

Biblical Echoes and Allusions: Proverbs as Intertextual Pathways in Patrick Chakaipa's *Pfumo Reropa*

by

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Abstract

The main purpose of the paper is to analyze the role that proverbs play as signposts for the introduction and embedding of biblical intertextual elements in some Shona literary texts. It does this by closely reading Patrick Chakaipa's 1961 novel *Pfumo Reropa*. The paper notes that while proverbs are oral texts that serve as behavioral and moral conductors in diverse cultures, they are transferred to the written realm as part of the creative and literary act. The poetic nature of proverbs makes them attractive to most narrators who use them to entrench their main themes. This paper also proposes to read them in their function of interconnecting among others biblical literary texts by Chakaipa as these intertextual linkages can either appear by explicit reference to an earlier text usually known to the reader; or, implicitly, in the form of faint echoes of biblical texts, themes, motifs, traditions or events. Hence, the proverbs in Chakaipa's novel resonate with biblical allusions and echoes, something he does to subtly preach Christianity.

Introduction

This paper's major contribution is that while Chakaipa's novels have been read as heavily influenced by the bible (Kahari, 1972, 1997; Mapara, 2003) the issue is that the way some of these biblical elements have been brought into the narrative have not been analyzed. This paper contends that this has been done through the use of proverbs among other narrative devices. The focus of this paper is thus on proverbs and how the author has deployed them as pathways of bringing in what this author refers to as 'turning the novel into a pulpit.' Informed by intertextuality, popularized by Kristeva, it is observed that Chakaipa's *Pfumo Reropa* (Spear of Blood) hinges on biblical texts through its use of echoes and allusions.

It notes that echoes and allusions reinforce the didacticism and moralizations that are major aspects of the Shona novel (Kahari, 1986). As other texts, *Pfumo Reropa* is part of intertextual intersections that reflect other literatures, both written and oral. The paper therefore calls upon all serious scholars of Shona literature to rethink the manner they have been analyzing the Shona novel and other literary genres. It also calls upon readers, scholars and students of Shona literature to make efforts to understand authors and their backgrounds so as to have a deeper understanding of their texts through reading widely since echoes and allusions can best be detected by those who study extensively other literatures and cultural books as well as theories of literature.

This paper is also not about the effect that proverbs have as aesthetic literary devices, neither is it about the general effect that proverbs have in a narrative as discussed by Pongweni (1989). It notes that while proverbs themselves are intertextual insertions in the texts they are found, because they are oral by nature, they go further than that in literary texts. The paper delves into how proverbs play a relay effect serving as pathways or signposts in *Pfumo Reropa* through introducing intertextual echoes and allusions into the narrative. As pathways, the proverbs function as entry points or platforms on which among others, the author introduces biblical echoes and allusions.

Intertextual Echoes and Allusions

The term intertextuality was first introduced by Kristeva (1986). It points out that a particular text depends on prior sources and persuasions that help to shape that manuscript. For example, studying Spenser's *Faerie Queene* might trace its sources right back to Homer's the *Iliad* (Linde, 2009: 2). This genealogical scrutiny perceives a text as having various forms of conversational relations with earlier texts through various means such as response, continuation, homage, critique, parody, pastiche, etc. Lately the focal point has shifted to even tracing concatenation of influence between specific texts to a concern about the intertextual nature of any manuscript, whether or not it overtly responds to any prior document (Linde, 2009: 2-3). What debatably, the argument finally boils down to is that no literary text is original but is portmanteaux of various texts that are in constant dialogue with one another. This view of intertextuality therefore argues that no author can ever be wholly original. In these arguments on and about intertextuality what scholars largely focus on are echoes and allusions that they ride on as means of getting back to prior texts, and even in some instances, to texts that came later as is the case for example of Mabasa's *Mapenzi* (1999) and *Ndafa Here?*, (2008) that are chained by among others aspects the words "*Handisi imba yakasara kumatongo ini*" (I am not an abandoned house left in a formerly inhabited area). What is however important to note is that although echoes and allusions are related, they are different.

An intertextual echo may be either a cognizant or unconscious act and is faint enough that often it is impossible to determine whether its manifestation in a text was willfully or unconsciously inserted by the author. Like in an allusion, it is a result of the influence of a text that the author may have read at one time in the past. It may derive from one specific text, event, tradition, person, or thing. If the echo is a textual or literary echo, it stems from a text that the author has read (or heard) at some point in the past (Beetham, 2008: 20-24). Commenting on the same issue of intertextual echoes with a focus on biblical studies, Hays states that echoes may not be as loud as expected and may require wider knowledge on languages and texts, especially languages and texts of the ancient Near East in the case of biblical and classical studies. There are however cases like in the New Testament study when a scholar may identify louder echoes that may be a verbatim replication of verbal skill, style and syntactical outlines from the Greek versions of the Jewish Scriptures yet one focusing on the Old Testament faces the problem of linguistic fissures that exist between cultures (Hays, 2008: 37). Despite these challenges, one notes that echoes can even be realized by a word or two as noted by Porat who notes that T.S. Eliot alludes (which is really an echo) to John Donne by using only two words (*qtd. in* Hays, 1998: 35). It is clear that whether one is referring to biblical studies or literary ones, echoes take the reader back to earlier texts but they are not as loud as allusions that are discussed below.

Allusions to earlier works were in fact at one time seen as a mark of creative ingenuity as in the case of the *Aenid* by Virgil which is an allusion of Homer's the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. Some biblical texts also allude to other Ancient Near Eastern documents such as the Flood Story (Genesis 6:9-9:17) and the Gilgamesh Epic (Sanders, 1964). Israelite prophets also subverted and transformed messages of the Ancient Near East in their prophecies (Hays, 2008: 21). It is consequently apparent that an allusion comprises of one or additional words from an earlier literary or other manuscript whose appearance in a book evokes the reader's remembrance of another text or texts. Each distinctive reference is to an individual source. In an allusion one can undoubtedly witness resemblances connecting the source text and the new manuscript (if s/he has prior knowledge of the other text). The author of the new text may not hide the fact that s/he is relying on a prior one, although s/he may not openly acknowledge that.

Allusions come in different ways such as in plot, characterization and even format. In an allusion the author deliberately makes an effort to bring in elements of a prior text or texts with the intention of linking his/her content to the preceding one. The reason largely has to do with efforts to make his work more appealing and ensure that issues raised are better understood when the two texts are juxtaposed. A good example of this is realized in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Nicol (2000) states that this play is heavily dependent on texts like Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (p. 20). The dependence on prior texts may be because the author may use allusions to increase his text's worth in the eyes of the reader (Beetham, 2008: 17-20) or to ride on the success of a previous work. Allusions may also be used by writers to prove that they are part of a long global literary tradition.

Proverbs in Literature

A proverb is difficult to define. According to Mieder, a proverb is a diminutive, well-known and recognizable sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and customary views in a figurative, set and memorable form, which is handed down from generation to generation (Mieder 1985: 119). To Finnegan (2012: 383) it is a saying in more or less fixed form, marked by 'shortness, sense, and salt'; distinguished by the popular reception of the truth succinctly articulated in it. Mapara and Thebe (2015: 204-205) characterize it as a succinct well thought-out, figurative expression that shows the ability of humanity to express their inner most thoughts, feelings and sensations through a keen and sharp sense of imagination. A proverb is both a linguistic and literary aspect that makes up a momentous ingredient of oral verbal communication. Reminiscent of other varieties of oral language forms for instance folktales, riddles and parables; they are deemed the genus of the spoken tongue which is found in all human languages. But besides being a language aspect, the proverb in sub-Saharan Africa has in addition been described as part of oral literature.

It is essential to observe that proverbs have been used in literature as far back as Sumerian times and in the medieval period (Frank, 1943: 508). Their use in African literature has been amplified by Achebe, especially in his *Things Fall Apart* (1958). They have also been part and parcel of African orature which has seen them used in for example folktales. Although the definitions given above are helpful, in this paper, in light of the novel being analyzed as well as its author, Ross' definition with reference to the use of proverbs or the types of proverbs found in the bible's Ecclesiastes and Job is more appropriate. This becomes even more poignant when it is considered that Chakaipa went to mission schools, for his primary and secondary education. As regards Wisdom Literature that is found in the bible that has also influenced Chakaipa, Ross observes the following on Ecclesiastes and Job and points out that:

Proverbial wisdom is characterized by short pithy statements; but the speculative wisdom, such as Ecclesiastes or Job, uses lengthy monologues and dialogues to probe the meaning of life, the problem of good and evil, and the relationship between God and people (2008: 23).

These words, when analyzed and applied to *Pfumo Reropa* indicate that the author has used proverbs in a refreshing manner and this is significant. Ross's words ring true of the dialogues and monologues in *Pfumo Reropa*. It however has to be noted that the dialogue in *Pfumo Reropa* is not used for the enrichment or betterment of the human predicament, but to bring to the fore the turmoil and turbulence in other people's lives caused largely by those with political and military power like Ndyire.

Biblical Reverberations and Allusions Through Proverbs

A perusal of some Shona novels reveals that intertextual echoes and allusions in Shona novelistic narratives are as old as the Shona novel itself. For example, Mugugu's *Jekanyika* (Journey across the Lands) (1969) has allusions to *Sohrab and Rostum* which Matthew Arnold translated into English (1853) (Castleman, 2014: 1-28). The veracity of the existence of such intertextual linkages is further confirmed when Barber and Furniss clearly point out:

And African-language writing is not a closed-off phenomenon; it exists in intertextual relations with anglophone and francophone African literary texts, and provides a perspective on them that can be highly illuminating (2006. 2).

These words are significant because when applied to the Shona novel they also show that it is a product that is not independent of other literary traditions and works. What is also interesting about the Shona novel is the existence of intertextual relations between Shona literary texts on their own. For instance, Honzeri's *Ndinofa Ndaedza* (I will die after attempting) (1991) alludes to Mugugu's *Jekanyika* (1969). Intertextual echoes and allusions are also manifest in some of the novels of Chakaipa such as *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* (The Lone one of Ten Arrows) (1959) and *Garandichauya* (Wait I shall return) (1964). In *Pfumo Reropa* the echoes and allusions that are focused on are only those linked to how Chakaipa has utilized proverbs as entry points into biblical intertextual linkages.

It is interesting to note that Chakaipa's use of biblical echoes and allusions may be a consequence of his having read the bible and his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, where he later became a padre and Archbishop. His use of proverbs as intertextual pathways for echoes and allusions in his novel is significant because it confirms that proverb use in literary creations goes beyond teaching and depicting African life in the pre-colonial era (Bimpe, 2012: 286). Although Chakaipa does not openly mention Catholicism in his novel, there are echoes and allusions that point to his use of the bible to further entrench his moral teachings especially against the vile and debilitating effects of iniquitous behavior exhibited by some people principally the powerful ones like Ndyire and his henchmen such as Musasa.

One of the proverbs that Chakaipa deploys in *Pfumo Reropa* is, "... pane gombo ndopane mwoyo?" (p. 1). (... where the virgin land is, is where the heart's desire is also) that Ndyire utters to Munhamo. Chakaipa employs this proverb to echo and allude to several biblical motifs that link Ndyire and Munhamo. The narrator presents Munhamo contemplating her predicament, and this cogitation elicits the proverb, "... muromo kapako kokuhwanda nako" (p. 1) (... the mouth is a cave in which one takes refuge) in her mind. Although this proverb is deliberated and ruminated on and not verbalized, it gives an impetus on Munhamo to respond in a comportment that does not make Ndyire irritated despite the polite rebuff she gives him.

The raconteur uses this proverb to moreover echo Proverbs 15: 1 that reads, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (*Mhinduro nyoro inopodza hashha, asi izwi rakaomarara rinovirutsa hashha*). It is probable that Chakaipa uses this echo to endow his main female character with an intellect that is quick, and one who thinks about perils that may befall her family if she is to respond in a manner that would ridicule Ndyire. Unfortunately, her diplomatic endeavors do not yield positive results as Ndyire in his response insists that he would get her.

In her rejoinder to Ndyire’s “*pane gombo ndopane mwoyo*” (p. 1) Munhamo expresses her opinion, “*Ichokwadi ... pane gombo ndopane mwoyo asi gombo kana rakabatirwa ... rava munda womumwe, hazvizokodzeri kuti pawane anouya achiti orima ...*” (It is true that where the virgin land is, is where the heart’s desire is also, but if that piece of land ... is now someone’s field, it is not proper that another person comes and lay claim to it). Notwithstanding her protestations and courteous rebuff, Ndyire is adamant and declares, “*Pane munhu ane munda kana gombo zvaro zvisiri zvangu muno munyika here? ... Gombo iri ndarida ndinorima chete ndione chinouya*” (Is there a person who has a field or virgin land that are not mine in this land? ... I will till this virgin land and face the consequences). The words *gombo* and *munda* are significant in the biblical allusion that they are a pointer to. There are phony allegations against Munhamo’s husband and his family in the same manner that through Jezebel’s influence a false indictment is brought against Naboth. Both Shizha and all men of his family as well as the biblical Naboth are exterminated for Munhamo, and Naboth for his vineyard. The case of Naboth is given the bible's I Kings 21: 1-16.

A closer reading of these paragraphs in Chakaipa’s text, clearly reveals that the words *gombo* and *munda* are comparable to Naboth’s vineyard (*munda wake wemagirepisi* in the Shona bible), and are used figuratively to denote Munhamo. Shizha, Munhamo’s husband is killed by Ndyire’s forces so that he can have Munhamo. Ndyire is two biblical characters rolled into one. As one who desires Munhamo, he approximates Ahab. But he also resembles Jezebel, Ahab’s wife in that he plots to have Shizha and his family extirpated so that he can have Munhamo. It is Jezebel as the above verses reveal who plotted the murder of Ahab. The words, “Is this how you act as king over Israel? ... I’ll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite” that Jezebel speaks are significant. In Chakaipa’s novel, words that allude to these are vocalized by Ndyire when he declares, “*Pane ... munda kana gombo zvaro zvisiri zvangu muno munyika ...? Ndiani ane simba rokundirambidza kurima pandinenge ndichida? ... ndinorima chete ndione chinouya.*” Albeit in the bible it is Jezebel who reminds Ahab of the power he has. The realization of such words that allude to those in the bible may lead one to conclude that such an occurrence is no accident but the narrator’s deliberate act to embed biblical motifs in his work so as to preach indirectly the Catholic faith that he has embraced. It may also be an endeavor by the novelist to allude to the bible to illustrate the universalism of greedy among human beings.

The Ndyire-Ahab exposition referred to in the above paragraph is an allusion based on the proposition that Miola (2004: 19) advances asserting that the source proximate is the most widespread variety of intertextuality that deals with sources and texts. The source proximate's core argument is that the author credits, restructures, nicks, ransacks, and plunders through avenues such as copying, paraphrasing, compression, conflation, expansion, omission, innovation, etc. Chakaipa has done this in the above case through for example, rolling Ahab and Jezebel into Ndyire, and *gombo/munda* and Munhamo into Naboth's vineyard. This is a case of conflation, innovation and transference that Miola refers to. It has the effect of turning the Ahab-Naboth conflict into a parallel of the Munhamo-Ndyire one. The parallels that come draw attention to Munhamo's victimhood as much as Naboth's that is underscored in the biblical story. The callousness of Jezebel and Ahab that has its parallel in Ndyire is intensified and the reader would understand the universalism of the abuse of power by those who wield it, in the days of old, and also even today, especially in the formerly colonized countries in Africa like Zimbabwe.

Chakaipa also utilizes Haripotse, besides Munhamo to usher in a proverb that presents issues of justice and respect for people and private property including people's wives. Although Haripotse does not use the canonical Shona proverb, "*Muranda nyangonaka sei, haatongerwi mhosva asipo*" (No matter how good a slave is, s/he cannot be tried in absentia) as it is, he rephrases it as "*Kunyangwe munhu ari muranda haafaniri kutongerwa mhosva asipo*" (p. 15) (Even if one is a slave, it is not good that s/he is tried in absentia). He deploys this proverb during the choreographed hearing against Nhindiri's family to justify its destruction. Haripotse points out that although they witness destroyed homesteads and those amputated for thefts, there are never exhibits of recovered property. It is clear that Haripotse uses the proverb to expose Ndyire as a liar who falsely accuses people for non-existent crimes. What is however more noteworthy is that the proverb echoes Proverbs 3: 30 that reads, "Do not accuse anyone for no reason — when they have done you no harm." (*Usarwa nomunhu pasina mhosva, kana asina kukuitira zvakaipa*). The Shona bible replaces 'accuse' by 'fight' and this is precisely what Ndyire's army does; it invades Nhindiri's village which is an act of fighting. They attack the Nhindiri homestead and the accusations only come out posthumously. This Shona translation speaks louder than the English version because it clearly shows that Ndyire is bent on getting Munhamo, no matter the consequences.

It is as well vital to be mindful that the same proverb is used to evaluate the character of Ndyire, presenting him as one who lacks *ubuntu/unhu*, which accentuates that one is expected to treat others with reverence because they are fellow human beings. *Unhu* also requires that one always remembers that *mukadzi wemumwe ndaambuya* (another man's wife is a mother-in-law). Ndyire instead cobbles a story that alleges that the Nhindiri family is one of criminals so as to lay his hands on Munhamo. This proverb "*Kunyangwe munhu ari muranda haafaniri kutongerwa mhosva asipo*" (p. 15) that Haripotse employs is particularly significant since proverbs are also used as a validation of accepted values as well as a criticism of behavior that does not conform to those ideals (Forster 1970, 304-305). It is consequently a criticism of Ndyire as a hollow person who is motivated by his greed.

Haripotse's disquiet also reverberates with Proverbs 31: 8-9 that states, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." In all probability by echoing biblical motifs in his novel Chakaipa is subtly entrenching biblical wisdom in his narrative so that his readers without inevitably confessing to the Christian faith will still learn of what is morally acceptable and also wrong in human relations. Through this echo, he is also saying that African wisdom is endowed with teachings that entrench values of human rights and dignity that are also found in the bible.

An additional proverb that underscores the suggestion that Chakaipa is interested in advocating for biblical morality is, "*(Dai) ndakaziva haitungamiri*" on pages 72 and 87 that echoes and alludes to different biblical motifs. In the first instance it is employed by Munhamo, Tanga's mother to express her regret on why she had accepted to get married again after the death of Ndyire. She says to Tanga, "*Zviri kwaani ... Ndakaziva haitungamiri ndaidai ndakaita zyawakanga wareva.*" (I regret ... If I had known does not take a lead, I should have done what you had suggested). These words and proverb may be deployed by the narrator to echo Proverbs 10: 21 that reads, "The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense." The proposition here is that Munhamo finds herself in problems because she had not listened to Tanga's advice and had rebuffed him, reminding him that he was but her son. Through the same proverb, and biblical echo, one is also persuaded to conclude that the proverb also reverberates with another Shona proverb "*Ndambakuudzwa yakaonekwa nembonje pamhanza*" (One who spurned advice was found with a wound on his forehead). It is important to observe that even though proverbs are being analyzed as entry points into intertextual linkages, in this case, a proverb has also come in as an intertextual echo, inferred to through another proverb in the text linked to a biblical verse.

This proverb is yet again used when Dzinesu bemoans her folly in pushing her husband to accede to murder Munhamo and controlling him to consent to her demands. She laments, "... *ndava kufa pamusana pokutonga murume. Dai ndakaziva haitungamiri.*" (p. 87) (... I am dying because of controlling my husband. If I had known does not take a lead). While in the case of Ahab/Jezebel and Naboth's vineyard who can be likened to *gombo/munda* and Munhamo, Dzinesu and her husband can be equated to Judas Iscariot. A close reading of the text shows some words alluding to biblical verses. This proverb which ushers in both an echo and an allusion is used in retrospect to justify the killing of Dzinesu by her husband. Earlier on the wife and husband underwent contrition for murdering Munhamo. The echo is realized in the use of the proverb *Dai ndakaziva haitungamiri* and her statement that she is dying because of being domineering. Dzinesu then alludes to the bible saying, "*Ndapara mhosva huru kwazvo, mhosva isingaripiki. Zvino ndoitai ndauraya munhu asina mhaka?*" (I have committed an offence that cannot be paid off by a fine or compensation. Now what can I do because I have killed an innocent person) and her husband also says, "*Wandiurayisa munhu asina mhosva pano kuti ndaidai ndauraya iwe*" (p. 87) (You have driven me to kill an innocent person when I should instead have killed you).

This sentiment of compunction alludes to Matthew 27: 3-5 where Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples filled with guilt and remorse after betraying him takes back the money he received from the same Jewish chief priests to whom he has betrayed Jesus. Judas Iscariot after realizing the gravity of his act says, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood" (Matthew 27: 4). The Shona bible has, "*Ndakataadza nokutengesha kwandakaita ropa risina mhaka*" (Mateu 27: 4). These words are almost the same with those that Dzinesu has used. The words ... "*ndauraya munhu asina mhaka*" are an allusion to "*nokutengesha kwandakaita ropa risina mhaka.*" Whereas Dzinesu has committed the murder herself, Judas Iscariot has betrayed Jesus, an act that would lead to his death. These differences result from the author creatively using his source. The allusion is significant in that while it may help readers to understand a text, it is as well important in giving readers an avenue that may lead them to a better understanding of the author's life and background. It is essential to note that this appreciation would besides other factors go a long way in assisting in deciphering a text. The allusions possibly will furthermore mean that novelistic discourses are not innocent pieces of individual creative prowess but are texts that talk to others that have come before them (and in some instances those that come after them), and are also utilized as launch pads by the authors to move forward their agenda. As Miola (2004: 19) points out the author can modify texts he gets from his source(s) as Chakaipa has done. He has restructured, transferred and modified the story of Judas Iscariot, but the words are unmistakably those of Judas Iscariot spoken through Dzinesu and her husband. The purpose may be assumed to be that of sermonizing by all means possible. In this case, it may be stated that Chakaipa is doing that even without necessarily asking people to convert to the Christian faith; he is however entrenching Christian values in his readers' minds.

The same proverb "*Dai ndakaziva haitungamiri*" (p. 87) that Dzinesu utters also alludes to the biblical notion that some acts that people undertake are responsible for bringing them to personal ruin and death. The verse below clearly captures this.

Ungodly people have brought death on themselves by the things they have said and done. They yearn for death as if it were a lover. They have gone into partnership with death, and it is just what they deserve (Wisdom of Solomon 1: 16).

(Vasiri vanamati vanozyikokera rufu nezviito zvavo uye nezvavanotaura. Vanotoonda kwazvo nokurufunga vachifunga kuti ishamwari, vachitoita zvavo chitsidzirano narwo nokuti kurufu uku ndiko kubato ravo ikoko) (Ungwaru 1: 16).

What is likewise significant is that this allusion to the bible helps tie biblical teachings with Shona wisdom as carried in proverbs and folktales. One of the proverbs that are alluded to is “*Hapana muchero usina masvisvinwa* (There is no fruit eaten that is without expectorants), which means that every bad act has its consequences. In folktales an example can be found in one titled “*Rungano rwembira yairera mwana*” (The tale of a dassie that babysat a human baby) (Fortune, 2010: 56-62). The attachments that come up linking biblical teachings and other oral art forms are significant in showing that both the bible and Shona oral literature anchored on morality and carry within them universal values.

The proverb is in addition an allusion to the death of Judas Iscariot. However, while in the New Testament story of Matthew it is only Judas Iscariot who dies after expressing his regret, in *Pfumo Reropa* four people, Dzinesu, her unnamed husband, the healer and Handidiwe who has provided the poison die. Like Judas Iscariot they die because of their greed. In fact, as observed by Moyise (2002: 419), an allusion is more often woven into the text rather than “quoted”, and is frequently not very precise in terms of phraseology. There are generally no agreements as to how much verbal concurrence is required to establish the incidence of an allusion. Taking this into consideration, the case of Dzinesu and her partners is more than an echo and thus qualifies to be an allusion. The allusion is significant when one looks at Chakaipa as a preacher. He seems to be interested in preaching the idea that the wages of sin is death.

The author’s weaving together of his narrative and the biblical text can best be explicated by what in biblical and classical studies is called redaction criticism. According to Smalley “redaction criticism” can be understood as the detection of the evangelists’ creative contribution in all its aspects to the Christian tradition which they transmit (1977: 181). Perrin further states, “The prime requisite for redaction criticism is the ability to trace the form and content of material used by the author concerned or in some way to determine the nature and extent of his activity in collecting and creating, as well as in arranging, editing, and composing” (1969: 2). While Smalley refers to redaction criticism in connection with its use by evangelists, Perrin’s is broader although he also utilizes it in connection to biblical writers. These two’s observations are all applicable to Chakaipa who has adopted and adapted biblical knowledge and characters into the Shona novelistic discourse. He has embellished the biblical images with the Shona idiom. It is therefore plausible to contend that a close reading of Chakaipa’s text and his use of echoes and allusions was deliberately done to create an awareness of the Christian faith and one can see the interrelatedness of Chakaipa’s novel and biblical texts. Resultantly one may present the proposition that Chakaipa in using echoes and allusions was intending to preach to the reader in a subtle way against the evils of covetousness because it has negative consequences for its victims, both the perpetrator and the one on whom the act is performed.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that proverbs have always influenced world literature especially with reference to their influence on some literary aspects that drive narratives such as themes and characterization. It has gone further to argue with reference to Chakaipa's novel *Pfumo Reropa* that they more than spice up a text, but are used as avenues through which the writer has introduced biblical motifs in his narrative. Through proverbs, Chakaipa has created an intricate narrative web through characters that are very much like biblical ones, not only to moralize but also to subtly preach the Christian faith to his readers. Through this same act, Chakaipa has also underscored the point that issues to do with morality and respect for human rights are not something that Africa learnt of for the first time with the advent of western Christian missionaries, but is something that African people in general, and the Shona in particular have always had. It can thus also be argued that through *Pfumo Reropa*, Chakaipa is also talking back to the western establishment, telling them that they are not harbingers of moral values and ethics as some proverbs that he has used to link with biblical verses show.

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