

Femininity and Masculinity in the Novels of Euphrase Kezilahabi and Said Ahmed Mohamed

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Abstract

This paper examines the portrayal of femininity and masculinity in the Kiswahili novel. It specifically focuses on the works of Kezilahabi and Mohamed. The analysis is aimed at revealing the society's position on the images of girls and boys, women and men, sex and prostitution by analysing the defamiliarization techniques used by the authors. Defamiliarization techniques are literary techniques used by an author to render the familiar in an unusual way. The two authors utilize these techniques in their portrayal of femininity and masculinity. The paper aims at analysing defamiliarization techniques in order to decipher the messages embedded therein. The analysis adopts Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (CDA). CDA interprets defamiliarization techniques by acknowledging the ideological, social, cultural and historical context. Thus the defamiliarization techniques are viewed as an inseparable element of social intercourse. The interpretation of the defamiliarization techniques draw from patriarchal ideology and socio-cultural beliefs and practices. Generally, the techniques analysed in this paper are inter-textuality, metaphor, irony, sarcasm and symbolism. The techniques enable the reader to decipher multiplicity of meanings.

Ikisiri

Makala hii inachunguza usawiri wa hali ya jinsi ya kike na ya kiume katika riwaya za Kiswahili. Inazingatia hasa riwaya za Kezilahabi na Mohamed. Uchanganuzi unalenga kudhihirisha msimamo wa jamii kuhusu taswira za wasichana na wavulana, wanawake na wanaume, suala la ngono na ukahaba kwa kuchanganua mikakati ya ukiushi inayotumiwa na waandishi hawa. Mikakati ya ukiushi ni mbinu za kifasihi zinazotumiwa na waandishi kuwasilisha mambo ya kawaida kwa kutoa picha isiyokuwa ya kawaida. Waandishi hawa wawili wametumia mikakati hii ya ukiushi katika usawiri wa hali ya jinsi ya kike na kiume. Makala hii inalenga hasa kuchanganua mikakati ya ukiushi ili kudhihirisha ujumbe uliomo. Uchanganuzi huu unazingatia nadharia ya Uchanganuzi Matini Hakiki. Uchanganuzi Matini Hakiki hufasiri mikakati ya ukiushi kwa kutambua nafasi ya itikadi, miktadha ya kijamii, kisiasa na kihistoria. Hii ina maana kwamba mikakati hii ya ukiushi inachukuliwa kama isiyoweza kutengwa na mawasiliano ya kijamii kwa ujumla. Ufasiri wa mikakati ya ukiushi unatokana na itikadi za mfumo wa kuumeni na imani na mazoea ya kijamii na kitamaduni. Kujumla mikakati itakayochanganuliwa ni mwingiliano - matini, sitiari, kinaya, kejeli na taashira. Mikakati ya ukiushi humwezesha msomaji kugundua maana mbalimbali.

1.0 Introduction

This paper attempts to uncover ideological assumptions that are embedded in the defamiliarization techniques that are utilized by the authors under study. The techniques are utilized for the enhancement of aesthetics and meaning. The paper attempts to decipher feminine and masculine overtones embedded within defamiliarization techniques in relation to images of girls and boys, women and men, sex and prostitution. The authors under study have utilized different defamiliarization techniques to bring forth varied messages. Techniques such as

metaphor inter-textuality, irony, symbolism and sarcasm have been utilized to bring forth patriarchal ideology and socio-cultural beliefs and practices.

Literary techniques such as metaphors are not only aesthetic in nature but they?? contribute to the overall messages and themes in a given literary work. It is for this reason that the paper adopts Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (CDA). CDA is viewed as a shared perspective encompassing a range of approaches having different emphasis. Some of the proponents of CDA are Kress (1989), Fowler (1979, 1991, 1996), Fairclough ((1989, 1995) and Wodak (1989).

According to Wodak & Meyer (2001) CDA is a post-modern theory that holds the belief that there is no one meaningful interpretation of the world. The theory therefore offers numerous readings aimed at deconstructing concepts, beliefs systems or generally held social values and assumptions.

CDA holds that discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure and culture. This means that any use of language like the one used in literature should involve choices made and their relationship with the socio-cultural context. Therefore, in examining femininity and masculinity, an attempt is made to draw a connection between the author's choices, socio-cultural context and systems of beliefs and knowledge.

Overall, the analysis operates on three levels: the actual texts, the discursive practices and the larger social context. This means the texts are viewed as a record of events where some things were communicated and they involve presentation of facts and beliefs which are often ideological. Discursive practices refer to rules, norms and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour in specific relationships. This means that literary works are more than just words. Literary techniques disclose socio-cultural ideologies and in this case how femininity and masculinity are viewed in society. Finally, the techniques are analysed within their socio-cultural contexts. Within CDA the analysis focuses on the way social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through the selected works of Said Ahmed Mohamed (*Asali Chungu*) and Euphrase Kezilahabi (*Rosa Mistika* and *Kichwamaji*).

2.0 Juxtapositioning Images of Girls and Boys

This section deals with defamiliarization techniques that depict images of girls and boys. Montgomery (1992:144) defines juxtaposition simply as the placing of two communicative elements side by side. It is a technique which is intended to open up a plurality of meaning. It involves combining two or more elements in such a way that the connecting links between them are suppressed. This creates some degree of strangeness that leaves the reader curious. The authors under study have employed the technique of juxtapositioning to highlight various perspectives on the images of girls and boys.

In Kezilahabi's *Rosa Mistika*, Regina fulfills the social responsibility of motherhood by giving birth to many children. Unfortunately, she has five daughters and this becomes a source of problems in her marriage. This does not make her or Zakaria, her husband, happy. The author describes Zakaria's disappointment graphically:

Zakaria hakuwajibu lolote. Regina na Rosa walikuwa wamenyamaza tu. 'Mshenzi unanizalia wasichana tu! Unaniletea taabu nyumbani bure' (Kezilahabi, 1971:23). Zakaria did not respond. Regina and Rosa were quiet. 'Foolish, (woman). You only give birth to girls. You are bringing trouble to my home'.¹

The strangeness of Zakaria's utterance is in his belief that female children bring 'trouble'. In actual fact, children should be a source of pride for parents. To Zakaria, girls are a source of 'headache' and problems. To him, is it Rosa or Regina? Who is foolish and inadequate, because she has not given birth to sons. Conversely, when Regina gives birth to a son, Zakaria is full of praises for her. Kezilahabi writes:

Zakaria alirudi usiku nyumbani siku hiyo. Alikuwa amekwishapata habari hizo njema. Alimbeba mtoto. Alimpa pongezi mke wake. Regina sasa mji huu umekuwa wako (Kezilahabi, 1971:23).

That day Zacharia arrived home late. He had already received the good news. He carried the baby and congratulated his wife. 'Regina now this homestead is yours'.

Zakaria's attitude towards his wife changes after she gives birth to a baby boy. He officially decrees Regina's legitimacy and ownership of the home. Legitimacy of Regina in the home was pegged on bearing a son. This thought is partly inspired by patriarchal ideology as Masinjila notes:

In most (African) communities, boys were preferred. This was mainly because the patriarchal system could not bestow status on women. Giving birth to boys meant that the mother would be more secure in her marriage; and that through her son she could have access to what society had to offer in terms of resources and benefits. At the clan level, the birth of boys was seen as a continuation of the lineage (Masinjila, 1994:6-7).

Thus, it seems Zakaria's attitude and reaction is motivated by patriarchal ideology that bestows a high premium on sons. Among the Swahili, sons occupy a crucial

¹ All translation is mine.

role in the family. They are given authority of making policy decisions in homes such as regarding marriage and other family issues. This is not confined to African societies only. The Biblical stories also elevate the boy child over the girl child. From the story of Adam and Eve, Abel and Cane, Abraham and God's promise to him over a son, to the story of the prodigal son in the New Testament, the boy child is seen to have a crucial position in the family. Kezilahabi seems to question this ideological position through Regina's relationship with Zakaria. He writes:

Usiku huo Zakaria alimba aleluya karibu usiku kucha. Kesho yake alikwenda posta ...Aliendelea pia kuchunga binti zake kama ng'ombe (Kezilahabi, 1971:25).

That night Zakaria sung haleluya throughout. The next morning, he went to the Post Office (to withdraw some money). He continued to 'guard' his daughters like cows.

The fact that Regina gives birth to a son fills Zakaria with joy. This is why he sings haleluya throughout the night. The haleluya song is a song of great joy. For the first time in the novel, it is observed that Zakaria goes out of his way to look for money. The money was meant for the comfort of Regina and the baby. But, Kezilahabi is quick to add that he did not stop to 'guard his daughters like cows'. Cows are destructive animals when left unattended and can destroy crops. They have to be guarded all the time. The image of a 'cow' has other ramifications in Kiswahili language. When used metaphorically (*wewe ni ng'ombe*-you are a cow) it amounts to an insult. It means that one who is referred to as a cow is an idiot, somebody with scanty intelligence. It also implies that the person is gullible. Viewed within this understanding, the simile is therefore derogatory. It reveals Zakaria's negative attitude towards his daughters. It shows his lack of trust in the daughters. He sees them as being unable to make independent rational decisions. They are also seen as displaying a tendency for mischief.

The cow serves man for free through provision of milk and meat for consumption. Like cows, women in Swahili culture, serve as servants to men. Women are restricted to and confined in the home. Girls are not allowed freedom of association or thought. As a result, parents influenced by this ideology, like Zakaria, police their daughters. They make decisions for girls as if they are incapable of determining their own fate especially in regard to marriage.

On another level, Zakaria's reference to his daughters as cows could be viewed as stemming from patriarchy. In a community in which dowry is paid in terms of cows, girls are seen as assets to their fathers. As a result, the girls need to be guarded especially to prevent them from losing their virginity since virginity places a high premium on the girls at marriage.

2.1 The Home as a Zoo

In *Rosa Mistika*, Zakaria is seen complaining that the girls attract many unwanted visitors. He says:

Kuzaa wasichana taabu sana! Unapata wageni wa kila aina. Kweli wasichana watano walikuwa wengi na vijana sasa walizoea kuita mji wake 'zoo' (Kezilahabi, 1971:38). Giving birth to girls brings problems. One receives all manner of 'visitors'. Surely five girls were too many and the youth now called his home a zoo.

The metaphoric reference to Zakaria's home as a zoo has three possible interpretations. First, in a zoo, animals are viewed and sold. This then implies that the girls in Zakaria's home are likened to objects of admiration and attraction and may be exchanged for money. Secondly, a zoo is a restricted area. This alludes to the idea that girls are vulnerable and need protection. Lastly, animals are bred in a zoo. In this sense, Zakaria's home is likened to a breeding ground. The image of the zoo shows the vulnerability and weakness of the females. It is also used to highlight Zakaria's chauvinism.

2.2 The Jail Metaphor

Although the metaphor of the zoo depicts girls as weak and vulnerable, in some instances, Kezilahabi depicts girls and women as being powerful and shrewd. This is captured graphically in his description of Flora's school. He writes:

Flora alimpa pole dada yake. Flora naye – huko shule ya wasichana ya jela (Hili lilikuwa jina la utani la shule ya wasichana huko Mwanza iliyokuwa ikilindwa na polisi), alikuwa amekwishatoa mimba (Kezilahabi, 1971:46).

Flora was sorry for her sister. However - from her school, 'the jail' (for that was the nickname given to Flora's school in Mwanza which was guarded by police) she had already aborted.

Flora's school is metaphorically referred to as a jail. This is because it is guarded by the police. It is strange that a school has to be guarded by police. A jail is a place where criminals are housed after being convicted. The criminals are strictly guarded to prevent them from escaping the hard life in prison. They are also guarded to ensure they do not run back to society before they are rehabilitated. In the above comparison, therefore, the girls are depicted as criminals. They are involved in criminal activities such as abortion. Despite the heavy security, the girls' sneak out of school and indulge in sexual relationships which result in pregnancies. Some procure abortions. This highlights the crookedness and cunningness of the girls.

From the above analysis, it is possible to argue that the author seems to be questioning societal beliefs and attitudes which view women as angelic, harmless, obedient and innocent. These beliefs make parents complacent in guiding their

daughters. The girls are here depicted as tough criminals who engage in crimes under the noses of policemen. Through the metaphor of the jail, the author castigates the society's attitude towards girls.

2.3 Metaphors of the Hyena and the Angel

Kezilahabi depicts both girls and boys as destructive. Whereas girls have been depicted as being destructive due to low intelligence, boys are seen to be destroyers, devourers and dangerous to unsuspecting girls. In *Rosa Mistika*, Kezilahabi utilizes juxtaposition to defamiliarize the story. He presents description of five boys' schools and one girls' school situated on opposite sides of the road. He writes:

Kulikuwa na milima karibu kila upande. Milima hii ilikuwa imejaa mawe makubwa makubwa meusi na mapango ambamo fisi walikuwa wakilala. Usiku utawasikia wakicheka lakini mchana hawaonekani. Shule tano zaidi zilikuwa zimejengwa katika milima hii. Shule zote zilikuwa za wavulana. Lakini shule moja ya wasichana ilitosha kupafanya pawe mahali pazuri pa kusomea...shule hii ilikuwa ikiendeshwa na mabikira walioonekana kufaa sana katika shule iliyokuwa imejengwa kati ya mbwa mwitu (Kezilahabi, 1971:21).

There were hills all round. These hills were full of many big dark stones. The hills also had caves in which hyenas lived. At night, you would hear them laugh, but during the day, they could not be seen. Five schools were built in these hills. All of them were boys' schools. But, there was only one girls' school which was enough to make this place a good environment for learning ... The school was administered by nuns. These nuns were important in a girl's school which was built amidst wild dogs.

In the above description, the five boys' schools are situated in a scary environment inhabited by hyenas. The fact that Kezilahabi admits that the environment is scary and serves as a home for hyenas yet the boys' schools are situated in this vicinity, is a pointer to the attributes of those who inhabit this area. The boys from the five schools are being likened to hyenas. By putting these hyenas and the boys side by side in the text, the author seems to be attributing the negative characteristics to the boys.

Biedelman (1994:186) in examining folktales from a Tanzanian community, Kuguru reveals that the Kuguru just like the Swahili, have strong beliefs about hyenas based on the moral attributes, which they metaphorically associate with certain physical qualities and acts. Hyenas have powerful jaws and teeth, with which they easily devour bones and even metal. They eat badly decomposed meat, but also hunt down live animals. They have dirty unkempt looks due to frequenting mud wallows. Their grotesque and somewhat humanoid calls have been described by some African societies as demonic (Biedelman, 1994).

Although hyenas occasionally feed by day, they are active during the night when their laughter and whooping punctuates the night. Hyenas are creatures whose appetite has no bounds and their eating habits are voraciously bestial. They can do anything possible to secure food to satisfy their greed. Kezilahabi seems to be likening these qualities of the hyena to the boys. The image is highly exaggerated owing to the fact that hyenas are extreme in their behaviour. The boys are seen to be greedy by virtue of their inability to curb their sexual urges. They can do anything within their reach to satisfy their sexual cravings. This means that the girls in the neighbouring school are insecure and in danger of possible attacks from the hyenas (boys). The boys are depicted as ugly, unkempt, clumsy and dangerous especially at night. Their sexual urges do not allow them to be selective. They pick on any woman that can satisfy their lust. The boys are also described metaphorically as 'mbwa mwitu' (wild dogs). These strong metaphors (hyena and wild dogs) depict boys as vicious and dangerous to the girls.

In the description of the five boys' schools and one girls' school, Kezilahabi says that the presence of the girls' school administered by Catholic nuns in this scary environment turns it into a good learning environment. A possible interpretation here is that the males have excesses, almost animalistic, in their behaviour while the females bring some humanic characteristics and order.

The hyena metaphor in relation to the boys can also be interpreted positively. The hyena is a determined animal and nothing stops it from attaining its desire. Boys are therefore depicted positively as determined and hard working. Compared to girls, boys are seen as having the capability to survive under hard circumstances than girls.

The excesses of the boys are countered by images of girls as angelic. The girls are described metaphorically:

Mara moja wavulana wanaamka kwenda kuinama. Miungu wadogo wanaweka mikono yao kifuani kuonyesha kwamba wanakataa. Huu ni wakati wao wa umalaika (Kezilahabi, 1971:31).

Suddenly the boys rise and bow to the girls. The young goddesses place their hands on their chests to show that they reject (the offer to the dance floor). This is their time of being angelic.

In the above description, girls are likened to young goddesses. The metaphor signifies that the girls are harmless, holy, tender and beautiful. The girls, therefore, are depicted as holy and not capable of harming anyone. They have to be approached with care and respect. The girls are precious and have to be worshipped, loved and appreciated just like goddesses. This is why the boys have to bow before them while requesting for dance. The comparison of girls to angels also reinforces the image of girls being obedient and submissive. The implication here is that a time will come when they will not be angelic. At a certain period in

their growth, females can be seen to be holy, obedient and submissive. The girls are angelic before they indulge in sex. Sex leads them to lose their angelic qualities.

Other artists have also depicted girls or women as angelic. Fadhili Williams for instance, has expressed this in his song “Malaika” (Angel). In this song, he stresses the beauty of a woman. Through the image of the angel, Kezilahabi highlights the popular belief that girls are naturally tender, beautiful and harmless. But, as the girls continue growing up, they begin to manifest dangerous characteristics. Chinweizu (1990) argues that the female gender utilizes the myth of angelic qualities in order to hold the man in subservience without a threat or a blow. The authors under study manifest their understanding of the myth that women are angels, by depicting them as human beings with all weaknesses peculiar to humans. The next section discusses the defamiliarization techniques that depict women in their various ramifications.

3.0 Images of Women as Satanic Beings

The depiction of girls as angelic is contrasted with images of women as demonic, satanic and shrewd. Women are seen to exploit the myth of being angelic for self-gratification. According to Phillips and Jones (1985:2), women have been blamed for humanity’s problems. This is based on Eve’s submission to the devil and her encouragement to Adam to eat from the forbidden tree. Some of the disparaging statements quoted by Phillips and Jones (1985:4) include:

“Woman is the daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace, through her Adam lost paradise” (St. John Damascare).

“Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls” (St. Cyprian).

“Woman is the arm of the devil, her voice is the hissing of the serpent” (St. Anthony).

“Woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon” (St. Gregory the Great).

Phillips and Jones (1985) argue that these negative attributes about women may have contributed to the attitudes that people have towards women. Some of the defamiliarization techniques from the selected texts seem to echo some of the stereotypes about women. For example, Shaaban in *Asali Chungu* likens his former wife to the devil. He says:

Lakini wanawake ni ibilisi wakubwa. Wanaweza kumtoa mtu roho ghafla (Mohamed, 1977:33).

Women are devils. They are capable of sudden killing.

Although Shaaban confesses that he loved his former wife and that she was beautiful, he still compares her to the devil. From Islamic and Christian religions, Satan was once an angel but due to his arrogance, God sent him out of heaven to earth. Some other angels who also disobeyed God followed Satan and are now his agents in his agenda of causing evil on earth. By referring to his former wife as a devil, Shaaban is likening her to Satan. The devil's main mission on earth is to destroy and bring sorrow. This could imply that girls mutate from their angelic image to become demonic in adulthood and that they are capable of all manner of evil. This image of women as dangerous and destructive has also been portrayed through African proverbs. Schipper (1991) in her anthology of proverbs, *Source of all Evil*, documents a number of these proverbs. In this publication, women are depicted as a source of all evil. She argues that proverbs confirm societal norms and values (Schipper, 1991:3).

A similar image is depicted when Dude describes her mother, Pili, in negative terms. He says:

Mama alikuwa shetani mpevu. Watu wengi walimwita mchafu, mnyama
(Mohamed, 1977:37).

My mother was a deeply entrenched devil. Many people called her 'dirty', inhuman.

In the above explanation a woman is compared to a deeply entrenched devil. Both metaphoric expressions comparing woman to the devil seem to allude to not only the quotations given by Phillips and Jones, but also to the Biblical images of women exemplified through Delilah, Jezebel and Rebecca. These women, though depicted as crooked and evil, are seen to have possessed positive characteristics. They exploited their angelic characteristics to deceive their own husbands.

According to Chinweizu (1990:14) the womb, kitchen, cradle, man's immaturity and his inability to control his emotions, constitute the five pillars of female power and enable a woman to have dominance over the male. In the metaphor comparing woman to the devil, this idea is evident through the adjective 'mpevu' (seasoned devil/deeply entrenched devil). This means that women possess a positive characteristic, which gives them an edge over men. Through this image, Mohamed draws the attention of the reader to the paradoxical nature of women. Women are generally regarded as being physically weak, but their hidden power lies in the ability to manipulate through rare mental skill. They are unmatched by the men. This rare use of intellect displayed by women is what Mohamed is highlighting through these strong metaphors.

It is these rare characteristics which Kezilahabi also reveals by depicting Rosa as shrewd and cunning in *Rosa Mistika*. Rosa is extreme in her relationship with boys and men. She is capable of exploiting her 'womb power' as well as male weakness to attain her goals. On the contrary, men are depicted as people who are

cheated easily by women like Rosa. After getting financial favours from a man with a promise of sex, Rosa does not meet him as agreed. Kezilahabi writes:

Rosa alifahamu mengi, kweli alifahamu mengi – alifahamu mapenzi na unyonyaji. Mapenzi ya mwanamke mara nyingi huenda pamoja na unyonyaji. Kijana alifika 'Banda Street' namba mbili. Hata kiwiliwili chake kilimcheka! (Kezilahabi, 1971:42).

Rosa understood many things, indeed, she understood many things – she knew love and exploitation. A woman's love usually goes together with exploitation. The young man arrived on Banda Street Number Two. Even his own shadow laughed at him.

This sarcasm, seen through the image of the young man being laughed at by his own shadow, highlights the gullibility of the man. It shows how vulnerable men are in their quest for sexual gratification. The man displays a high level of gullibility, due to his indisciplined sexual urge. Kezilahabi is also satirizing such men who fall victims of the likes of Rosa. The authorial voice is very clear here. This is alluded to in the statement: 'A woman's love usually goes together with exploitation'. This shrewdness and cunningness expressed by the female gender contradicts the earlier depiction of women as angelic. This, in my view, bestows humanistic qualities on girls and women. They are capable of good and evil just like their male counterparts. The author shows the subversive nature of girls and women, thereby questioning the ideology of women as the weaker sex. Society has its ways of socializing boys and girls to become masculine and feminine.

However, research has shown that parents cultivate social abilities in young girls and physical independency in young boys (Wood, 1994:44). While this is true in many African societies, other scholars hold a different view. Kezilahabi seems to agree with Greene and Kahn (1994) and Chinwiezu (1990) who, from research, have observed that women, in fact, are the powerful sex. Green and Kahn argue that women have wielded more power than has been known before and that aspects of women's lives which appear to be restrictive may actually be enabling (Greene and Kahn, 1994:17). It may be argued that Kezilahabi and Mohamed have successfully depicted women and men authentically to question the stereotypes about both sexes in the African society.

4.0 Images of Sexuality

The authors under study discuss sexual qualities in relation to both men and women. Most of the techniques utilized reveal the traditional beliefs and ideologies of the African society in relation to sexuality. This section deals with defamiliarization techniques which reveal traditional beliefs and ideologies on sex in regard to women and men. Both authors under study depict prostitution and sex through metaphors. They praise morality as respectable and virtuous. Morals deal

with the question of what is right and good and what is wrong and evil in human conduct (Mbiti, 1975:175).

African people have a deep sense of right and wrong and this has produced customs, rules, laws, traditions and taboos, which can be observed in every society. The authors under study draw from this moral fibre in their portrayal of prostitution. Kezilahabi, for instance, praises Sabina for maintaining chastity when he says:

Sabina ni msichana atunzae usafi..... Dansi ya kushikana wawili wawili ilipoingia nchini, usafi ukamwisha mwanangu (Kezilahabi, 1974:34).

Sabina is a girl who observes 'cleanliness' (purity)...When the dance, which involved people holding one another was introduced into the country my dear, 'cleanliness' (purity) was done away with.

In the above metaphor, 'cleanliness' symbolizes chastity, purity and high moral standards. The implication here is that irresponsible sex 'contaminates' a person and robs him or her of their purity. Irresponsible sexual behaviour is discouraged here. Sabina is praised and respected for keeping herself clean (safi) to mean chastity.

4.1 Images and Symbols of Virginity

In African traditional societies such as the Swahili, virginity is valued. Girls who maintain their virginity are regarded as morally pure. On the contrary, boys are not supposed to maintain virginity. Again, this has its roots in patriarchal ideology. While girls are socialized to maintain virginity, boys are free to indulge in sexual acts after circumcision. Therefore, sexual intercourse seems to reduce the pricing of a girl.

Among the Gikuyu, a girl was supposed to maintain virginity by having an unperforated hymenal membrane when she marries (Kenya, 1978:159). Those who lost it before marriage were sometimes forced to cheat in order to be accepted by society. The authors under study have examined this patriarchal perspective of virginity in their works. The importance attached to virginity is depicted in *Rosa Mistika*. Ironically, Rosa has to lie that she is a virgin in order to win respect, approval and acceptance from her suitor, Charles. She say:

'Charles – mimi ni bikira'. (Charles alijibu) *'Wewe ndiye msichana ambaye nilikuwa nikimtafuta kwa muda mrefu. Rosa nitakupa heshima yangu yote'* (Kezilahabi, 1971:78).

Charles – I am a virgin. (Charles responded) 'You are the girl I have been looking for, for a long time. Rosa I will truly respect you'.

Through dramatic irony the importance of virginity is foregrounded. Rosa is not a virgin and the reader is aware. But, she manages to convince Charles that she is a virgin and wins him. Through this portrayal, Kezilahabi presents the illusiveness of upholding virginity as a practice. This is clearer when he depicts the aftermath of Rosa's lie. Kezilahabi satirically describes a scenario where Charles proves that Rosa is not a virgin after all. Charles lures her over a drink and goes ahead to have sex with her to ascertain her virginity.

The satirical presentation serves to question the belief in the importance of virginity. This is extended further when, finally, the relationship breaks after Charles discovers that Rosa is not a virgin. Consequently, Rosa commits suicide. After the tragedy, Charles discovers his foolishness.

Through authorial intrusion, the author reveals clearly the insincerity of society in dealing with the issue of virginity. It is ironic that the author makes Charles discover that it is impossible for him to find a virgin but he still says that he needs one. The dilemma, which is evident, compounded with the irony, highlight the author's disapproval of the value placed on virginity. Charles is looking for a virgin, yet he is not a virgin himself and he does not see the need to maintain virginity. Through this, the author seems to be challenging society for insisting on the sanctity of virginity. The fact that Charles is looking for it yet he is not cautious to observe it makes it an oppressive practice encouraging male dominance.

4.2 The Image of 'Eating'

In *Kichwamaji*, girls are metaphorically referred to as 'fruits'. While discouraging Kazimoto from marrying Sabina, Fungameza says:

'Sabina – nikwambie mtoto wangu – ni tunda baya na nisingependa wewe ulile'
(Kezilahabi, 1974:161).

Let me tell you my son, Sabina is a bad fruit and I would not like you to eat it.

The metaphor of a fruit gives a woman the qualities of tenderness, softness, sweetness, attractiveness and the man is supposed to actualize his admiration by 'eating' and enjoying it. But in this particular metaphor, Sabina is likened to a 'bad fruit', which is not fit to be 'eaten' by Kazimoto. It is rotten with worms and unfit for consumption. The metaphor of 'eating' is a common image. 'Eating' in most African languages is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. For example, there is a popular saying 'A woman is a maize cob to be eaten by anyone with teeth'. The reference to sex as eating elevates the man as the one with teeth or privileged to enjoy the maize or the fruit.

The same image is alluded to by Mohamed in *Asali Chungu*. Dude falls in love with Shemsa who is Amina's daughter. Initially, Dude had a sexual

relationship with Amina. After discovering the fact that Shemsa is Amina's daughter, Dude gets worried. Mohamed describes his state of mind:

Atakuwa vipi Bi. Amina atakapomwona amerejea, na katika kurejea huko anakwenda kumposa mwanawe Shemsa? Hata yeye mwenyewe Dude aliona vibaya. Inauma kufikiria kuwa hatimaye itambidi kula kuku na vifaranga (Mohamed, 1977:143).

How will Amina feel by seeing him back, and this time to betroth her daughter, Shemsa? Even Dude himself was uncomfortable. It hurts to imagine that finally he will be forced to 'eat' the hen and its chicks.

Through the metaphorical expression referring to sex with mother and daughter as 'eating a hen and its chicks', Mohamed is asking a disturbing question: Who is to blame? On his part, Dude is innocent since he was lured into a relationship with Amina due to his poverty - he could not resist. But, the underlying message here is that it is not acceptable for mother and daughter to share a sexual partner. It is tantamount to one eating the hen and its chicks.

The image of 'eating' in reference to sexual intercourse is guided by the view that men eat while the women are eaten. The male partner is supposed to be the one enjoying the act of sex and the woman remains a passive participant. This is clear from the reasons given for circumcision in communities that practice it. It is said that male circumcision is meant to make the boys brave, fierce and virile. The act of circumcising boys is meant to sharpen the weapon of 'eating'. However, the girls' sexuality is controlled by undergoing a similar rite - Female Genital Mutilation. This is meant to curtail women's sexuality. The 'eating', therefore, was left only for the one with a weapon of eating; the phallus (the above needs referencing). The implication in this metaphor is that a woman is for man's pleasure. The most important thing in a relationship between man and woman is for the woman to entertain the man by satisfying his sexual needs.

Although we can interpret the origin of the metaphor of eating through patriarchy, it is also true, according to Irigaray (1997) that it could be stemming from a woman's psychological formation. Although in most instances eating is reserved for the men, Mohamed presents a strange scenario where a woman is the one 'eating' the man. As Amina plans to meet Dude in *Asali Chungu*, the author reveals this clearly:

Alitaka wakutane faraha, pale yeye atakapomiliki uwanja wa matendo, atakapomteka mtoto yule kwa raha na ladha (Mohamed, 1977:90).

She wanted him to meet in privacy, where she would be the one in charge of the game, where she would mesmerize that 'child' with pleasure and taste.

Here, Dude is supposed to be passive while Amina 'works' on him. She perceives Dude as a child, and therefore vulnerable. The ironic presentation of a woman

approaching a young man for sexual gratification reveals the precarious position of the poor. In the above scenario, Amina vows to do the ‘eating’. And she vows to mesmerize the ‘child’ with pleasure and taste. Dude is referred to as a child because of his lack of experience in sexual matters. But, Mohamed deliberately highlights the fact that Amina does the eating because she is far much older than Dude. ‘Eating’ is insinuated through the Kiswahili word ‘ladha’ which means taste. This portrayal depicts the dynamic aspect of gender roles. A woman’s role in sexual matters is in this instance reversed. Although this is completely different from patriarchal thinking, Mohamed presents the reality in his society to highlight the changing nature of society. Dude’s poverty is vividly revealed through the fact that although he is much younger than Amina, he has to accept her demands. The traditional understanding of sex is contested through this metaphor to reveal the effect of poverty on society.

4.3 Licking of Honey

In stressing the importance of virginity, Mohamed (1977) symbolically refers to sexual intercourse with a virgin as ‘licking honey’. He writes:

Ile siku ya siku, miezi kumi na moja nyuma kabla Pili hajamwendea Zuberi kifua moto akamtobolea wazi ghushi zake na kumkumbusha wajibu wake, ndipo Zuberi alipoiramba asali (Mohamed, 1977:7).

It was that day, eleven months before Pili went to Zuberi. She was boiling with anger, to break her annoyance in reminding him of his duty. That was the day Zuberi ‘licked honey’.

Honey is sweet and licking it is enjoyable. It nourishes the body. It is viewed as medicinal in some communities. From this understanding, sexual intercourse with a virgin is viewed as enjoyable to the man; only comparable to licking honey. In this metaphor, it is the man who ‘licks’ the honey while the woman is the honey. This portrayal echoes the earlier one in which sex is metaphorically referred to as ‘eating’.

The techniques used to explain virginity have revealed the societal perception on the subject. Virginity is honoured and a woman who strives to maintain her virginity is respected in society. Unfortunately, the same society does not put measures in place to protect the women from losing it. Virginity can therefore be seen as one of the values imposed on women by patriarchy - meant to bring pleasure to men as expressed through the metaphor of ‘licking honey’.

4.4 Sexuality and Violence

Sexual violence is associated with hegemonic masculinity. According to Brittan (1997:115), sexuality and violence are explicit on television, in cinema, in novels

written by men, making it almost a necessary convention. He observes that most best-selling novels have rape scenes. Several theories have tried to explain why men value aggression. For example, new evolutionists claim that gender is not so much to be viewed as a social construction, but rather it is rooted in biological imperatives. Thus, aggression, for instance, is seen as being innate whereby dominant males pass on their genes to suitable female partners (Brittan, 1997:114).

Viewing aggression in this light therefore means that whatever is functional for baboons or chimpanzees is functional for human males, provided one accepts the evidence that there is indeed a real continuity between primate and human behaviour. This view is what is used to explain why men exhibit animalistic tendencies. If man's aggression is innate, then it means there is something in a man's make-up, which pushes him into acts of sexual assertiveness. Inferring from this, men are at the mercy of strong drives over which they have very little control.

However, sociologists take issue with this perspective in that they view masculinity as a product of socialization. To them, aggression is acquired in a context in which men learn that it is both rewarding and expected to behave in an assertive manner (Brittan, 1997:116). The implication is that a society's proper functioning depends upon the inculcation of aggressive patterns of behaviour in young boys. According to Kamaara (2003), gender conflict manifests itself in all forms of gender violence such as rape, incest and battering.

In African traditional societies, members were expected to observe moral laws, which were believed to have been given to them by God (Mbiti, 1975:175). These morals evolved in order to keep society in harmony and help members to do their duties and enjoy certain rights. Members of society were socialized especially during seclusion after initiation into adulthood. During this period, the initiates underwent physical training to overcome difficulties, pain, to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance and bravery especially for boys (Mbiti, 1975:94). It is during this period that boys were socialised in aggression and violence since these were viewed as masculine. They were also taught about matters related to rules and regulations governing sexual indulgence (Kenyatta, 1978:155). The authors under study present sexual aggression as both a product of socialization and genetics through the use of defamiliarization techniques. They elaborate how this is achieved in the novels under study.

5.0 The Chaff and the Bouncing of a Ball

According to Tong (1989:49), patriarchy does not require marital fidelity from the men. This is because she sees transition into monogamous family as a move by men to secure their wives' marital fidelity; thereby imposing an institution of compulsory monogamy on women. This was meant to ensure that men's material property was inherited by their blood sons. Looking at why prostitution is

associated with women in this light, it is possible to understand why the majority of prostitutes depicted in the texts under study are women. Put differently, most African traditional societies practice polygamy, which gives men the license to have many sexual partners and restricts women to a single partner (Mbiti, 1969). In *Kichwamaji*, in reference to Nyabusu the prostitute, Kezilahabi writes:

Hajapata wachumba. Nani ataoa makapi. Huyo sasa amekuwa mpira wa kudunda na kuacha hapo wengine pia wadunde (Kezilahabi, 1974:62).

She has not found someone to marry her. Who will marry that 'chaff'? That one now is a ball to be bounced and left for others who are interested in doing the same.

The defamiliarization devices, in this instance, are the references to prostitutes metaphorically as chaff and to prostitution as bouncing of a ball. Chaff is the remains after cereals have been polished, usually separated from the grains by winnowing. Although chaff may be perceived as useless by virtue of being separated from the valuable grains, it has some minor uses such as the lighting of fire. A number of messages are alluded to through this metaphor. A prostitute is depicted here as a woman whose 'nutrients' have been sucked out. Thus, prostitution erodes a woman's inner worth, but it does not mean that she is completely worthless.

Just the way chaff may have other minor uses, so does a prostitute. Kezilahabi seems to be highlighting the ambivalence about prostitution as a practice. Although a prostitute is not highly regarded in society, she is useful to men who need her for sexual gratification. Speaking from an Islamic background, Phillips and Jones (1985) blame prostitution on monogamy. To them, men hide in monogamy while prostituting since they have no legal binding with the women they relate with. They argue that polygamy forces men into fidelity by obliging them to take socio-economic responsibilities - for the fulfilment of their polygamous desires and provide protection for women and children. The assertion by Phillips and Jones may not be acceptable, but it is true that prostitution is driven by selfish desires whereby one is able to enjoy sex without shouldering the burden of providing for the women except for small gifts.

The fact that chaff is very light in weight and can be separated from grain by winnowing signifies the idea that prostitutes are weak and easily swayed. They are cheated easily and they engage in prostitution sometimes due to their inability to control their own sexual urges as well as their inability to turn down seduction.

A prostitute is compared to a ball, which is supposed to be bounced by one person at a time and left for another who would be interested in bouncing it. This extended metaphor compares sexual intercourse to a ball game. A ball without air cannot be useful in a game such as football. The fact that it can bounce and be left

for another person to continue with the game means that prostitution is a game, which is enjoyed by its players. A female prostitute, just like a ball full of air, is full of life and this is why men who associate with her find her worthy and enjoyable. Remotely, this seems to signal the fact that men enjoy sex with prostitutes and this could be the reason as to why they go back to it, even if the practice is unacceptable. Such a woman is an object of amusement for men who would like pleasure.

Through this metaphor, it is clear that Kezilahabi sees a woman prostitute as having no control over her sexual urges and is ready to entertain any man who is in need. A prostitute is not earmarked for marriage by anyone. Rather she is to 'serve' any man who needs her services. The two metaphors portray the society's view of female prostitutes. The strong metaphors give a clear picture of society's image of a female prostitute.

5.1 Bait, Hook and the Shark Metaphors

Many scholars have written about men being attracted by the physical appearance of women. Chinwizu (1990) for example states that:

...from puberty onwards, nothing disorganizes the male mind more quickly or thoroughly than the sight of the female body – beautiful. It triggers a craving, which overwhelms the 'males' self-protective instincts (Chinwizu, 1990:36).

Although I do not agree wholly with this statement, some of the defamiliarization techniques in reference to women seem to embody this perspective.

The beauty of a woman and her ability to attract a man is referred to in *Asali Chungu*. Biti Daudi comments about Amina's beauty by saying:

Uzuri wako ni chambo kwa mwanamume yeyote na utajiri wako ni ulimbo
(Mohamed, 1989:63).

Your beauty is the bait for any man and your wealth is the glue.

The above metaphor comments on a woman's beauty by alluding to fishing. A fisherman is armed with the bait and the hook before he goes fishing. The bait is used to attract fish, but as the fish goes for it, it gets hooked or glued and finally it is fished out of water. The fish, in this case, is the man who is foolishly attracted to the beauty of a woman. Just like the fish is trapped while foolishly pursuing the bait. This metaphor highlights the foolishness or gullibility of some men in relation to their sexual urges. They are attracted to the beauty of women and driven by their desire for sex. This makes them easy prey for women who use their wealth and beauty to keep them captive. The strong message behind this metaphor is that beautiful wealthy women are dangerous to poor young men.

6.0 Conclusion

In this paper I have analyzed defamiliarization techniques, which reveal femininity and masculinity. The concepts of good and evil have been depicted through the themes of gender, virginity, sex and prostitution. The analysis reveals the society's position on the images of girls and boys, women and men, sex and prostitution. Generally, the techniques utilized are intertextuality, metaphor, irony, sarcasm and symbolism.

Generally, both authors have utilized the metaphor more than other techniques especially in describing prostitution. The techniques enable the reader to decipher multiplicity of meanings. The analysis of the defamiliarization techniques in reference to sex and prostitution have revealed that the authors draw from patriarchal ideology and socio-cultural beliefs and practices. Illicit sex makes women unclean while prostitution erodes their dignity and self-esteem. For men, sex is for gratification and having multiple partners is heroic. From the analysis, it has been observed that the question of what constitutes good and evil occupy a central place in social interaction. The analysis also reveals that the concepts of good and evil is guided by patriarchal ideology in which men who engage in prostitution and irresponsible sexual behaviour are tolerated but not women. Women are expected to behave in certain manner by society and when they fail to fulfil this societal image they lose respect.

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