

Review

Prostitution in selected colonial and post - colonial Shona novels

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This paper comparatively analyses the portrayal of prostitution in Garandichauya (1964), Pafunge (1972), Mapenzi (1999) and Ndozviudza Aniko? (2006). It mainly focuses on the causes of prostitution as well as the images given to the prostitutes. The first two novels are set in colonial Zimbabwe whilst the other two in the post-colonial era. In Garandichauya, the author fails to put prostitution in its proper historical and socio-economic context as he blames individual prostitutes labelling them pariahs and social renegades thus rendering them negative images. As for Mapenzi, the writer has an ambivalent vision as he vacillates between blaming the neo-colonial system and the prostitutes in their individual capacities as they are shown to be the bringers of mishap in their societies. It is in Pafunge and Ndozviudza Aniko? where the writers, regardless of writing in two different historical eras, treat the aspect of prostitution fairly. The authors blame the forces operating in both the colonial and the post-colonial periods as being responsible for compelling women into prostitution. Prostitutes are shown to be victims of the diabolic systems of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The paper argues that literature is quite a powerful and effective way of influencing social behaviour and attitudes and therefore failing to give real causes of prostitution as well as giving negative images to prostitutes will not help society appreciate their predicament. Usually in any crisis, women are the most vulnerable and they turn to prostitution as a means of survival. Therefore, prostitution becomes an escape route for women caught in a poverty trap.

Key words: Africana-Womanism, prostitution, colonial Zimbabwe, post-colonial Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to make an analysis of how some selected Shona novelists in both the colonial and post-colonial periods address the theme of prostitution in their works. The novels under discussion are Chakaipa's *Garandichauya* (1964), Tsodzo's *Pafunge* (1972) and Mabasa's *Mapenzi* (2000) as well as Nyandoro's *Ndozviudza Aniko?* (2006). The main thrust is to look at the causes of prostitution as well as the image of the prostitute as portrayed in the selected novels. In this paper, the term prostitute refers to a woman who has multiple sexual partners in exchange for money and or other material benefits. The term post-colonial refers to the period after the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe in 1980. The researcher will examine if the authors are able to put prostitution in its proper historical and socio-economic context. An attempt will be made to

see if there are any similarities and differences in the handling of the theme of prostitution by the writers in the two historical epochs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by the teachings of Africana-Womanism which is a movement initiated by women of African origin with the intention of putting centrality on African women (and men) in the analysis of information and events. It is an off-shoot of Afrocentricity which is a broader perspective rooted in African history and culture with the intention of transforming the lives of African people. As a theory, Africana-Womanism encourages that the challenges and problems African women face

should be viewed and resolved from an African perspective. Put differently, African culture and history are vital in the understanding and diagnosis of problems affecting African women. The theory provides knowledge for social, cultural, economic and political transformation of African women.

THE DEPICTION OF PROSTITUTION IN COLONIAL NOVELS

Garandichauya is set in the early days of colonialism when modernity is still in its infancy among the Shona people. It reflects a tragic reaction to the developments as they end up resorting to deviant behavior in their attempt to cope with the new lease of life. The story centres on Muchaneta (You-Shall-Get-Tired) who fails to remain faithful in her marriage and engages in several affairs especially after her divorce. At the beginning of the story, she is married to a man who works in Mutare who manages to meet most of her material needs including monetary ones but she nevertheless, remains unfaithful. Even before marriage, Muchaneta is shown to have had many relationships for material benefits. She confesses:

“Zvandanga ndisati ndawanikwa, ndaive nevakomana vashanu vaineidipa zvose zvanda. Mudzidzisi wepachikoro apa ndakambomudya. (6)
(Before I got married, I had five boyfriends who met my needs. I milked the teacher at the nearby school.)”

The author blames Muchaneta's mother for bad tutelage, which results in her engagement in extra-marital affairs, which is against the society's cultural ethos. It's a serious offence which warrants divorce as the Shona, just like in many other African cultures, perceive marriage as sacred as it does not only unite those who are alive and the unborn but also with the living dead. Mbiti (1975) aptly describes this perception among the African people: Marriage links both the community of the living and the community of the living dead to the community of those to be born. In this sense, marriage is the meeting point for the three layers of human life according to African religion. These are the departed, the living and those to be born. The departed come into the picture because they are the roots on whom the living stand. The living are link between death and life. Those to be born are the loins of the living and marriage makes it possible for them to germinate and sprout. (89)

Therefore engaging in extra-marital affairs also offends the dead who are believed to be the protectors of those living. Muchaneta's mother advises her:

Unofanira kuziva kuti chava chirungu chino, ukada kuteerera tsika dzekare unofa uri rombe rekupedzisira. (4)

(You must know that these are now modern times, if you stick to our past cultural norms you will die a pauper.)

This is against the expectations in the Shona culture where mothers are supposed to nurture their children to observe the norm. As noted above, the paradox is that Muchaneta's Mutare based husband is shown to be quite supportive meeting all her material needs. He even went on to buy her a bicycle, a symbol of well being in those times. The impression then one gets is that Muchaneta goes into prostitution as a result of bad influence from her mother. This is despite the fact that the author is apparently aware of the negative impact of modernity among the Shona as he makes references to the effects of objects like tea, bread, money and bicycles. For instance, he gives an incident in which Matamba, who later becomes Muchaneta's boyfriend, is given extremely hot tea whilst having the highly esteemed drink at the latter's home which burns his tongue. This created bitter relations between Matamba's grandmother and Muchaneta's family. The author is showing the gulf created by modernity between those who could afford and those who failed to. However, the author shifts his attention from this important observation and deliberately focuses on blaming individual characters rather than the new system introduced by colonialism. As Chiwome (2002: 198) notes, the author blames character malformation in the family more than on the economic circumstances thereby underrating the impact of the capitalist economy on the habits of African consumers. He further argues that individual choices of a lifestyle are given prominence more than the economic imperative. Apart from the mother's influence, Chakaipa also blames Muchaneta herself as she fails to understand what her physical beauty meant. She is shown to be overwhelmed by her beauty to an extent that she feels to be in her own class:

Iye pano pasi pane munhu angandikunda kunaka here? Kana zvakaita muchiringiro zviri izvo, hapana, kutosiya kwevakadzi vavaRungu vashomanana asi ruzhinji tonienderana (6)
(Is there anyone in the world who can be more beautiful than me? If my image in the mirror is true, then there is none except for a few white women but for the majority, we are equal.)

The author therefore is attributing her immoral behavior to her failure to transform her physical beauty into utility. It also makes it appear as if the author is supporting the very system of colonialism that is responsible for the problems that Africans are confronted with. For instance, in the above quotation he is measuring beauty using a white woman as the standard. He is subscribing to the worldview of the white race where the word black is associated with things that are substandard and evil

whilst white becomes the antithesis of black. Europeans fabricated myths about Africans to justify their exploitation of the continent. One of the myths is that Africans are inherently promiscuous and this is what Chakaipa does as Muchaneta is shown to be engaging in several relationships regardless of the problems she is facing. Andersen (1988: 231) notes that Europe's identification of Africans as heathens led them to believe that black women and men were lustful, passionate and sexually aggressive and this then became the basis for racial and sexual stereotypes of black men and women. This then becomes the problem with Chakaipa who displays an ambivalent vision by supporting the very system which he intends to condemn. The reason for this could be that the author is a product of both the colonial school and the church as he was later to become a Roman Catholic priest and archbishop. The products of the two institutions were alienated from their environment as the education offered to them was irrelevant to their needs as it was tailored to suit the colonial master's needs. On African writers who received western and Christian education, Abiola Irele cited in Appiah (1992: 54) writes: We are wedged uncomfortably between our traditional culture and those of the West. The process of change which we are going has created a dualism of forms of life which we experience...

At the end of the day, the author erroneously blames individuals rather than the system that is responsible for the predicament they find themselves in. Colonialism meant an overhaul of the African way of life as a new political and socio-economic system was ushered in. The new political master realised the need to transform and remodel the existing indigenous structures to ensure total control of the local people. This included some cultural practices in the traditionally patriarchal society in which men and women played different but complementary roles. Cawthorns (1995: 5) sates that colonialism changed the African economy, social and gender relationships and labour. She further notes that for women, the power and prestige they had before colonialism was taken away. Oppression for black women tended to come from three fronts: race, class and gender. This triple misfortune meant that African women were the most affected politically, socially and economically. Consequently, they ended up engaging in deviant behaviour including prostitution as a means for survival. This is what the author should have focused on rather than the narrow moralisation of blaming prostitutes he opts for. He states:

Vasikana ava waitambawo mutambo waiuraya vanhurume vazhinji, mutambo waipunza dzimba dzakange dzine rugare, mutambo waparadza nyika yamadzitateguru edu, mutambo unosemwa nevana chaivo vemuno vane tsika neunhu. (90)

(The girls were involved in the same game like that of Muchaneta, a game that has killed several men, a

game that has destroyed families that had peace, a game that has destroyed our ancestral land, a game that is avoided by local children who are morally upright.)

The image one gets of a prostitute is that of a murderer, one who destroys peace and stability in society. They are also portrayed to be deliberately engaging in prostitution and therefore inherently immoral. As a cadet-priest, the author is concerned about the survival of the Shona family amidst the adverse effects of colonialism as those who leave the institution are punished at the end of the day. Muchaneta is murdered by one of her ex-lovers, Handisumbe (I do not regret) whilst Matamba who leaves his wife in search of urban pleasure is made blind. Before her death, Muchaneta's behaviour is shown to have become bestial:

Nguva iyi waimuona akati zvake kudivi renzira pi marutsi aya asingambotauriki. Akanga asisina mhosva nezvounhu, akanga enge imbwa... Munhu akati osviba, akati nzvi semhungu, runako ruya rukati rwapera. (90)

(During that time you would at times see her sleeping on the roadside with vomit all over her. She no longer cared about her morals, behaving like a dog. She became darker and darker in complexion like a black mamba, and her beauty vanished.)

The concept of giving animalistic qualities to Africans is also typical of Victorian racial thinking. As noted earlier on, this makes colonialism appear justified as there was need to "civilize" Africans and at the same time making Africans appear to be the source of the problems they were facing. The author fails to put prostitution into its proper socio-historical context as research on Shona anthropology has shown that the practice was not there before the advent of colonialism. Bourdillon (1987: 321) notes that prostitution is relatively new to the Shona society, brought about largely by urban environments. It became a means of survival as African women battled to survive in the harsh environment ushered in by colonialism. He fails to meet what is expected from African writers that they be informed by history in the explanation of the current situation. On this, Achebe (1989: 42) demands:

What we need to do is to look back and try and find out where went wrong, when the rain began to beat us.

At the end, the reader is made not to sympathise with the prostitutes as they are presented as evildoers who should be condemned as they bring mishap in society. In this case, Muchaneta is punished with death as she is responsible for the breakdown of a number of families and crimes which include theft and gangsterism.

As for Tsodzo's *Pafunge*, the story is set in the later stages of colonialism when industrialization and

urbanization have encroached deeper into the African lives. The life of Africans is shown to be in turmoil after they have migrated into the urban areas as that in the rural had become unbearable especially after the introduction of the Land Apportionment Act in 1930 and the Land Husbandry Act in 1951. After being alienated from their land, Africans were forced to flock to urban areas to seek employment in industries as they needed money to pay tax. Even there life is shown to be uncomfortable as they fail to secure employment and descent accommodation. Consequently, they end up engaging in criminal activities as well as prostitution as a survival strategy. To show that unemployment was very high, the author describes the queue for people waiting to be contracted as casual workers at some company as:

Nenguva pfupi pfupi mudungwe wakanga wasvika panzira yemota. Sezvo kumira munzira kwaityisa, raini rakati kugona kukwira nenzira ndichienda kurukesheni rwe- Mukoba. Rakafamba kwazvo, asi rakazosvikazve pane imwe nzira yemota, rikati inga zvino roenda kuVhitori, richibva rasoneta apo zuva rakanga richangobuda, ndiye kwaro tumbi. (40)

(In a short space of time, the queue reached the road. As it was dangerous to queue in the road, the people lined in the direction to Mkoba Location. The queue grew longer and longer, until it reached another road. It then followed another road to Victoria and later stopped as the sun was rising).

This is a revelation of how pathetic the living conditions of Africans were. In the novel, an unnamed prostitute comes to live with Joe Rugare alias Joe Rug, a thief, conman and thug. This is because she had failed to secure her own accommodation. She has another sexual relationship with a certain man and fails to explain the relationship convincingly:

Ava ndisekuru vemukomana wamainini vomurume wambuya vangu. (37)

(This is uncle to the boyfriend of the aunt to the husband of my grandfather).

Another prostitute in *Pafunge* is Sarah who doubles as a thief. Her main targets are students at Fletcher High School and the University College of Rhodesia. She is part of Joe Rug's gang who engage in criminal activities as they fail to find employment. The author euphemistically describes the criminal activities as:

Nokudaro iye neshamwari dzake vakarangana kuti vararame nokutora zvinhu varidzi vasingazivi. Saka izvi ndizvo zvavakange voita siku nesikati. Vakanga vasingazodzori havo zvavainge vatora nekuti vainge vachida kuzvishandisawo. (4)

(Therefore together with his friends they decided that they should earn a living by taking property of

other people without their consent. This became their daily routine. However, they would not return the property, as they also wanted to use it.)

Unlike Chakaipa, Tsodzo is showing that prostitutes and other deviant characters are victims of the diabolic system of colonialism. For Africans, colonialism was deprivation rather than acquisition and they are shown to be desperate in making ends meet hence their resorting to unsanctioned behaviour. The author correctly situates the characters' morality to the poverty they find themselves in.

This approach by Tsodzo is similar to that of Dambudzo Marechera in his collection of short stories *The House of Hunger* where in the main story "*House of Hunger*" prostitutes are shown to be acting out of desperation because of the ills brought by colonialism in Zimbabwe, known as Rhodesia by then. He sets his story in Vengere Township of Rusape and there is a growing number of prostitutes. To reveal the gravity of their plight, the prostitutes had nowhere descent to take their clients and they opted for the bush. One of them Nester is a school dropout after being impregnated at the age of twelve by a married man. In fact, she is cast out of school, church and family and because of her situation she seeks accommodation in lavatories. Eventually, she becomes a prostitute as a remedy to the problems she is facing. Therefore, the image of prostitutes one gets in *Pafunge* is that of victims of circumstances as they are shown to be acting not out of choice but out of desperation.

THE DEPICTION OF PROSTITUTION IN POST-COLONIAL NOVELS

Mabasa's *Mapenzi* is set in post-colonial Zimbabwe and what transpires in the novel is typical of the Fanonian "Pitfalls of National Consciousness" as the nation is shown to be in a crippling crisis. There is an unprecedented political, economic and social crisis, which is a result of bad governance by the political leaders. The story is set in the late 1990s and the society is portrayed as being an agglomeration of mentally unstable people (*mapenzi*), which is a consequence of the amorphous challenges they are facing. In the end, people are shown to be unethical and deviant as they struggle to make ends meet. This is after the government, in an attempt to put the economy back on track, had between 1990 and 1995 introduced the World Bank inspired Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which, instead of alleviating the crisis, only managed to deepen it. Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 6) note that the effects of the programme were both immediate and sustained. These included an unprecedented increase in interest rates and inflation, a 65% fall in stock market, deindustrialisation precipitating a 40% decline in

manufacturing causing company closures and massive job cuts and a substantial decline in real wages and overall standards of living. Thereafter, the crisis continued unabated and according to Bond and Manyanya (2003: *xii*), the crisis had its culmination in the financial meltdown of 14 November 1997 (the Black Friday) when the Zimbabwean dollar fell from around 10 dollars to below 30 dollars to the US dollar within four hours of trading time. They argue that the immediate catalyst to this was President Robert

Mugabe's decision to give war veterans gratuities of Z\$50 000 and monthly pensions of Z\$2000. This was a budget buster and the currency crash was so severe, and quite possible, outside wartime, the worst ever experienced in such a short time in modern history. Therefore the characters in the novel are shown to be affected by this situation hence their mental instability. In the novel, prostitution mainly comes through two University of Zimbabwe students, Magi and Kundai. The latter confesses that she started being a prostitute during her days at university as a result of the financial problems that were bedeviling her:

Zvanzi naKundai ndakabvira kuhura zvokusimudza hembe tichiri kucollege. I did it occasionally to supplement payout when things were not going fine (159.)

(Kundai confesses that she became a prostitute and going naked [in the Avenues] whilst she was at college. (She) did it occasionally to supplement payout when things were not going fine.)

She unequivocally explains her predicament and she reflects that her going into prostitution was not out of choice but as a survival strategy. She is shown not to be afraid of the deadly Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) when asked by Kundai why she continues to have multiple sexual partners even after college:

Shamwari kusiri kufa ndekupi? Ndakarambiwa ndikasiirwa vana two. Ever since we parted a lot has happened. Mari yangu haikwane nyangwe ndiine degree. Degree rine basa rei pakukwira kweshuga nechingwa? (160)

(My friend, what is the difference with death? I was divorced and left with two children. Ever since we parted a lot has happened. My salary is inadequate although I am degreed. Does being degreed have anything to do with (stopping) price increases?)

This is the same situation that Magi find herself in. She is also a single mother and tries in vain to have stable relationships as boyfriends dump her once they realise her social and academic status. At the end, she falls in love with elderly married men who are also able to meet her material needs. In fact, this is shown to be the trend

among female university students. She says:

...also nyaya yekuti mari yatinopiwa ishoma kuti ikuitirewo zvaunoda, I just did like most girls are doing pano. Vanodanana nevarume vevanhu vachinyatsoziva, asi they tell youkuti vari kuda kungowana mari yekuti vararame. Vazhinji vacho vanoramba kuti havasi mahure, asi chokwadi ndechekuti tese tingori mahure. (49)

(...Also the fact that we are not given payout that is adequate to meet our needs, I just did like most girls are doing here. They are in love with married men knowingly, but they tell you they are just doing it for survival. Most of them deny that they are prostitutes but the reality is that we are.)

The author, just like Tsodzo, puts prostitution into its proper context. It is a result of women struggling for survival and therefore becomes an economic necessity. The predicament of the University of Zimbabwe students typifies that in other tertiary institutions as the institution bears the flagship of the country's tertiary education. It is a reflection of the government's failure to adequately support the system in an environment characterised by rampant inflation and corruption as evidenced by the false claims on disability that are made by some veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war.

However, Mabasa seems to have an ambivalent vision on prostitution, as there are incidents in which he castigates them in their individual capacities. He gives negative images that make the readers not to sympathize with them as they are shown to be the sources of the problems faced by other characters. When Kundai is traveling from the town of Bindura to the capital city Harare, the conductor of the minibus makes comments, which equate prostitutes to murderers. He says:

Kana musingazvize anamai, uyu musikana ndatomuona kare. Ari kuuya kuno kuHarare kuzouraya vanhu. Ipfambi uyu. Vanogarira vanhu muno munaSecond, kwete ini asi vanoda vane mota, vanobhadhara mari zhinji. (31)

(Mothers, I have already concluded on her. She is coming to Harare to kill people. She is a prostitute. She waits for her clients here in Second Street; those with cars who pay more.)

Hamundigone, the main character who is the author's voice of reason as he castigates misgovernance by the political leaders, echoes these sentiments by the conductor. He gives nasty and misleading comments on prostitutes and their clients:

Rega zvipedzane. Asi varoyi vanhu ivava. Munoti kufamba usiku kudai kuti zvidii? (31)

(Let them kill each other. These people are witches. What is the reason of traveling at night?)

In Shona culture, just like in other cultures, witches are believed to be the bringers of misery among the people, which include diseases and death. Therefore, likening prostitutes to witches is tantamount to labeling them enemies to human progress in society. As seen in Chakaipa's *Garandichauya*, they are sources of death. This stance by Mabasa weakens the vision he paints earlier on when he scrutinises prostitution and places it in the context of the prevailing political, socio-economic crisis. He blames them for some of the problems affecting society. Even some of the terms the author uses in describing prostitutes are meant for people not to appreciate their problems. Another character in the novel Vincent (alias VC) describes his Uncle Sabha's prostitute as:

Nezuro chaiye vakauya kumba kwangu nehure racho. Rino zimunhu rinenge gomo kukura nemazizamu anenge mombe dzemukaka. (51)
(Yesterday he came to my place with the prostitute. She is as huge as a mountain with breasts similar to those of dairy cows.)

The above description makes one overlook the plight of the prostitute. The mere fact that Sabha wanted to be accommodated with her at Vincent's place could be a reflection that she had no place of her own. The bestial terms employed by the writers are meant to castigate her behaviour as animalistic which makes readers blame her in her individual capacity thereby somehow exonerating the system which is responsible for her suffering. It is the environment that shapes one's behaviour and immorality usually is a result of desperate people attempting to solve their problems as they cease to exist meaningfully. Mabasa is therefore subscribing to the stigma attached to prostitutes that they are social misfits.

Just like *Mapenzi*, Nyandoro's *Ndozviudza Aniko?* depicts life in post-colonial Zimbabwe as being characterised by people battling to live a fulfilling life as the country is plunged into a dungeon of political and socio-economic crisis. In the end, the social relations and norms that helped in keeping the integrity of the people are shown to be disintegrating as people resort to deviant activities as a way of survival. The author shows that there is an increasing number of criminals (and prostitutes) because of the economic hardships. This is reflected through Oscar, a school teacher, when consoling Revai, a friend who fell victim to the robbers that has become the order of the day in the capital city Harare:

Kuoma kuri kuita upenyu hwanhasi ndiko kunenge kuri kutuma vanhu kuti vadai. Zvinhu zviru kudhura. Pamusoro paizvozvo, mabasa haachawanikwi, uyezve vanhu vari kugumurwa pamabasa zuva nezuva... Pamusana pokuti anenge otsvagawo kurarama ndipo paanoswera opfuvisa vanhu

kuburikidza nekuvabira. (60)

(The fact that life is now tough is that which is forcing people to behave like that. Above all, it is difficult to secure jobs and people are being retrenched daily... Because somebody will battle to survive, he/she resorts to stealing.)

It is in this context that women find themselves resorting to prostitution. In the novel, the characters depicted as prostitutes are Fiona and Magireta also known as Silver Dollar. Fiona is brought up in a polygamous family and is subjected to stiff competition for resources as the father is concentrating more on children of the younger wife. As fate may be, her mother dies after being trapped in a gold mine. Like other villagers, she had resorted to illegal gold panning so that she can meet the educational costs of Fiona as well as other needs. After her death, Fiona dropped out of school when she was only in Grade Five. The death of her mother therefore meant that she was suffering from deprivation and neglect and thus limiting her opportunities for a fulfilling or a contenting life. Education regulates one's access to certified skills and jobs and therefore failure to access education is almost synonymous with the acquisition of poverty. In the end, she resolves to join her friend Victoria as a domestic worker in Harare. She is employed as a barber by a Mr. Zimbudzana who latter dismisses her after she turns down his love proposals. After failing to find alternative employment and bus fare to return to the rural areas, she ends up living in the streets. There life is unbearable as she sleeps in the open, fails to feed, clothe and bath herself. The worst of all experiences comes when she is raped and impregnated by Wisdom, a fellow street kid. She attempts in vain to beg like what the blind were doing and she even wishes she were blind:

Dai ndaiva bofu ndingadai ndichikandirwawo mari sezvizvi. Munoti iro bofu iri parinoswedza zuva rose handiti rinenge ratove nenjumba yemari. Ko, ndikanama maziso angu neshurushuru yebhasikoro ndomboitawo zvinota mapofu iwaya zvekupemha zvingadii? (34)

(If I was blind, I could have been getting money like what this one is doing. By the end of the day, she will have a lot of money! How about if I seal my eyes with adhesive solution used on bicycle tyres and I beg like the blind, will I not succeed?)

To wish faking blindness is in itself a testimony of how desperate Fiona was for survival. When she gives birth to a baby boy, she dumps him in a rubbish bin and is subsequently arrested and detained at Northcort Training Institute and Remand Centre for two years. After her release, there are no changes in the hardships she faced prior to her detention and ultimately Magireta who was running a brothel and shebeen recruits her to work as a prostitute. Initially, she is made a waiter but later on forced

into prostitution after being threatened to be dumped back into the streets by Magireta:

Fiona, ukada kuita dambe neni, uchiramba zvandinokuudza ndinoswera ndakupa card dzvuku. Ndinokudzinga pano, wodzokera kumigwagwa kwandakaita zvekukunhonga uchitambura. (144)
(Fiona if you do not listen to me I will dismiss you. You will leave this place and go back to the streets where I got you struggling to survive.)

Therefore, Fiona is a victim of the harsh socio-economic environment and her becoming a prostitute becomes an economic necessity. In fact, she is portrayed as a “moral prostitute” as she makes savings from her wage at the brothel with the intention of starting a sewing business after acquiring the skills at the reformatory institution of which she succeeds. She is shown to have the capacity to turn around her life which is a positive image given by the author. She has a sense of courage, fortitude and resilience.

As for Magireta, she resorts to prostitution after she came from the rural areas with the intention of securing employment in the city but without success. This was the period when companies were scaling down production and retrenching workers with some even shutting down. As she had nothing to save her life, she goes into the streets as a prostitute and on one occasion she goes out with Jeremies, a German national. Later on, she enters into a marriage of convenience with him until he goes back to his mother country. She is then left with a house and a car but still life was not easy for her as she failed to pay the rates, clothes and feed herself:

Nokuda kwekuti imba yaida kutererwa uye iye aidawo mari yekudya, zvipfekedzwa nezvimwe, akazopedzisira, atanga shabini, ndokuzovakisa imba yekuseri. Adaro, akazotsvaga vakadzi vanogaramo vachiita basa rechipfambi pamba, mari ichiuya kwaari. (139)

(Because she needed money to pay rates, feed her, clothes and other necessities, she later started operating a shebeen and built a cottage in the backyard. After that, she recruited prostitutes using the cottage as a brothel, getting money from it.)

In the novel, even professionals like teachers are also shown to be engaging in prostitution as a way of supplementing their meager salaries. An unnamed teacher at a certain Glen View school was cited in a story in *The Herald* a newspaper as being a prostitute. This is because the government of Zimbabwe is failing to adequately remunerate its civil service. In reality, since the year 2000 teachers have been paid wages inadequate to meet basic requirements like rentals, food, clothes and paying educational fees for their dependants. Education is key to the development of society and

therefore when teachers are dehumanized to the extent of being forced into prostitution, the society will have reached the climax of disintegration.

For all the three prostitutes in *Ndozviudza Aniko?* poverty is shown to be the cause of their engagement into prostitution. Townsend cited in Charles (2000:125), defines poverty as:

Poverty may be best understood as applying ... to those whose resources do not allow them to fulfill the elaborate social demands and customs which have been placed on them as citizens of the society.

The women are shown to be driven by circumstances into a situation where the emotional or material poverty of their lives makes prostitution appear the only option. This is aptly captured by Garvey (1986: 13) when he says, “Hungry men (and women) have no respect for law, authority, [morality and] human life.”

Therefore, in *Ndozviudza Aniko?* prostitution is given its proper socio-economic context as the country is shown to be in turmoil and therefore for women it becomes the only option for survival. The image one gets is that of prostitutes as victims of circumstances but still they remain focused in living a meaningful life outside prostitution. One therefore sympathises with them, as the writer does not treat them as renegades in the societies they live in.

CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that the writers treat the theme of prostitution differently although in *Pafunge* and *Ndozviudza Aniko?* the authors have the same vision. They succeed in putting prostitution in its proper context as they reveal that it is an economic necessity for the women to survive. Chakaipa in *Garandichauya* has a totally different vision as he erroneously blames prostitutes and fails to analyse it in the context of the adverse effects of colonialism. He exonerates the system of colonialism, which is responsible for women’s suffering and ultimately engaging in prostitution and opts to blame individuals. In *Mapenzi*, the author’s approach is problematic as he shifts from blaming the political, social and economic crisis prevailing in post-colonial Zimbabwe to blaming the prostitutes thereby giving both positive and negative images.

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