

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

# **URBANISATION, SHONA CULTURE AND ZIMBABWEAN LITERATURE**

MELANIA MANCUVENI

MNCMEL001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Language, Literature and Modernity.

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2011

## **COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
GRADUATE SCHOOL IN HUMANITIES**

**DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

I, *(name of candidate)*

Melania Mancuveni

---

of *(address of candidate)*

8 Eikenhof Flats, Main Road, Kenilworth, Cape Town

---

do hereby declare that I empower the University of Cape Town to produce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation entitled

URBANISATION, SHONA CULTURE AND ZIMBABWEAN LITERATURE

---

---

in any manner whatsoever.

---

CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE

---

DATE

## Table of Contents

Dedications.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Glossary.....	iv
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Female urban migration and the Shona culture in Chenjerai Hove’s novel</b> <i>Ancestors</i> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Chapter 3: The township; violence, poverty and the Shona culture in Charles Mungoshi’s</b> stories, “The brother” and “The hare”.....	<b>28</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>48</b>
References.....	53

## **Dedications**

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents, Blazio Magwaza and Florence Magwaza who inspired me to love reading and studying from a young age, thus, sowing the seed for this study to take place.

## **Acknowledgements**

I owe my deepest gratitude to my Supervisor Dr Reuben Chirambo who has encouraged, guided and supported me from the initial stage of my thesis up to the final stage.

Secondly I offer my blessings to my brother Noel Mancuveni who has supported me financially throughout my studies.

Lastly I would like to say thank you to all those who supported me in any respect during the writing of my thesis.

## Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of urbanisation on Zimbabwean culture, particularly the Shona culture as it is represented in Zimbabwean literature. My main argument in this thesis is that Zimbabwean literature suggests that urbanisation is harmful and destructive to the Shona culture and the way of life of the Shona people. The aspects of Zimbabwean literature examined in this thesis include the novel and short stories and addresses the period from the late colonial period to the early postcolonial period. I use Chenjerai Hove's *Ancestors* (1996) and Charles Mungoshi's short stories, "The brother" (1980) and "The hare" (1997). The literature in this thesis explores how urbanisation destroyed fundamental aspects of the Shona culture thereby creating violent, immoral, abusive and uncultured individuals. Of interest, also, is the negative image of women who migrate to the city and become victims of urban society. The changes that result from urbanisation vary according to sex, age, location as well as family background. In examining culture and urbanisation, I consider the dynamic nature of both culture and urbanisation during the period in question.

## Glossary

### Words and phrases

Karanga	Shona tribe living in and around Masvingo
Kalanga	Shona tribe living in the western parts of the country
Korekore	Shona tribe living in Kariba and Zambezi
Manyika	Shona tribe living in northern and eastern parts of Zimbabwe
Ndau	Shona tribe living in northern and eastern parts of Zimbabwe
Zezuru	Shona tribe living in and around Harare
Mutupo	clan
Unhu	Humanness
Ubuntu	Humanness
Rowora	Bride price
Muroora	Daughter-in-law
Mapositori	Religious group
Ba aSekai	Sekai's father
VaJumo	Mr Jumo
Tiripo kana makadini wo	We are well if you are alright too

# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

This thesis examines the impact of urbanisation on the culture of the Shona people of Zimbabwe as represented in literature. It looks at the changes affecting individuals with Shona cultural background arising from urbanisation in the colonial era up to the period of the 1980s and 1990s after Zimbabwe gained independence. A variety of short stories and poetry have been written that depict the influence of urbanisation on the Shona culture in Zimbabwe. I have purposely chosen Chenjerai Hove's novel *Ancestors* and Charles Mungoshi's short stories "The brother" and "The hare" because these authors are both prominent and are themselves Shona. The changes that have resulted from urbanisation vary according to sex, age, location as well as family background. I consider the dynamic nature of culture and urbanisation during the period in question. Chenjerai Hove's novel *Ancestors* is set in colonial Zimbabwe and much of the action in the story takes place in rural Zimbabwe. However, there are migrations to the city that take place in the story both by women and men for different reasons and it is this that sets the contrast. Charles Mungoshi's stories "The hare" and "The brother" are set in the townships of Harare city. "The hare" takes place in independent Zimbabwe and "The brother" takes place in colonial Zimbabwe. Both stories involve characters from the rural areas that enable comparison that suggests change. This thesis will be asking the question, has urbanisation affected the Shona culture and how is this represented in Zimbabwean literature? My main argument in this thesis is that Zimbabwean literature has shown that urbanisation is harmful and destructive to the Shona culture and the way of life of the Shona people. The literature in question, therefore, explores how these Shona authors perceive in what way urbanisation has destroyed fundamental aspects of the Shona culture and in so doing create violent, immoral, abusive and uncultured individuals.

Urbanisation is a complex subject matter and Edward Arnold (1972, p. 17) amongst others asserts that defining urbanisation is not easy because urbanisation is 'not static but [is] continually being changed by new conditions'; thus, the fact that urbanisation is ever-changing poses some challenges in defining urbanisation. Smout (1976, p. 4) remarks that when dealing with the theme of urbanisation, it is important to keep in mind that urbanisation occurs in cities and 'to become part of the urban economy, the Rhodesian African has to move out of traditional areas and away from family and friends to a new and culturally alien

environment [the city]'. This being so, urbanisation, therefore, involved migrating away from the village and then settling in the city. Thomson (Thomson quoted in Anderson, 1960, p. 4) defines urbanisation as the 'movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger, whose activities are primarily centred in government, trade manufacture or allied interests.'

Though Anderson (1960, p. 5), agrees with scholars like Thomson and Smout, defining urbanisation as a process whereby people migrate from rural to urban areas, he argues that this definition is very limited for the reason that 'merely moving a man to the city does not necessarily urbanise him'. Based on the limitations of the above definition, Anderson (ibid), asserts that 'urbanisation involves basic changes in the thinking and behaviour of people and changes in their social values.' This definition narrows us down to Fair's idea of urbanisation who argues that urbanisation has two forms which are, the 'purely physical concentration of population and economic activities in towns and cities' and the 'social aspect of urbanisation as a way of life, that is, becoming urbanised in a psychological sense' (1984, p. 1).

Hammond-Tooke's idea of urbanisation in a way expands on what Fair is saying. He describes urbanisation as involving moving to the city, learning new skills, developing new philosophies, having new desires, developing new opinions and dropping or adjusting manners and values which are not harmonious with the city (Hammond-Took, n. d). Urbanisation thus involves the movement of people from rural to urban areas as well as a change of lifestyle from a rural traditional lifestyle to a lifestyle that is urban in nature. *The new shorter oxford dictionary on historical principles* defines someone who is urban as, 'having the qualities or characteristics associated with town or city life...' (1993, p. 3527). The above explanations of urbanisation best represent what goes on in *Ancestors*, "The brother" and "The hare". The characters involved in the stories migrate from the rural area to the urban area and when they are there they undergo a change of lifestyle from a rural traditional lifestyle to an urban lifestyle.

Like the definition of urbanisation, the definition of culture is also problematic because like urbanisation, culture is not static but is ever changing with the changing times (Bourdillon, 1993). There are many definitions of culture but I shall go by Bourdillon's definition because it speaks best to the essence of my thesis. Bourdillon (ibid, p.7), defines culture as including 'the language we speak, how to behave, music and dancing, knowledge and ways of thinking, values, beliefs, the technology we use at work and at leisure'. To understand the culture of

the Shona people, it is also important to know their history because the culture and history of the Shonas are intertwined. According to Lewis Gann (1969), the history of the Shona could be traced back to Bantu speaking people who moved into the area now known as Zimbabwe in the first millennium and these Bantus are believed to be the ancestors of the Karanga clan; the clan that is the largest among the Shona people. The citizens of Zimbabwe did not have a single national name and the name Shona is recent and was applied to all the people who speak Shona dialects by the Europeans after the British colonisation of the country (Kuper, 1954). The name Shona has come to be accepted as a national identity name for the people in Zimbabwe comprising of the Karanga, Kalanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru which are the six main groups among the Shona (Bourdillon, 1976). Of these tribes, '[t]he Kalanga are found in the western parts of the country; the Karanga around Fort Victoria [Masvingo]; the Zezuru around Salisbury [Harare]; the Korekore in the Zambezi basin downstream of Kariba and the Manyika and Ndau occupy the northern and eastern parts of Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]' (Kay, 1970, p. 27). In spite of the variances between these seven tribes, the Shona people consider themselves as an 'ethnic and cultural group' (Kay, *ibid*, p. 27).

In addition to the culture of the Shona people, land is very important amongst the Shona people as well as to my study. This is because the identity of the Shona people in terms of culture, history, spirituality, health, wealth, food, games, language, names and history revolves around the land. In his novel *Ancestors*, Chenjerai Hove establishes how the Shona people affirm their attachment to the land by the burying of the umbilical cords of the newly born babies in the land signifying that the land is their birthright and that they have an eternal right to it (1996, p. 39). Another significance of the burial of the umbilical cord is that it is the link between the land, the ancestors and the Shona people because the ancestors are buried in the land and the land is

The abode of the ancestors... [t]he importance of the land derives from the fact of the ancestors' burial in it, and their having passed it on to the present generation. The people's connection with the land, and thus with the ancestors, finds expression in the practice of referring to a person who lives on ancestral land as a child of the soil (Owomoyela, 2002, p. 40).

According to Gordon Chavunduka (1994, p. 59), the Shona believe that the ancestors are not dead but

they protect their descendants at all times. They have the power to prevent evil and they also help the living in solving their daily problems. They ... may punish them for bad behaviour ... [through] withdrawing their vital protection

and so permitting evil influences such as witchcraft to harm the individual' causing illness or death (Chavunduka, *ibid*, p. 60).

Thus, the Shona derive their identity, protection and sense of belonging from their land, which is the residence of their ancestors. As such, it is very important for the Shona people to stay in touch with their land as well as their ancestors. Since urbanisation involved people moving away from their ancestral homes, it destroyed the link that exists between the Shona, the land, and their ancestors.

It is almost impossible to talk about urbanisation without reference to industrialisation. Many scholars, among them Anthony King (1991) argues that urbanisation relied on industrialisation for its development. King defines 'industrialization as a process that uses new forms of energy, technology, as well as capital labour, and economic and social organisation' (King, *ibid*, p. 38). Rakesh Mohan also raises the same issues as King regarding urbanisation and industrialisation but he further suggests that urbanisation and industrialisation are considered synonymous because 'many cities evolved originally as market or trading centres ... for economic growth' (1982, p. 3). Industrialisation is therefore a major factor to consider when dealing with the theme urbanisation because urban areas were created to sustain industrialisation.

However, though urbanisation has been linked with industrialisation and economic growth in many continents, Rasna Warrah (2005) argues that in African countries in which we may include Zimbabwe, urbanisation has occurred in an environment of constant economic decline and droughts. The situation worsened in the 1990s when Zimbabwe, adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Reform Programme that led to retrenchments, closure of manufacturing industries, inflation and the deterioration of the standards of living for urban people, particularly, for the people living in the townships (Warrah, *ibid*). As such, even though industrialisation is a primary factor to consider when dealing with urbanisation, we should bear in mind that in Zimbabwe, it is the decline in industrialisation that turned urbanisation into a negative development; culturally, socially and economically.

Before colonisation, the population of Zimbabwe was entirely rural and thus cities are 'the product of a settler-colonial political economy, which aimed to reorganise existing African societies so that exports could be produced with only minimal returns to local labour' (Amin, 1971, quoted in Rakodi, 1995, p. 8), by means of altering the peasant system of agriculture and establishing urban settlements (Rakodi, *ibid*). Thus, cities were created to meet colonial

needs especially cheap labour for their industry and were not intended to benefit the Africans. Many scholars agree that people only began to migrate to the cities in huge numbers to work and learn after independence; that is from 1980 onwards because independence abolished racial restrictions that had prevented many blacks from coming to the cities and gave everyone the right to move to the city. It is important to note, however, that, although the colonialists were no longer in control of Zimbabwe after independence, they left an imprint of their ways and culture in the cities and towns. Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe in which the short stories, “The brother” and “The hare” take place was established in September 1890 (Zinyama, 1993). From the beginning, the city of Harare was a racially divided city, (Kay, Smout & Cole, 1977). For this reason, the question of race is of primary importance when we are dealing with the subjects of urbanisation and culture in Zimbabwe.

Many people migrated from the rural areas to cities because the colonial government administered itself and carried out its industrial and economic activities in cities (Gutkind, 1974). Colonial labour migration was gender discriminative through favouring males above women (Chilivumbo & Mijere, 1992). The gender discrimination was so serious to the extent that even domestic work was done by males and this pushed urban female migrants to prostitute for a living (Gaidzanwa, 1985). As a result, most women in the city have become associated with sexual immorality (Gaidzanwa, *ibid*). The gender-selectiveness of urbanisation brought significant changes in both the social and economic ways of life of the Shona people. Due to the migration of men to urban centres, women in the rural areas had to assume male labour roles and still do domestic work; in cities; men, on the other hand, took up tasks that were initially known to be women’s tasks such as domestic work (Chilivumbo & Mijere, 1992). Moreover, families were disrupted because of the separations between husbands and wives (Chilivumbo & Mijere, *ibid*).

When dealing with the subject of urbanisation, we also need to understand the history of colonialism given that, urbanisation evolved from colonisation, and that urban areas were established to serve European needs. Richard Basham (1978), amongst other scholars, argues that urbanisation as a colonial construction was controlled through such things like taxes, so as to ensure that the needs of the Europeans were met, regardless of the consequences that the Africans had to endure.

In the early days of urbanisation, ‘Blacks moving into town were regarded as temporary residents’ (Zinyama & Whitlow, 1986; Patel, 1988 quoted in Zinyama, 1993, p. 15) and they

moved to the city ‘only to provide labour as domestic servants and in low-level industrial and service trades’ (Zinyama, *ibid*, p. 15). Rural-urban migration for Africans was done on a temporary basis such that black males were recruited on short-term contracts and returned to the village at the end of their contracts (Rakodi, 1995). Rural-urban migration was therefore not always permanent; there were ‘returns’, ‘repeats’ and ‘temporary movements’ and as a result of this, the extent of the effects of migration particularly the break of family, kin and community of origin depended on the type of migration which include, ‘local, short distance, temporary, seasonal, and labour mobility, as well as internal and international migrations which involve greater distances for longer periods of absence, and tend to be more permanent’ (Goldscheider, 1984, p. 4). Therefore, the magnitude of the effects of urbanisation depends on whether it is permanent migration or temporary migration. It also depends on the distance of migration. Colonial administration made sure that ‘wives and family had to be left in the rural areas, thus enabling urban wages to be kept low’ and these developments ‘destroyed craft production and increased rural demand for manufactured goods, reinforcing the reliance on cash income’ (Rakodi, 1995, p. 24).

The Land Husbandry Act of 1951 ‘which limited the size of African agricultural holdings’ was passed to make sure that the colonial government has sufficient cheap labour (Drakakis-Simth, 1987b quoted in Rakodi, *ibid*, p. 25). The Native Urban Areas Accommodation and Registration Act was intended to control urban inflow and also to confine women to the village by denying them access to the places where their husbands worked unless if they have marriage certificates and their husbands have accommodation in the native townships (Vambe, 1976, quoted in Veit-Wild, 1992a, p. 27). These mechanisms affected negatively the way of life of the Shona people in rural areas as well as in the urban areas.

Residential areas in the cities were racially segregated such that blacks lived in the townships even though some had very good jobs and the whites on the other hand lived in low-density suburbs no matter their financial status and only domestic workers had access to European residents (Kay, Smout & Cole, 1977). Therefore, although some of the people worked in the city, they still came back to the townships where they lived. Some worked in industrial areas and came back home to the townships where they resided. Residential areas for blacks (townships) were located far away from those of whites, and they were poor and inadequate (Kay, Smout & Cole, *ibid*). In Charles Mungoshi’s story “The hare”, Nhongo is a manager at a textile industry but he lives in the township even though a man with such a high position as he does is expected to live in the low density suburbs (1997, p. 6).

In her essay, “Inside the city: reassembling the township in Yvonne Vera’s fiction”, Sarah Nuttall (2005), and Veit-Wild (1992b) elaborate on the devastating state of the townships where the Africans lived. They argue that township houses were very small, consisting of two rooms, packed tightly together with inadequate partitions, had no ceilings, had no plastered walls, had no toilets and had no water and electricity such that they had to use communal taps and toilets. According to Flora Veit-Wild, changes in the Zimbabwean family and traditions found its

[C]rudest in the most urbanised setting: the township. Denied the values of traditional life and of an identification with European culture ..., children in the townships were exposed to a life of materialism and brutalised human relationships; pervasive control and violent oppression by the colonial power added to the atmosphere of fear and hatred. Everyone was fighting to survive, physically and spiritually (1992a, p. 164).

The living conditions of the townships therefore had very negative and devastating effects on the blacks in the townships because of the poverty, violence, racism, materialism and hatred that surrounded the townships. Veit-Wild also describes the township as a ‘melting pot’ of the people’s customs because of these appalling living conditions of the Black Africans (1992a, p. 27). Thus, the most damaging cultural changes amongst the Shona people were found in townships because of the terrible living conditions.

Nuttall also elaborates on the effects of the ‘physical proximity’ of townships and cities to each other (2005, p. 180). She argues that this closeness caused the township to possess a mixture of both colonial and traditional elements, thereby producing a ‘duality’ that threatened the Europeans such that they ended up oppressing the Black people so as to keep them in their place (Nuttall, *ibid*, p. 180). Vambe also emphasises on the insecurity of the whites towards the closeness of the cities to the townships. He argues that, the physical closeness of towns in Zimbabwe created fear amongst Europeans with regard to ‘the black men’s sexuality’ and this led colonialists ‘to recommend the employment of black women as domestic servants’ (Schmidt, 1992, p. 69 quoted in Vambe 2001, p. 57-58), even though ‘the presence of black women in the urban areas was considered by both white settlers and the rural African patriarchy to be problematic’ (Vambe, 2001, p. 58).

As argued by many scholars, patriarchy opposed female urban migrations because no matter how justified the reasons were, it was considered as a challenge to patriarchy’s status quo. Some women who migrated to the city were running away from rural poverty and some were running away from failed marriages; either way, for black men, the city had ‘corrupting

influences on black women' such that the 'few independent black women in the city came to be associated by black men with loose morals' (Vambe, 2001, p. 58). Furthermore, Zimbabwean literature also opposes female urban migration and most Zimbabwean writers deliberately portray urban women especially those who are economically independent and modern as immoral and evil and these women 'die violently, get maimed or diseased and live tormented lives' (Gaidzanwa, 1985, p. 12). This, according to Gaidzanwa, is meant to confine women to the village and 'discourage women from questioning the stereotypes and expectations placed on them' by patriarchy (Gaidzanwa, *ibid*, p. 12). The negative portrayal of urban female migrants in Zimbabwean literature which we also see in the literature under study is thus meant to shelter the 'status quo' of patriarchy by preventing women from going to the city where they are likely to find freedom from male oppression.

Another important aspect regarding the city was that it is occupied by people from different backgrounds, countries and cultures, who have a great impact on the way of life of the Shona. Veit-Wild asserts that, there is no 'homogeneous community' in the townships but there is a 'mixed community' which includes people from Mozambique Malawi, Zambia and of course Zimbabwe, thus, there is 'no common culture' (1992b, p. 7). According to Kay and Cole (1977, p. 43), the 1969 census in Harare showed that immigrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia amounted to 17 percent of the total Africans in urban areas in Zimbabwe. These migrants mixed with the Shona people through marriages and social functions as well as at workplaces. The census also showed that 81 percent of the people living in Harare were Shona speaking; 17, 5 percent spoke other languages that are not local and only 1, 5 percent were Ndebele speaking. For this reason, even though the Ndebele are an important tribe in Zimbabwe, they have had insignificant impact on the Shona culture because the Shona people outnumber them by far (Kay & Cole, *ibid*). Instead, most Ndebele living in Harare have been assimilated into the Shona culture (Kay & Cole, *ibid*). Consequently, this lack of a uniform culture corrupted, modified or changed the Shona culture.

The question to ask is that, has Zimbabwean literature shown that urbanisation has affected the way of life of the Shona people and to what extent? In his book, *Shabeen tales messages from Harare* (1994, p.10), Chenjerai Hove argues that 'the city does not make up any part of the human soul' for most Africans, such that they remain attached to the village but others are in the middle, such that they have incorporated both traditional ways and urban ways in their way of life. Therefore, despite the fact that most of the Shona people have been affected by urbanisation, most of traditional culture is still alive and exists together with urban culture.

The extent of change as a result of urbanisation's impact on the Shona people thus depends on the extent that an individual has allowed the urban culture to infiltrate his life and also the time that he has spent in the city (Goldscheider, 1984).

The other question that needs to be answered is that what aspects of the Shona culture have been affected by urbanisation and how? Not everything about the Shona culture has been affected by urbanisation. Though there are some cultural traits that have survived the intrusion of urbanisation, there are some aspects of the Shona culture that have been redundant while on the other hand others have been slightly altered.

One aspect of the Shona culture that has been affected by urbanisation is the issue of kinship. The rural Shona communities are closely knit communities 'built around their pattern of kinship' and the 'Shona kinship system is patrilineal, which means that kinship through males is stressed over kinship through females' but this does not mean that the mother's relatives are not important (Bourdillon, 1976, p. 37). Hilda Kuper (1954, p. 19) defines kinship as a group of 'families related through a common ancestor'. Holleman (1969, p. 29) asserts that kinship relations includes 'blood relatives who live in the nearby village or in the same village' as well 'all people with a common clan' (ibid, p. 30). In addition, the Shona people divide themselves into clans (*mutupo*) which they give names of animals and they are not allowed to eat the animal that represents their clan (Bourdillon, 1976). The extended family through blood relations is therefore very important to the Shona people such that kin grow up close together, socialise together and help one another at all times (Bourdillon, 1993). These kinship ties were weakened through urbanisation because of various reasons but most importantly because of economic limitations. Economic hardships that are experienced in the city make it difficult for the extended kinship systems to function. Families and kin cannot live together because township houses are too small to accommodate big families. Families therefore live apart because they cannot be accommodated in township houses and this in turn affects kinship ties, gender roles, morality of the people and family commitments because kinsmen are not there for one another.

The African idea of *ubuntu* which the Shona people call *unhu* is also very difficult to practice in the city because of the economic challenges that families face. *Unhu* is basically the foundation upon which the Shona culture is built. A person with '*unhu* behaves in a worthy, rational and responsible fashion and he knows how to master his passions, conduct himself with dignity, act with kindness and humour, compassion and common sense as parent, spouse

and citizen' (Gann & Henriksen, 1981, p. 99). Among the Shona people, *unhu* is grounded on the greeting; '*Tiripo kana makadini wo!*' which when translated means, '[we] are well if you are all right too!' (Dangarembga, 2006, p. 65). *Unhu* therefore emphasises that a person must be kind, loving and concerned about the well-being of others. This is difficult in the city because the economic challenges force people to turn a blind eye to the suffering of others.

Marriages were also affected since kinsmen were no longer close to monitor and ensure the survival of marriages. Therefore, a man could now take and reject women as he pleased and vice versa. Since rural-urban migration was done mostly by men, divorce and adultery and prostitution increased. Polygamy also decreased because the houses in urban areas were expensive and were too small to accommodate large families. Though polygamy decreased, it began to be done for completely different reasons. Traditionally, men married many wives so that women and their children could help in farming, but in the urban areas men married one wife and at the same time could have several mistresses that they could go to entertainment places with (Bourdillon, 1993). Traditionally, a man had to pay bride price and then he could go and live with his wife. However, because of the effects of Christianity, there are now two marriages, a traditional marriage and a white Christian wedding. The *rowora* is the common marriage among the Shona people and includes 'the transference of some form of property from the groom's group to the girl's' but 'today it includes cattle or money' (Kuper, 1954, p. 21). A western/Christian wedding, on the other hand, comprises of '[a] white dress for the bride, the beautifully dressed team of bridesmaids and the team of attendants of the groom, an ornate wedding cake, the bridal dance and usually the church service' (Bourdillon, 1993, p. 35). Moreover, the expenses of the wedding are met by the bride's family while in the Shona traditional marriage the expenses are met by the groom's family (Bourdillon, *ibid*).

Language was another aspect that was changed because in urban areas different people from different backgrounds with different languages converged. Inter-marriages between the Shona and foreign immigrants have affected the language of the children that will be birthed out of these unions as well as the children that these children will interact with. Moreover, new vocabulary was beginning to invade cities as technology, modernisation and industrialisation took hold of the city.

The morals of the people also changed in response to the kind of exposure the people received in the city. The lack of job opportunities for women in the city left women with very few options such that most of them turned to prostitution for them to survive (Chilivumbo &

Mijere, 1992). The absence of agricultural activities in towns and opportunities to perform traditional tasks made women to also start looking for opportunities in areas of work that were known to be the male domain (Chilivumbo & Mijere, *ibid*). Young urban people indulged in drinking, smoking, stealing and corrupt things so as to fit in and not be considered 'RB' (rural background)' by their friends (Bourdillon, 1993, p. 1). They also began to follow what they saw as modern fashions and taste rather than live in the past and what they considered fashionable was usually culturally obscene and indecent.

Religiously, the Shona people were also affected by urbanisation because of the many religions that were found in cities, among them Christianity, which played a very significant role in transforming the religion of the Shona people. Christianity was common in the cities and many people turned to Christianity even though most of them still performed traditional rituals and there were also other religions such as *Mapositori* and *Zion*, which emanated from both the Shona culture and the urban culture (Veit-Wild, 1992b). Moreover, the township environment was not conducive for certain traditional rituals to be performed.

Economically, there was a massive change as the subsistence way of life based on agriculture was taken over by the cash economy which was backed up by industrialisation. The primary goal for urban people became that of acquiring cash. Women too later became integrated in the cash economy and more women became educated and more enterprising than their husbands hence reversing the positions of power between men and women.

Also to consider is the fact that rural areas are also changing as the world is becoming a global village and this also makes it difficult to pin point on the damages to the Shona culture that have arisen specifically as a result of urbanisation. Culture is also ever-changing (Bourdillon, 1993). If culture is not static and is ever changing, then how does one differentiate changes on culture that were brought about by urbanisation and those changes that came about for the simple reason that culture is not static? Urbanisation too is not static and this also makes it difficult to distinguish what is urban from that which is not urban. Issues of education, colonialism, racism and independence are also very crucial in battling with issues of how urbanisation has affected the Shona culture. Embedded in education are issues of race and colonialism which are all detrimental to the African culture and educational system. Together with these; ways of entertainment, food and dressing also affected the way of life of the Shona people.

The other problem arising from Zimbabwean literature, particularly the literature under study is to do with the negative image that the city has been associated with. If there is a lot of bias regarding the city then how does one state the real facts without falling prey to the bias? There is a danger of also dismissing the city as corruptive since most of the literature available also paints the city as destructive to culture. Writers forget that the Shona culture itself consisted of other things that were also very bad that include; witchcraft, sorcery, murders carried out for ritual purposes as well as such issues as polygamy, arranged marriages, wife inheritance and pre-mature marriages. Thus, some of the negative behaviour that we see in the city does not necessarily evolve from the city but has roots in rural areas. The difference is that people now do these bad things for different reasons and in new circumstances.

It is also important to take note that literature has painted the city negatively with regard to women. Pedzisai Mashiri is amongst scholars who maintain this argument and he asserts that, most of the Zimbabwean writers portray the city as 'unAfrican and as the deathbed of the Shona culture and family' (2001, p. 118). Gaidzanwa (1985) also raises the same concerns regarding the negative portrayal of urban women. The urban environment is thus depicted as threatening the continuity and stability of the Shona culture in Zimbabwean literature especially to women. The city is also portrayed as a symbol of immorality that promotes free female sexuality and individuality, at the same time destroying cultural identity and traditional patriarchy (Vambe, 2001). Women are depicted as the culprits of cultural degeneration and immorality experienced in the city as a ploy by patriarch 'to reinforce patriarchal control of female sexuality' (Mashiri, *ibid*, p. 118).

However, despite the negative images that have been given regarding women and the city, women view the city as a symbol of freedom. This is because in the city, they can exercise their sexuality without restrictions from the community around them. For the African men, restraining women from going to the city is a way of retaining their control over women. Most of the writers also show Africans responding negatively to the city; hardly is there any writer who depicts an African coping in an urban environment (Mashiri, 2001). This raises a lot of difficulties especially when we consider the fact that there are many positive things that the city has impacted on the Shona people and that there were many other features of the Shona culture that were outdated that the city helped to abolish. Furthermore, the majority of the writers make female characters the culprits of cultural erosion and yet men too are responsible for the cultural decadence in the city.

Flora Veit-Wild (1992a) accuses African writers for merely pointing out the effects of urbanisation and colonialism on the Africans without stating the real reason behind this. She argues that poverty is responsible for these devious actions such as immorality, betrayal, unfaithfulness, greed, hate, violence and jealousy (Veit-Wild, 1992a). Veit-Wild's argument makes sense. Writers tend to represent urban dwellers negatively while ignoring the real reasons that have forced the urban dwellers to lose their morality and cultural values. The other issue arising from scholars regarding urbanisation is that though there are some Shona people who still regard the rural area as their home; most urban residents no longer consider the rural area as their home even though they are still in contact with their relatives that live in the rural areas. This has definitely caused major shifts in the Shona culture.

The study consists of four chapters. Other than the introduction, Chapter 2 is an analysis of the novel *Ancestors* by Chenjerai Hove. The novel is set in rural Zimbabwe in the 1960s and early 1970s. My main argument is that; Zimbabwean literature, particularly Chenjerai Hove's *Ancestors* displays how female migration to the city destroys fundamental aspects of the Shona culture while at the same time helps women to protest and fight against oppressive cultural laws. In the novel, we see a movement of women escaping oppressive cultural practices and going to the city to seek financial freedom. Some of the women went to the city on their own while others went there with their parents who had gone there to look for work. Nonetheless, these women also lose critical characteristics of their culture in their quest for emancipation in the city.

Chapter 3 focuses on two short stories, "The hare" and "The brother" written by Charles Mungoshi. My main argument in this chapter is that the township as a violent environment often results in violence for those who lived in it as captured in Charles Mungoshi's stories, "The brother" and "The hare". The two stories are based in the township and they depict township life in terms of poverty and violence and at the same time bring out the effects of this violent environment to its inhabitants and their culture.

Chapter 4 will be a conclusion to all the issues raised in the three chapters. The conclusion seeks to show that the study's main argument is coherent and that the main question raised in the thesis, has urbanisation affected the Shona culture and how is this represented in Zimbabwean literature, has been answered.

## Chapter 2:

### **Female urban migration and the Shona culture in Chenjerai Hove's novel**

#### *Ancestors.*

In this chapter, I argue using Chenjerai Hove's *Ancestors*, that Zimbabwean literature has shown that female migration to the city destroyed fundamental aspects of the Shona culture while at the same time it helped women to protest and fight against oppressive cultural laws. In the novel *Ancestors*, we see women migrating to the city to escape oppressive cultural rules and laws but at the same time losing cultural values that are very important among the Shona. This being so, urbanisation as represented in *Ancestors*, has both positive and negative effects on the Shona culture with regard to women. Thus, there are two sides to my argument. On one side, I am arguing that Hove through *Ancestors* shows that when women migrated from rural areas to cities, they encountered several cultural changes which are destructive of the Shona culture. For instance, in the story, when Tariro moves to the city, she becomes dehumanised, loses her sense of identity and becomes uprooted from her roots. On the other hand, we see female migration as enabling women to challenge, question and rebel against Shona traditions that are unfair towards them such as polygamy, premature marriages and arranged marriages. For example, in the novel *Ancestors*, Tariro escapes from a premature, arranged and polygamous marriage, arranged for her by her father in order to strengthen his friendship to Musindo (108)<sup>1</sup>. Under the circumstances, it can be argued that, even though the Shona culture is a good culture, it does not mean that it is perfect. There are some aspects of the Shona culture that are unfair especially towards women. Hove is therefore raising these unfair cultural laws so as to inspire patriarchy to revisit the areas of culture that are oppressive towards women. In the novel, Hove represents the urban space as opening up the possibility of change in those areas of the Shona culture that are oppressive to women and therefore not very positive. On this regard, the changes that urbanisation caused on the Shona culture are beneficial to women although they seem unfair to men since the Shona are a patriarchal society in which men control everything including the lives of women. For women, however, urbanisation has both positive and negative cultural changes to their lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> All further references to *Ancestors* are to this edition (Hove, C. *Ancestors*. London: Picador) and will be given in page numbers.

*Ancestors* is told through Mucha who is a young boy but is speaking on behalf of women in the story. Mucha narrates to us a story about Tariro, his sister who runs away from an arranged marriage and migrates to the city. We learn from Mucha that Tariro at a tender age had a marriage arranged for her by her father to his friend Musindo, who was very old and in fact nearing death (103). The purpose of the arranged marriage was so that Tariro's father could strengthen his friendship to Musindo (108). However, Tariro is not happy about this arranged marriage because she feels that she is too young to get married and she does not love Musindo. She therefore decides to run away from Gotami her rural home and goes to the city to live there (113). In the city, she finds herself with nowhere to stay and she begins to live on the streets and to sleep at the railway station (114). In the city, Tariro faces many challenges that threaten and destroy her culture, identity and roots. Mucha also gives us a comparison of his two girlfriends whose names we are not given; one who lives in the city and the other one who lives in the rural area. There is a sharp contrast between these two girlfriends and the effects of urbanisation are quite apparent on Mucha's city girlfriend who moved to the city with her parents and probably now regards the city as her home. Mucha's girlfriend who lives in the rural area and has never been to the city is presented as having the right qualities expected of a Shona young girl. These three women in the novel give us a basic understanding of the positive and negative implications of urbanisation on the Shona culture with regard to women.

I begin my analysis by looking at Tariro who migrates to the city and encounters a variety of situations that affect her culturally. I then move on to Mucha's girlfriends whose contrast shows us the impact of interactions between the urban culture and the Shona traditional culture. My argument in this chapter blends well with the overall argument of the whole thesis which seeks to show that Zimbabwean literature has represented urbanisation as harmful and destructive to the Shona culture and the way of life of the Shona people. I will establish the changes that have been brought about by urbanisation on women and then show how these changes in turn affect the Shona culture as a whole as represented in *Ancestors*.

Before going into my analysis, it is useful to look at what other scholars have said about the city and women. Flora Veit-Wild (1992a, p. 79), amongst others, argues that Zimbabwean literature focused on 're-establishing the history and the culture' of the Shona people by exploring 'the effects of urbanisation on the African society under the motto "the city is the death-bed of the Shona people's morals and decency"'. Mashiri (2001, p. 118) also echoes the same sentiments as Veit-Wild and argues that Zimbabwean literature 'potray[s] the city as

unAfrican and as the deathbed of the Shona culture and family.’ Therefore, for most Shona writers, the city is viewed as a place of cultural degeneration in an attempt to encourage the people to stay in touch with their rural homes so as to uphold their culture. This is to a larger extent true when we look at Hove’s *Ancestors*. In portraying urbanisation negatively, Hove is in a way encouraging the Shona people to remain in touch with their traditional homes and preserve their traditional values. The negative interpretation of the city is even worse with regard to women. Gaidzanwa (1985, p. 12) argues that Zimbabwean literature deliberately portrays urban women as prostitutes or failures and they either ‘die violently’ or ‘live tormented lives’ for failure to succumb to the model of wifehood and motherhood. Gaidzanwa (ibid, p. 12) further argues that these images are deliberate and are meant to discourage women from migrating to the city and also to ‘discourage women from questioning the stereotypes and expectations placed on them’ by society. The city therefore is viewed as a danger to the African culture and even more so to African women’s morality. This explains why Tariro’s migration to the city though liberating from male oppression, is met with many challenges and complications that cause her to lose important Shona cultural values.

Tariro is from a place called Gotami, which is a place that was named after the Gotami people, who are a Shona tribe in Zimbabwe. The Gotami area is ‘near the land of the Tonga people, near the waters of the Zambezi’ (38). The Gotami tribe is a tribe whose life, history and identity revolve around the land. Land is the source of their livelihood through subsistence farming and they claim they inherited their land from their great ancestors (39). It is also their burial ground for generations and generations and their ancestors were buried in the land and so are the umbilical cords of both the living and the ancestors, ‘...the land, the shrines, the graves of their ancestors, the soil in whose belly lay the umbilical cords of the dead and the living.’ (39).

Arranged marriages as well as polygamous marriages are common practices among the Shona, therefore, from the Shona cultural perspective, Tariro’s father is right to give away his daughter as wife to his friend. Moreover, during the time in question, women were groomed for marriage and educating a girl was not considered a priority. For example, Tsapi in the story asks Mucha’s father that,

How can a man like you send girls to school? ...send a girl to school and you are sending back the money to the in-laws where ... You are burning money

like firewood, with your eyes wide open. Girls must only go to school to enable them to read letters from their suitors. Nothing more (84).

Veit-Wild, (1992b), amongst other scholars, also asserts that parents in the Shona culture believed that educating a girl was a waste of time and money because girls were created for marriage. Under the circumstances, not many people would find it problematic that Tariro's father gave away Tariro to marry his friend. It was her inevitable destiny since girls were groomed for marriage and everything that they did revolved around being future good wives and mothers. Tariro's father by marrying his daughter to Musindo also intended that her daughter will be inherited by Musindo's son or grandson in the event that Musindo dies. He tells Mafunga, who is the go-between in Tariro's arranged marriage that 'Doesn't Musindo, at his age, know that a man who marries a young wife also marries for those of his blood who are not yet born' (103). The tradition of wife inheritance is therefore also common and acceptable among the Shona people

However, although arranged marriages, polygamous marriages, wife inheritance and premature marriages are part and parcel of the Shona culture, it does not mean that they are fair to women and that women are happy about these traditions. Tariro is only a teenager, therefore, not only is her childhood being robbed but she is also being denied to have a choice of a husband. She is also being treated as if she was male property to be inherited over and over again. Because of this, Tariro decides to run away from the arranged marriage and she goes to the city (113). The city offers Tariro the freedom to escape from the oppressive cultural laws that are practised in the rural areas. Though Tariro escapes to the city to liberate herself from the oppression of patriarchy, she meets with many challenges that destroy her confirming that Tariro's escape to the city has two sides to it. In bringing out these two sides, Hove is putting across a message to both women and men. To men, he is in a way provoking them to revisit some of the cultural laws such as wife inheritance, polygamy, arranged marriages and premature marriages that they have established so as to favour them and yet they are oppressive towards women. To women, Hove is putting across the message that they should remain confined to the rural areas even though there are some cultural laws that are unfair to them because urban migration will do more harm than good to them both personally and culturally.

Therefore, Tariro's migration to the city can be seen as a form of escapism from the oppressive patriarchy that denies women the right of choice of a husband; a cultural practice that also promotes polygamy without considering women's views and feelings. By going to

the city, Tariro desires to unyoke herself from the bondage of an arranged marriage and polygamy. Apart from this, she is also establishing her independence from men as well as her individual identity outside of men. Thus, from a feminist point of view, Tariro's actions are justified or reasonable. Though Tariro has disobeyed and challenged Shona traditions, women would feel that it is for a just cause. At the same time, however, it is important to consider how her actions are detrimental to her as a Shona person. It is also vital to bear in mind that feminism is not an African concept.

Since land is a central aspect for the Gotami people, separation from the land results in dire consequences, culturally. If an individual moves away from her homeland, there is danger that that individual will be exposed to evil since she is no longer in touch with the ancestors who are believed to be the guardians of the people (Chavunduka, 1994). It also means that she has lost her identity because the land is what defines who the Shona people are and completes the circle between the living and the dead (39). Tariro's migration from Gotami to the city is therefore very critical because she has uprooted herself from the land in which her roots are established and has placed herself in the city, a place that she has no relation with whatsoever. Furthermore, she has disobeyed the will of her father whom she is required to be subordinate to by culture. Bourdillon (1993, p. 30) argues that, in the Shona tradition, the father 'is the head of the family and he makes all the decisions' and his authority is 'reinforced by the traditional religious beliefs; the father is the representative of the ancestors, on whom all the children depend for their health and good fortune'. Children are therefore expected to respect and be obedient towards their father so that they may acquire blessings from the ancestors. Tariro has therefore angered both her father and her ancestors. Angering the ancestors has dire consequences among the Shona people because ancestors are believed to have the power to harm, kill or protect their descendants (Chavunduka, 1994). Tariro's actions have not only alienated her from her father and ancestors but also from her family and her kin. Kin, family, ancestors and the land are the base and foundation of the Shona culture. Hove is in other words saying that there is a disconnection between city life and ancestral ties and this disconnection is not good for the Shona people because the Shona are a people whose existence depends entirely on remaining connected to the ancestors.

In the city, Tariro has no sense of roots and identity because she has no decent home and she lives on the streets and sleeps at the railway station (115). Her living conditions in the city are therefore very dehumanising. Under such living conditions, she has lost her sense of self as

well as her dignity. Tariro has therefore run away from the unfair Shona cultural practices but the price that she has to pay for her liberty seems big. She has in other words gained her liberty from the arranged marriage on the one hand, but has sacrificed her humanity, on the other hand. The promises of liberty and freedom that the city offers are therefore not without a price. 'Ubuntu' or 'unhu' which means being humble, rational, responsible, obedient, respectable, respectful and dignified, is a concept that is the backbone of the Shona culture (Gann and Henriksen, 1981 & Gelfand, 1976). *Unhu* or *ubuntu* stresses on the importance of the 'humaneness' of a person (Broodryk, 2006, p. xi). When we look at Tariro's conditions of living, we can see that she has lost not only her culture but also her 'unhu', which is the feature that makes a distinction between human beings and animals. The urban space therefore though liberating, is a 'melting pot' of culture' (Veit-Wild, 1992a, p. 27). In this case, Hove seems to be suggesting that some elements of the Shona culture may seem unfair but they are better than the alternative of going to the city.

Furthermore, back in Gotami her rural home, Tariro is considered dead. This is because she has disrespected her father, the ancestors and her husband to be, thereby, challenging the status quo of patriarchy. It was unheard of for a woman to challenge patriarchy because patriarchy is the backbone of the Shona structure (Bourdillon, 1976). As a result, Tariro is never talked about, and neither is her name ever mentioned in Gotami (96). According to Tariro's father, and the rest of the people Tariro is 'removed from the memories of the living. She is dead, a castaway, a reject' (95-96). Even when the children play the naming game in which all the members of the family have their names called out, Tariro's name is not mentioned (96). The city has therefore created a wide chasm between Tariro and the people who help define her. Tariro has therefore crossed the line such that patriarchy believes that the only punishment she deserves is complete removal from the village, family and from the memories of her relatives. Tariro's father's move to erase Tariro's memories among the living as if she never existed is deliberate. It is a message by Hove to other women that they should not dare to disrespect patriarchy like Tariro has done. Therefore, even though Tariro has gained freedom from male domination, she has lost a place among the Shona people. She is no longer considered as part and parcel of the Gotami people who now consider her as 'dead, reject and cast away' (95). In other words, Tariro no longer has an identity since the Gotami people no longer regard her as part of them.

When Tariro is banished from her home, Tariro's mother is continually sorrowful and she yearns for her daughter's return. As a result of her sorrow, Tariro's mother ends up defiling one of the family's important rituals that was dedicated to the ancestors. It was a 'ritual to thank the ancestors for the ripening of the crops' (116). She cries during the ritual in protest to what has happened to Tariro and such an action was known to 'invite the anger of the ancestors' because it is a sign of 'a bad omen' and may result in 'death' of a very important person (120). She further curses the ancestors for not preventing Tariro's arranged marriage saying, 'if the ancestors take away my daughter, I curse them' (121). In the end, the ritual is not completed and Tariro's grandmother who was responsible for conducting the ritual dies a few days later. Tariro's mother's actions lead to a lot of divisions and confusion in the family such that in the end she is divorced and is forced to leave Gotami land and goes to live with her eldest son very far away from Gotami (140). Divorce was not something common among the Shona culture because there were always people to counsel people facing marriage challenges to ensure that marriage last for a lifetime. Her young brother Mucha also suffers loneliness and sorrow regarding his sister's leaving (96).

Tariro's resolution to move to the city has therefore caused family rifts. The family unity that forms an important part of the Shona people has been destroyed. Tariro's migration to the city therefore poses a lot of challenges not only to herself but also to her family that remained in Gotami. Thus, though she is able to escape the arranged marriage she has on the other hand lost her true identity and sense of family and roots. She has also caused the disintegration of her family. The loss that Tariro has caused is therefore way too much compared the gain she has attained. Thus, Hove's intention is to encourage women to remain in the rural space no matter how oppressed they may be, so as to maintain family units since among the Shona, women are considered as the custodians and the backbones of both culture and a home (*Our creative diversity*, 1995, p. 114 quoted in Mashiri, 2001, 119).

In the city, Tariro has also lost connection to the ancestors who among the Shona people are believed to be the guardians of the people. In the city, Tariro is vulnerable and exposed to dangers because she is so far away from the protection of the ancestors who are buried in the land back in Gotami. This is probably the reason why Tariro suffers terribly when she arrives in the city; homeless and sleeping at the railway station. She is also exposed to people of different origins, particularly Zambians and Mozambicans. We are told that 'she has to learn new names like Phiri, Mwila, Mulenga' instead of names like 'Mafunga and Charamba' that

she was used to (114). Because of this mixture with people of different origins, Tariro's identity definitely changes as she interacts with these different people of different origins. She shows her determination to learn the new languages and cultures of the people she is now interacting with. The narrator tells us that 'She does not mind ... [to learn the new names and languages of the people that she now lives among]. She will learn. She who wants to swallow a bone must ask her throat if it is the right size' (114). Tariro's exposure and determination to learn new cultures which are alien to that of the Shona is a threat to the Shona values that she upholds because in adopting foreign cultures, she is in danger of neglecting her own.

Nonetheless, even though Tariro has lost much by coming to the city, there is hope that she will be able to do well in the city and live a liberated life from the oppression of the men. Her name means hope and therefore the author by naming her as such is in fact giving us the possibility of Tariro making it in the city. She has already taken the biggest step to escape from the oppression of her culture in the rural area. The city thus symbolises freedom and total independence. In the city, Tariro has the opportunity to do what she desires without any restrictions from anyone. She is alone and therefore has power over her own life and sexuality. She can decide what to do with her life without any interference from men. In this case, Hove has created Tariro to send a message to women that they can free themselves from the unfair traditions that men have created so as to keep women subordinate to them. Hove has also created the character of Tariro to send a message to men that they need to revisit some of the cultural traditions that are outdated, such as arranged marriages and polygamous, premature marriages.

The old lady at the railway station where Tariro sleeps is used by Hove as a voice of reason to those women who have migrated to the city so as to free themselves from male oppression. The old lady tells Tariro that 'You are a young girl. Don't let the city swallow you. Find some work to do and you will be a free woman' (115). The old lady is aware of the consuming dangers of the city. This advice is very crucial to Tariro if she wants to make it in the city. The old lady is simply warning Tariro not to succumb to the culture of the city while neglecting her own culture. Having people like the old woman around will help Tariro remain focused and not completely get lost. Tariro tells the lady of her intentions to return home one day, 'I will return, one day. I will return' (115). If Tariro is able to return to her village, there is the danger of having her life dictated by patriarchy like before. There is, however, room for her to be able to be independent in the village that is if she attains financial freedom. Moreover, she has dishonoured patriarchy before so patriarchy is likely to let her be for fear

of further humiliation. Therefore, for Tariro to be able to return to Gotami, she must have fully attained financial emancipation which will allow her not to be dependent on anyone for survival. The old lady tells Tariro that by attaining financial freedom, ‘...you will be a free woman. You can go to your mother without anyone carrying you as if you were a log’ (116). The old lady is in other words advising Tariro that it is possible for her to work in the city and gain financial independence such that by the time that she returns to Gotami she will be an independent woman who will be able to provide for her family without the help of anybody especially that of men. In this regard, the city is therefore being portrayed by Hove as producing liberated and self-reliant women as opposed to traditional and submissive women. Even though most men will disagree, from a female point of view, urbanisation in this case has somehow changed the African culture in a positive way by allowing women to fight and rebel against those aspects of the Shona culture that favoured men at the expense of women. It has allowed women to be able to find their identity, independent of men. Even though we do not get to see Tariro actually gaining her financial freedom while in the city, the reader is made to feel that she has taken a step in the right direction. Tariro has shown women that it is possible for them to free themselves from unfair cultural practices and patriarchy. She has also shown women that in order for them to free themselves from patriarchal bondage, the city is the best place to do it since in the city men cannot exercise their control over them.

Generally, Tariro’s situation is debatable and it depends with which angle you are looking at it. It has both a positive and a negative side to it. On the one hand, she cannot establish her roots in the city because she has nowhere to stay. She cannot also ascertain her roots in the rural areas because she is so far removed from there. What also makes her situation very complicated is the fact that her living conditions are appalling and are not suitable for a human being. She lives on the streets and sleeps at a railway station (115). The conditions that Tariro exposes herself to, therefore, not only rob her of her culture but they also dehumanise her as a person. She therefore gains control over her individuality and her sexuality in the city while on the other hand she completely loses those fundamentals that define the Shona people. Therefore, Tariro’s story shows that, even though the city is a place where one can escape unfair traditional values, it is also a place in which a person faces the danger of losing her cultural identity. By showing negative elements of urban life, Hove is buying into Veit-Wild (1992a, p. 79) and Mashiri’s (2001, p. 118) theory that Zimbabwean literature is trying to ‘re-establish the history and the culture of the Shona people’ by

representing the effects of urbanisation on the African culture under the slogan, 'the city is the death-bed' of the Shona people's culture.

Many female scholars have accused male authors of idealising rural women and castigating urban women as a way of keeping women away from the urban space. Gaidzanwa argues that in male literature, urban women are made to live immoral and tormented lives in the city 'so as to discourage women from questioning the stereotypes and expectations placed on them' (1985, p. 12). Chenjerai Hove stands guilty of this in his portrayal of Tariro. He makes Tariro live a tormented and degrading life because she has disobeyed patriarchy and has gone to the city, a place that is known to be for men. In fact, in the end, Hove kills Tariro and she later returns as an ancestor (194). Hove, as a male writer might be communicating a message to urban women as well as those women who desire to migrate to the city that, rebelling against patriarchy and going to the city is not worth the trouble. He may be saying that there is more trouble than gain when a woman migrates to the city to escape patriarchal oppression. Thus, Hove's portrayal of Tariro can be viewed as deliberate and meant to keep women confined to the village.

As we move onto the story of Mucha and his girlfriends, we also see the same statements regarding urban women. Mucha is the narrator and has two girlfriends; one now lives in the city with her parents and probably regards the city as her permanent home. The other girl friend lives in the rural area in the Gotami area where Mucha also lives. There is a sharp distinction between these two girls so as to show how much urbanisation has destroyed morality in young girls. Though there is the possibility of freedom on the part of Mucha's girlfriend who lives in the city which the rural girlfriend is not able to enjoy, it is the woman in the rural area that is treated with respect.

Mucha is at a mission school and lives in Gotami but he interacts with the city on several occasions because of his school's participation in sports (48). That is how he met with his city girlfriend whose name is not given to us by the narrator. Mucha tells us of an incident in which he went to the city on a sports day and met up with this city girlfriend. The description that Mucha gives us of this city girl is the general negative image that most literature has given us regarding girls who live in the city. First of all, Mucha is ashamed because she took him to her parents' home in the city (48). Mucha's shame derives from the fact that in the Shona culture, it is the man who has to take the woman to his parents' home and not the other way round. It is unheard of that a woman should be the one to take a man to her parents'

family. If a girl does this, she is regarded as shameless and loose. Mucha's girlfriend is taking the initiative to introduce Mucha to her parents and yet culturally the man is the one who must take the initiative to introduce his girlfriend to his parents and family and if a girl wants to introduce her boyfriend to her parents, the boyfriend is the one who must first make that request. Mucha's girlfriend is, however giving a message to the men that there is nothing wrong for a girl to have an upper hand in a relationship and introduce her boyfriend to her parents first.

In addition, Mucha's city girlfriend has the freedom to be in control of her sexuality in the city. She also has the freedom to choose the kind of man that she wants, without her father or parents intruding in her decisions. Culturally, parents felt the need to interfere with choices of spouses that their children had so as to avoid bad marriages and divorces (Dolphyne, 1991). They also felt the need to preserve their daughters' dignity and chastity so that they will not be a disgrace to the family (Bourdillon, 1993). In the city however, children have the liberty to do as they feel without considering how society feels.

The narrator also tells us that Mucha's city girlfriend 'kissed [Mucha] in the church when a few friends and [Mucha] had visited their school and she pretended to take [him] around the school, then she suddenly kissed [him] in a lone some church, far away from the eyes of the other students' (48). In this incident, Mucha's girlfriend is showing not only control over her sexuality but that she also has the freedom to make sexual advances to a man. In the Shona culture, it is a taboo for a woman to be the first to make sexual advances. It is the man who has to be in control over every sexual encounter that he has with a woman. In this case, Mucha's girlfriend is the one who is in control of the relationship and this is quite contrary to the Shona culture. She is able to use her sexuality to control Mucha and does not feel any shame or embarrassment. In the Shona culture, however, this is a sign of loose and unthinkable behaviour. Girls like her are not considered as the marriage type and any man who associates with a woman with loose morals like her becomes a laughing stock of the whole village. In the Shona culture girls were to keep pure and remain virgins until they are married (Gelfand, 1976 & Bourdillon, 1993). One can argue here that through Mucha's girlfriend, Hove wants his readers to question the Shona values that encourage women to suppress their sexual feelings and wait for men to explore their sexual feelings for them. She is owning the ability to express her sexual feelings freely and asserting the fact that women have feelings too just like men have.

In the Shona culture it was a taboo for couples to engage sexually or to be involved in anything that has sexual connotations (Gelfand, 1976). Mucha's girlfriend, however, refuses to be restricted by these traditions. In the city, she has the freedom to engage in pre-marital sexual relationships without any fear or shame. Even though a kiss is a foreign concept among the Shona people, that is, it is not among the ways that the people use to show or demonstrate love to one another; Mucha's girlfriend finds it as an appropriate form of expressing love. It is a Western concept and Mucha's girlfriend's use of a kiss shows that she is highly informed by the Western culture on which the city culture is grounded. Mucha's girlfriend has therefore been taken by the urban culture which seems to promote unlimited freedom to all sexes.

Mucha also tells us that his girlfriend was five years older than him (48). This again is another notable difference between the urban culture and the rural Shona culture. Among the Shona people, men are expected always to be older than their partners are. This is so that the man may be able to exercise authority in the home. If a man is younger than a woman, it becomes hard for him to exercise authority in the home. In the city, Mucha's girlfriend has the liberty to choose a younger boyfriend and not be ashamed of it. A younger boyfriend is easy to control and dominate. However, for Mucha, this is a disadvantage and even his friends at school laugh at him (48). He finds himself under the control of his city girlfriend throughout the relationship. Hence, when he talks to his friends, he vows that he would not marry her. This is because she is authoritative and if Mucha marries her he will be controlled throughout the marriage. Mutswairo (1996, p. 54), argues that traditionally boys and girls sleep, bath and live separately so as 'to encourage the cultivation of virtue by keeping the bodies of opposite sexes apart' from each other. He further argues that, 'girls may feel attracted to men of their choices but custom restrains them from expressing their passion unless and until men make advances' (Mutswairo, *ibid*, p. 56). Mucha's girlfriend however has no respect for these values.

The relationship between Mucha and his city girlfriend is therefore a subversion of patriarchy. It seems Mucha's girlfriend is going against all the things in the Shona culture that ascertain male authority. Through Mucha's relationship with the city girl, we are able to see how city life has changed male female relations and courtship. In the city, women have the power to control relationships. They are also free to make sexual advances to men without fear of being labelled whores and prostitutes. Mucha's city girlfriend is therefore questioning the Shona traditions that deny women an upper hand in courtship. She is getting across the

statement that women can initiate a relationship if they feel that they love someone instead of waiting around to be approached by a man whom they may not even love. However, Hove created her as an example of an unfit girl for marriage since Mucha describes her to his friends as loose and unfit for marriage (48). Therefore, though Mucha's girlfriend has the freedom to have an upper hand in terms of courtship, she is painted as unfit for marriage. In the Shona culture, every girl was supposed to get married because that was the destiny for all girls (Gelfand, 1976). Marriage was therefore the most important thing for Shona women and by dismissing her as unfit for marriage, Hove is putting across a message to warn urban women who dare to have an upper hand in male-female relations that they will never get married. On the other hand, however, by presenting to the reader such a character, Hove is challenging patriarchy to revisit some of the restricting cultural laws that could be contributing factors to some of the failed marriages. For instance, Mucha may love this girl but because she is not accepted by society because of her age, he cannot publicly declare his love for her or worse still marry her. He may end up marrying a rural girl who he may not love because she is accepted by society.

Although not much is said about Mucha's rural girlfriend, she exhibits so much characteristics of what the Shona people regard as decent. She is presented as an embodiment of the Shona cultural values. She strikes out as a decent girl who Mucha would like to marry. She is younger than Mucha and is reserved such that nowhere in the novel do we see her making sexual advances towards Mucha. Nowhere in the novel do we hear Mucha disclosing anything bad about her. Mucha deliberately does not speak about her sexuality. This deliberate preservation of her sexuality is to emphasise the importance and sacredness of a woman's body and sexuality. Gaidzanwa argues that Zimbabwean male literature holds rural women on a 'higher esteem than urban women' (1985, p.12). Hove gives so much value and respect to Mucha's rural girlfriend as opposed to his urban girlfriend. This seems deliberate on Hove's part and is meant to maybe encourage women to remain confined to the rural space and get married.

Generally, *Ancestors* shows us that there are unfair Shona cultural practices towards women and the city opens up space for women to be able to free themselves from these cultural bondages such as polygamy, arranged marriages, premature marriages, the confinement of women to the domestic sphere, the belief that women are only created for motherhood and wifehood, the preservation of a woman's virginity until marriage and women taking a passive role in courtship. Both Tariro and Mucha's city girlfriend are able to escape these unfair

practices but at a price. While Tariro was under the control of her father and husband in the village, she is able to have control over her life in the city. She is also able to escape the arranged polygamous marriage that her father has arranged for her and work for herself so as to attain financial freedom. The cost of this freedom is that she loses her family and becomes detached from her roots. She also lives a degrading life of homelessness. The freedom from patriarchy that she has gained by going to the city thus comes at a cost of losing her roots, dignity and family. As a result, even though the city is viewed by many feminists as a place where women can enjoy freedom from the oppressive hand of patriarchy, Hove shows us that it is also a place of cultural erosion. Moreover, feminism is not an African idea. Mucha's city girlfriend is able to assume power in courtship which patriarchy has assigned to be a man's responsibility. She is also able to exercise her sexuality freely without respect of the cultural laws that insist that women should shut down their sexual feelings unless they find a suitor who marries them. This also comes at a cost. Mucha's city girlfriend faces the danger of never getting married because the character she has is associated with loose morals. She therefore has sexual freedom but is not marriage material.

*Ancestors*, therefore, shows us that urbanisation can be both liberating and damaging to women with regard to culture. However, as many scholars have argued, Hove and a variety of male authors are guilty of castigating women who go to the city to liberate themselves from patriarchy. The fact that it is a story about women and is told from the point of view of a male character who is very young and therefore cannot fully comprehend the things that the women in the novel go through also shows that Hove is undermining the ability of women to be independent and speak for themselves. The use of a male narrator shows that Hove does not believe in the independence of women but that he would like to see women remain confined to the private and rural space.

## Chapter 3:

### **The Township; violence, poverty and the Shona culture in Charles Mungoshi's stories, "The brother", and "The hare".**

In this chapter, I argue that Zimbabwean literature has shown that the township as a violent and poverty infested environment often results in violence and immorality against those who live in it as seen in Charles Mungoshi's stories, "The brother" and "The hare". "The hare" is set in the township of Zengeza, a township located in Harare, Zimbabwe (Mungoshi, 1997, p. 6)<sup>2</sup>. The exact location of the setting of "The brother" is not given but the narrator mentions that the story takes place in a township in Harare (Mungoshi, 1980, p. 59)<sup>3</sup>. The stories vividly capture characters living in the township and they expose the poverty and the violence in the township and the effects that this violence and poverty has on its inhabitants and their culture with regard to family, kinship, marriage, morality and relationships. In the stories, violence and poverty have caused rifts in marriages, between relatives and in family relationships because such an environment can sometimes force good people to behave in bad ways. For example, as demonstrated in the two stories, some people may turn to prostitution and corruption as a means to survive. Men who fail to provide for their families resort to drunkenness, violence and sexual abuse as a remedy to reassert themselves. People who grow up in a poor and violent environment normally have an inclination to become violent and abusive too because it is the only way that they know how to live and survive. Morally upright women can be pushed by circumstances to prostitute and indulge in corrupt ways so as to be able to fend for their families. Thus, through Mungoshi's stories, we are able to see that, upholding Shona values of morality, kinship, family, marriage, faithfulness, honesty, fatherhood and love are hard in the townships because of the violence and poverty experienced there.

Among the Shona people, the village is strongly connected to kinship such that kin socialise together, help one another and look out for one another so as to safeguard people from unruly

---

<sup>2</sup> All further references to "The hare" are to this edition (Mungoshi, C. (1997). *The hare*. In *Walking still*. Harare: Baobab books. pp. 1-26) and will be given in page numbers.

<sup>3</sup> All further references to "The Brother" are to this edition (Mungoshi, C. (1980). *The brother*. In *Some kind of wounds and other stories*. Gweru: Mambo Press. pp. 49-78) and will be given in page numbers.

behaviour (Nelson, 1987 & Bourdillon, 1993). These kinship ties are absent in the city and they are further damaged by the financial difficulties experienced in the city which make it difficult for kin to live together. For this reason, people in the township sometimes become wayward since kinsmen are not there to monitor them (Bourdillon, 1993). The economic hardships experienced in the city can also lead to alcohol abuse as people drink to escape from their problems and avoid depression (Veit-Wild, 1992b & Bourdillon, 1993). Alcoholism and drunkenness are part of the problems that the township experiences and it may lead to abuse and violence in the family. In traditional Zimbabwean societies, the taking of alcohol is common but beer is brewed primarily for religious and ritual purposes or to get help in hard work such as clearing a field or building a house (Bourdillon, 1993). The African idea of *ubuntu* which the Shona people call *unhu* is also very difficult to practice in the city because of the economic challenges that families face. *Unhu* is basically the foundation upon which the Shona culture is built. A person with '*unhu* behaves in a worthy, rational and responsible fashion and he knows how to master his passions, conduct himself with dignity, acts with kindness and humour, compassion and common sense as parent, spouse and citizen' (Gann & Henriksen, 1981, p. 99).

"The brother" and "The hare" are founded on the background of poverty and violence which I have briefly described. The stories mirror the extent of damage that township economic hardships and violence have caused on the Shona culture with regard to kinship, marriage, *unhu*, family, moral uprightness and honesty. "The brother" is preoccupied with both the themes of violence and poverty in the township in relation to the Shona culture. "The hare", on the other hand, is mainly preoccupied with the poverty of the township resulting from the continual economic deterioration of Zimbabwe and the effects that these have had on the Shona cultural values during the post-colonial period in the 1990s when the government embarked on the Economic Structural Adjustment Program.

In the story "The brother", is a man named Magufu who while living in the township has been transformed from being a well-cultured rural Shona man into an abusive individual who not only abuses those around him but also inflicts harm on himself. As a result of his association with bad company and being in a hostile township environment, Magufu is now a drug addict who also drinks and smokes excessively. He has also turned into a male prostitute who has no dreams, hopes or love for his family and those that are close to him.

The title, "The brother" suggests that Charles Mungoshi is concerned about family relationships. Magufu as an older brother is expected to love and help his brother but his immersion into the urban culture destroys his appreciation of the extended family. He fails to relate to his brother and family in the way that the Shona culture expects him to. Bourdillon (1993) argues that the extended family is essential among Africans, to the extent that blood relations between families are not altered by urban migration, and when a kinsman comes to town, turning him away for whatever reason is a breach of tradition. Furthermore, traditionally, the father is the head of the family whose authority is reinforced by the ancestors and therefore, children should respect their fathers in order to receive blessings from the ancestors (Bourdillon, *ibid*). The Shona people should also be prepared to welcome the extended family in any given situation because culture demands it (Bourdillon, *ibid*). Dolphyne also echoes the same sentiments regarding the extended family amongst the African people. She argues that, in the African society, the 'nuclear family' is an imported idea because family in the African context is the extended family that embraces all the 'paternal uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, brothers, sisters, children and so on' (1991, p. 3). Magufu however fails to live up to these cultural expectations of the Shona people with regard to the extended family and neglects his duties as a brother, son and a husband. He abandons his pregnant wife in the rural area and disregards his father's request to pay for his young brother's fees (49 & 77). He has lost the fundamental value of *unhu* because he is self-centred and does not care about his family. The reason he has turned out to be like this is because of his abusive drinking of alcohol which has led to him becoming poor (70).

The story unfolds through Magufu's young brother Tendai, who comes to the city for the first time in his teens when he is about to go to boarding school. The reason that he has come to the city is to collect school fees from his brother, Magufu. During the two days that Tendai spends in Magufu's home that is located in one of the townships of Harare (59), we are able to see the devastating effects of urbanisation on the Zimbabwean culture and values. Tendai gives us an image of Magufu in the rural areas in contrast to the new Magufu who now lives in the township. Magufu is a perfect example of those people who migrate to the city and lose touch with their rural home as well as their culture and traditional values, in this case, the Shona cultural values. The township is now Magufu's home and he has made a new family and new friends in the township such that his relatives and wife that he left in the rural areas no longer matter to him. In addition, he has become violent and abusive towards himself and

others. This change can be attributed to the poverty and violence of the township in which he now lives in.

When Tendai arrives in the township that his brother lives in, he notices a sharp contrast between the Magufu he knew while in the rural area and the Magufu who now lives in the city. Tendai says, 'It didn't feel like his brother's house at all. Not the brother who would drive the whole family to church every Sunday he was on leave' (49). Tendai's statement suggests that Magufu has changed drastically. In the rural area, Magufu is known to be a man who upholds high moral standards of kinship and family. Magufu would drive his family to church every time he was in their rural home and was always in good books with his father and family. He is someone who took care of his duties as the first born son and these duties included providing for his family such that Tendai even looked up to him as a brother (49). In the Shona culture, it is family and the ability to provide for family that completes a man (Primorac, 2006). However, in the city, Magufu has completely forgotten about his family and has lost touch with them. Tendai expected to see Magufu's house with pictures of his newly wedded wife but instead, his living room was full of, 'naked women pictures, a big portrait of his brother in dark glasses, like a black pop star ...' (49). In his interview with Viet-Wild, Laurence Vambe states that in the early 1980s, 'new types of black entertainment and popular music were emerging' that were an imitation European entertainment (Viet-Wild, 1992a, p. 27). The image of Magufu as a pop star therefore shows us how much the urban culture was corrupting some people in the townships. The pictures of naked women that we find in Magufu's room in a way reflect the things that now occupy his mind because normally people put up pictures of things that they always want to remember. By keeping such pictures, Magufu is both nurturing and cultivating bad images in his mind thereby giving way to temptation to commit adultery. The presence of such pictures in his house also shows a lack of respect for his wife and marriage according to the Shona culture. As a married man, cultural expectations are that a husband is supposed to find contentment in his wife's body but Magufu is deriving pleasure from women that are not his wife and even has the audacity to display these pornographic pictures of these women in his home. Pornography is a foreign concept to the Shona culture and is meant 'to cause sexual excitement' or to entice 'erotic behaviour' (*Webster's third new international dictionary*, 2002, p. 1767). Magufu is therefore, cultivating immoral behaviour by indulging in pornography.

To further demonstrate his lack of love and affection for his wife and family, Magufu does not bother to open the letter that Tendai has brought that his wife who is in the village has

written (78). He also refuses to pay Tendai's fees and tells Tendai to go back home and ask his father to pay the fees instead because he had squandered all his money and was broke (77). As a first born son, Magufu has responsibilities not only for his immediate family but also his siblings. His father is therefore not wrong to ask him to pay for his brother's fees because culture perceives it as normal for a person to care about his extended family. Thus, by refusing to pay for his brother's fees and suggesting that his father must pay for it, Magufu has breached custom and has created friction within the extended family. Amongst the Shona people, the eldest brother is practically a 'father' to his siblings (Gelfand, 1976, p. 67). Therefore, Magufu, as brother/ 'father', must provide for Tendai in every circumstance, hence, by refusing to take responsibility over Tendai's fees, Magufu is neglecting his duty as a first born son and as a 'father'. He has failed to act as a brother should towards his own brother. In addition, he has failed his own father and fellow kinsmen who expect him to be the head and provider of the family. He has also failed to act responsibly as the head of the family by failing to budget for Tendai's fees and yet spending his money on beer and women (70). His excessive taking of alcohol has also affected his work because the strong stuff he was taking 'causes blackouts, the shaking of hands, sleepiness [and] loss of memory (70). Under the circumstances, he cannot work properly and therefore cannot make money; which explains why he is now broke.

In the Shona culture, a visitor is welcome at all times. According to Gelfand (1976), a man with *unhu* among the Shona people welcomes visitors to his home and treats them well no matter what time of the day they arrive. However, when Tendai arrives at his brother's house, Magufu is not happy to see Tendai who, on the other hand, is so excited that he will be spending the whole weekend with his elder brother before he leaves for boarding school (49). On seeing Tendai, Magufu says more than once (49), 'I wasn't expecting you today. I thought you'd be coming tomorrow'. Magufu's reaction to Tendai's arrival is quite contrary to the culture of the Shona people because among the Shona, visitors are welcome at any time of the day and they do not have to make an appointment. Moreover, Tendai is not just anybody but he is Magufu's blood brother and so he is not expected to make appointments to come and see his own brother. Magufu's response towards Tendai shows that he no longer values the Shona tradition of *unhu* but has assimilated western ideals whereby one has to make an appointment when he wants to visit a relative. The reason Magufu is not happy with Tendai's early arrival is because, as we see later in the story, he wanted to have sex with a young girl whom he had brought from Chegutu and he also wanted to host a drinking party with his

friends which later take place on the night that Tendai arrives. He probably did not want Tendai to see these activities because he knew that he would not approve of his behaviour.

In his description of Magufu, Tendai likens him to a 'black pop star' with regard to his dressing and behaviour (49). In imitating the lifestyle of pop stars, Magufu is striving so much to live up to European standards because pop stars were by and large associated with European standards of fame, immorality, alcohol, prostitution and money (Veit-Wild, 1992a). Since Magufu is someone who has recently become a married man, we expect him to dress and behave like a decent father should and since his wife who he has left at the village is expecting a child; culture expects him to be a role model for his child. By imitating pop stars, Magufu has disqualified himself as a good role model for his child because he has diverted from the model of fatherhood.

Besides cultivating immoral behaviour, the pictures of naked women in Magufu's living room speak volumes about the image that people have towards urban women. The fact that Magufu displays women in their nakedness shows that women's sexuality has been turned into a public spectacle that is meant for everyone to see and be amused with. In the Shona culture, a woman's sexuality and body is sacred and is not meant to be displayed for every man to see. Mungoshi therefore wants to show that the township has reduced female bodies to some form of amusement and entertainment for men. Gaidzanwa (1985) argues that this kind of image of women helps to perpetuate and rationalise cruelty against women. This misrepresentation of women may explain why Magufu mistreats and abuses women without any shame or worry because he sees them as objects of sexual amusement.

Women in the story are abused physically and sexually by their male counterparts. Magufu for instance, drugs Sheila, a fifteen-year-old virgin and forcibly has sex with her in the presence of his young brother Tendai who then decides to sleep on the streets than to watch his brother sexually abuse Sheila (77). Sheila is from Chegutu (76), a town that is over 120km away from Harare. She was with her sister and aunt in Chegutu when Magufu and his friends picked them up so that they could have sex with them, promising to give them money and then drop them off in Chegutu after they were done which they never take responsibility for (75-76). Sheila's aunt and sister encouraged Magufu to drug and have a good time with Sheila and yet they were aware that Sheila was only fifteen (74). Aunts and sisters in the Shona culture are there to give good advice and help young girls so that they can grow up morally upright. The fact that Sheila's aunt and sister encourage Sheila's abuse shows how

much the city has changed women negatively. Amongst the Shona people, virginity is emphasised and should only be given up when one is married (Bourdillon, 1993). Virginity is thus a girl's pride. When Sheila is raped by Magufu, she therefore loses her innocence and her pride as a woman. The fact that Magufu forcibly attempts to sleep with Sheila in the presence of Tendai shows that Magufu has no respect for women or anyone else. It is a traumatic experience for both Sheila and Tendai who are both teenagers. When Sheila tries to assert herself by asking Magufu to at least have the decency to take her home because her parents will be worried, she is ignored and she has to beg for a dollar so that at least she will catch a lift home (77). This level of degradation for women shows us the extent to which life in the township has robbed women of a sense of self and dignity. Sheila is only fifteen years old and the experience that she has had with Magufu might haunt her for the rest of her life because the man she has had her first sexual experience with showed no respect for her. Because of this experience, she is most likely to lose self-respect for the rest of her life. Mungoshi is using Sheila's situation to explain why most girls who live in the townships end up being prostitutes.

Sam, Magufu's friend also beats up his girlfriend Martha for no apparent reason and shows no remorse for his actions (73). After beating her up to the extent that she began to bleed and mess up the sofa, he unremorsefully tells her that, 'Don't mess up that seat. Go and wash.' (73). Sam like Magufu is violent and abusive and shows no sign of kindness towards women. In the village, there are always kin available who can reprove anyone who goes astray, neglects his duties or abuses others (Bourdillon, 1993). In the township, however, Magufu and Sam have no-one to guide and reprimand them when they are going astray and abusing others because they have no kin.

Not much is said by the writer regarding Magufu's wife who he has left back home in the rural area soon after their marriage (49). All we get to hear about his wife is that she had stayed in the rural areas to help on the farm and that she is expecting her first child and fears that Magufu, her husband, would not be there when she will go into labour (49). In the rural area where she lives with Magufu's parents, Magufu's wife helps on the farm (49). It is typical in the Shona culture that a woman is married to meet her husband's needs as well as those of the family. Nevertheless, even though she is in the rural area she too is affected badly by Magufu's cruel behaviour because though absent from his wife, Magufu is able to hurt her by denying her his love, having no communication with her and denying her conjugal rights. Magufu has also neglected his duty of providing for his wife. She has to work

on the farm even though she is pregnant, doing duties that he as a husband should do. Therefore, Magufu's wife though in the rural area and not physically present in the township, is much a victim as other women like Sheila. The fact that Magufu lives in the city while his wife is in the rural area is also largely to blame for Magufu's promiscuity. Had his wife been living with him in the city or had he been living with his wife in the rural area, chances that Magufu would have been unfaithful to his wife would have been minimised.

The violence that Magufu and his friends exhibit is not only directed towards others but is also directed towards themselves. Magufu does not only abuse women and those around him but he also abuses himself. He admits that peer pressure is what has led to his demise when he sobs saying to Sando his friend that, 'It's all your fault, Sando... I told you that I don't want to touch that stuff anymore. What are you doing to me Sando?' (68). The 'stuff' that Magufu is referring to is alcohol and it has caused him many problems which include, poor health, loss of sanity, blackouts, loss of memory and sleepiness (70). These have in turn affected his working abilities causing him to have financial problems because he can no longer perform well at work (70). Of course, alcohol is readily available in the Shona society which like anywhere else when taken in excess, it breaks down people's inhibitions such that even a responsible person can neglect his responsibilities (Bourdillon, 1993). However, in the rural area, there are always kinsmen who offer advice, strength and support when an individual is not acting responsibly. Therefore, Magufu would have been able to get moral guidance and help from kinsmen but in the township there are peers like Sando who are morally degenerate and are a bad influence to him because they too are encountering the same problems as he is. Magufu is now addicted to alcohol and can no longer live without it.

The narrator says, beer and women have become Magufu's source of 'salvation' where 'salvation' means alcohol and women are Magufu's source of escapism from the problems that he is facing in the city (67). Magufu has become entangled in the fast township life of women and beer and has neglected his duties as a father and first born son. According to Gelfand (1976), a father amongst the Shona must be a role model for his children's behaviour and must be a provider for his family, his parents and siblings. Magufu's life is now consumed in beer and women and this has turned him to be a bad role model for the child he is expecting. He has also abandoned his role as a provider of his family. I believe in the rural area, Magufu would not have gone astray to this extent because his kinsmen would have reprimanded him before things got to this extent.

The violence and destructive nature of the township is also apparent in the way Magufu and his friends speak to each other. They use immoral and obscene language to communicate to one another. There is a continuous use of vulgar words and phrases such as ‘idiot’, ‘ass’, ‘damn you’, ‘to hell with you’ when they communicate (52 &53). The principles of respect that are highly valued in the Shona culture are lost in the townships. According to Bourdillon (1993), language and vocabulary adapt to suit the environment. Therefore, vulgar language is quite common in the township because of the violence, prostitution and alcoholism that characterise life in the township (Velt-Wild, 1992b). The Shona culture has no vocabulary for vulgar language because of the peacefulness and morality of the environment. There is also that desire to respect one another such that certain words cannot be spoken in public to maintain some respect and to preserve some dignity amongst people. Therefore, the fact that Magufu and his friends speak to each other using abusive language also shows that Mungoshi wants to show us that their friendship is not good and constructive. Their friendship lacks respect, love and *unhu*. According to Gelfand (1976, p. 58), a man with *unhu* ‘does not fight with others, nor is he one who drinks to excess.’ Magufu fails to live up to these concepts of *unhu* that the Shona culture highly regards. The greater reason for his behaviour is because he has no kinsmen around him to guide and advise him. Instead, he has friends who are a very bad influence to him because they too have been corrupted by the poverty and the violence of the township.

Sam in the story urges Tendai not to tell his parents what he had seen of Magufu arguing that, ‘If you tell them what I have told you about your brother you will only kill them’ (70). Sam is therefore aware that what the city has done to him and his friends is not acceptable to his people back in the village. Sam also conscientises Tendai on the negative effects of beer by using Magufu’s case. He tells Tendai that,

This Stuff [beer-strong stuff] is very bad for your brother. In the beginning it gave him a name and earned him admirers right and left in the drinking community. But now it’s losing him friends fast, money faster and his health and sanity fastest...This stuff ...completely wipes out any sense of self, shame, pride or dignity...It also causes blackouts, the shaking of hands, sleepiness, loss of memory and a queer hating and avoiding of people, especially those dearest to one’s heart (70).

The taking of alcohol in itself is not bad and as already stated; beer is at the centre of many religious and social gatherings of the Shona people. However, when taken in excess and without discipline, it destroys people. Bourdillon (1993) asserts that township life is

economically challenging and therefore people resort to drunkenness as opium for their problems. This seems to be the case with Magufu. By taking alcohol, Magufu believes that he will not have to think about the money problems that he often faces. Therefore, while most of the time in the rural area, alcohol is used for the benefit of society, socially and religiously; in the township, beer can be abused because of the challenges that township people are often faced with.

Tendai takes a bus the following day after his arrival back to his rural home. As he leaves for the village, he says that, ‘... he would always remember that something very violent had been done to him and that is when he had begun not to care very much for his brother Magufu ... except that they had the same parents’ (78). What Magufu has become has further caused a rift between him and his family. At first, it is Magufu who did not care for his family but Tendai too ceases to care about him. One would expect the violence of the township to affect only those who live in the township but Mungoshi is trying to tell us that the effects of township violence go beyond the township setting. Thus, the violence that Tendai encounters the first time he visits his brother in the city affects him negatively. It destroys the love that he initially had for his brother. The family bond that existed between Magufu and Tendai is destroyed by the violence that both of them have been exposed to in the township. Tendai too like Magufu in the end fails to act as a brother should because of what his brother has turned out to be due to the abuse of the township. One would expect Tendai to help his brother no matter the circumstances but the brutality of the township is too great for relationships to be mended. Tendai therefore chooses to hate Magufu for the rest of his life rather than help him because the damage of the township on Magufu is too much for there to be any hope that he will change.

“The brother” therefore presents us with the violent and devastating effects of the township on the culture and values of the Shona people. Magufu seems unrepentant and unwilling to change. It seems he has been completely swallowed by the township and there is no room for him to return to his senses and roots. Besides the fact that he has refused to pay Tendai’s fees, he even asks for Tendai’s pocket money that he had been given by his father. Magufu has therefore failed himself, his family and his parents. The township has robbed him of his sense of *unhu*, kinship, self discipline and family. He has failed to act as a brother should towards his family in accordance to the Shona culture. Mungoshi presents the reasons for these changes that take place in Magufu as resulting from the poverty and the violence that he experiences in the township.

Charles Mungoshi's "The hare" also demonstrates to us the devastating effects of the township economic challenges on the Shona culture. It is a story about a man, Nhongo, who was born in Chivhu, a rural area in Zimbabwe (Primorac, 2006). He marries his wife Sara while living in Chivhu after he had impregnated her while she was still in school and after their marriage, they both move to the city in Zengeza, a township in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe (6). Through hard work Nhongo 'had risen to the position of section manager' at a Textile company in Harare (6). The narrator describes Nhongo as a 'traditionalist, a tribesman' (8); meaning that he still upholds the Shona traditional values even though he has moved to the city, and he constantly visits his village together with his family even though he lives and works in the city. The first sixteen years of Nhongo's marriage are good. His wife bears four children and is content about being a house wife even though when she dropped out of school was a bright and promising student (7). According to Primorac (2006, p. 125), Nhongo being a 'married man and a father ... a key component of his identity is his status as a family provider.'

This, however, changes, when Nhongo's family, which was initially an intact well-cultured family becomes fractured due to the economic challenges that his family faces when Nhongo becomes a victim of the IMF's Structural Adjustment Program launched in the 1990s in Zimbabwe which led to him losing his job after his company went into liquidation (9). When he loses his job, his wife becomes an entrepreneur so as to ensure that her family does not starve (10). In the process of enterprising to fend for her family, Nhongo's wife gets caught up in prostitution and corruption because it is the only way to make it under the given circumstances (10). She transforms from being a well-cultured ideal Shona wife to being an adulterous wife leaving Nhongo feeling 'castrated' (13). In the end, the family faces destruction. The story ends with Nhongo contemplating taking a second wife who happens to be their maid. The title "The hare" suggests trickster, cleverness and the deception of the city as we see in much of the Zimbabwean folklore. In Zimbabwean folklore, hare is usually depicted as symbolizing deception and cleverness. Therefore, Mungoshi by giving the title "The hare" to the story is suggesting that the city is full of deception and that life is too fast for many.

Nhongo is one of those people who although he works, lives and owns a house in the city, still regards the rural area as his real home. He has not come to terms with accepting the way of life of the city. This explains why he consistently visits his rural home and thus, stays in touch with his cultural values (4). For Nhongo, the rural areas become a place in which he is

able to see sense and escape from the violent changes in the way of life of the Shona people that now predominates the townships. We are told that he sometimes had a 'strange irresistible nostalgia to revisit the scenes of his childhood...to walk once more through the tall dewy grass. Hunting for wild fruits such as matufu, hute, nzviro and maroro.' (4). This nostalgia for Nhongo is one of the ways that keeps him connected to his people and his traditional values. He is proud and boasts about being a traditional man to the extent that he still values family ties and respects his parents' involvement with the decisions that he makes in his own household even though his wife Sara does not like the idea (6). She believes that they could run their home as they pleased without the interference of Nhongo's parents (6). Nhongo therefore is a strict follower of Shona traditional values because among the Shona, parents play a vital role in the decisions that their son and his wife make, and there is no such thing as privacy and individualism because everyone is concerned with how everyone is conducting their lives. This is because parents want the best for their children and therefore, they will do whatever it takes to ensure that their children live good lives. Furthermore, marriage among Africans is 'a union between two families rather than two individuals' and 'the success of a marriage depends on whether or not the two families are agreeable to the union' (Dolphyne, 1991, p. 1-2). Therefore, marriage among the Shona is not only about the individuals involved but it includes the parents of the husband and wife. Sara's attitude to Nhongo's parents' involvement in the marriage is unacceptable in the Shona society. She shows that she prefers the European idea of marriage which is a union of two individuals who leave their parents' home to begin a completely new life as husband and wife. Therefore, even though Sara is initially portrayed as an example of an ideal traditional wife, she differed with culture on this aspect.

Nhongo provides for the family in the sixteen years of their marriage in line with the patriarchal expectations of the Shona. For the sixteen years, Sara had remained an obedient wife who did not find problems in being merely a housewife, raising their four children and looking after her husband (12). As Gaidzanwa (1985, p. 29), states, 'the role of a wife [among the Shona] is closely tied to that of the husband and children' and '[t]he ideal wife is one who is totally committed to serving the interests of her husband and children even at the risk of martyring or sacrificing her own interests.' Sara is therefore a good example of an ideal wife within the Shona society. Although we are told that she was a very bright student, she dropped out of school, put her dreams of education aside and dedicated herself to being Nhongo's wife and a mother to their children (13). Nhongo says, 'He had never really

thought of her alone, independent, without the children. Someone with her own individual needs' (11). Therefore, both Nhongo and Sara believed that a woman's identity was centred on wifehood and motherhood. Thus, although Nhongo and Sara were living in the city, they managed to maintain most of the Shona cultural values without compromising.

Like the Shona culture emphasizes, Nhongo believed that a man takes pride in taking care of his family and he strove to make sure that his wife and family never lacked anything (Primorac, 2006). The narrator tells us that Nhongo and his friends regarded themselves as 'traditionalists' or 'tribesman' (8). This shows us that even though Nhongo and his friends lived in the city, they still were proud 'traditionalists' who upheld the Shona traditional values. To emphasise how much Nhongo and his friends were strict adherers to the Shona traditional values, the author tells us the story of one of Nhongo's acquaintances, Jokonya who was a primary school headmaster who had a wife who was a secondary school teacher. We are told that when Jokonya's wife brought her first pay cheque home, Jokonya took it and tore it into half saying that, 'I can manage my family very well without a second pay cheque in the house.' (8). Nhongo and his friends often spoke about this story so as to remind themselves that it is the men who were supposed to work and take care of the family while the wives stay at home as house wives (8). Nhongo and his friends therefore believed that it is the men who work and provide for the family, while women stay at home and look after the family.

After Nhongo lost his job, prices of basic commodities began to rise every day; his children were at school and therefore needed money to pay their fees and he owed a lot of money to the finance company that had given him money to buy his car (9). Given the circumstances, Sara's decision to start a small business was reasonable because there was a need for her to find a way to make her family survive. She was, however, aware of the fact that her husband was a strict traditional man who was not comfortable with the idea of having his wife provide for the family since he believed that it is the man who had the mandate to provide for the family. She insisted that the reason that she was doing it was that she really wanted to help (10).

Sara's decision to start enterprising so as to provide for the family is not welcomed by Nhongo or Nhongo's father as well as Nhongo's friends because Nhongo as a husband is the head of the family and his duty is to provide for and protect his family (Primorac, 2006). Sara by working to fend for her family is assuming the role of a husband. Primorac asserts that by

being the breadwinner Sara had 'taken on a key component of masculine identity, leaving Nhongo with a feeling of being emasculated' since he can no longer provide for his family (2006, p. 126). In other words, when a woman assumes the role of provider like Sara has done, she is considered as challenging the authority of her husband as well as that of patriarchy since a woman's place has been traditionally confined to the kitchen because 'working women outside the home are characterised as insubordinate and difficult to control' (Gaidzanwa, 1985, p. 97). As the provider of the family, Sara therefore automatically gains authority and power over her husband, since she is the one who now has the economic muscle and the survival of the family now depends entirely on her. Sara's position therefore reverses the roles that were culturally known to be for men and women. Sara is now the provider of the family and Nhongo, on the other hand, has become a dependent to Sara and is the one who has to stay at home and be with the children, a duty traditionally known to be for women (21).

Several problems begin to arise due to the economic freedom that Sara gains. As time passes, Sara acquires a passport and begins to go across the borders to bring goods for resell (10). The passport that Sara obtains can be taken as a metaphor for a variety of things. It can be taken to symbolize freedom and independence from the life of dependency on her husband. It is also a sign of modernisation through globalisation. With a passport, she is able to travel to any country that she pleases. This therefore means that her freedom is not only local but also international. This explains why the changes that Sara undergoes are very drastic and alien to the Shona culture. She has been influenced not only by the township but also by the international trips that she makes to countries like South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique. Through interactions with other international cultures, Sara is likely to adopt cultural values from these foreign countries. The narrator tells us that it had taken Sara two hours to acquire a passport that is supposed to take six months (10). Sara has therefore bought in to the corrupt system that now governs the country. Due to the economic decline that was going on at the time, corruption increased such that even people who were initially good people were forced to indulge in corrupt deals because it was the only way to survive under the circumstances. Corrupt deals are contrary to the Shona concept of *unhu*. According to Gelfand (1976), a corrupt person is classified under the bracket of bad people who include witches, thieves and murders. People who fall in this bracket are despised by society because they destroy the integrity of the society. Sara has therefore been forced by circumstances to adopt bad behaviour that is unacceptable in the Shona culture.

The conversation that Nhongo has with his father while in the rural areas also sheds light on the damage that township and city economic hardships have caused on Sara as well as on the Shona culture. *VaJumo*; Nhongo's father tells his son that

the city was alright if you were still young and had a job. But jobs in the city were not life/. The black man's wealth is a home out in the country among his own people. But a home, a family, meant a good hard-working wife ... without a wife, a hard-working wife, there was no home; a faithful wife is what makes a man a father. Any man can be a man but very few were fathers. He should strive to be a father, not just a man. And he couldn't be a father without there being a mother (24).

There is so much to learn from what Nhongo's father says in relation to the Shona culture that in the story is lost. He tells his son first that 'jobs in the city were not life ...the black man's wealth is a home out in the country among his own people' (24). What Nhongo's father means is that jobs in the city were not permanent and therefore if one was out of work there was no assurance that he would still have a home in the city. This is because a home in the city is expensive to maintain. One had to have money for rentals, electricity and water bills. A home in the rural area, on the other hand, was permanent and did not need expenses to keep it going. Also in the rural areas, one could farm the land and survive all year round, and surviving without money in the city was impossible because everything depended on money. *VaJumo* in his conversation is bringing out the binaries of subsistence versus the cash economy that are epitomized by the village and the city concurrently. While in the village, people through farming feed their families; in the city people have to worry about making money because everything in the city requires money. Nhongo in the city now feels 'castrated' (13) because he is out of work and therefore no longer has the means to support his family. In the village, however, there are always people to help when in a crisis, so that a man does not have to feel 'impotent' when faced with a financial crisis.

*VaJumo* also emphasizes the fact that the city can never be home to an African. This is because the city is alien to the Shona culture and in most cases it destroys certain fundamental values of the people, like it has done to Nhongo and his wife. *VaJumo* is also saying that though one works in the city, it is always wise and good to maintain a rural home in which one can establish some permanent roots. In the city it is difficult to establish roots because the township consists of people from different countries and cultures. Therefore, there is no common culture with which one can identify. Under such conditions, it is difficult for any person to establish roots in the city where there is not a homogeneous culture.

When *VaJumo* tells his son that ‘without a hardworking wife, there was no home ...’ (24) it is because *Nhongo*’s wife has neglected the wifely duties as a Shona woman. Thus, though *Nhongo*’s wife, *Sara*, could be said to be hardworking through travelling to neighbouring countries like South Africa, Botswana and Zambia to buy goods to sell and making a lot of money from that, she is not considered a hardworking wife. *Sara* does not do the house chores and does not cook and wash for her husband (21). Looking after ones husband and children is the primary duty of a Shona wife (Gaidzanwa, 1985). *Sara* has therefore been westernized in that regard. *Sara* also does not go to the rural area to visit *Nhongo*’s parents to help with the ploughing of the fields (20). Amongst the Shona people, a wife must be prepared to constantly visit her in-laws’ rural home to help them with the ploughing of the fields. Therefore, although what *Sara* does is enterprising and also requires hard work, it is not regarded as hard work among the Shona. In fact, women who go across borders to bring goods for resale are not respected. They are regarded as loose and immoral. The narrator tells us that ‘*Nhongo* couldn’t help-but silently, and through his body language-to hold her up for the children to look at: look at her. Look at your mother. Please just look at the bitch’ (12). This explains why *Nhongo*, *Nhongo*’s father and many other typical African men would not consider *Sara* a good, hardworking wife. Gaidzanwa (1985) argues that women who are economically independent are portrayed as prostitutes because these women are hard to control since they have the financial muscle in the home. Therefore, Mungoshi is arguing that female financial freedom is problematic for the Shona culture because the Shona society is a patrilineal society whose continuity is founded on the subordination of women to men.

By the statement that, ‘... a faithful wife is what makes a man a father’ Mungoshi, (24), means that *VaJumo* does not consider his son’s wife to be faithful. There are so many characteristics that *Sara* has embraced that initially were not part of herself. For instance, she does not dress decently according to traditional standards; instead, she wears trousers and short dresses. Trousers and short dresses are not considered as decent clothing for women among the Shona. Bourdillon (1993) argues that women who wear trousers are considered as immoral, and moreover men feel that their authority is being threatened by women who dress in trousers. Clothing is therefore not just considered as mere dressing but is ‘gendered’. By wearing trousers, *Sara* is thus assuming the male gender and as a result posing a threat to the authority of her husband. Miniskirts and trousers are also associated with prostitutes such that a woman who wore these is labelled a prostitute. A ‘proper’ wife is therefore not expected to dress in a mini skirt or trousers. *Sara* not only wears trousers and miniskirts but also goes to

the extent of painting her nails and lips, which again is associated with prostitution. The company of friends that Sara now associates with in her enterprise also dress in trousers and miniskirts, so Sara's dressing could have been influenced by them so that she could be able to fit into the circle of her newly acquired friends and not be labelled 'backward' (Bourdillon, 1993, p. 1). Unlike in the township, in the rural area, there are aunts who are there to guide women on how to dress decently but they are not there in the township. Instead, the women that Sara is close to also dress and act in ways that the rural people consider as indecent.

We also learn that Sara befriends men other than her husband who she travels long trips with and is often dropped off and picked up by them almost every day (13). Traditionally, there is nothing wrong with having friends of the same sex, but Sara's move to have male friends is considered as an insult to her husband and is a sign of a lack of respect. It was in fact 'unheard of that a married woman, somebody's wife, had male friends and left her husband at home to go on business trips to foreign countries with them' (14). The patriarchal system does not allow women to be in the company of men other than their husbands unless he is a relative or a family friend. Sara, by accommodating men other than her husband, is going against custom. It is also considered an insult to Nhongo's manhood and his position as head of the family. Nhongo's friends even make fun of him by insulting him and asking him that; 'who made the rules in his home' and that, 'Did he still have his balls on him?' (14). His friends' insults show that Sara's actions are not accepted culturally because they undermine the authority of her husband. The narrator tells us that Nhongo, 'belonged to a proud tradition that said the hunting is done by the man of the house.' (13). We are also told that 'Nhongo seems to keep coming across the word 'castration' each time he picked up something to read' (14). Sara's behaviour has therefore 'castrated' Nhongo by making him feel less of a man since she is now the provider of the family and is always in the company of 'male friends'. She now also makes her own decisions without consulting her husband, going out and coming into the house as she pleases (11).

As mentioned before, it is the duty of a Shona wife to constantly visit her in-laws but we are told that Sara hardly visited her in-laws anymore but she sent her house keeper, Ella instead at the end of every month with groceries and money (20). Ella came to the city to work when she was still a teenager after dropping out of school because she needed money to help her mother to look after her siblings, after her father took a second wife and ceased to take proper care of his family (20). Primorac asserts that 'as Sara began to take on a quasi-masculine identity after Nhongo loses his job, Ella starts to take on aspects of the role of

housewife/mother in [Sara's] absence' and is often in the company of Nhongo and the children (2006, p. 127). In the end, Sara became distant to her in-laws and Ella, on the other hand, became very close to them, to the extent that they began to regard her as their son's wife. Even when they address her, they address her as '*muroora*', the Shona name for daughter-in-law (15). Nhongo's mother would dish food for Ella and Nhongo in the same plate which tradition forbade because husbands and wives are the ones who were meant to eat in the same plate (19). Ella even knows the intimate details about Nhongo that only his wife is supposed to know. For instance, she knows that Nhongo, 'Ba aSekai doesn't like onions or tomatoes in fresh chicken' (17). She also washed his clothes including his underwear (21). The concept of a house maid that Sara picked up from the city is a western concept and it has destroyed the known duties of a wife. A Shona wife was supposed to wash and cook for her husband. She was supposed to in fact do all the house chores and look after the family. This was part and parcel of what was required of an ideal wife. The fact that Sara had abandoned her wifely duties and had left them to be done by Ella her house maid makes her an unfit Shona wife. This explains why Nhongo's parents are doing all that they can to ensure that Ella becomes Nhongo's second wife, because Ella is the one who fits into the known ideals of what a true wife should be like among the Shona people. Sara has also abandoned her motherhood duties. As a mother, she is expected to take care of her children. She has, however, left this responsibility to Ella while she is busy going across borders to buy goods for resale. Mungoshi is asserting, therefore, that the economic challenges faced in the townships have caused Sara to assume the role of provider in her family but at the same time they have made her abandon her duties of motherhood, wifeness, faithfulness and subordination to her husband. All these duties are highly regarded in the Shona culture.

Unlike Sara, Ella's clothing, 'had become longer, more housewifely, and more motherly....And as Sara's trips to South Africa and Botswana became more frequent, Ella had begun to assume the role of mother' (21). Furthermore, when visiting Nhongo's parents at the rural area, Sara would wear jeans while Ella would wrap 'an ankle-length cloth around her lower body' (15). It is one thing to wear jeans in the city but to wear them in the rural area in the presence of your in-laws is another thing. It is considered a sign of disrespect and abused freedom. Ella had therefore assumed the role of 'both mother and elder sister to the young girls' (12) and in the end, Nhongo ends up sleeping with her with his parents' approval. The story leaves us in suspense but it is elaborated that Nhongo is now considering taking Ella as his second wife. Shona tradition is in this case being used to justify Nhongo's

taking of a second wife. It is because Sara has abandoned the highly valued duties in the Shona culture of wife and motherhood that Nhongo and his family feel that Nhongo should take Ella as a second wife since Ella is the example of the ideal Shona wife.

“The hare”, therefore, stands as an example to us that the economic challenges faced by township dwellers can force people who were morally upright to become immoral, according to cultural ideals. Sara who was initially an ideal Shona wife transforms into an immoral and corrupt wife so as to make it in the enterprising world. She also abandons her duties as wife and mother because it is difficult to balance motherhood and enterprising since the economic challenges require that one works extra hard. Her dressing and way of life also changes as she meets with different people and different cultures in her travelling in and outside Zimbabwe. In her travels, Sara has picked up characteristics that seem incompatible with the Shona culture. When the story ends, Nhongo’s family is facing the danger of being destroyed as Nhongo is contemplating taking Ella as a second wife. The effects of poverty in the township have not only affected Sara, but Nhongo as well. After losing his job, he also loses his status as provider and head of the family because he can no longer provide for his family. He also loses his authority in the home because his wife is the one who now has the financial muscle in the home. Mungoshi is therefore arguing that the poverty of the township has therefore destroyed the morality of women and has reversed the roles that were traditionally designated for men and women.

The two stories, “The brother” and “The hare”, both show the devastating effects of the township violence and poverty on the Shona culture. Both stories reveal to us what most literary critics believe; that it was in the township that changes in the Shona culture were drastic and violent. This is because of the conditions of living as well as the poverty and the violence that pre-dominates in the township. Like Viet-Wild argues, poverty is indeed the foundation of the violence and the cultural erosion of the Shona culture in the townships. Both Magufu who is in the story “The brother” and Sara who is in the story “The hare” are victims of township violence and poverty respectively. Magufu is in an environment where people regard women, drugs and beer as the things that make up a real man. In his attempt to live up to these township standards, he loses all the money he has and turns to women and alcohol as a means of running away from his problems. As he does this, he loses important cultural values among the Shona people that include the extended family, *unhu*, and moral uprightness. He also attains characteristics that are associated with the township that include violence, selfishness, disrespectfulness, hatefulness and drunkenness. Sara too like Magufu

transforms from a traditional wife and mother to becoming an entrepreneur who now dresses and behaves like most of the women in townships. She also begins to befriend men. As a result of the economic challenges that her family faces, she becomes corrupt. She also neglects her duties as a wife, leaving them to Ella, her house maid. In the end, her family is broken. Hove and Mungoshi are therefore arguing that Magufu and Sara are victims of the township violence and poverty and they want to show that the poverty and violence that occupies the township have caused Magufu and Sara to drastically change for the worst.

University of Cape Town

## Chapter 4:

### Conclusion

The study has successfully been able to grapple with the question of whether or not urbanisation has affected the Shona culture, as represented in Zimbabwean literature. Charles Mungoshi and Chenjerai Hove's writing have been able to show that urbanisation is destructive to the culture of the Shona people. Chenjerai Hove's novel *Ancestors* (1996) and Charles Mungoshi's stories, "The hare" (1997) and "The brother" (1980) give the impression that Zimbabwean literature is concerned with the idea that urbanisation is harmful and destructive to Shona culture and the way of life of the Shona people. The literature in question exposes the negative changes that take place in the Shona culture regarding kinship, the extended family, marriages, courtship, the sexuality of women, gender roles, morality, *ubuntu*, women emancipation, ancestral roles and the people's relationship with the land.

For example, as argued in Chapter 2, Zimbabwean literature shows that female urban migration to the city destroys fundamental aspects of the Shona culture, even if one may argue that urbanisation can help women to protest and fight against oppressive cultural laws as depicted in the novel *Ancestors*. In the novel, when Tariro migrates from the rural areas to the city, she encounters several changes with regard to the Shona culture and these changes can be seen as destructive. On the other side, however, it can be argued that female migration to the city from the rural areas enabled women to challenge, question and rebel against Shona traditions that were unfair towards women such as polygamy, premature marriages, wife inheritance and arranged marriages. Women like Tariro, who migrated to the city to escape arranged and polygamous marriages, were able to free themselves from male domination which thrived on the control of the lives of their female counterparts in the rural areas.

In my analysis of the novel *Ancestors*, I demonstrated that indeed there were two sides to female urban migration. Tariro, who escapes an arranged, polygamous and premature marriage by going to the city, is at the same time made to suffer grievously while in the city. She challenges certain cultural perceptions about women and frees herself from male control and unfair traditions that many women have been afraid to question. Arranged marriages, polygamous marriage and women inheritance laws all point to the fact that women in the Shona culture are viewed as objects and therefore male property. These traditions also show that women have no say towards their destinies and sexuality. Thus, men have the authority to control who women marry and can own as many wives as possible who they can pass over

to their sons and grandchildren when they die. Tariro, by going to the city, is questioning the Shona traditions that treat women as objects of men, incapable of making decisions for themselves. In this case, the city has positive effects on women because it allows for women to escape these cultural laws that were unfair to women.

Mucha's city girlfriend has the freedom to exercise her sexuality and has an upper hand in her courtship with Mucha. She is also able to court a younger man than she is and initiate sexual advances towards Mucha without fear of what society will say. Culturally, men were meant to be the ones who have the upper hand in relationships as well as marriage so that they can maintain their authority over women. The fact that Mucha's girlfriend has the upper hand in the relationship shows that she has authority over Mucha, and this defies patriarchy which depends on the subservience of women for its continuity. In this regard, the city may allow women the freedom to take control of their sexuality and be able to choose the person they want to court or marry.

The negative side of urbanisation towards the Shona culture as represented in *Ancestors* is that Tariro lives a humiliating life in which she has no place to stay, and sleeps at the railway station (115). Moreover, she is disowned by her father who banishes her from the village and pronounces her dead even when she is still alive (95-96). Tariro also causes the divorce of her mother (140). In the end Tariro is made to die in a foreign land and returns as an ancestor (194). Thus, Tariro has escaped oppressive cultural laws in the rural area but at the same time she has lost certain crucial Shona cultural values. Likewise, Mucha's city girlfriend who is free to exercise her sexuality and have an upper hand in her courtship with Mucha is painted with the image of a loose woman who is not marriage material (48).

Hove's image of women can be problematic from the perspective that he is a male author representing women issues. Moreover, he makes his narrator a male figure. The question that comes to mind is that, can a male figure fully understand female issues? It is also problematic because to have women's issues represented through Mucha, a male character, without falling prey to the gender stereotypes that have been established for women, can be difficult. Furthermore, having a male character speaking on behalf of women, may drown out the female characters themselves. Therefore, even though Hove may have feminist perspectives, these issues are hard to ignore when dealing with women's urban migration in *Ancestors* and Zimbabwean literature in general. On a positive note however, *Ancestors* is useful as the basis for dealing with women migration. It is able to show the unfair traditions towards

women such as wife inheritance, polygamy, premature and arranged marriages. Hove through the characters of Tariro and Mucha's city girlfriend, offers a complex picture of the struggles women face even when experiencing the kinds of freedoms offered by urban life.

In chapter 3, the thesis argues that, the township, as a violent and poverty stricken environment, often results in violence and immorality against those who live in it as seen in Charles Mungoshi's stories, "The brother", and "The hare". These stories vividly capture male and female characters living in the townships and also their exposure to the poverty and the violence in the township and the effects that these have on the Shona people and their culture with regard to family, kinship, marriage, morality and relationships.

While in both stories, men are portrayed as victims of urbanisation, their women counterparts are portrayed as responsible for cultural erosion in the city. Women in "The brother" are portrayed as loose and immoral. Moyana (2006, pp. 156-157) argues that in the story "The brother", 'the role of women fulfils the male stereotypes-as sex symbols rather than as useful human beings'. This image of urban women as prostitutes helps to propagate and justify cruelty against women and also helps to discourage women from coming to the city and remain confined to the village (Gaidzanwa, 1985). The women in the story, Sheila and her sisters, are sexually abused and are violently beaten by their male counterparts. Hove, however, overshadows their ill-treatment by portraying them as loose and immoral. The reader is invited to see these women as deserving of the abuse they receive in the "The brother".

Gaidzanwa (1985, p. 96) further argues that, if the view that the women deserve this treatment because they are bad persists, it is easy to justify the violence against them because 'labelling the women negatively camouflages and justifies their bad treatment' and also 'perpetuates the bad, brutal attitudes and actions towards them.' Mungoshi fails to show that women too are victims of the poverty and violence that surrounds the townships. Magufu, on the other hand, is shown as a victim of the township violence and poverty. We are able to get a picture of him before he had been urbanised in which he is presented as well cultured, responsible and loving. We are also given a picture of the new Magufu who becomes a victim of the city and ends up losing his cultural values and becoming morally loose, hateful, abusive, violent and a drunkard. The way Magufu is portrayed shows that he is indeed a victim of the city. Mungoshi does not do the same for the women in his story. The women are

just shown prostituting as if they were like that from the beginning. The reader is not given the chance to see the causes behind their present situation.

The same image regarding women is also found in the story “The hare”. When Nhongo’s wife Sara, is confined to the images of women as mother and wife, ‘she is held in higher esteem’ (Gaidzanwa, 1985, p.12). However, as soon as she begins to work for her family, she is dismissed as loose and as a ‘bitch’ (12). Nhongo’s actions to take a second wife become justifiable because of the negative image that Sara is presented with. Sara is presented as if she is a perpetrator of Nhongo’s suffering and yet, a more sympathetic view would suggest that she is trying to work for her family because her husband has been retrenched. Nhongo by refusing to accept Sara’s new role as the provider for their family, is resisting the changes that he has to make while in the city. Sara, on the other hand, sees Nhongo’s retrenchment as an opportunity to take up the role of provider that was exclusively for her husband. Thus, we see clearly a clash between urbanisation and a more traditional Shona culture. From the Shona cultural perspective, the fact that Sara can earn money is unacceptable, but, from a feminist point of view, it is good because Sara is able to attain freedom from male oppression. However, her feminist sensibilities place her at odds with traditional Shona culture.

Sara is also presented as immoral and corrupt, such that should Nhongo take a second wife, the reader will feel that Sara deserved it. Nhongo, on the other hand, is presented as a victim of the economic problems that hit Zimbabwe in the 1990s causing many people to lose their jobs (9). Even his character is presented as good despite the challenges that he goes through. He is presented as an adherent of the Shona culture despite the fact that he is now living in the city. Therefore, when his wife starts to work and provide for the family, people see Nhongo as being victimised by his wife who now is able to socialise with a lot of people including males (10). Mungoshi treats Sara spending time with her male friends as a taboo. It gains her the title of an unfaithful wife (12). However, when Nhongo spends time with Ella their house maid, Mungoshi treats this relationship as normal and acceptable (21). These stereotypes as argued before are meant to keep women subordinate to men so that the status quo of patriarchy remains intact.

Generally, Mungoshi and Hove through their writing have been able to touch on very crucial aspects of the Shona culture that have been affected by urbanisation. Their literature demonstrates not only that urbanisation has been harmful to Shona culture, but it also shows

the complexities of the townships as well as the struggles that women go through while experiencing the kinds of freedom offered by urban life.

## References

- Anderson, N. (1960) *The urban community: A world perspective*. London, Routledge & Kegan.
- Arnold, E. (1972) *The study of urban geography*. New York, Halsted Press.
- Basham, R. (1978) *Urban anthropology: The cross-cultural studies of complex societies*. California, Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Bourdillon, M. (1976) *The Shona peoples*. Gweru, Mambo Press.
- Bourdillon, M. (1993) *Where are the ancestors? Changing culture in Zimbabwe*. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Broodryk, J. (2006) *Ubuntu Life-coping skills from Africa*. Johannesburg, Knowres Publishing (Pty) Ltd.
- Chavunduka, L. (1994) *Traditional medicine in modern Zimbabwe*. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Chilivumbo, A & Mijere, N. (1992) Development policies, migrations and their socioeconomic impact in Zambia. In: Fadayomi, T & Toure, M, eds. *Migrations, development and urbanisation policies in sub-Saharan Africa*. Dakar, Codesria Book, pp. 277-298.
- Cole, M & Kay, G. (1977) The townfolk. In: Kay, G & Smout, M, eds. *Salisbury: A Geographical of the capital of Rhodesia*. London, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, pp. 41-56
- Dangarembga, T. (2006) *The book of not*. London, Ayebia Clarke Publishing Ltd.
- Dolphyne, F. (1991) *The emancipation of women. An African perspective*. Legon, Ghana University Press.
- Fair, T. (1984) The urbanisation process in South Africa. In: Kraayenbrink, E, ed. *Studies on Urbanisation in South Africa*. Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations.
- Gaidzanwa, R. (1985) *Images of women in Zimbabwean literature*. Harare, The College Press.
- Gann, L. (1969) *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 Vol 1*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Gann, L & Henriksen, T. (1981) *The struggle for Zimbabwe*. New York, Praeger Publishers.
- Gelfand, M. (1976) *The genuine Shona. Survival values of African culture*. Gweru, Mambo Press.

- Goldscheider, C. (1984) Migration and rural social structure: An overview. In: Goldscheider, C, ed. *Rural migration in developing nations. Comparative studies of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Mali*. New York, Westview Press.
- Gutkind, P. (1974) *Perspectives on third world urbanisation and urbanism*. Amsterdam, Vangorcum and Company.
- Hammod-Took, W. (n. d) *The Effects of urbanisation on traditional values*. (n. p).
- Holleman, J. (1969) *Shona customary law with reference to kinship, marriage, the family and the estate*. Lusaka, University of Zambia.
- Hove, C. (1994) *Shabeen tales messages from Harare*. Harare, Baobab Books.
- Hove, C. (1996) *Ancestors*. London, Picador.
- Kay, G. (1970) *Rhodesia: A human geography*. London, University of London Press Ltd.
- King, A. (1990) *Urbanism, colonialism and the world economy: Cultural and spatial foundations of the world urban system*. New York, Routledge.
- Kuper, H. (1954) The Shona. In: Forde, D, ed. *Ethnographic survey of Africa. Southern Africa part IV. The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia*. London, International African Institute, pp. 9-40.
- Mashiri, P. (2001) Representation of Blacks and the city in Zimbabwean post-independence television drama. In: Vambe, M, ed. *Orality and cultural identities in Zimbabwe*. Gweru, Mambo Press.
- Mohan, R. (1982) *The effects of population growth, of the pattern of demand, and of technology on the process of urbanization*. Washington, World Bank.
- Moyana, R. (2006) Women in Mungoshi's short stories. In: Vambe, M & Chirere, M, eds. *Charles Mungoshi: A critical reader*. Harare, Prestige Books, pp. 152-167.
- Mungoshi, C. (1980) The brother. In: *Some kind of wounds and other stories*. Gweru, Mambo Press, pp. 49-78.
- Mungoshi C. (1997) The hare. In *Walking still*. Harare, Baobab Books, pp. 1-26.
- Mutsvairo, S. (1996) *Introduction to Shona culture*. Harare, Juta Zimbabwe (Pvt) Ltd.
- Nelson, N. (1987) Rural-urban child fostering in Kenya: migration, kinship ideology and class. In: Eades, J, ed. *Migrants. Workers and the social order*. New York, Tavistock Publications, pp. 181-198.
- Nuttall, S. (2005) "Inside the city: reassembling the township in Yvonne Vera's fiction." In: Muponde, R & Primorac, R, eds. *Versions of Zimbabwe: New approaches to literature and culture*. Harare, Weaver Press, pp. 177-192.

- Owomoyela, O. (2002) *Culture and customs of Zimbabwe*. London, Greenwood Press.
- Primorac, R. (2006) The circularity of the perverse: Zimbabwean post independent masculinity. In Charles Mungoshi's *The Hare*. In Vambe, M & Chirere, M, eds. *Charles Mungoshi: A critical reader*. Harare, Prestige Books, pp.124-131.
- Rakodi, C. (1995) *Harare: Inheriting a settler-colonial city: Change or continuity?* London, John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Smout, M. (1977) The townscape. In: Kay, G & Smout, M, eds. *Salisbury: A geographical survey of the capital of Rhodesia*. London, Hodder & Stoughton ltd. pp. 26-40.
- The new shorter oxford dictionary on historical principles*, (1993). Vol 2 N-Z). Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Vambe, M. (2001) Images of black women popular songs and some poems on AIDS in post-independence Zimbabwe. In: Vambe, M, ed. *Orality and cultural identities in Zimbabwe*. Gweru, Mambo Press.
- Veit-Wild, F. (1992a) *Teachers, preachers and non-believers. A social history of Zimbabwean literature*. New York, Hans Zell Publishers.
- Veit-Wild, F. (1992b) *Dambudzo Marechera: A source book on his life and work*. Africa Trenton, World Press.
- Warah, R. (2005) Chaotic urban transition in Africa, Zimbabwe evictions come at a heavy cost. In: *UN Chronicle*, September- November, pp. 30-31.
- Wester third new international dictionary of the English language unabridged*, (2002). London, Webster Inc Publishers.
- Zinyama, L. (1993) The evolution of the spatial structure of greater Harare: 1890 to 1990. In: Zinyama, L; Tevera, D & Cumming, D, eds. *Harare: The growth and problems of the city*. Harare, University of Zimbabwe, pp. 3-32.