

**NARRATING THE FEMALE BODY IN TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S *THIS
MOURNABLE BODY***

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Declaration

This research project report is my own original work and has not been submitted for examination or award of a degree in any other university.

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Date.....

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This research project report has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the following instrumental people: my old man, Ayub Otieno Oludhe, I am forever grateful for the support and encouragement, Wuod Agoro. My mother, Dina Anyango Otieno, your love for education and support inspire me always, mamana. Mercy Onyango, your love and support inspire me; I dedicate this study to you too. Finally, Ladasha Mafri Otieno, I believe you will grow up to read this.

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Abstract

In *This Mournable Body* (2018), Tsitsi Dangarembga continues the story of her protagonist, Tambudzai, which began with *Nervous Conditions* (1986) and its sequel *The Book of Not* (2006). This study is inspired by the need to investigate the narration of the female body in postcolonial Zimbabwe as depicted in this latter work. The argument in this research is that the female body is portrayed on the backdrop of double colonization where gender and legacies of colonialism are the Zimbabwean woman's predicaments and sources of political resistance. This research employs the Russian-formalists' theory of Defamiliarization and postcolonial feminist theory of Double Colonization to interrogate various images of the female body in the text and how, aside from giving agency to the African woman, they relate the story of postcolonial Zimbabwe. The focus of this literary inquiry further spreads to author's point of view and its significance in narrating the female body. The results of this study reveal that the female body portrays women as subjects defined by suffering, mental breakdown, and as victims of racial inequalities, poverty and sexual objectification. In spite of all these hurdles, an analysis of the text demonstrates how, on the other hand, a new image of the woman in a postcolonial setting is created. Through transfiguration of the female body, this study notes that female characters possess the ability to transform their bodies by reconstructing the 'othered' bodies with attributes of strength, resilience and economic prosperity. Notably, the second person point of view is used in narration in the text as a convenient tool for imagining and constructing female agency. By using the pronoun of address 'you' in the narration, the narrating voice invites the reader or narratee to understand the protagonist, or to empathize with her as process of gaining insight in the prevailing conditions of the female body in the postcolony.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The female body is a central and defining motif in most postcolonial novels authored by female authors committed to narrating the African woman's story. Through narratives about the body, the African female novelist explores images of the African woman in most African communities. This body, based on analysis of most creative works, is represented by double enslavement or a double colonized subject. That is to say that, apart from being chained by oppressive socio-cultural beliefs such as abusive patriarchy, the female body is not exempted from the subjugation by colonialism and its legacies such as racism and capitalism that affect the entire postcolonial community.

By locating the female body within such social, economic and political space that is highly masculine and oppressive, the novelist expresses the prevailing concerns that the African woman grapple with, which in essence are the instigators of her physical and emotional pain. In so doing, the female body is reflected as subject that languishes in pain and suffering, confined within a society that is a composite of barricades towards her journey of attaining visibility, audibility, autonomy and growth, yet it still struggles to redefine and reconstruct itself. The point of view also becomes a strategic element in which the female body is related in the text. It is from the point of view of the author that readers become aware of the perspective of the text, which go ahead to influence their experiences and the narrative. Narrating the female body requires a strategic point of view, which ensures that the theme is properly conveyed to the narratee and other readers.

Notably, while narrating such stories, the resulting agency transcends the female body to a collective and metaphorical body. The author, arguably, creates a larger version of a body in pain and suffering that is bigger than her protagonist and characters. It could be representative of the body of a gender, community, nation or race. The images, characters, actions and roles are reflections of a larger domain of life and the world. When confronted with such texts, readers are encouraged to apply meticulous interpretation to unmask the dual nature of that the body embodies. Consequently, through such novels, the concerned female novelists are able to map the story of an individual and that of a larger force. It cannot be said whether this manifestation

is deliberate or purely coincidental. As literary critics, our prime goal is to confront such works of art with meticulous lenses of inquiry so that the double narrative is realized.

Tsitsi Dangarembga is among such authors whose works from an interpretive grid employs the images of a woman and a strategic narrative voice in narrating the female body. In reading *This Mournable Body*, I argue that by choosing the second person voice in narration, she relates a story of physical and emotional pain inflicted on the female body through her female protagonist, Tambudzai Sigauke, concurrently with that of a painful and suffering body of collective forces such as womanhood and the nation. The title of this novel is adapted and inverted from the essay *Unmournable Bodies* (2015) by Nigerian-American novelist, Teju Cole. Cole's work is a critique to global politics that is built on the premise of preferential response to global violence. In his view, some violent deaths in the world are more meaningful, and worthy of commemoration than others (Cole 5). However, Dangarembga, in this text, offers a rally call to the readers to observe the prevailing deplorable state of the 'mournable body'. It can be argued that she puts emphasis on the female body as a matter of urgent concern, and worth responding to in the fight to emancipate women in the postcolonial world from various forms of subjugation.

1.0.1 Background of the Author

Tsitsi Dangarembga is a Zimbabwean novelist and filmmaker. She was born in Bulawayo in colonial Rhodesia, on February 1959 but spent her early childhood and education in England. She returned to Zimbabwe with her family at the age six and continued with her education at Hartzell High School in a Rhodesian township of Umtali, present-day Umtare. While at Cambridge University, Dangarembga studied Medicine and returned to Rhodesia in 1980 just before the country got its independence to become present-day Zimbabwe. In addition to that, she also studied film in Germany at the Deutsche Film und Fernseh Akademie located in Berlin.

Dangarembga is renowned for her staunch advocacy for women rights, a position that she has conspicuously portrayed in her creative productions. Some of her films include *Neria* (1993), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *I Want a Wedding Dress* (2011) and a documentary, *Growing Stronger* (2005). Notably, all these productions are centered on the images of the Zimbabwean woman. In the spaces of the literary text, Dangarembga is renowned for her first novel, *Nervous Condition*

(1988) which won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize. She has also authored *The Book of Not* and in 2018, she launched *This Mournable Body* that comes as continuation of *Nervous Conditions*.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study sought to interrogate how female body has been narrated in *This Mournable Body*. By investigating the presentation of the images of the woman, evaluating their significance in narrating the story of the nation and interrogating the significance of the author's point of view in the text, my study focused on revealing how the female body intersects with elements of double colonization in post-independence Zimbabwe.

1.2 Objectives

This study was conducted guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify and evaluate images of the female body in *This Mournable Body*;
2. To investigate how the author's point of view narrates the female body.

1.3 Hypotheses

In order to conduct the study, the following hypotheses were premised:

1. *This Mournable Body* has images that narrate the female body;
2. The author's point of view is used to narrate the female body.

1.4 Justification

The African females' literary works have exposed the inherent contradictions and conflicts in societies of imbalanced and preferential treatments in gender and resultant pain to the African woman. Besides, such works have expressed that women are unhappy and chained despite accepting subjugating societal impositions. Through an interrogation of *This Mournable Body*, this study is significant because it maps out the deplorable status of African female body in post-independence. Further, the study is essential because it transcends the 'mournable body' to reclaiming dignity and womanhood. Notably, invisibility is a form of pain that surrounds the progressive African woman in most post-colonial African texts. In most cases, the role is arguably relegated to female African authors to give themselves the agency. According to Sola Owonibi in *African Literature and the Re-construction of Womanhood*, 'Heroic deeds of the

post-colonial African woman as a progressive agent of the historical process and political evolution of her society have been scarcely represented in African literature.’ (89). Resultantly, this literary inquiry on *This Mournable Body* brings the body of the African woman to the public surface for inquiry. In an era where emancipation and empowerment of the African woman has become a societal agenda, there is the begging significance of studying such works, which seeks to offer agency to the African womanhood. By subjecting this text to the literary investigation, I will gain enlightenment to the defining elements of the female body such as pain, struggles and concerns in a society that has for a long time had the woman as defeated and dominated gender.

This study is also grounded on the initial impressions that I had after my first reading of the text. To begin with, the novel adopts the second person voice unlike most texts that I have read. While reading it, I had the sense that I was the narrator because of the ‘you’ narrating voice employed. The second person narration is strange and rare in prose, and this triggered my interest to study it. I was convinced that the author had not employed the second person voice for the mere sake of it. Instead, there is underlying significance of the voice of narration in *This Mournable Body* which I feel obliged to interrogate.

Next, I developed a conviction that author uses the female body to metaphorically narrate the story of Zimbabwe. While at it, I could cite reflections of parallels between anti-heroine protagonist, Tambudzai Sigauke and postcolonial Zimbabwe. Evidently from the text, characters navigate through social and economic and political spaces and history of the country which instigate and rubber-stamp their respective forms of pain. It is from this initial comprehension of the text that I conceptualized this study, to map the female body as a reflection of the physical, social and political space of Zimbabwe, both as postcolonial subjects. My argument is that the ‘mournable bodies’ of the female protagonist and other characters have been used as reflections of larger forces that are equally languishing in pain. Therefore, by conducting this study, I sought to refine my initial idea about the dualistic nature of the body; the female body and the collective body (Zimbabwe) in the text to present a more solid and concrete argument in the text.

The title, *This Mournable Body*, is not only attractive but also thought-provoking and subjective. It refers the reader to ‘this body’ which she is about to relate in the text. Written using demonstrative pronoun ‘this,’ the author is figuratively showing the reader the ‘mournable body.’ As a form of agency, Dangarembga ensures that she shows the reader the ‘mournable’ and

painful state of the female body. The corpse motif is dominant in the novel, and coupled with a strong demonstrative pronoun ‘this,’ that is irresistible for literary inquiry. Besides, Tambudzai’s assertion of her own invisibility as an instigator of her pain woman reinforces this assertion. She says, ‘They never see me. It doesn’t make any difference that they are. Nobody sees me’ (Dangarembga 107). These ideas have prompted me to carry out this study where I intend to investigate the prevailing state of the female body in the text and what has contributed to its ‘mournable’ condition.

1.5 Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Female Body

For the purpose of this project, female body is conceptualized within postcolonial grid as a subject of conquest, control and manipulation by a force that is perceived to be the strongest. The human body has been studied and deconstructed as a ruling institution with its autonomy being a subject of challenge. Colonialism led to the creation of a new meaning of the body defined as the colonized who is subdued and silenced by the colonizer. As a result, my study contextualizes the female body as the subdued economic, social and political statuses of womanhood within a hegemonic cultural (patriarchy) and post-independence space (racism, capitalism, poverty). Female body in this study, therefore, is what it implies to being a woman in a patriarchal and post-independence hegemony that defines the roles and space occupied by the female gender and the capacity to rebel from these oppressive and hegemonic chains.

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1.5.2 Internal Exile

This study adopts Ketu Katrak’s concept of exile in elucidating the female body as a site of political resistance. According to Katrak, internal exile is the situation where the female body disconnects itself, as if it does not belong to it and lacks agency (2). During exile, the female body demonstrates resistance against the sources of her own predicament such as patriarchy through several strategies. These strategies include madness, silence, speech and others which allow the woman to protest against the harsh postcolonial environment. Thus, my study borrows from this concept to elucidate the protagonist’s mental instability as a form of internal exile and resistance to double colonization.

1.5.3 Transfiguration

My study hinges the concept of transfiguration from postcolonial feminist discourse on identity recreation. I borrow my understanding from Elleke Boehmer who argues that during transfiguration, the female body figures the ‘othered’ and already figured body (269). The implication is that transfiguration is a process where the female body redefines, refigures and recreates a new identity that is different from the one that is socially ascribed. It is a process of gaining autonomy by rebuilding the self on attributes that are essential in overcoming the sources of the body’s predicaments. It can also be understood as a form of resistance to the prescribed socio-cultural values that have denied the female body the independence of voice, choice and control.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, this study analyzes the images of the woman as presented in the text to narrate the female body. Through the characters, I explore the portrayal of female characters, their roles, space and actions in the postcolonial textual world. This project was also conducted by interpreting the portrayed images of the nation and how the female body, alongside how female body is representative of the nation’s body. The study also focuses on the second person narration, and its analysis as a vital tool in narrating the female body in a postcolonial fictional world created by the author.

1.7 Literature Review

Since *This Mournable Body* is a recently published novel, 2018, it had not received much critical attention at the time of writing this project. Thus, this literature review is centered on critical and literary reflection on Dangarembga’s other works, particularly *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*, which foreground *This Mournable Body*. Additionally, a review of other theoretical and critical works on gender, postcolonial and politics of the female body is prioritized in this section to offer the study an interpretive grip and illustrate the gap that it seeks to fill.

Tsitsi Dangarembga grounds her works on the postcolonial setting of Zimbabwe. Carolyn Martin Shaw offers an anthropological and critique to Dangarembga’s debutant novel, *Nervous Condition* and play *She No Longer Weeps* in ‘*You had a daughter, but I am becoming a woman*’ in which she argues that sexuality and femininity are constructed in the postcolonial setup of her

works. Furthermore, she posits that a daughter is confined in the struggle for to define her identity which is independent of the father and the cultural codes (Shaw 8). This implies that the woman seeks to redefine herself and create a new image of the self that is not determined by cultural obligations and patriarchy. Shaw studies the above creative works by Dangarembga as avenues in which the African daughter (created by patriarchy and cultural ascriptions) offers resistance to the forces which hitherto have defined her personage in order to gain a new identity as a woman.

In addition to that, Shaw asserts that Dangarembga advocate for independence for women through her female characters. She is also keen to note the vulnerability, awful responsibility and loneliness that accompany the process of self-identification (Shaw 8). This article, therefore, is centered on the 'feminist consciousness' (Shaw 23) which entails the implication of becoming a 'woman' under the confinement of violent postcolonial context primarily inscribed by cultural codes and patriarchy. Shaw's analysis, by contrast, focuses on the anthropological foregrounding of women's oppression in a postcolonial setting by analyzing works whose historical setting is in the colonial period in Zimbabwe. My study seeks to further this discussion by incorporating aspects of colonial legacies as crucial forces that subjugate the woman in postcolonial Zimbabwe even after colonialism as demonstrated in the text.

In his unpublished MA thesis titled *A Feminist Analysis of Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, Mbatha offers a critique of 'African patriarchy' of the novel. The project examines the manifestation of patriarchy in the form of subaltern position of women. Mbatha posits that the novel approaches colonialism as a double-edged sword where it encompasses a discourse of western modernity such as education which then is an avenue to challenge patriarchy in the novel (36). On the other hand, the study approaches colonialism through colonial education as a form of alienation on the African subject from his or her culture which has disastrous psychological repercussions. It is interesting to note that in as much as Mbatha addresses colonialism alongside patriarchy in analysis of Dangarembga's debutant novel, the essence of double colonization of the female body is not highlighted clearly. Colonialism, in this case is regarded as a source of alienation of the subject and avenue to challenge patriarchy. My study will offer meticulous analysis on different perspectives of colonialism through its fragments such

as racism and xenophobia and capitalism in *This Mournable Body* to expose them as captors of female body in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Other scholars have offered a cultural consideration of Dangarembga's works. Ghania Ouahmiche and Lemya Boughouas in their article *Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions: A Quest into the Time-Honoured Mindsets about Feminineness Scuffle in the Context of Colonization and Partriarchy* stipulates that Dangarembga portrays the feminine internal conflict which is heavily inclined by patriachal fears from 'recalcitrant, unrully and insurbodinate women' (104). The authors take into consideration that *Nervous Conditions* highlights what they term as 'opaque facets' of a patriarchal system that assert the domination of women as a secondary gender group. The publication posits that the hegemonic male gender asserts itself as the commanders and appropriators of the female gender through the reinforcement of culture. In so doing, a conflict emerges where the women attempt to discover a spot for themselves in escape from this subservience (Ouahmiche and Boughouas 104). Notably, unlike Shaw (2007), this article transcends the discussion on the role of partriachal societies on female oppression and focus on an entire sociological perspective of the colonial culture that denigrate womanhood. Ouahmiche and Boughouas's study dwells on a colonial period, certainly, between 1960s and 1970s before Zimbabwe's independence in elucidating the subjugation of the female body in a colonial culture. By analyzing the same theme in *This Mournable Body*, my study comes out unique by offering a critique to the oppressed female body in the post-independence Zimbabwe which is an entirely a different period with unique circumstances that the subject has to encounter.

Yuleth Chigwedere employs Frantz Fanon's concept of psychology of the colonized in *Black Skin White Mask* in portraying Dangarembga's struggle with sense of idenity as an inheritance of colonialism. In his argument, this scholar asserts that colonialism left a cultural scar on the colonized, leaving the subject traumatized which then is carried as a legacy in the postcolonial era. The work uses *The Book of Not* to capture the history of psychological violence which was visible in the transformation of Zimbabwe from colonial Rhodesia. These critics alludes to the colonized body being in a 'state of permanent tension' (Fanon 52) which higlights the psychological ramification on Tambudzai in *The Book of Not*. She posits,

Tambu fails to get past her negativity and does not succeed in appropriately placing herself within the white space of the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart.... This leads to her suffering from depression as her mind submerges under the pressure of assimilation (Chigwedere 170).

Chigwedere manages to locate the female body within the psychosocial oppressions inherited from the culture colonialism in Zimbabwe as her major focus of argument. In so doing, her work does not offer explanation on the impact of gender inequalities on the mental state of the same protagonist, which my study highly considers in explaining as conceptualization of double colonization of the postcolonial woman in Zimbabwe.

Another critic who applies Fanon's theory in interpreting Dangarembga's works is Charles Sugnet in his essay, *The Colonized Women: Accommodation and the Sources of Resistance*. In this article, he alludes to Fanon's theorization of violence in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth* where the 'native' (colonial subject) is a historical subject that is socialized by the colonial situation and culture. He , points out that, 'Dangarembga redeploys Fanon's concept to show that 'women' like 'natives' is not natural but is a historical artefact constructed by oppressive social situation' (Sugnet 37). This author maps hegemonic socio-cultural forces in the colonial Rhodesia in 1970s, when *Nervous Conditions* is set, as insitgators of violence on women, which the female characters such as Tambudzai and Nyasha resist by equally meting violence on their male oppressors. Thus, violence become a formidable weapon of resistance which the woman as a colonial subject can rely on to resist abusive patriarchy. Other forms of resistance and agency cited in this work include solidarity among women, 'madness,' developing a sense of pride in the female body and the landscape to redefine the woman's role in colonial Rhodesia. Importantly, Sugnet portrays Tambudzai as a female character who aspires not to drown in alienation from her culture as depicted through male characters, Nhamo and Babamukuru, as she attempts to gain upward mobility, socially and economically (38). By analyzing the images of the female body in *This Mournable Body*, my investigation seeks to find out the fate of Tambudzai (now a grown up), who Sugnet puts a positive prophetic emphasis on her future in his analysis.

In his unpublished MA thesis titled *The Representation of Marginalized Voices and Trauma in Selected Novels of Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yvonne Vera*, Weston Sisimayi asserts that

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Dangarembga addresses race, gender and class that affect women in postcolonial Zimbabwe in *Nervous Conditions* and the *The Book of Not*. Additionally, this thesis asserts that oppressions that are linked to colonialism such as classism and race are responsible for silent voices of the postcolonial woman in Zimbabwe, which generates trauma (Sisimayi 24). Thus, the project illustrates the concept of double colonization in the two works and associate it with marginalization of the women. The postcolonial setting in Zimbabwe is accused of racial discrimination and gender inequalities, which compound the oppression of women. My study on *This Mournable Body* offers a temporal effect of double colonization on the female body. While *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not* are set in colonial Rhodesia, *This Mournable Body* transcends from the post-independence to the millenium. My argument is that since it comes after the initial two texts, *This Mournable Body* embodies difference in time as an aspect of setting, which introduces new dynamics and influences of double colonization whose intrigues are worth a critical literary inquiry.

Randi Jean Rodgers's unpublished MA thesis explores the complex position which African women face amidst detrimental effects of colonization that intersects with traditional patriarchal structures. *Nervous Conditions*, according to this thesis, 'Centers on Tambu, a young woman finding her independence in the mids of turmoil and exterior forces that seek to keep her submissive and under their dominance' (Rodgers 4). This work further asserts that Tambu as the protagonist in the sequel, *The Book of Not*, is now what the readers expect her to be and is instead treated by the author as a 'mimic with mediocre life and career' (Rodgers 5). The scholar proclaims legacies of colonialism and cultural codes such as patriarchy as the loci for Tambudzai's ebbing in the two works. Notably, Rodgers puts more emphasis on education as an avenue through which the oppressed woman manages to redefine her identity at the historical period when the above novels were written (between 60s to 80s). My study transcends this period to when postcolonial Zimbabwe approaches the milenium, implying that the study on *This Mournable Body* is based on a female body in a relatively new socio-cultural environment compared to the one in the aforementioned works.

Lily G. N. Mabura in *Black Women Walking Zimbabwe* argues that Dangarembga's protagonist in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*, employs the concept of 'landscape' as a recognition of the world around her and the space and role that she has to occupy in it. Landscape, therefore,

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becomes a natural world around us which constitutes largely cultural geography (Mabura 93). The argument is that the gazing of landscape implies something different to a woman than it often does to a man. In gazing the landscape, this scholar argues, a woman positions herself and fits in it, and is able to redefine herself and fit in the society. Tambudzai's love for nature in *Nervous Conditions* and conceptualization of Unhu philosophy in *The Book of Not* are exemplified by this critic as a way in which the female protagonist seeks a new identification of the self in an oppressive patriarchal space through landscape (Mabura 94). This article offers the political potential of the female body to resist socially ascribed identifications in a geographical view. My study seeks to build on this by incorporating other aspects of resistance such as exile and defying social expectations that the 'volatile bodies' (to use Elizabeth Grosz's term) employ in transfiguring the 'othered' body.

John Ebimobewe Yesibo interrogates the creation of a new image of the woman in his article *Female Self-Definition and Determination in Tsitsi Dangarembga's She No Longer Weeps*. His argument is anchored on the basis that in a patriarchal culture, men define female bodies on their biological, sexual and reproductive abilities (Yesibo 11). Using Dangarembga's play, *She No Longer Weeps*, Yesibo interrogates the author's concern with patriarchal paradigms that work towards hemlining the woman. Focus is placed on the analysis of the protagonist, Martha, who strives for self identification against the grains of powerful patriarchal forces. Such forces, Yesibo argues, paint a picture where the woman is denigrated within a culture where the man is deemed as the locus. He further posits,

In the play, Martha demonstrated self-assertiveness by defying patriarchal values, beliefs, negative and nihilistic prejudices which conspire to hemline the female gender. She boldly refuses to be cocooned in the maelstrom of patriarchy, in a culture which valorizes male sexual potency as social potency (Yesibo 14).

She No Longer Weeps, evidently, foregrounds Dangarembga's concern for self-identification and autonomy of the female body in a masculine space which is a dominant motif in her novels. By working against the grains of patriarchal ascriptions of the female body, Yesibo argues that Dangarembga's protagonist exercise the revolutionary potential of an oppressed woman in the society. Yesibo's critique is limiting because it focuses on Dangarembga as a playwright and her

protagonist in addressing the ideology of female self-identification and determination. It would be interesting to study how this idea is embodied in her most recent prose work, *This Mournable Body*, and this is where my study comes in.

Choice and change become dominant aspects in which Odoi, Lesibana and Klur's study reveal the avenue of reconfiguring the oppressed body in Dangarembga's works. The argument in this article is that *Nervous Conditions* present strong female characters through Nyasha and Lucia opposed to the docile Maiguru and Ma' Shingayi. According to these scholars, '*Nervous Conditions* constructs for us realistic female portraits on the persons of Lucia and Nyasha who take advantage of the choices in their lives to bring about changes in male dominated world even if the choices are limited' (Odoi, Lesibana and Klur 157).

The authors assert that Dangarembga writes with great conviction and passion with regards to the space that the woman occupies in the society through the two characters. Notably, these critics ignore or overlook Tambudzai, the protagonist in the novel, and perceives her as weak. By focusing on the strengths of Nyasha and Lucia, and their ability of free will, Tambudzai is placed at the periphery and not likely to be considered as a politically active female body. In my project, I intend to study how the protagonist, perceived as a 'weak' character by these scholars, embodies resilience and agency to redefine and reconfigure her body through other methods such as internal exile.

Postcolonial scholar, Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Mask*, interrogates the psychological impacts of colonialism on the subject. Fanon's places high premium on racial relations between the colonial master and the colonized, exposing the inherent hierarchical contradictions and conflicts that result from such relations. According to Fanon, colonial culture produces a colonial subject who is overwhelmed by the desire to be white because the society reinforces the inferiority of the colonial subject (100). He argues more,

'In a society that proclaims its superiority of one race; to the identical degree in which that society creates difficulty for him (colonial subject), he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation' (Fanon, 100).

Fanon theorizes psychological distress of the colonial subject as a legacy of colonialism. The same argument has been furthered by literary interpretations of Dangarembga's works in some of

the works reviewed in this section. However, what Fanon fails to capture in his postcolonial studies psychosociological dimensions of the colonized is the issue of gender. He focuses on race as a sociological perspective of life. Gender, as a concern has been eluded and overlooked by most postcolonial scholars in their analysis of postcolonial subjects and environments. My investigation on *This Mournable Body* will offer in-depth analysis on how gender inequalities intersect with racial inequalities to produce a postcolonial subject who suffers based on her gender and race.

Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies* traces the concept of the body in the conventional philosophies. Philosophers such as Plato and Descartes argued that a human being exists in a dual dimension of the mind and the body. The mind controls the body, and it is evident that a hierarchical order between the two is formed where the body assumes the weaker role. This scholar posits that, 'Most relevant here is the correlation and association between male and female, where mad and mind, woman and body, become representationally aligned (Grosz 4). Traditional philosophers established a patriarchal relationship between the mind and the body. This way, Grosz alludes to Locke who asserts that given this male and female correlation between the body and the mind, the body becomes visible as a possession of the mind, thus a property of a subject. As a result, patriarchal oppression justifies itself where there is a fixed concept of connecting the body to the woman (Grosz 14). The body, according to Grosz, must be seen at the center of all political actions that seeks to emancipate it from the hegemonic action of the mind. In so doing, it emerges as a form of resistance.

A similar argument is upheld by Ketu H. Katrak in her book *Politics of the Female Body*. In particularly her essay, *Theorizing a Politics of the Female Body: Language and Resistance*, she asserts that, 'The female body is in a state of exile including self-exile and self-censorship, outsideness, and un-belonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy' (Katrak 2). This entails the literal and the metaphoric exile from patriarchy which has objectified and colonized the body. Internalized exile, in her view, is seen when the body aspires to disconnect from itself, in a manner likely to suggest that it does not belong to it or lacks agency. By using Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition*, Katrak exemplifies how colonial education, cultural practices, and racial relations create alienation of the female body (2). This marks the birth of resistance in the body by expressing defiance to the above institutions that have subjugated it.

In spite of the limiting scholarly discussions on *This Mournable Body*, at the time of this study, several reviews had been written about the novel which pivots the gap established by my research. Reviewing the novel for *The New York Times*, Alexandra Fuller establishes the link between *Nervous Conditions* and *This Mournable Body*. It is obvious that she has not read *The Book of Not* or is oblivious of its existence. She locates the protagonist in despair who triumphs over as indicators of victory over her oppressors. Fuller points out that, 'At every turn, the humiliations pile on: the exhausting efforts to find employment, the terrible loneliness of a person who has defied her family's African traditions only to find Western ones no less limiting' (Fuller). This review acknowledges that the protagonist is confronted by African patriarchy and western forces. Nevertheless, she presents an insightful understanding of *This Mournable Body* as 'a story of triumph and not despair' (Fuller). My study is distinct because it asserts double colonization as the primary cause of the female body's predicament.

Leah Mirakhor in her review for the *Book Forum* asserts that *This Mournable Body* depicts the life of Tambudzai attempting an escape from entangled forces of patriarchy, neocolonialism, 'poverty and the country's history. Unlike Fuller, she boldly pin points the aspects of double colonization which are detrimental to the protagonist's upward mobility in a neocolonial space. The review asserts that, 'While Tambu is well educated and ferociously self-determined, Dangarembga shows that these qualities alone are not enough for her to be successful' (Mirakhor). Also, the review highlights the interplay between poverty and blackness as a concern of the novel to highlight the influence of race on the progress of a black woman in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Fungai Tichawangana in *Chicago Tribune* posits that the protagonist in *This Mournable Body*, is portrayed as close to self-destruction as grapples with a mental fight against the sources and demons of her failure and poverty. Unlike Fuller, Tichawangana is able to trace the protagonist in *The Book of Not* which then she uses to point out that *This Mournable Body* is a story of Zimbabwe as a nation. The review sets parallels between the protagonist and Zimbabwe's history. It proclaims that, 'Like the period of Zimbabwe's history this story is set in, the pain, false hopes and dashed enthusiasm come in large doses and victory lies at a very long road' (Tichawangana). My study seeks to locate and expose the parallels between the female characters and Zimbabwe's history by studying the various images depicted in the text.

In conclusion, this section has reviewed several published and reputable scholarly works on Tsitsi Dangarembga's novels, which foreground *This Mournable Body*. Insight into *Nervous Conditions* (1986) and *The Book of Not* (2006) are meticulously reviewed in this section because these two works offer the basis of understanding *This Mournable Body*. The review has elucidated how Dangarembga's works stress on female agency within the chains of a double colonization in colonial Rhodesia between 1960s and 1980s. Further, this section has interrogated several book reviews on *This Mournable Body* from reputable sources in light of the fact that there is absence of scholarly publications of analysis of the text at the time when this project is conducted. In addition to that, this section has scrutinized theoretical debates on female body within postcolonial interpretive grids to offer a gap that justifies this literary inquiry. Thus, my investigation on *This Mournable Body* offers freshness of the concept of double colonization of the African woman by the essence that the novel is not only recently published but by the fact that the storyline is set in a different temporal space, post-independence Zimbabwe transcending to the millennium. Thus, this project approaches double colonization by how it manifests in the neocolonial or post-independence era of the textual world, thus, offering new dynamics in understanding the female body within a modern era which previous studies on Dangarembga's have failed to capture.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored two theories. First, I employed the postcolonial feminist theory of Double Colonization to conduct a literary postmortem on Dangarembga's 'mournable body.' Secondly, this project adopted the Russian formalist theory of Defamiliarization to offer an interpretive grid for analysis of the images of the female body and the nation in the text. It is also within the same theoretical grid that this study concludes that the second person point of view is an estrangement strategy.

Postcolonial feminist theories are primarily concerned with the representation of the woman in the third world. They are responses to the Western feminism and philosophical thoughts that have been cited as inadequate to address the concerns of the postcolonial woman. Feminism entirely has been faulted for focusing predominantly on the experiences of the Western (white) woman. As a result, postcolonial feminist theories scrutinize the representation of the woman in both anti-colonial and postcolonial discourses. Double Colonization is a concept introduced by

Kristen Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford in their book, *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Postcolonial Women's Writing (1986)*, to address the concerns and experiences of the postcolonial woman.

The postcolonial woman, according to Petersen and Holst, suffer from 'double colonization.' This implies that women in the postcolonial space simultaneously experience the oppression of colonialism (or effects its effects after independence) and patriarchy. As a result, the woman is characterized in twofold annexation; imperialism and male dominance. This prompts the postcolonial woman to offer resistance not only as the colonial subject but also as a woman. In such form of colonization or enslavement, Petersen and Rutherford argue that even the woman's brother ceases being her accomplice and morphs into her oppressor. As a result, the brother exploits the woman by misrepresenting her in the nationalist discourses as he attempts to free himself from the colonizer whom he shares with her sister (Tyagi 45) In addition to that, the postcolonial woman also suffer from misrepresentation by the Western feminist movements that ignore her colonial past, go silent on her racial and cultural plights.

Double Colonization was essential in this study as a tool of investigating the female body. Dangarembga's idea of a 'mournable body' implies that the public body of the woman has been molested into a corpse. Besides, this theory assisted in mapping the predicaments of the female characters that Dangarembga presents, especially her protagonist, Tambudzai. Set after independence of the colonial Rhodesia, there is evidence that the new country, Zimbabwe, and the society have inherited the hegemonic colonial attitudes in addition to oppressive patriarchy which places the female characters in a twofold colonization. Thus, double colonization assisted in conducting literary 'postmortem' on the 'mournable body' by mapping the interactions of the postcolonial woman within forces of patriarchy and fragments of imperialism (neocolonialism) in the society.

Defamiliarization was introduced by Russian formalist thinker, Viktor Shklovsky in his article *Art as a Technique (1917)*. This theory is also referred to as estrangement, and it aims to make the reader see familiar things in a strange and unfamiliar way. The major argument is that by making the object appear in a strange way, it renews the perception and the awareness in the beholder, which is beyond the **automized** schemes. According to Shklovsky, art is thinking in

Comment [DT4]: Did you mean 'atomized'?

images. Herein, art becomes a way of experiencing the artfulness of the object. We pay attention to how artful the object is crafted. In other words, the object takes a subsidiary role. He argues,

The purpose of art is to impart sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged (Shklovsky 16).

Defamiliarization, therefore, ensures that language of art is different from the ordinary language. While the everyday language is purposed for communication, estrangement ensures that literary language is paramount and pays little attention to communication. As a result, the language of literature comes in a constructed quality and makes the reader see things differently. Language is crafted in new ways and fashions that are unfamiliar to make it more artistic. The theory is best used in analysis of images and figurative language that are employed in a text. I intend to apply defamiliarization in the analysis of the images of the nation used in *This Mournable Body*. The author has employed the second person narration which in essence is a defamiliarization strategy to give agency to the female body. These images and the point of view require a prolonged perception for in-depth understanding which this study has offered.

1.9 Research Methodology

This study focused on how the female body has been portrayed in the text. It is premised on the argument that the text employs images of the woman in a postcolonial space and the narrative voice to give agency to the female body. In so doing, it sought to conduct a literary 'postmortem' on the narrator's 'mournable body.' To achieve my objectives, this academic activity encompassed a reading of the text. The first and second reading was to map and acquaint myself with the narrator, other characters and the storyline. The third and fourth reading allowed me to map the bodily conditions as portrayed in the text. Analysis of the text will be based on my interpretation guided by the prescribed theories. Postcolonial feminist theory of Double Colonization was essential in elucidating the prevailing state of the female body while the theory of Defamiliarization was significant in understanding and interpreting the female body as a representation of the nation's body. This project also relied on reading reputable secondary

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sources to broaden my arguments and insight on the topic concurrently with locating my study within existing scholarly debates.

CHAPTER TWO: IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING IMAGES OF THE FEMALE BODY IN *THIS MOURNABLE BODY*

2.0 Introduction

The title, *This Mournable Body* is metaphorical of the conditions that the female body has become from the pre-colonial to post-independence Africa. The female body as a sight of oppression has been battered to a point of lifelessness. It is essentially dead because of the degradation that patriarchy and fragments of colonialism have meted on it in what highlights the concept of double colonization. *This Mournable Body* strives to create the images of the female body as a form of telling the African woman's story. The understanding of the concept of 'being a woman in the postcolonial African space' in the text is facilitated by the female body being compared to a corpse, and this image is provoked in the title of the novel through the words 'mournable body' so that the reader can cite the extent of damage that the society has done on the African woman. The text presents images of the suffering woman and discerns the causes of her suffering.

It is also within the text that new images of the female body are created. The new woman here is one that gives herself agency through resistance to the sources of her own downfall in the society. By creating two female bodies that are binary oppositions to each other, the text elucidates how the African woman has suffered and how she can overcome the social barriers which have hitherto been sources of her predicament and 'mournable body' status. In so doing, *This Mournable Body*, thus, offers agency to African female body by telling her story and building a platform for resistance in a postcolonial environment.

Postcolonial feminist scholars such as Ketu H. Katrak in *Politics of the Female Body* conceptualize the woman in postcolonial fiction as a colonized body. The colonization in this case is depicted by female characters and occurs in twofold; she is made inferior by the nature of her sex and race (Tyagi 45). Double colonization, therefore, has been a dominant motif in most postcolonial prose all over the world including Africa. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* (2018) completes the trilogy that began with *Nervous Conditions* (1986) and *The Book of Not* (2006) as the sequel, where she portrays the postcolonial African woman grappling through colonial and patriarchal forces in her quest to gain agency for the female body. Using Tambudzai

Sigauke as the protagonist, Dangarembga reflects the impacts of racial and sexual politics on the female body in the colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Mask* alludes to M. Manonni's analogy colonial subject in Malagasy who has to go through a journey of identifying the self within the colonial culture. The Malagasy begins by realizing that he is a man, and later knows that men are divided into whites and blacks (Fanon 97). The female body follows almost a similar path in self-identification; however, her path is more complicated. First, she has to realize that she is a human being, and human beings are divided into men and women. Later on, she discovers that she is either white or black. This is the essence of double colonization which inflicts a psychological pain on the subject.

Tambudzai is carefully crafted by Dangarembga to elucidate on the oppressive experiences that the female body encompasses in a postcolonial society. Along with other female characters in the three texts, they portray the essence of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Thus, in *This Mournable Body*, the female body is depicted as a sight for the women's oppression and in which only the woman has to showcase resistance to escape from the chains of patriarchy and legacy of colonialism such as racism, xenophobia and capitalism

2.1 The African Woman as a Body of Suffering

Becoming a woman in a space that has socio-cultural values that relegate the female gender to a dominated zone and a postcolonial society involves pain and suffering. The female characters in *This Mournable Body* experience various forms of sufferings from different or unrelated experiences. The pains and suffering are responsible for their current state. Tambudzai, in the first chapter of the text, is presented in front of a mirror where she examines the state of her body. The mirror is metaphorical in that it is a referential point where the female body is examined and assessed. It offers the image of what the woman has become vis-à-vis what she was in the past which is realized through the character's own initiative of recall. In *Postcolonial Representations*, Françoise Lionnet asserts that:

'If the subject's self-image is widely at variance with the social and cultural reality that surrounds her, if the reality is a mirror that casts back

nothing but distorted reflections, the subject finds herself in a tragic impasse' (99).

It is this tragic impasse that Tambudzai finds herself confined in and it is worsened by the image that she sees in the mirror which shows the hallmark of a suffering female body. As a result, the protagonist presents her past life through recall as a protagonist in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not* which then becomes essential in understanding her in the present. *This Mournable Body* begins with a scene where the protagonist has to view her own image in the mirror, implying that the text is an immediate form of self-assessment of the female body that has undergone oppressions.

The image of the female body is displeasing even to the woman herself because it has been battered by the post-colonial space and cultural values such as patriarchy beyond recognition. Tambudzai cannot look at herself in the mirror because the reflection is not who she believes that she is and was meant to be. She observes, 'There, the fish stares back at you out of purplish eye sockets. Its mouth gaping, cheeks dropping as though under the weight of monstrous scales. You cannot look at yourself' (Dangarembga 18).

The impression given above is of a female body that is in physical state of despair. Pain and suffering have reduced Tambudzai's feminine body to a deteriorated condition which inflicts self-shame. Her body is compared to that of a fish because it is rough, dry and scaly. The animal imagery of a fish is very significant here in presenting the prevailing physical and emotional circumstance of the female body. Patriarchy and post-colonial fragments such as racism and capitalism are responsible for the conversion of the female body to that of an 'animal'. As Tambudzai looks at her body which has gone through such experiences and equates it to that of an animal. She imagines that she is a skinny fish (Dangarembga 18). This is the state of the female body which the story is premised on, and that is why it has to be presented first in the novel. It is a strategy in which the text builds a case for the female body; a body in physical and emotional despair which can only be equated to an animal. Henceforth, all experiences of the female characters take this precedence of pain and suffering, and association to animal imagery.

The experiences that Tambudzai goes through, which contribute to her state, can be approached into two ways; by making references to *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not* and flashbacks

that are present in *This Mournable Body*. As she contemplates suicide, Tambudzai examines her state in the postcolonial space. It is a moment for her to interrogate how her life turned out to be a 'disappointment.' In spite of her university education, 'she is jobless and lack sustaining family bonds' (Dangarembga 37) because she is unmarried and been running away from her poverty stricken family and patriarchal village as portrayed in the *Book of Not* which threatened to consume her being in *Nervous Condition*.

You are concerned you will start thinking of ending it all, having nothing to carry on for... How, with your education, do you come to be more needy than your mother? End less than a woman so dashed down by life that she tried to lean on her second daughter- a daughter who requires support herself, after losing her leg in the war and now fends for two liberation struggle babies, your nieces... Your uncle, who intervened to keep you from your mother's fate by sending you to school is in a wheelchair, made a casualty of Independence by a stray bullet (Dangarembga 37-38).

The sources of Tambudzai's predicament are highlighted in the above excerpt from *This Mournable* which recalls some of the defining incidents in *Nervous Condition* and *The Book of Not*. Tambudzai's education was an afterthought, and was facilitated by her uncle, Babamukuru, after the death of her brother, who had been preferred to her for the western education. She therefore came as unlikely option and was given the western education which was preserved for male children in the society. Tambudzai is a victim of a colonial society that 'othered' the female gender with priority given to the male gender. Thus, her quest for intellectual achievement aims at not only escaping the poverty in her village and her mother who constantly mocks this journey but also to emancipate herself from the chains of patriarchy. Unfortunately, Tambudzai's education has not yielded the success that she aimed at. Despite her university education, she is unemployed and is a victim of both race and gender discrimination that occur in the postcolonial and multiracial Zimbabwe's workplace.

Nyasha, Tambudzai's cousin, is also another woman whose life is defined by failure to achieve materially after long periods of studying. Unlike Tambudzai, Nyasha's parents are economically stable and vastly educated in the colonial times, with master's degree from the United Kingdom. Tambudzai argues that in spite of such privileges, Nyasha has ended up hopeless and jobless like

her. At this point, the protagonist is welcomed into a new world of realities which is described as a 'realm of impossibilities.' She states, 'You have entered in a new realm of impossibility, worse even than the discovery that your cousin has been placed on the slide to impoverishment, in spite of her degrees in Europe' (Dangarembga 130).

In Tambudzai's perspective, failure and the resulting pain and suffering are only designated for people from a humble background like her. Somehow, her suffering should be more understandable than that of Nyasha. Her education began with immense difficulties as demonstrated in *Nervous Condition* where she grows maize and sells to fund her school fee as a little girl. The colonial education system favoured boys over girls (Stratton 80) and this is evidently depicted in Tambudzai's difficult education path. Conversely, Nyasha's education begins in Europe. Later she moves to Mission school and proceeds to Europe for her two degrees. Tambudzai perceives Nyasha as a woman who always win and gets everything because of her background. According to Tambudzai Nyasha is not supposed to fail (Dangarembga 105) because of the above privileges. It becomes a shocking experience for her that despite this 'coveted' educational milestone that Nyasha has gone through, as well as her marriage to a white man, she languishes in abject poverty just like her. Success and material achievement for the black woman in Zimbabwe, thus, becomes difficult to achieve even with education at advanced level.

The African woman portrayed through Tambudzai bears the pain that comes with failure. In Tambudzai's view, education becomes the only hope that a woman can use to transcend social and economic barriers. It becomes the ladder for social mobility that will rescue her from her predicaments that have been caused by her gender and impoverished background. She has a glorious past that contradicts her present state and this fact haunts her. She is traumatized that she lacks the things that makes her better after all the struggles that she has been through. She admits that she is ashamed of herself and the personage that she has ended up being (Dangarembga 108). She wants the things that make her better which she cannot have because she is unemployed, living in a ladies' hostel, lack any family bond and is lonely. Her past becomes the referential point for her present and at the same time the source of her emotional pain.

Based on her experiences, Tambudzai is presented as a victim of racism that has marred the postcolonial culture of Zimbabwe. The colonial Rhodesia was stratified in to races. Being a black girl, Tambudzai faced racial prejudice while studying in the multiracial Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart. The irony is that despite being a multiracial school, it only had six black African girls. Tambudzai was among them by virtue of the scholarship that she had won. The school environment becomes harsh because they have to compete against white girls who are privileged by the system. At the same time, Tambudzai and the other African girls have to stay away from their white classmates because of the barrier that has been created by a colonial culture and institutionalized by the school and education system. The African girls in this school become the 'other' and this explains why Tambudzai is shortchanged when she scores the best O-level results. The award is given to her rival, Tracey Stevenson who is a white. She undergoes similar racial discrimination in her Steers et al. where the award meant for her work is given to a white official.

As a result of discrimination based on her race, Tambudzai develops hate for white people. It appears that all white people are representations and contributors of her suffering from her days in The Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart and at Steers et al. Aside from that, a white person reminds her of her sister Netsai, who is now one-legged because of the bullets of colonial army. White people have inflicted so much pain directly into her life and indirectly by targeting her family. While in the mental institution, she admits to Dr. Winton that she wanted to beat up a white woman that looked like Tracey (Dangarembga 107). Considering that Tracey was a beneficiary of the racial discrimination that was meted on her at Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, and also was one of the executives at Steers et al. who oversaw her award being taken away from her and given to a white male officer, her hatred for white people is understandable. The sight of white people reminds her of her own pain and suffering. Dr. Winton says to her, 'It seems you do not like white people' (Dangarembga 107). Tambudzai's response sums up the problem that all black people face. She says that she has been invisible to everybody including white people. Double invisibility is notable here in that as a woman, Tambudzai's achievements are unrecognized even by her own mother and also by white people who have taken advantage of her.

2.1.1 The Female Body and Mental Breakdown

This Mournable Body portrays the height of the suffering of the female body to be mental breakdown. As a result of the harsh socio-economic and political environment that the woman has passed through, she is likely to undergo mental health problems. According to Françoise Lionnet, such kind of the female protagonist should be seen as a 'Code for denouncing an unsettling situation' (Lionnet 89). Thus, *This Mournable Body* is a critique to the mind of a suffering woman who has been battered by the forces of patriarchy, colonialism, and the legacies of colonialism. Everything that happens in the novel is brought through the protagonist mind that is overwhelmed with multiple thoughts of her own failure in comparison to her glorious past. Tambudzai is presented in serious mental instability where she feels ashamed of herself and resorts to loneliness. Her physical stature scares her even more and reminds her of how low she has sunk. She bears the images of a hyena that constantly laughs at her state. She sees insects on the wall, her bed and her body which gnaws her, making her feel irritated at her problems, at the same time reminding her of her despair.

In most instances, she is unconscious of her environment, body and self because she is in a constant journey of finding her lost self. After the night out with Christine, Tambudzai finds herself lying at the bus stop. The physical state of her body is revealed as one that is being gnawed by insects and spiders as she struggles to recall who she has become. She asserts, 'Ants and spiders trek over your body... I am the kind of person two cooks give a coin to. No, I am not that person. I am. I am not' (Dangarembga 82). Tambudzai's physical state manifests as a recurring thought in her mind to an extent that it makes her unaware of her abilities and how much she can do to escape from her problems. While teaching at Northlea, she encounters a group of school girls who frequently laugh at her situation and nicknames her as 'Miss Grief.' Her attack on Elizabeth indicates her level of mental breakdown. She beats the little girl unconsciously. It is from this incident that she finds herself in a mental institution where she has to encounter her problems as part of the healing process.

Nyasha is also representative of a female body that has been subdued mentally. In *Nervous Condition*, she attempts suicide by developing a poor eating habit of vomiting all the food she ate. Her decision is based on the tense relationship with her father, who at one time had physically assaulted. The new woman that grew in her, henceforth, was one that is afraid of

masculine force and brutality. She carries this attribute with her and is often sentimental in *This Mournable Body*. She readily shed tears at the slightest provocation that reminds her of her abusive childhood. When Anesu (her daughter) tells her that Panashe's teacher (Panashe is her son) beats the children, and noticing how afraid Panashe has become to a point of crying, Nyasha breaks into tears too. According to Tambudzai, Nyasha's behaviour is nauseating and a ghastly act of femininity crying in front of a first grader (Panashe) because she views the discussion as a minor act of corporal punishment (Dangarembga 169). The act of a teacher beating a child reminds Nyasha of her past which brings painful emotions to her. Through Tambudzai, the reader notes, 'Your cousin, who was a teenager was herself brutally beaten by her father, closes her eyes... Now tears roll quietly down Nyasha's cheeks (Dangarembga 171-72). At this point, Tambudzai is able to come into terms with Nyasha's situation and realize that she is not just showing aspects of nauseating and ghastly femininity but is coming from a serious psychological distress that was cultivated in her past. Physical abuse of the female body, therefore, has a lasting and psychological effect on the woman.

2.2 Sexual Objectification of the Female Body

This Mournable Body delves into how the society perceives the female body as an object of sexual pleasure. Some of the female characters in the text are victims of sexual objectification. The bus-station and the combi (passenger service vehicles) are unique in that they constitute people from different parts of the society. They become microcosms of the society and to a greater extent, the nation. As representatives of the society, any conversations, events or activities that take place inside a combi or in a bus-station may as well define the character of the society and the nation. With this argument, the texts present a society that perceives the woman as a sexual object through the activities in the combi. This society does not shy away from demeaning the female body and making sexual remarks about it.

Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz in *Re-writing Our Bodies and Our Identities* posits that the history and culture of colonial and postcolonial women has seen female bodies become a center of debate. The female body becomes the site of abuse, discrimination and violence anchored on traditional stereotypes about the body and identity (Ruiz 1). Sexual objectification of the female body, thus, becomes a phenomenon that is grounded in patriarchal cultures and reinforced by stereotypes. The woman, in such societies, becomes a victim of sexual abuse even from the way

she dresses. Gertrude becomes the first victim of sexual objectification in an event that occurs in a combi station (bus stop). Her dressing, according to the travelers, both male and female, does not conform to society's expectation. The reader observes Gertrude's dressing through Tambudzai,

She is elegant on sky-high heels in spite of the rubbles and the cracks in the paving. She pushes out every bit of her body that can protrude-lips, hips, breast and buttocks-to great effect. Her hands end in pointed black and gold nails (Dangarembga 108).

Gertrude is 'othered' by the society portrayed in the text by deeming her as socially inappropriate. This resonates with Françoise Lionnet arguments where she posits that in the African context, "one is simply not born a woman; one becomes a female person after having submitted to the cultural process" (162). In other words, a person does not become a 'person' unless he or she has been marked by the society in a manner that adheres to the society's expectation and confers dignity. Gertrude's way of dressing does not conform to the standard of femininity that is stipulated by the society in the text. As a result, she has to undergo a 'cultural process' in the combi station where she is subjected to verbal and physical abuse to restore the society's view of 'true womanhood' with regards to how a woman should dress.

Apparently, her clothes reveal too much of her body from the breast to thighs which makes passengers in the bus station uncomfortable. Gertrude is subjected to sexist comments from all sorts of people, from street urchins to adults. For example, one tells her, 'Someone open those thighs for her... Do it for her if she won't (Dangarembga 19). The society regard Gertrude as nude due to her dressing, and label sexist comments against her. She not only becomes an object of verbal attack but is also physically assaulted by the travellers. Stones and mealie maize cobs are thrown at her while she is being stripped. The objects that are thrown at Gertrude bring satisfaction to her attackers in the combi station when they hit her head. The travellers take delight in her attack under the misconception that they are cleansing the society of women like Gertrude.

Perhaps the most shocking revelation is that the sexual degradation of Gertrude is actively performed by women as well. These women deem her as a social misfit in the society. She

becomes a woman who is unworthy of being a model in the society. Among the women that attack Gertrude is Tambudzai. It may be important to interrogate why Tambudzai, in spite of being Gertrude's neighbour at the hostel and also a woman, is on the fore-front of attacking her. My argument is that Tambudzai is a product of a patriarchal society that dictates the presentation of a woman in public. According to Michel Foucault in his analysis of 'the Body of the Condemned,' the body becomes a 'system of subjection' of the individual person within designated cultural codes (26). The 'political technology of the body' creates a person whose role, identity and ability are defined by culture. The female body, therefore, becomes not only a member of the culture but also a product of the very culture that it is inscribed in. Culture offers meanings and concepts including the conceptualization of a woman and becoming a woman within it. Such cultural ties that define gender roles and expectation are grounded in the beliefs and customs of the people, including women, who then have to accept them.

Like other travellers, Tambudzai who attacks Gertrude, has been socialized by cultural codes to believe that Gertrude's dressing is 'not womanly' and has to be condemned by any possible mean. This would explain why she ignores Gertrude's plea for help. It could also be said that Tambudzai is undergoing mental distress and is oblivious of what she is doing. She is a woman in pain, whose grief has caused her mental disequilibrium and in most cases is unaware of who she is or what she is doing. The attack on Gertrude, thus, offers a cathartic effect to her where she is able to release all her emotions with the excitements that come. This also explains why she is unmoved and unsympathetic when Mako narrates her ordeal (Dangarembga 55). Tambudzai does not feel anything for her female neighbours because her troubles cloud her sensibility.

The character of Tambudzai is critical in analyzing how the society objectifies the woman with sexual connotations. In her view, material achievement and social mobility appear impossible for the Zimbabwean woman unless she offers herself and body to a man. Having failed to achieve social mobility through education, Tambudzai's option is to attain this aspiration by attaching herself to a man. As a result, patriarchal oppression then justifies itself through connecting women more closely to the body than men, thus restricting women's socio-economic roles which would otherwise be the ladders to their ascension to economic prosperity. According to Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies*, the female body is coded with corporeal which inhibit the development of the female body (14). The society in the text is highly patriarchal such that the female body

has to attach itself to a more powerful body, the masculine one, to achieve material success. Tambudzai contemplates and highly considers meeting one of the Mai VaManyanga's sons so that she can finally become successful.

This arrival is a gift, bringing you to a man to consider. It is a stepping stone to the life you crave... You do not think of love, being obsessed only with what the gentleman can do for you, how the widow's son will be insurance against your absolute downfall (Dangarembga 39).

Tambudzai weighs the best options among the three sons, Praise, Ignore and Larky and eventually chooses Larky whom she perceives as the most powerful (42). The society presented is where wealth and prosperity rests predominantly with masculinity. Besides, it might be said that hers is a desperate time that calls for desperate measure of becoming successful having failed in spite of her advanced education. Analytically, the belief is shared by most of the prosperous women in the text who are product of the very society that associate masculinity with material achievement and success. Tambudzai's landlady, Mai Manyanga is presented as a rich woman who owns property and other riches. Notably, she is widowed and becomes the sole owner of the riches through inheritance from her dead husband, VaManyanga (Dangarembga 30). Her story defines the situation that surrounds most women in the masculine society. While working for the wealthy VaManyanga, Mai Manyanga was elevated from an executive secretary to a spouse and did not waste any time as she enthusiastically put a concrete slab to an executive property which had become hers by the virtue of her marriage with VaManyanga (Dangarembga 30). The concrete slab is symbolic of her efforts to cement the marriage so that she could protect her position and the ensuing riches that she later inherits upon the death of VaManyanga.

When the society restricts the woman's social and economic roles, the female body gets identified in biological terms according to misogynist thoughts. Grosz argues that misogynist thoughts confine women to biological requirement and link the female to corporeality (Grosz 14). As a result, the corporeality of the female body allows the male to access women's body for sexual pleasures Shine, one of the few male characters in the novel, is a representation of a masculinity that objectifies women for sexual pleasure. Tambudzai records that he takes different women into his room practically every day (Dangarembga 59). Shine takes advantage of the material deprivation of most of the women he brings to his room. He lures them with gifts and

money, something that Bertha is very critical of. According to Bertha, women should survive based on hard work and not depending on men like Shine. She says, 'Now look at her, thinking sugar isn't bought in the shops with money but with Shine's foolish organs' (Dangarembga 61). Bertha is able to subvert the commodification of a woman's body for material achievement by offering a more dignified alternative of working hard and being self-reliant.

The binary positioning of the mind and the body is applied in analysis of the relationship between men and women in terms of wealth ownership. Philosophy has elevated the mind over the body, which then finds itself in linking males to the mind and women to the body. Since the body is perceived to be controlled by the mind, patriarchal societies see women becoming the property and subject of control of men. Grosz posits that the implication of this is that women's bodies are perceived as incapable of men's achievements and weaker (14). Such ideologies and thoughts perpetuate a socialization process through cultural and religious beliefs that foreground the female body as a dominated gender. Mai VaManyaga's wealth is under attack in a society that believes that she should not own wealth. Her three sons, Ignore, Praise and Larky are in fratricidal conflict that turns bloody as they scramble for Mai VaManyaga's wealth. The three sons are representatives of the forceful and hegemonic patriarchy that attaches wealth ownership to men and not the women. They represent the larger society and how the society perceives a woman that owns wealth. Mai Manyaga's woes results from a socialization process. Katrak offer more insight into socialization as encompassing layers and levels of ideological, socio-cultural influences which then impose ignorance or knowledge of women as gendered subjects (9). As a result, barring women from owning wealth is a product of socialization in a patriarchal society.

2.3 Transfiguration of the Female Body

This Mournable Body not only highlights pain and suffering as attributes of the female body in postcolonial Zimbabwe but also presents images of the new body of a woman. The postcolonial Zimbabwe that is portrayed in the text comes out as the metaphorical 'hyena' and 'insects' that seek to scavenge and gnaw on the female body; at the same time the text offers a triumphant image of the female body over her predicaments. The text crafts this new female body dubbed the Zimbabwean woman throughout the entire story. She is a woman that is presented as strong

and does not give up. This woman never runs out of option and will not let grief consume her body. She stands up and moves on with life.

The novel is divided into three strategic parts that denotes the process of creating this new female body. The first part is '*Ebbing*' where the female body collapses to external forces. The second part is '*Suspended*' where the female body is at the climax of suffering and pain and is metaphorically represented by the image of the corpse. In the third part, '*Arriving*', the female body refuses to be consumed. The body is the Zimbabwean woman fights because her survival depends on it. This is the path taken to create the new female body that is embodied by Tambudzai and other female characters in the text.

Elleke Boehmer argues that, 'The silenced, wounded body of the colonized is a pervasive figure in the colonial and postcolonial discourse, but its **valencies** differ significantly' (269). It is for this reason that most postcolonial writings seek to create a new body. The new body, according to Boehmer, is rewritten where the oppressed undergoes significant translations (269). The female body, as a colonized body exists within the same culture that has consumed other women and must undergo transfigurations. The body moves in the same spaces of oppressive patriarchy, racism, poverty and unemployment but adamantly refuses to succumb to the resulting forces that aim to suppress it. This is the kind of body that is envisioned in the text to be ideal and should be emulated by all African women in patriarchal and hegemonic societies. This new body is the one that the protagonist, seeks to create and embrace as she struggles to redefine herself and find a meaningful bearing of life. The new body is the Zimbabwean woman who Tambudzai wants to identify with. She asserts in her mind that;

Comment [DT6]: Is this the correct spelling of the word?

Zimbabwean women, you remind yourself, know how to order things to go away. They shriek with grief and throw themselves around. They go to war. They drug patients in order to get ahead. They get on with it. If one thing doesn't turn out, a Zimbabwean woman simply turns to another (Dangarembga 169).

2.3.1 Transfiguring the Female Body through Internalized Exile

The body that is depicted by Tambudzai can be argued to be weak because she appears unwilling to embrace the attributes of a 'Zimbabwean woman' that she aspires to be. She is presented as

disillusioned in life and with herself. She harbours the feelings of self-doubt and shame and thinks low of herself. She admires strong-willed characters such as Christine because they have an attribute that she direly needs but cannot attain. Conversely, her body should be viewed as a political site of resistance against her predicaments. Her body is what Ketu H. Katrak refers to as a body in 'internalized exile' in *Politics of the Female Body*. The concept of exile refers to a situation where 'the body disconnects itself, as though as it does not belong to it and have no agency' (Katrak 2). Through exile, the body offers resistance to patriarchy and postcolonial fragments such as poverty simple avoiding doing what is expected. The body goes to a strike against forces that wants to consume it. Tambudzai's mental condition can be analyzed as a situation where the body is in internalized exile. According to Katrak,

The unfolding, indeed the process of the body being exiled, brings female protagonists to a 'liminal' state of consciousness.... In resisting exile they (female protagonists) often use their female bodies via speech, silence, starvation or illness. At times, resistance fail and fatal outcomes result in murder or suicide (2).

When Tambudzai is admitted into a mental facility, it reveals the state of exile that her body has become. She is unaware of herself, her environment and the people around. It takes time for her to realize that she is in a hospital and the people who regularly visit her are her relatives; Nyasha, Aunt Lucia and Christine. She sees animals such as the hyena, who constantly laugh at her and is ready to scavenge on her body. She notes, 'The hyena laughs at you as you enter the gate. It has slunk once more as close to you as your skin, ready to drag away the last scraps of certainty you have preserved the moment you flatter' (Dangarembga 204).

Importantly, the hyena and other small animals that Tambudzai sees are imaginary and reflect the mental state of her mind. They are constant reminders of her predicaments. She sees her body as corpse that is scavenged by her predicaments. At one point, Tambudzai sees a dead body which is her own body. She observes, 'She is a corpse, long dead, lying by the bus shelter, dined on by creeping things, gnawed on by scavengers' (Dangarembga 205). At this point, her body is in a state of internalized exile that runs away from consciousness and reality. Reality has become too harsh and shocking for her that she cannot accept her own situation. This drives her to a point

of insanity and unconsciousness which protects her from her problems that have been instigated by oppressive patriarchy and postcolonial culture.

Physical detachment is also a form of exile and resistance that is depicted by the protagonist. Tambudzai, from the moment she realizes that her mother conspired with the Big Brothers to have her uncle, Babamukuru, killed swears never to go back to the village in *The Book of Not*. The decision that she makes is anchored on several reasons. First, her village being highly patriarchal is the same physical and social space that was a barrier to her education. Secondly, her mother constantly mocks her and her education. Mai wants her to fail and sees no reason why she should be studying. According to her mother, Tambudzai is getting 'spoilt' by the white man's education. Thirdly, her village is a constant reminder of poverty that she wants to escape away from. *This Mournable Body* reveals only two instances where she goes home, and she partakes in this journey when she perceives herself as relatively successful, driving a car, employed and with a house. In all other circumstances, she avoids any contact with the village.

2.3.2 Transfiguring the Female Body through Abjection

For Tambudzai, her village is a reminder of a social-cultural and political environment that has degraded the female gender at the expense males. She is a direct victim of this relegation, and thus perceives oppressive patriarchy as a prime cause of her ebbing. The masculine society presented in the text views the female body as a lowly rated binary opposition of the males. Françoise Lionnet asserts that in most African societies, the discourse of female sexuality define femininity with regards to binary cultural inscriptions (163). These cultural inscriptions privileges males over females in the society which then render the latter as the abject. The abject is defined by low, miserable, despicable and self-abasing circumstances. Such attributes describe the states of female characters such as Tambudzai, her mother (Mai) and Aunt Lucia that have had contact with the village life. Thus, Tambudzai's village should be viewed as a representation of a society that is grounded by patriarchal values that degrades the female body, and that is why the protagonist detaches herself from it.

Tambudzai, as an abject is described by Julia Kristeva who asserts in *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* that, 'the abject has only one quality of the object, being opposed to I' (1). Tambudzai becomes repellant to the ascriptions of her conditions and status by the society. The

bag of mealie is symbolic of the village that she strives very hard to disassociate with. From the moment Christine brought it to her, Tambudzai had promised to discard it away but often forgot to do so. The bag of mealie travels with her from Mai Manyanga's premises to when she stays at Nyasha and Leon's house and eventually when she moves out to her own house provided by the Green Jacaranda Safaris. The bag of mealie is a mark of identity as an abject in the postcolonial society. It defines who she is, and where she comes from.

Having identified herself as an abject, the protagonist aims to subvert this identity. According to Carole Mastrangelo Bove, by defining a woman as powerless, impure body, patriarchy produces a figure woman who simultaneously offers life (154). In other words, the abject begins a process of transforming the body by challenging the societal values that 'others' her Tambudzai is represented as an abject whose attribute is perverse. Kristeva asserts that these attributes see the abject manipulating her condition and subverting social norms (15) to create a new image of self that she can identify with a sense of pride.

The eventual attempt to discard the bag of mealie meal, therefore, should be seen as a self-liberating action of the body to disassociate itself with the forces that threaten to consume it. This happens when Tambudzai is at the point of emotional breakdown. It is noted:

You rush away from her into the kitchen. Once and for all you must bury this woman. You rip the lid from the rubbish bin and heave up the bag of mealie meal. You scatter its content across the floor and over the furniture.... You dig a hole deep as a grave and pour in the gift from your mother (Dangarembga 205).

The act of destroying and burying the mealie meal marks a point of temporary victory for Tambudzai. It is a metaphorical victory over her village and cultural ties that relegate women to abjection state.

2.3.3 Empowering the Zimbabwean Woman

This Mournable Body presents characters that are the binary oppositions of the protagonist, Tambudzai Sigauke. It is through these characters that a female body that contradicts the one portrayed by Tambudzai is presented. The image of the 'Zimbabwean woman' comes with

attributes such as resilience, strong-will, determination and courage. These attributes are embodied by characters such as Aunt Lucia, Mai Moetsabi, Bertha, Christine and Mai VaManyanga. Arguably, these attributes cannot be associated with Tambudzai who feels too self-insufficient to encounter and overcome her own problems. She idolizes the Zimbabwean woman and her image of power and autonomy but she admits she is far behind the threshold (Dangarembga 169). Her only consolation is that she is black, and a Zimbabwean for the matter, thus bears advantage over Tracey Stevenson (a white Zimbabwean).

Christine and Aunt Lucia's are categorically used to demystify the female body. They offer a new understanding of the female body as a body of strength and determination in their role in the liberation struggle in the country. Elleke Boehmer posits that, the post-independent African literature have dominantly linked the struggle for independence with male personalities (92). Works such as *Matigari* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o presents the victory against imperialism as a male achievement. The reason attributed to this strange phenomenon is that African male writers have dominated the literary tradition and made the African female character invisible. This is asserted by Florence Stratton who states that, 'Considering their invisibility in dominant critical tradition, it is not surprising that women writers have not gained submission to the literary canon' (3). *This Mournable Body*, therefore, is an attempt to offer life in African literary tradition by giving her more space, power and voice.

The text presents Aunt Lucia, Christine and Netsai as ex-combats who go to the bush, join the guerilla warriors in fighting for Zimbabwe's autonomy against the colonial Rhodesian forces. The effects of their involvement come in twofold; they encounter pain that comes with it as observed in Netsai who loses her leg in the war. Aunt Lucia's child is shot by Rhodesian soldier when the little boy goes to untether the cattle. For Aunt Lucia and Netsai, they suffer personal and direct loss from the war. The second effect of the war creates a new body out of the initial woman that went into the war. The new body is a military trained woman who is not scared by fear. She has faced blood and death in the battle field and nothing scares her anymore. I argue that the historical period spent in the bush during the war by the African woman has imparted vital survival tactics on the female body which enables her to confront oppressive patriarchy and postcolonial fragments such as poverty. Such a female body is a product of modernization. According to Ginette Curry, modernization progressively brings about social changes that boost

women's need for free choice of roles (2). Modernization allows the female body to intersect in the roles that traditionally were designated for the male bodies.

The new body is not afraid of men as seen in Christine's confrontation with the bouncers in the club after Tambudzai disturbs peace. Tambudzai observes, 'Your companion (Christine) plants her fists on her hips and informs the bouncers she is an Independence struggle ex-combatant. Moscow trained' (Dangarembga 79). Christine and Lucia are able to face their problems, albeit overcome them because of the experience that fighting in the struggle for independence gave them in the bushes. It trained and conditioned them to endure and survive hardships. Boehmer asserts that this is a process of transfiguration which begins by the figured (female body) figuring the Other (itself) (269). The colonial woman was hitherto figured by notions of weakness by patriarchal and colonial forces. The decision to join the war is an act of subversion which transfigures the female body contrary to the expectations of the male dominated society. Christine tells Tambudzai about blood which is symbolic of suffering. In what appears to be a therapeutic session for Tambudzai who is undergoing depression, Christine uses her war experience to encourage her. She says,

There's one kind of blood, not many like some like to say. We saw it seep from every wound. And those who couldn't run knew how, after they saw it. It's true, Tambudzai. If you've seen blood, you know about running (Dangarembga 69).

From the suffering that they went through, Christine admits that it made them strong to run away from it. Postcolonial feminist scholar, Françoise Lionnet points out that suffering becomes the consequence of a spiritual quest which drives the female body to exile in their search for lost identities (89). What results is then a transfigured female body that is victorious over the causes of her suffering. This explains why power and autonomy in the female body in the text rests with women like Aunt Lucia and Christine who went to the war. They exist in a world that excludes impossibilities. For instance, Christine reminds Tambudzai that her sister (Netsai), with her one leg carried some of the gifts from home that would then be taken to her in the city. Aunt Lucia sums up this new strength of the female body by stating that she is a fighter that can face any totsi (robber) even if he is holding a gun (Dangarembga 151). This is the new female body created in the text that overcomes masculine brutality to assert a reputable space in the society.

The story of Manini Lucia is one that should be inspiring to the African woman. It begins in *Nervous Condition* where she is a victim of the objectification of the female body for sexual pleasure, transcends to *The Book of Not* where she is a freedom fighter and comes to *This Mournable Body* where she is now a strong woman, independent and with her own security company. AK Security is an idea that she conceives from her period in the war and actualizes it. It makes her proud of herself and this is observed when she sees Tambudzai the gray uniform and the company logo that she designed. A feeling of self-satisfaction comes to her at regarding achievement. She has overcome poverty and unemployment by putting her ideas into practice despite not being as educated as Tambudzai. The presence of women like Manini Lucia and Christine consoles Tambudzai and gives her hope that her problems can be solved. Manini Lucia and Christine are models of the strong African woman that should be referential points to women in oppressive societies. Their victory is victory for the oppressed female body.

The powerful female body as a site of resistance is also vividly portrayed in the presentation of the character of Mai VaManyanga and Mai Moetsabi. The two characters are what Katrak theorizes as ‘the politics of the female body.’ They are in a continuous process of decolonizing their bodies from cultural ties that deny them access to wealth and prosperity because they are women. Katrak posits that sexual inequities and cultural differences have played significant roles in dominating and exiling women (9). By struggling to attain prosperity and access wealth, these characters resist cultural subscriptions of their bodies. Mai Moetsabi works hard in her boutique business and becomes successful. She is referred to as the ‘Queen of Africa’ which is metaphorical of economic prosperity of the female body in a postcolonial setting. For Tambudzai, Mai Moetsabi becomes a referential point to the milestones that a woman can achieve. She asserts,

The question of who can and cannot, who does and does not succeed, returns to echo ominously, bringing bitterness into your soul, you doubt that, were you put to such a test, you would find inner resources to triumph as Mai Moetsabi (Dangarembga 199).

The female body portrayed by these characters is strong one that stands against forces that seeks to consume it, and is a model that should be emulated by the African woman who exists in a similar environment. In so doing, the female body gets into a political action of resistance by

reconstructing its sexuality as argued by Katrak (8). Here, the body acts against societal expectations and norms, reconstructs a new personality that allows it to overcome its oppressors.

Given the above analysis of the text, the female body is presented as an active site of resistance from its double colonization. The resistance begins with a body in exile, refusing to acknowledge its own status and then begins a path to reconstruct and refigure itself. By refiguring the 'othered' body to a figure that it can then identify with pride, the female body in the text overcomes the legacy of colonialism and patriarchal forces which at one point were responsible for abject state. This section has elucidated on this transformational journey of the woman by analyzing the protagonist and other female characters in the text that live in a postcolonial setting.

2.4 The Female Body as an Image of Postcolonial Zimbabwe Nation

Narration of the female body in *This Mournable Body* concurrently gives agency to postcolonial Zimbabwe. By studying the experiences that characters go through, the images of postcolonial Zimbabwe are portrayed in the text. The story is set when Zimbabwe is approaching the millennium, which is about fifteen years after the country got its independence. Typical of other postcolonial states, Zimbabwe is depicted as grappling with legacies of colonialism such as racism, xenophobia and underdevelopment. As a result, this study argues that postcolonial Zimbabwe is equally portrayed as a 'mournable body' in the text, which then contributes to the 'mournable' state of the female body.

2.4.1 The Female Body in Portraying Economic Failure in Zimbabwe

This Mournable Body is set in postcolonial Zimbabwe. It is the story of a nation that struggles to redefine its identity a few decades after independence against the backdrop of postcolonial fragments such as capitalism, poverty, xenophobia and racism. Zimbabwe got her independence in 1980 following the victory of the freedom fighters over the Rhodesian forces. Robert Mugabe was sworn in as the country's first president and what followed was the change of the name of the country from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in an effort of indigenizing or nationalizing the country. Indigenization aimed at shedding of any influence of imperialism.

By claiming the assets that were initially owned by the white settlers and colonial officials, the newly set African government hoped to make the country an African one, and governed by

Africans. For the white community in the country such as Tracey Stevenson, this is a concern to worry about because it not only threatens their ownership of property but also their stay in the country. Tracey asks Tambudzai, 'We've got a fair trade deal with suppliers in Mutoko. So we hope it's just a vicious rumour about the government nationalizing everything. This indigenization thing. What d'you think they're doing Tambu?' (Dangarembga 185). Zimbabwe's process of indigenization is a process of restructuring and reconfiguring itself to the pre-colonial times before the white men came and took over the country. The new government's agenda scares the white community. Later, the fear that Tracey bears transforms into reality when part of their family's land that she uses for her Green Jacaranda Safaris is taken away by the government. The central park in Harare has been renamed to Africa Unit Square from Cecil Square (Dangarembga 188). The initial name, Cecil Square was named after Cecil Rhodes who head of the British South African Company that was responsible for the annexation of Zimbabwe and its naming to Colonial Rhodesia. The African government's indigenization process is a measure of its fear and contempt for white people who are a constant reminder of the colonial oppression that Zimbabwe went through. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe now becomes a multiracial country that has to grapple with the challenges with it.

In as much as Zimbabwe is attempting to shed off traces of imperialism represented by the white community, the country is confined in the web of neocolonialism where it has to depend on the European nations for her success. The protagonist offers the view to this phenomenon in her observation of the city, Harare. It is ironical that in spite of the Cecil Square being renamed to African Unity Square through the indigenization process, its path is still arranged in patterns of the British flag (Dangarembga 188). This elucidates the indelible mark of association that British left in Zimbabwe that is still evident even as the country approaches the millennium. In addition to that, the British flag in the African Unity Square is symbolic of the dependency that the postcolonial Zimbabwe has on the former colonial master. It interrogates the motive behind the indigenization process. It can be argued that the initiative was a selfish one which the founding fathers of the nation used to enrich themselves by inheriting the wealth and property left by the former colonial masters and settlers. Indigenization would have been genuinely conceived and carried out if it ensured that the Union Jack in the African Unity Square is replaced by Zimbabwean flag as well.

Aside from that, indigenization is elusive and a reserve for a few Africans in Zimbabwe. The only parts of the population that are aware of it are the African leaders as the beneficiaries and the white community who are losers in the scheme. The average Zimbabweans who are battered by poverty such as Tambudzai are oblivious of it, if not concerned with the process because it does not help them. Zvoushe, Uweziyimana and Auriacombe in *Indigenisation, Politics of Exclusion, and Problematics of Autochthony in Zimbabwe's Redistribution Agenda* stipulate that redistribution of wealth and resources is a top agenda in postcolonial societies that grapple with legacies of colonialism (122). The belief that indigenization policies will rectify historical wrongs (inequality, racism and unbalanced access to resources) has been applied by most colonial societies. Mai Manyanga portrays the attitude of the black ruling party towards the country's resources. Her wealth was inherited by her late husband VaManyanga, who benefited from the scheme. ZANUPF, upon taking control systematically labeled whites as 'settlers' and 'immigrants' (Zvoushe et al. 126). Wealth and influence earned by VaManyanga elevates his social position to a powerful figure in Zimbabwe. The Manyanga are symbolic of the ruling class in the country whose power and influence are as a result of the freedom fighters in the bush, the victory over the Rhodesian colonial government, the Independence and indigenization process.

John Makumbe argue that in fourteen years after independence, Zimbabwe had morphed into the feature of other African or Third World countries-marred with the familiar problem of corruption and unethical conduct of public officials (45). Christine is critical of the manner in which people like VaManyanga have become rich after independence. She sarcastically refers to it as 'doing business'. 'Doing business' becomes a euphemism that Zimbabweans use to refer to corruption and massive plunder of the country's resources that becomes common after Independence. Prosperity after Independence, according to Christine is a reserve for the few, people like her uncle while it is elusive to the real liberators like her who were in the bush fighting for freedom. As a result, the bureaucratic corruption in Zimbabwe, Makumbe argues, serves the socio-cultural and economic aims of its perpetrators (46). The analysis of Christine's point of view of the independent Zimbabwe elucidates the systemic corruption in the country that benefits a few people. Christine refers to as 'indigenizing anything' (Dangarembga 77). For Tambudzai, this is a new form of consciousness about the country and the route to success that other Zimbabweans have taken. Contrary to what she has always known, most of the Zimbabweans in the rich quarter

are not in that position due to hard work but have benefited from a grand false scheme of indigenizing the country.

From the above argument, *This Mournable Body* offers a critique to the liberation struggle and its implication on those who fought for it. Muchaparara Musemwa in his article, *The Ambiguities of Democracy* argues that thirteen years after independence, ex-combatants live in destitute and the liberation struggle that they took part is a revolution journey that lost its way (31). Christine, particularly, is a character whose role is to elucidate on the failure of the liberation struggle to live to its expectation. She is very vocal and interrogative of the government and how it has failed and betrayed the spirit of the liberation. She admits to Tambudzai that in spite of being taught not to be selfish, the war was full of lies (Dangarembga 67) because the people that benefited are not those who fought against the Rhodesian forces in the bush. According to Musemwa, 'Muchanoguta kumusha' (plenty will be availed at home) as a phrase was used to instill resilience in the struggle among the ex-combatants, who ironically became destitute (31). Tambudzai's sister, Netsai lives in abject poverty with one leg after she lost one in the war. Besides, she has two liberation daughters, Concept and Freedom who she has to fend for in her handicapped situation. It becomes ironical that people like VaManyanga who never fought for independence become the beneficiary of the liberator's struggle.

This Mournable Body gives an insight into what Makumbe (1994) refers to as the 'emergent petit bourgeoisie' from scrambling for the national coffers (50) in the presentation of the character of Mai Manyanga. The vivid description of Mai Manyanga's house portrays affluence that mostly come with high social and political positions yet the property has heaps of telephones that are abandoned, and not working (Dangarembga 28). Mai Manyanga tells Tambudzai, 'Those phones you are seeing... are one of the many things my husband was working on before he left me' (Dangarembga 28). Telephones, therefore, is argued to be the metaphor of Zimbabwe's post-independent projects and infrastructures that have been abandoned by the post-independent leaders. On the contrary, Mai Manyanga's office denotes affluence that come from ascension to power and influence. Additionally, the office represents the attachment that Manyanga's have with the former colonial masters. For instance, 'There are copper plaques depicting proteas, springboks and blazing flame lilies, the blossoms of Rhodesia, as well as shields proclaiming the

year, location, and purpose of the many conferences Mr. Manyanga attended' (Dangarembga 32).

In addition to that, her sons are described as equally affluent, notable in the Mercedes Benz, Volkswagen, Cressida and the BMW vehicles that they drive and their conversation. Ignore drives Porsche which is a source of envy for his brothers. Economic exclusion ensured that 90% of the wealth in Zimbabwe rested in 4% of the population, who were predominately blacks who benefited from plundering the countries resources (Makumbe 50). Mai Manyanga is an apparent sign of corruption and economic inequality in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Typical of most colonial states, nationalism in Zimbabwe was painted with socialist ideals that later failed to materialize. Majumdar (2007) in her assessment of the postcolonial situation argues that what then results in most postcolonial states is economic difficulties, halt of progress and inability to attain minimum standards of prosperity (195). The scenario is evident in *This Mournable Body* that metaphorically portrays the country's infrastructure in desolate state. The swimming pool that is no longer in use questions the existence of some projects in the country. Most of them were established for their luxurious representations but not for the need. Mai Manyanga notes that the boys (Praise, Ignore and Larky) no longer use the swimming pool. In other words, the swimming pool is symbolic of the unnecessary projects that the independent leaders set, which in the postcolonial times are of no benefits to the average Zimbabweans. Larky is critical of the swimming pool by questioning the motives for the investment. He asserts,

'I told them, Mai, Baba, start with lessons. For swimming. Not with a pool. That's how to start. But these parents of ours, do they listen? How many times did I fix it? I'm sick of maintaining this place when she can't do anything for herself!' (Dangarembga 45).

Zimbabwe's desolate state is also reflected on by Mai Manyanga's garden which Tambudzai has to depend on for her daily meals. The vegetable leaves are yellowish in stem and leaves depicting the deficiency of chlorophyll and nitrogen. It implies that they have not been taken care of, and Mai Manyanga admits this that the gardener has been neglecting his duties. She hands a bunch of the yellow leaves to Tambudzai and encourages her to keep on harvesting the vegetables for her daily meals. For Tambudzai, the vegetables are direly needed to keep her

going in her impoverished state. The garden can be argued to be the source of livelihood for the citizens who the government, represented by Mai Manyanga, has stewardship over. As a result, the yellowing of the leaves depicts neglect that the government has for projects that seek to help the citizens (represented by Tambudzai). Despite the services being in poor conditions, the citizens have to remain reliant on them for their survival in hard times.

2.4.2 The Female Characters in Portraying Racial Inequalities in Postcolonial Zimbabwe

Graham Kinloch's claim in *Changing Racial Attitudes in Zimbabwe: Colonial/Post-colonial Dynamics* that racism was institutionalized in colonial Zimbabwe, thus, legitimizing a range of racial stereotypes (251). Zimbabwe is a multiracial country, a legacy that was left by colonialism. The tensed relationship that exists between the black and the white races is depicted by two characters, Tambudzai and Tracey Stevenson. This echoes Paul Gilroy's argument in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* that race in its various forms perpetuate antagonism in different situations (11). Their relationship is traced back in high school at Young Ladies' College of Sacred Hearts in *The Book of Not* and several flashbacks in *This Mournable Body*. Tambudzai and Tracey are binary oppositions who represent the black and white races respectively in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Typical of most multiracial countries, the black and white race lives in a competitive environment, politically and socially. Gilroy alludes to Cecil Robinson's 'racial capitalism' which elucidates how racial differentiation has been integral to capitalist development (31). Racial capitalism is both a colonial and postcolonial feature of Zimbabwe which explains why black Zimbabwean disadvantaged in the country. The black Zimbabwean is a colonial subject who has to live in an environment of white supremacy and hegemony. The black person is deprived of several things which the white person is privileged. This is evident in the colonial education system that Tambudzai and Tracey pass through. Young Ladies' College of Sacred Hearts ought to be a multiracial government school but is predominantly whites only school. Tambudzai and other five African girls become the beneficiaries of scholarships to attend this school. The school, thus, can be seen as a symbol of the colonial government where racial conflicts and white supremacy ideologies are furthered.

One of the most notable prejudices that Tambudzai goes through in the schools is when she leads in the O-Level examinations, the award is not given to her. Instead, it is given to Tracey Stevenson (a white) who came second. This marks the epitome of racial segregation where awards are not given on merit but based on the color of the skin. It resonates with Fanon's argument that the Negro (in a society dominated by white minority) discovers that he or she is rejected by a civilization that is he has none the less assimilated (93). It confirms that protagonist, in spite of being educated at advanced level, and having same qualifications as whites, cannot attain the privileges of white people.

It can be noted that the black person is condemned to failure at a lower social status than the white person in both colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe. This argument is echoed in *The Souls of Black Folk* where Doc Burke's aspiration to buy a piece of land is prejudged as a failure because 'the white folks get it all' (Du Bois 101). The colonial and post-independence Zimbabwe depicted in the text is an environment that oversees hardship and failures among black people. For instance, racial segregation noted in Young Ladies' College of Sacred Hearts during the colonial time and Tambudzai's misfortunes at Steers et al. in the postcolonial times asserts this argument. After graduating from the University of Zimbabwe, Tambudzai can only find a job as a copywriter in advertising company owned by whites. On the contrary, Tracey, who has the same qualifications as Tambudzai sits with the board of executives in the same company (Dangarembga 183). Aside from that Tambudzai, again, becomes a victim of racial segregation when her work is stolen and given to a white officer in the company, who then receives the award. Meritocracy, thus, becomes a misnomer in the multiracial society depicted in the text where black people are judged and evaluated based on their skin colour and not their skills and qualification.

Aside from that, the government's indigenization process is a mechanism where the postcolonial Zimbabwean government revenges the racial oppression meted on them by claiming the assets and wealth owned by whites in Zimbabwe, which lead to most of them fleeing away from the country such as Peacock. Peter Geschiere in *The Perils of Belonging* presents an argument that the 'perils of belonging' in postcolonial Africa asserts competition over resources that are regarded as finite, and has instigated autochthonous claims, ethnic chauvinism and arbitrary identities of citizenship. Xenophobia, the fear and contempt meted on foreigners, becomes a

legacy of racial subjugation and colonialism in Zimbabwe. Lesile Mangezvo posits that as a form of fluid and subjective identities, xenophobia ensures that ethnic minorities and migrants bear the brunt of exclusion (7). Having passed through oppression in the colonial times and gained their independence, most Zimbabweans believe that the jobs and resources in the country belong to them and not foreigners such as Mai Moetsabi. It is for this reason that they attack her shop and ensure that her business is jeopardized (Dangarembga 197). It becomes ironical that the same black people who are complaining of being racially abused by the whites are exhibiting a similar abuse towards other black people in the country. Black African immigrants go through the brunt of 'xenophobic' exclusion due to the nation's disconnect and discomfort with its 'Africanness.'

Tambudzai and Nyasha are presented as the black educated elite and intellectual quarter in post-independence Zimbabwe face the consequences of a post-independence country's challenges to establish itself after the departure of the white colonial masters. In spite of attaining university education, at the time when the country needs the workforce to sustain itself, the duo is unemployed and are compelled to encounter the adversity that comes with this situation such as poverty and disillusionment. Graham Kilnoch asserts that the present day Zimbabwe is in a crisis defined by economic decline, political corruption that is accompanied by ethnic and racial violence (252). Additionally, the rise of neo-colonial continuities such as extreme capitalism, rising indigenous bourgeoisie with apparent class interests feature prominently in Zimbabwe which have then become barriers to the country's intellectual quarters. Zimbabwe, according to them becomes a ground that diminishes the value and potentials of an educated elite and this justifies the reason for brain drain in the country. Mrs. Samaita, upon scrutinizing Tambudzai's certificates is shocked that despite her qualifications, she is still in Zimbabwe (Dangarembga 86). In her view, Tambudzai would easily flourish and develop if she emigrated to Botswana or South Africa like other educated Zimbabweans have resorted to.

Economic exclusion of black Zimbabwean's, therefore, is portrayed by the predicaments that Nyasha and Tambudzai go through. Fanon posits that economic exclusion generates from the fear of competition and the need to protect poor white class and prevent them from sinking lower (88). The promotion which Tambudzai deserves by merit at workplace is instead given to a white male colleague to highlight economic exclusion of blacks in postcolonial corporate environment

in Zimbabwe. It elucidates the fear of whites to lose control of positions of influence, power and economy to deserving black Zimbabweans after independence.

In conclusion, this section has analyzed how the female body is used to give agency to the nation, postcolonial Zimbabwe. Female characters intersect with various aspects of the nation, which then sees the attributes of the nation defined in them. Through Tambudzai, Zimbabwe's struggle with racial inequalities is highlighted in the text. Through Netsai and Christine, the failed struggle and progress of Zimbabwe's ex-combatants are presented in the text. Indigenization process and its weaknesses such as corruption is also evident through the character of Mai Manyanga as Mai Moetsabi is used to portray Zimbabwe's struggle with xenophobia.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SECOND PERSON POINT OF VIEW AND DOUBLE COLONIZATION IN *THIS MOURNABLE BODY*

3.0 Introduction

Despite *This Mournable Body* completing a trilogy that began with *Nervous Condition* (1986), later *The Book of Not* (2006), it comes out as distinct in terms of the point of view that Tsitsi Dangarembga uses. *Nervous Condition* and *The Book of Not* are predominantly narrated in the first-person point of view. The protagonist (the subject), Tambudzai Sigauke, is represented by a subjective 'I-narrator' in the two works. Using the first person voice, she relates the narrative from her own experience and perspective. The reader relies on the I-narrator who is bestowed the narrative authority over actions and other characters. *This Mournable Body*, Dangarembga deviates from the first-person narration that readers had been accustomed to in her first two novels, and have to experience the same protagonist morphing into a second-person narrator. The second person point of view ensures that the narrating voice is designated to the ever ambiguous 'you' pronoun that could be indicative of the textual narrator, the narrator outside the text, and reader or implied narratee.

The second person point of view, tasks the reader with establishing the identity of the 'you' for comprehension purposes. The change in narration style witnessed here is not coincidental but is clearly a strategic effort by Dangarembga to estrange her readers and narratees. By deviating from the first-person narration, she places premium on the second person point of view which then becomes efficient gaining the attention of the addressed and the readers. The first chapter of this project has emphasized on the text as an embodiment of agency of the female body in against the grids of double colonization postcolonial space. This study argues that such a thematic concern of the text is realizable by interrogating the point of view that Dangarembga employs in her work. Therefore, focus will be placed on the usage of the second person point of view and its significance in housing the concept double colonization of the female body in a postcolonial textual world.

This chapter will focus on how the second person point of view has been used as a defamiliarization (estrangement) effect in narrating the female body in Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*. By deviating from the traditional points of view (first and third), Dangarembga's use of the second person point of view elicits an unfamiliar reading experience,

which then evokes the reader or narratee's consciousness of the experiences in the textual world. Bal has also argued that the 'you' voice as an estrangement device should can also be reviewed as a disguised 'I' and in this case, the character is perceived to be in interior monologue (31). The second person voice, the story engages the readers who are then are prompted to ask questions pertaining text. For example, a reader would then want to inquire who the 'you' is for the purpose of interpreting the text. Does 'you' refer to the reader or narratee or Tambudzai? Such questions evolve from reading the text which ensures that the exercise is active and interpretive.

Secondly, by using the second person voice in her novel, Dangarembga permits the readers to collect information about her protagonist as much as possible. The idea is that by using the second person voice in fiction, the author gives the reader the opportunity to explore the mind of the protagonist and all the actions that take place, as will be argued in this chapter. The second person point of view is also advantageous to authors who are out to persuade their readers and narratees. Through the 'you-persona', the author instigates a feeling on the reader and addressee that the story is being told from his or her perspective, which then implies that reader or narratee is likely to agree with the message in the text. You-persona, thus, becomes an essential art of persuasion which Dangarembga applies in *This Mournable Body* to relate the deplorable status of the female body. Another implication of the second person point of view is its ability to influence the reader and the narratee of the text. Since the story is narrated from the second voice, the addressee becomes an 'automated' audience that will act as per the dictates of the voice of narration, which they assume to be theirs.

3.1 *This Mournable Body* as Multiple Subjects

The second person point of view employed by Dangarembga in the narration of *This Mournable Body* holds the capacity to house multiple subjects. In this case, it refers to the narrator, narratee or reader and the protagonist (Tambudzai) simultaneously. Understanding *This Mournable Body* as second person point of view narrative is vital for its interpretation. While it is evident that the 'you' is the protagonist or the fictional character of Tambudzai, there are possibilities that other subjects can be generated by her because of the usage of the 'you' address. There are unique events and actions that occur to the narrating voice in the text which specifies the first subject. For instance, the narrating voice says, 'Blood is on your knees. Standing, you reach for a paper

napkin and wipe it off, feeling as though snakes of your womb have opened their jaws and everything is plummeting out of you to the ground' (Dangarembga 74). In this particular circumstance, the protagonist is in internal exile where the body experiences mental instability as it combats against its predicament. Katrak points out that such moments of madness are employed by the female body to avoid her double colonized situation (2). By alienating herself from reality and senses, the female body moves into a world of madness that does not recognize sources of her colonization. It is for this reason that Tambudzai as the prime subject imagines snakes in her womb. This experience is unique to the fictional character or subject in the textual world. It cannot transcend beyond the text. Thus, the reader or narratee identifies such specific experiences to belong to the textual world.

Dangarembga's use of second person point of view in this text ensures the ambiguity of the narrative voice. In so doing, the narrative voice manifests in other subjects which are not in the textual world. Tambudzai no longer holds the monopoly of the narrative authority. Darlene Marie Hantzis, in *You are about to Begin Reading: Nature and Function of the Second Person Point of View in Narratives*, asserts that to facilitate the presence of the second person point of view in the text, there has to be the absence of any speaking voice apart from the 'you' (4). *This Mournable Body*, the implication is that the narrative voice rests with 'you' and not any other perspective. The first and the third person pronouns functions are limited to facilitate the presence of a narrator that speaks out to a separate 'you' who is should not be seen as the narrator but as character or reader and narratee (Hantzis 4). In so doing, the context permits simultaneous implications of the 'you' pronoun to the narrator, character and narratee or reader, which leads to intersubjectivity of the second person point of view in *This Mournable Body*.

Traditionally, texts have designated the narrative authority and subjectivity to the 'I' persona who narrates from a point of self in first and third person points of view. By contrast, *This Mournable Body* challenges the narrative subjectivity and authority in its usage of the second person point of view. It is featured by the absence of the conventional sign of the subject 'I' (stated or implied). As a result, the novel deconstructs the traditional conception of narratives subjectivity and authority. Traditionally, the first person pronoun 'I' has been employed as the sign of a subject (Hantzis 4). Second person point of view texts such as *This Mournable Body* create a narrative subject without using the traditional 'I'. This permits the incorporation of the

reader or narratee as subjects as well in the text. As a result, a new narrative authority is created as Dangarembga employs a non-conventional constitution of subject in her novel where she employs the second person point of view.

Traditionally, the narrative authority has been designated to a subject. The multiple intersubjectivity of *This Mournable Body* as a second person point of view narrative signifies that a single textual vision or textual authorized voice cannot be located to the text. With this logic, Dangarembga's usage of the second person point of view is a revision to the traditional conceptions of the narrative structure. *This Mournable Body* does not assign a single authorized narrator that has always authorized characters and experiences in the text in traditional narratives. Instead, as a second person point of view narrative text, *This Mournable Body* makes a guarantee that the narrator is ascribed the subjective priority, thus has privileges over other subjects in the text

3.2 The Implied Narrator(s) and the Narratee in This Mournable Body

The first question that any reader of *This Mournable Body* is likely to ask revolves around the identity of the narrator. Readers, upon meeting a text for the first time, want to know who is telling the story. The narrating voice is a crucial element of a story that determines the point of view and the reader experience. Thus, by locating the text to the actual voice that narrates the story, a reader begins the active and interpretive roles that must be subjected to a text to get its meaning. The second person voice that is used in *This Mournable Body* places the reader at an ambiguous point. Dangarembga introduces the second person voice as immediately as possible to ensure that the reader becomes aware of this estranged form of narration as early as possible. As revealed in the text, the second sentence of the story is written in second person voice. The narrative voice states, 'The mirror is above the washbasin in the corner of your hostel room' (Dangarembga 5). Arguably, by immediate introduction of the second person voice through the possessive second person pronoun 'your' Dangarembga treats the second person voice with urgency and immediacy because it is paramount to reading and interpreting the text. The reader or narratee has to be cognizant of this point of view with immediate effect.

As a result, it is at the second sentence of the text that the reader or narratee is bothered to question the identity of the narrator. The reader becomes interested in who the possessive second

person pronoun 'your' is ascribed to. Hantzis posits that the second person point of view has the obligation of accounting for the 'voice that says 'you'' and the 'consciousness that generates the you-utterance' (47). Ambiguity brought forth at this juncture is because the voice could either belong to a protagonist in the text or the addressed, who both assumes the ownership of 'you' pronoun. The fluidity and ambiguity of the second person is typical of the English language where the addressed (you) could be anybody. As a result, one assumes that he or she is the 'you' and act. As the reader continues to experience the text, he or she comes to term with the identity of the 'you.' It becomes apparent that the 'you' serves the role of the actant and narratee in *This Mournable Body*.

Dangarembga enhances this identification by ensuring that the second person narrating voice interacts with other characters who reveal more information about the 'you.' Again, the author ensures that this realization is as immediate as possible so that the reader is not confused about the identity of the narrator. This happens in the first chapter where Gertrude, one of the protagonist's roommates at the hostel helps the reader to identify the narrating voice. The narrating voice says, 'It is a woman knocking at your door.' 'Tambudzai,' she says, 'Are you coming?' It is one of your hostel mates, Gertrude' (Dangarembga 5).

Importantly, at this point, the reader becomes aware that he or she is actually not the fictional 'you' that is embodied in the text. Dangarembga, in my view, gives her readers a choice; to accept and identify with the protagonist or to continue reading as the implied narratee or a reader. The reader is made aware through other characters that he or she cannot be Tambudzai in the textual world but has the possibility of narrating her story because of the implied 'you.' Having delinked the reader and narratee from the textual actant, Tambudzai, meaning of the text begins to emanate. The reader understands that 'you' is a fictional character, Tambudzai, in a fictional world who is telling her story in the second person point of view.

The identification of the textual narrator through Gertrude ensures that reading the text becomes much easier knowing that a line has been drawn between 'you-protagonist' and the 'you' the reader who becomes the addressed. The clarification of the owner of the second person voice is enhanced by the narrator and not the reader. It is through the narrator's view that her identity is given to the reader through other characters in the novel that she observes, describes and present

to the reader. Having realized that the narrator is Tambudzai, the reader begins experiencing the text through her mind and views.

In the first two novels (*Nervous Condition* and *Book of Not*), the first person point of view describes the subject (Tambudzai) as a female body full of confidence and agency to emancipate herself from the double colonization in imperial Rhodesia through education. Albert Memmi's theory of the Colonizer and the Colonized best explains the role of colonial education on the protagonist's desire for emancipation. A revolution emanates when the colonized attempts to free himself from colonial condition by using the limited education (Memmi 9). Her body is a political site where resistance begins against hegemonic values in the society through education. She bears optimistic and proud attitude about herself and future as she narrates her story using the first-person voice. Unfortunately, in *This Mournable Body*, when the life that she dreamt of fails to materialize, and she realizes that she is still trapped by the chains of patriarchy and colonial fragments that she attempted to run away from, the reality becomes too much for her to bear. Her condition is a direct contrast of what she expected and this makes her delink with her body including the voice that she narrates her story with.

Tambudzai uses the second person voice as a strategy to narrate her story through a form exile. Katrak posits that an internal exile comes as an experience where the female protagonist undergoes complicated level of consent and collusions to various forms of domination (2). Consequently, exile becomes a mechanism that the female protagonist applies to cope with or transcend suffering and dominion. It can then be argued that the second person point of view depicts a protagonist who is in a state of self-denial and is unwilling or afraid to talk about her conditions. Hence, Tambudzai gives the reader or narratee the burden to identify with her circumstances and to narrate them as if they were the reader or narratee's own which then justifies the use of the second person point of view in the text as a component of exile for the subjugated female body.

Dangarembga's choice for the second person perspective ensures that the reader or the narratee becomes the narrator outside the text. The generic implication of the second person pronoun in English language translates to a generic interpretation of the text when it is used as the voice of narration. 'You' refers to anybody in generic terms. The reader assumes that he or she is the 'you,' and is therefore no longer Tambudzai. This way, the narration can be argued as not done

from Tambudzai's mind but is told from the addressed perspective of the reader or narratee. The reader or narratee, in a subconscious reading action assumes a new role as the protagonist and character in the text. The generic implication of the second person voice ensures that the reader, even though is physically outside the text, he or she substitutes Tambudzai in the text, is involved in the events and actions in the story, and is critical to telling the story of the female body as the narrator. The reader or narratee gets to interact with the characters that the fictional protagonist, Tambudzai interacts with as the story teller.

The reader becomes the narrator and the perpetrator of the anti-heroine actions that Tambudzai performs. Hopkins and Perkins, in their study, *Second Person Point of View in Narrative* posit that 'you' in second person point of view narratives becomes the text's actant by definition (126). Thus, the 'you' performs the action which implies that the readers who identify the protagonist in such texts collaborate with the 'textual you' to perform actions of the story. For instance, when Tambudzai attacks Elizabeth, the whole has the potential of action replicating itself in the mind of the reader or narratee by the sense of perpetuating and owning it, and narrating it. The narrator says, 'Your chest rises and falls. Sweat runs down your face. It slithers into your eyes....Two or three young women pull at you. This has no effect. Instead, you escape yourself into unbearable radiance' (Dangarembga 95).

The above quotation describes Tambudzai's attack on Elizabeth during a Biology lesson. The dramatic and vivid description of the event has the capacity to evoke a similar tension in the reader or narratee's mind who is addressed by the second person possessive pronoun 'your' in the second person perspective. Elizabeth's assault is perpetuated by a fictional protagonist, Tambudzai, but is retold by the second narrator and new protagonist who happen to be the reader or narratee. The dramatic action is felt by the new subconscious narrator, who at that moment participates in the assault, however despicable it may be. The reader or narratee, thus morphs into an actant aside from telling the story and participates in assaulting Elizabeth because of the second person narrating voice. It should also be noted that the reader might choose not to be part of this assault, but is compelled to be because the author has brought him or her into the action using the second person voice. The same can be said where Tambudzai appropriate the money that she planned to use in financing Elizabeth's medical needs to improving her physical

appearance as a woman. The reader is trapped into these anti-heroine attributes of the fictional protagonist because of the subconscious ownership of the 'you' voice and as narrators.

Having identified that the text has two narrators, inside and outside the text, the second person point of view then becomes crucial in narration to identify the narratee of the story. The narratee is the person that the narration is meant for. Put aptly, a narratee is the person to whom the narrating voice is speaking to. The narratee is always the target audience for any narration (Bal 52). Literary works of fiction written in the first and second person voice pose the challenge of identifying the narratee. In fact, such works demand thorough interpretation to identify the narratee. By contrast, the second person voice in fiction specifies the narratee by referring to him or her as the 'you.'

The narrator in *This Mournable Body* is the protagonist, Tambudzai and the 'you' who is implied to any reader that ascribes to the text. The narratee of the text becomes 'you' which ideally is generic as an attribute of the second person pronoun in English language. The narratee, according to Ginett exists at the diegetic level of communication (259). That is to say that the narratee of *This Mournable Body* can be anyone so long as he or she experiences the text through reading it because the story is related in their perspectives. Arguably, by placing no specificity in the narratee, Dangarembga ensures that the underlying message of the text is available to anyone who reads the text. It is a strategy that the author narrates the double colonization of the female body as it struggles to emancipate itself to any reader of the text. Most texts have defined or implied narratees which come from several signifiers in the narrative. Unlike such authors, Dangarembga does not take chances: she deflects from specifying her narratee(s) by using the second person point of view.

Notably, generic reading, in some cases, tend to exhibit bias when experiencing texts where they perceive themselves as not part of the narratee or target audience. In so doing, such readers might ignore the theme of the text and focus on other ideas. This appears to be the concern of the Dangarembga with regard to her choice of second person point of view. Arguably, voice of narration ensures that the discourse of the double colonized female body is furthered in a vast audience even to those who are likely to delink themselves with the protagonist. They automatically become the narratee because of the 'you' which is addressed to them. The second person point of view and its relation to unspecified narratee map the motive for writing the text.

The female body in postcolonial Africa is in a precarious state that needs immediate redemption if the message can reach a vast audience. Thus, second person voice offers agency to the female body amidst a large audience of narratees which would otherwise been smaller had first and second points of view been used by the author in *This Mournable Body*.

There is a possibility that the narratee of the text becomes specified especially when readers identify with the events and actions that surrounds the life of Tambudzai. For these readers, some of them might have faced the essence of double colonization of their bodies, poverty and mental breakdown that Tambudzai faces. Thus, when the narrating voice uses the second person address, such readers feel emotionally connected with the story and the events. Through the second person narrative voice, the text becomes a reminder of collective experience for readers or narratees who have undergone similar experiences to those in the textual world. The narrator talks to them and they relive their experiences in the eyes of the second person voice.

Additionally, the second person voice is meant for the oppressors of the female bodies in the society who then becomes the implied narratees as well. In my view, the second person perspective should be interpreted as an invitation for Dangarembga's readers to put themselves in the situation of Tambudzai, go through her experiences in the text and feel her pain that comes with appropriation of her body. By inviting the oppressors into the space of the oppressed, the second person voice used by Tambudzai welcomes her oppressors and representatives of her oppression into a world of reality that is defined by pain, loss, suffering and emotional disequilibrium. For example, the narrator says, 'A shrill note of horror swells in your head. It pierces too far to endure. The purple hyena opens its jaws and all sensation vanishes' (Dangarembga 104).

The second person voice in the quote above invites the narratee to the experiences that Tambudzai go through. She is in a mental breakdown where she experiences imaginary voice of a hyena that wants to scavenge on her body. It elicits the feelings of fear and pain. By addressing these experiences to the narratee, the oppressors of the female body, the experience is replicated in their minds so that they become conscious of the extent of pain that they have meted on the female body. Such an effort only takes place if this type of narratee experiences the text by reading it.

The second person point of view in *This Mournable Body* ensures that the narratee share the same knowledge with the narrator. Unlike the conventional first and second persons' voices of narration in *Nervous Condition* and *The Book of Not*, *This Mournable Body* ensures that narratee is well informed by the narrator. Through the second person address, the narratee is given permission to explore the narrator's interior monologue and the mind. In other words, Tambudzai narrates her story through the mind of the reader. The abstract concept of the story occurs in the mind of Tambudzai who then actualizes the narration through the pronoun of address in the reader or narratee's mind. By availing all the information to the reader and the narratee, the narrator ensures that reader or narratee assumptions are eliminated from the text. This way, the story focuses mainly on the 'you' who is the reader and the narrator. The narrator traverses through the text with the narratee (who is also another narrator as shown in preceding discussion). The narratee is confined within the narration for understanding and interpretation purposes and does not have to offer external assumptions since the narratee is the protagonist and the narrator as well. Through this strategy, the text remains intact. For instance:

'Shocked and disappointed at Cousin-Brother-In-law's outburst, which is not the superior conduct you expect of a European, you hold on to the memory, slipping away from a developing argument in a dusty recall'
(Dangarembga 156).

The idea in the above quotation is possessed by a postcolonial subject who is conditioned to believe in European supremacy. Tambudzai does not believe that Leon, her brother-in-law (a white) can quarrel with a woman because the colonial culture has made her to believe that such outburst is of the 'uncivilized' like her. While a reader is likely to disagree with perspective that the protagonist has due to background knowledge of Europeans, he or she is bound not to disagree because of the second person voice. The second person address places such a skeptic reader as the narrator who is chained by supremacy of Western mythologies. Thus, the narratee and the narrator have to stick with the narration without adulterating its content.

The second person point of view ensures that the narratee experiences *This Mournable Body* within the realms of reality. While the text is fictional, the second person voice makes it less fictional and improves or heightens the readers' sense of reality (Esen 140). The power of the narratee is limited in that he or she has to follow along the narration with the narrator. The aspect

of reality comes where the narratee has to displace Tambudzai as the protagonist and the narrator. He or she finds himself in a fictional world which by the fact of experiencing it becomes a certain kind of reality. For instance, during the attack on Gertrude, the narratee morphs into the protagonist who joins the crowd at the bus station to attack her. The feeling of optimism and success that is later embodied by the protagonist in the text is transferred to the protagonist outside the text, you-reader and narratee. For example,

‘The rigours of the past years having whittled your body down, young men glance at you twice, while young women assume grating “if only I could be like her” expressions’ (Dangarembga 213).

The narratee and the reader share this feeling of accomplishment with the protagonist whom they had identified with in chapter one where her desolate body was described as scaly as that of a fish because of impoverishment. Since readers and narratees ascribe themselves with the protagonist in the second person voice narratives, they become integral in the character development. As the protagonist in the text develops or fails, the protagonist outside the text undergoes the same process.

3.3. Second Person Point of View as a Solidarity Marker

The second person point of view in *This Mournable Body* is a device that is used to bring, introduce and acclimatize the narratee or the reader as part of the narrative world. In so doing, it unifies the narrator with the reader or narratee in terms of experiences and ideology. The reference to the ‘you’ pronoun ensures that the reader or narratee becomes an accomplice of the actions and also a protagonist. It is possible to enter into the textual realm which then ensures that as an actant, the reader or narratee ascribe to the experiences and feelings of the narrator. This is what Dangarembga achieves with the ‘you’ narration. While it is Tambudzai undergoing the textual experience, the reader intersects between her and the world out of the text as shown below. ‘You curl your arms around your head. Your knees touch your chin. Even like this you are not big enough. The softness is bigger. You allow yourself to be swallowed’ (Dangarembga 101).

Second person voice that narrates the protagonist grappling with depression tends to portray the possibility of generic reference and sometimes the speaker-reference. According to Lotte

Hogeweg and Helen de Hoop, the second person pronouns, through generic and speaker-referring, their interpretations by the addressed will retain the initial meaning by the addressee (4). The idea is that the second person voice in literary texts will likely to be interpreted by the readers and the narratees as an invitation to assert them in the protagonist's position in the story. With this logic, it is possible that the reader or narratee experience the text's actions and feel the sensations that come with it being Tambudzai as a female body undergoing depression. The ability to empathize with Tambudzai when she is in the hospital ensures that she gets the support or solidarity from the reader or the narratee of the text who have allowed themselves to 'be in her shoes.'

Reader or narratee of the text, thus, offer support of the protagonist even in cases where the Tambudzai exhibits has antihero attributes such as nervous breakdown and suicidal thoughts. This is supported by Suzane Keen in *A Theory of Narrative Empathy*, who affirms that, 'We are living in a time when activation on mirror neurons in the brains of onlookers can be recorded as they witness another's actions and emotional reactions (208). The second person perspective comes as an invitation of the reader or narratee to enter into the textual world to observe the actions and experiences of the protagonist. The mental images invoked by the text in this observational journey triggers the mirror neurons (Keen 208) of the reader and narratee to identify with the actant, empathise and offer solidarity.

Consequently, the reader or narratee of *This Mournable Body* is invited by the second person narration point of view to put themselves in Tambudzai's shoes which then ensure that the reader identifies with the speaking voice. Additionally, the entire process triggers the addressed involvement in the text as Tambudzai, and developing feelings of empathy for the protagonist. The narrator intends to capture the reader's attention and empathy for her downfall and summarizes her journey through the second person voice that deflects the actions to the reader to bear the same feelings. She states, 'When you were young and in fighting spirit, growing mealie cobs in the family and selling to raise money for your school fees, you were not this person you have become' (Dangarembga 82).

This is an appeal by the narrator to the reader and the narratee to put themselves in Tambudzai's educational endeavours that came with difficulties because her gender in a patriarchal society. Hantzis posits that the 'you' in the second person perspective texts activates the reader or

narratee in two ways; it refers to the reader or narratee directly and also refers to a character that reader is compelled to identify with (32). As these experiences navigate through the readers mental capacities, he or she develops empathy for the protagonist and her predicament. The 'you' pronoun in the above quote has a generalization effect by referring to anyone. As a result, the second person voice in fictional narratives brings the essence of inclusivity as it seeks to gain empathy from those who experiences the text. Hogeweg and de Hoop refer to this strategy as the identification effect of the second person voice which occurs through self-ascription (4).

In explaining his self-ascription theory, Stephen Wechsler argues that second person pronoun 'you' does not necessarily refer to the addressee. In the case of the usage of the second person pronoun in *This Mournable Body*, 'you' is argued not to be the addressed, the narratee or the reader. Instead, the second person pronoun is employed as an invitation of the addressee to self-ascribe the attributes of being the 'you' (Wechsler 353). The second person voice in *This Mournable Body*, at this point should be approached as the voice of the protagonist, Tambudzai who is in interior monologue and not the reader or the narratee. Tambudzai exists in a world of fiction while the reader and the narratee exist in a world of reality where fiction can only be felt through imagination. Thus, the second person pronoun is used in reference to Tambudzai, the narrator, who then invites the reader to ascribe the self with her attributes and property.

For example, the you in 'You give up the struggle against your knowledge and concede at last fiendish truth that you first encountered at the university' (Dangarembga 82) is directed to any one experiencing the text. Every reader will likely assert themselves in Tambudzai's place and claim ownership of the feelings of struggle and giving up having realized that closeness to white people is the root of her problem. Furthermore, Keen in her argument about mirror neurons, states that by mirroring what the other person is expected to feel in a given context, empathy is provoked (208). Resultantly, by approaching the text in a generic way, the reader self-ascribes with Tambudzai upon hearing the 'you' that comes with the second person narration in *This Mournable Body*. Henceforth, the reader or narratee undergo a mutual agreement with the protagonist, and goes ahead to accept to space that Tambudzai occupies in the story as his or her own. Take for instance the quotation below from the text where the narrating voice states:

They do not know what it is to struggle with the prospect of that the hyena is you, nor how this combat marshals in the task of finishing the brutish animal off, while ensuring you remain alive yourself (Dangarembga 149).

At this juncture, the reader or narratee's mirror neurons are activated and begin to imagine the struggles for survival when deep inside 'you' exhibit illusions of an animal that wants to consume your body. This becomes an aspect of identification effect, which elucidates the arousal of empathy that the reader or narratee expresses while engaging the text. Additionally, through self-ascription theory, the reader and the narratee identifies (Hogeweg and de Hoop 5) with the protagonist in second voice narration, which then creates a sense of solidarity with the protagonist. This way the reader having been ascribed as Tambudzai through the second voice supports her in every actions that she undertakes. For instance, the reader or narratee understands Tambudzai lack of sympathy for Mako who had been sexually assaulted by Shine or her dislike for the village. The reader travels with her in every attempt that she makes towards her social mobility and is supportive when she fails and is satisfied when she gains economic independence when working for Tracey Stevenson.

3.4 Second Person Point of View and Access to the Mental State of the Protagonist

This Mournable Body should then be seen as a successful attempt of providing readers with the preoccupations of the mind of an oppressed and dominated female body. By offering this access using the second person point of view, readers are introduced to the extent of emotional pain that Tambudzai grapples as a postcolonial subject that has been consumed by effects of imperialism and patriarchy

Several scholars have studied the relevance of second person perspective to the mental state of the characters in a narrative. According to Fludernik:

Second person narrative can, and frequently does, correlate with great emotional depth since the dialogic relationship it puts at its very center stage allows for an in-depth treatment of human relationships, especially relationships fraught with emotional rifts and tensions (466).

The mental state is important when it comes to perspective. Michael Pauen argues that the subject's state of mind (emotional state, thoughts and memories) hold a significant impact in determining how he or she looks at an epistemic object (7). It is for this reason that text is authored in second person perspective to give the readers an access to the mental state of a suffering female protagonist to facilitate the reader's understanding of the circumstances that surround the postcolonial female body. The narrator says,

'Even as you speak, you are aware this person is not that particular white woman, the executive from the advertising agency who schemed with her fellow white people to steal the ideas you sweated over and produced a copy' (Dangarembga 79).

Tambudzai's mental distress is triggered by racial injustice that she goes through which is a social constructed phenomenon in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Thus, she contemplates attacking unknown which makes her the uncanny. The uncanny, according to Jacques Lacan does not know what is good or bad, pleasurable from displeasurable (Selden, Widdowson and Brooker 159). In her mind, attacking this woman is neither right nor wrong but helps her maneuver in her unsettling situation as a victim of racial inequalities in Zimbabwe

The images of the physical body of Tambudzai portray a dehumanized postcolonial subject which instigates her mental repression. Her physical body becomes symbolic of her suffering in the uncanny fields. In the uncanny fields, Sigmund Freud asserts that the subject psychologically experiences a familiar event as unsettling and strange (1). Tambudzai is portrayed as belonging to all that is terrible; arouse dread and horror to the female body. These instances are defined by poverty, racism and patriarchy which are constructed as familiar experiences in Tambudzai's society become unsettling to her metaphorically represented by irritating insects and the spiders. The narrating voice in second person says,

'An ant scurries along the grain of wood. You regard it, suspicious that it has crawled out of your imagination... You close your eyes. You open them it is still there on urgent business' (Dangarembga 134).

While the ant can be interpreted as a frequent reminder of Tambudzai's predicaments and unsettling situation, it is the lessons that she draws from it that reveal her as a subject determined

to come out of the uncanny field. The ant symbolizes persistence and embodies Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection. It highlights the female body's inner desire to remain visible amidst suppression by male hegemony. Tambudzai says, 'You will be like that ant, you decide. You do not yet know how, but come what may, you will focus on the prize until you possess it (Dangarembga 134). As an abject, the protagonist who has plunged into emotional distress refutes any option of giving up. She portrays an image of strength within her unshattering circumstances..

Locating the elements of the uncanny field's in Tambudzai's world becomes prerequisite to understanding her source of depression and anxiety. She exhibits a sense of low self-worth which the narrator gives the reader and narratee access to using the second person voice. For example while in Northlea where she teaches, she has a dehumanizing view of the self. The voice says, 'You perceive unwavering eyes as mockery, the laughter as scoffing at everything you have become' (Dangarembga 88). The uncanny fields in which the protagonist exists have rendered her a dehumanized subject. Using Fanon's analogy, the colonized (the woman in this context) is deprived and starved for anything woman. The native (woman in this case) is promoted; and they attempt to disharm him with his psychology (Fanon 140), She is dehumanized by social and cultural values of the community which puts her in miserable condition, thus, losing the essence of being a human (Chesler 20). What then results is a female body in mental distress whose state of mind and illusions are revealed through the second person point of view. Tambudzai's attack on Mai Chinembiri is an expression of mental breakdown and which begins with illusions and eventual physical attack narrated effectively in the second person voice.

Comment [DT7]: Confirm the word

'The sound oppresses you. You clump your hand over her mouth. Your pupil's father does not dare touch you... You listen to the girls. Then you laugh with them. You hear her but you cannot see the laughing woman' (Dangarembga 98).

The subject illustrated is constructed by a dehumanizing process of dominion by poverty, racism and sexism. Thus, she acts within uncanny fields, oblivious of her sense and reality.

The narrator of the story, therefore, is an oppressed voice and body that is filled with shame for the self. She wants to talk about herself, but for some reasons she cannot. It can be said that the

shame that she bears derails her from revealing information about herself. Additionally, it can be argued that for lack of confidence, she cannot use the first person voice that is accustomed with confidence. According to Chesler, the sociological impact of colonization has intensified in women fiction. In this case, the double colonized female body is made skeptical about her own humanity and existence as a woman (20). Put in the context of this study, the narrator loses the sense of self-worth and dignity because of the oppressions meted on her by the postcolonial space. She intends to talk about the self but bears feelings of shame and guilt. She is a disillusioned female body who compares her past glories (triumphing through hegemonic social institutions on the female body such as colonial education and patriarchy) to her present state of failure (poverty, loss of family fabrics, unemployment, racial inequalities) and evaluates the self as an evidence of shame. Fanon offers explanation to this scenario in *The So-Called Dependency Complex* that if one lives in a society that upholds superiority of one race, the society creates difficulties for the subject who later is confined in a neurotic situation (100). Race, definitely is Fanon's concern about hierarchical society. However, in postcolonial feminist studies, race and gender are dominant aspects of the superiority versus inferiority battle which renders the female body to a neurotic situation. Tambudzai's neurotic situation is the result of intersection of gender and racial inequalities in the postcolonial space of the text.

Tambudzai is a contradiction of what she expected to become. As a result, it can be argued that as the narrator, Tambudzai hides in the second person voice which enables her to describe the self. She invites the reader or narratee and by using the pronoun of address, she delegates the role to talk about herself to the reader or narratee. Hence, by studying the circumstances that surround Tambudzai, it is understandable why she narrates her story in *This Mournable Body* using the second person voice and not in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*.

Elaine Showalter in her work *Hystories* focuses on extensively on female maladies where she argues that mental distress of the female body should be perceived as a physical reaction or an expression to a given psychological repression. The oppressed woman undergoes depression and illusions (Chesler 2) which reveal the inner struggle within a postcolonial space. Through the second person point of view, the narrator is presented in a state of internal conflict which manifest in her behavior:

You prevent yourself from remembering something you do not want to recall. The effort plays havoc with your appetite. At one moment you do not want the slightest taste of anything; the next you are ravenous and gulp down every morsel (Dangarembga 112).

The reader or narratee is welcomed into the protagonist's world of madness through the second person point of view. Using the pronoun of address ensures that the reader or narratee ascribes to the mental states of the protagonist which then facilitates the ability to understand and empathize with a psychologically distressed protagonist. From a philosophical perspective, a person who has not experienced a specific event will not be in a position to understand what it implies for another person to undergo the same experience (Pauen 16). Put into context of *This Mournable Body*, some readers (mostly males) of the text are unlikely to understand the implication of being double colonized because they lack the prerequisite experience of being female in a postcolonial environment. For such an audience, which is arguably the text's primary narratee, Tambudzai's experiences might not be fully understood, and could be misinterpreted if Dangarembga chose either the first or second person perspective in telling the story. The author appears to be aware of the fact that there are high chances that her protagonist might be misunderstood or misinterpreted if she employed the first or third person perspectives.

Using the second person perspective, Dangarembga catalyzes the narratee's capacity to ascribe to the experiences of her protagonist. The pronoun of address 'you' encourages the reader and narratee to mentally imagine themselves as Tambudzai going through emotional distress as a result of her situation. As soon as 'you' is applied in relating Tambudzai's experiences, the second person perspective becomes largely automatic because it has the tendency of tapping the reader or narratee's subconscious process of imitation (Pauen 16). As a result, this process allows the narratee to understand Tambudzai by drawing her experiences and imagining them as if they were his or her own. For example, when Tambudzai is hospitalized, and all she can do is to cry and shed more tears (Dangarembga 118), the 'you' pronoun projects her experiences to the reader or narratee who then subconsciously imagines and own the experiences. The reader or narratee imagines him or herself in bed and crying. In addition to that, by imagining that ants and spider trekking over 'your' body, the reader or narratee is able to imagine the sensation that comes that comes with a 'mournable' body which the protagonist describes (Dangarembga 82).

The second person point of view employed by Dangarembga ensures that the reader is offered the opportunity to be an observant of Tambudzai's mind and thoughts, uncensored. It then means that the story is only possible as a construct of Tambudzai's interior monologue. Some critics have concluded that the second person point of view in text illustrates a situation where 'you' operates as a disguised form of 'I' and the character talks to him or herself (Hantzis 23). This argument would then explain narration of *This Mournable Body* as predominantly monologue by Tambudzai who is in a journey to assess and identify the self. The reader gets the privilege to observe and study the prevailing thoughts and concerns in the mind of a female body that suffers from the predicaments of double colonization. By penetration into Tambudzai's mind granted by the mode of narration, the reader is exposed to the feelings and thoughts of an oppressed female body. This comes from an argument that the external and physical conditions that the protagonist faces in postcolonial Zimbabwe such as racism and oppressive patriarchy are responsible for the thoughts harboured by Tambudzai which comes to the reader's consciousness because of the second person point of view employed in the text.

Through the 'you' narrator, the reader gets to scrutinize the Tambudzai's perception of her world that comes from uncensored interior monologues. The second person point of view makes the reader to realize how Tambudzai views her situation and how she relates with people around her as a consequence of her predicaments. By doing so, Tambudzai's interior thoughts demonstrated disillusionment as she faces adversity that comes with unemployment. In addition to that, her perception of white people is presented as tensed and full of hatred because she deems them as the precursors of her ebbing. Being a suffering postcolonial subject, Tambudzai's inner thoughts portray her resentment for her gender, no wonder she shows no empathy to Mako when she is sexually assaulted by Shine or Gertrude who is attacked by mob because of her dressing. Tambudzai's social relationship is worn and weak. She prefers isolation and has detached herself from her family and in the village. All these manifestations come through the interior thoughts that are presented in the second person point of view.

Tambudzai, therefore, speaks to herself throughout the text as she interacts with the people around her. The second person point of view places her in a continuous conversation with the self, and the subject of the discussion is her ebbing circumstance. It is for this reason that flashbacks are frequently used and compared with the current perception of the self by the

protagonist to gain an understanding of the personhood that she has become. Physical places like Young Lady's College of Sacred Hearts, Steers et al. Advertising Agency, the Mission School and the village reoccur in her mind in an attempt to understand the self because they influenced the kind of person that she morphs into, the oppressed female body. The events that occur in these physical spaces are availed to the reader in the second person narrating voice as the thinking process of the mind. By gaining an access to the current thoughts in Tambudzai's mind through the second person voice, the reader can easily map the causes of her downfall and how she perceives her condition at the current moment.

Notably, the second person point of view ensures that the reader is given direct access to the protagonist's thoughts and ideas which can be trusted as true representation of the character. In this case, the second person point of view narrative is analyzed as a self-narrative (Demjen 6). The protagonist gets into a self-address, delineated by 'you' is seen as the narrator and the narratee. In such instance, the protagonist becomes honest to the self with regards to the thoughts harboured by the mind. Thus, thoughts of the mind can be argued to be a representation of the reality in any individual. The mind is unlikely to lie to itself because it is the hub of truth and reality. Whatever the mind thinks portrays how the personhood perceives the subject. Therefore, the second person point of view in *This Mournable Body* offers the readers the chance to study and interrogate the real and uncensored thoughts exhibited by Tambudzai's mind. For example, Tambudzai's inner thoughts and attitudes about white people are revealed in the night club as she attempts to beat up a white woman. The narrating voice says, ‘

Even as you speak, you are aware this person is not the particular white woman, the executive from the advertising agency who schemed with fellow white people to steal the ideas you sweated over and produced for copy’ (Dangarembga 79).

The ‘you’ narrating voice ensures that the reader or narratee becomes aware of such thoughts which are essential to understanding the impact of racial inequalities and discrimination on a female body as revealed in the text. The reader is privileged to be given this access to the protagonist's attributes which arguably she might not readily expose to other characters in the text because of shame and guilt. By granting the permission to relive and identify with the

operations of the protagonist's mind, Dangarembga ensures that her readers gain access to the honesty of the mind of the postcolonial woman.

For example, thoughts such as her dislike for the village, spite for the mealie meal, hatred for white people, desire to seduce one of Mai Manyanga's sons among others are explicitly portrayed in her mind but not conspicuous in her external interactions with characters in the text. The second person point of view, thus, gives the reader the real image, character and attributes of Tambudzai. In other words, there are two forms of the protagonist that can be identified in the text; the one that interacts with other characters and the other one that lives in the mind. The second person point of view unmasks the latter which is totally different from the former.

The protagonist is presented by permitting the readers and narratee to gain access to the mind of a product of double colonization. She has been created by her environment, thus, and this is the true reflection of the postcolonial female body that is embodied in the text. The body is of a woman who exists in the mind but not the physical body since the external body has been battered to death by aspects of double colonization. As a result, the female body embodied by the protagonist uses lies and pretense in the external environment, to present a vibrant image of life which contradicts with the reality in the mind. For example; Tambudzai lies to a passenger sitting next to her that she is a wealthy owner of a large farm, specializing in horticulture (Dangarembga 16). She is also on record for lying to Mai Manyanga that she is employed so that she can reserve a room in the plot. These are instances where the protagonist has to present a false image which contradicts with what the mind knows about the self, and in which the reader and narratee is made to understand because of the use of the second person point of view.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes by offering an evaluation of how Tsitsi Dangarembga has used the second person point of view in *This Mournable Body*. The second person perspective, in this case comes out as a successful strategy by the author to estrange her readers. By using the second person narration, *This Mournable Body* estranges the readers, unlike in *Nervous Condition* and *The Book of Not*, Dangarembga successfully defamiliarizes her readers and through her chosen style of narration. The barring effect ensures that the reader and the narratee's interpretation of the female body begins by interrogating the identity of protagonist and the narrating voice.

By telling the story in the second person perspective, the author successfully invites the reader or narratee into the textual world as actants, protagonist and narrator of the textual experience. In such a strategy doing, she accomplishes in creating a positive reception for her protagonist whom the reader or narratee are obliged to identify with and support owing to the self-ascription that comes with 'you-narrating voice.' Additionally, the reader and narratee are brought on board into the mind and thoughts of an oppressed female body because the pronoun of address 'you.'

Again, this should be seen as the author's deliberate effort to gain empathy and solidarity for female agency in the text. In addition to that, the second person perspective ensures that the story's narratee is unspecified but limitless, which then expands readership and audience of *This Mournable Body*. The generic implication of 'you' pronoun automatically dictates that any reader of the text becomes the narratee. Indeed, emancipation of the female body from double colonization in a postcolonial space calls for the attention of an entire community, nation or international community which only becomes possible in the text by its use of second person point of view.

The second person point of view employed in *This Mournable Body* ensures that reading of the text becomes an engaging experience that it ought to be. The reading experience is featured by a reader who moves through the roles of narrator, protagonist and narratee and an actant of the actions in the text. Besides, it provokes the reader or narratee's mental capacity of imagination which ensures corroborates with the intrigues that surrounds Tambudzai's experience.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate how the narration of the female body is realized in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* which completes a trilogy that began with *Nervous Conditions* (1986) and its sequel, *The Book of Not* (2006). The female body is guided and contextualized in this research within postcolonial interpretations as a subject of conquest, control and manipulation by hegemonic forces. With this context, the female body can be understood as the essence of being female in a postcolonial society that is marred with masculine domination alongside legacies of colonialism such as racism, capitalism, xenophobia and poverty. Thus, the study is conceived from the presupposition that the text portrays the female body as a double colonized subject; she suffers as a body suppressed by patriarchal forces and fragments of imperialism.

The research was guided by two objectives. First, I intended to identify and evaluate the images of the female body as portrayed in *This Mournable Body*. Further, this literary inquiry also involved an interrogation of the author's point of view and its relevance in giving agency to the female body. My literary interpretation and analysis of the text, guided by the postcolonial feminist theory of Double Colonization and Russian formalist theory of Defamiliarization reveal various images of the female body portrayed in the text. Through the protagonist, Tambudzai and other characters (Mai VaManyanga, Nyasha, Mako, Aunt Lucia, Bertha and others), the text depicts the female body as a site of active political resistance through various strategies to overcome her double colonization. My analysis indicates that the woman is portrayed as a suffering subject who has to demystify her identity and transfigure the self to a body that only she can view with pride.

Tambudzai is presented as character that undergoes physical and emotional breakdown unlike in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*. She is portrayed as a body that has been consumed by patriarchal forces and fragments of colonialism which she was optimistic of overcoming in Dangarembga's previous works. In addition to that, other characters such as Gertrude and Mako portray the image of the female body as a site of physical and sexual assault and objectification by the masculine oriented society. Tambudzai, in particular, should be studied as the texts prime image of the repercussions of double colonization of the female body. The novel tells her story

struggling with mental breakdown, depression, which results from a society that has been socialized to oppress the females in twofold: patriarchy and fragments of colonialism. As she strives to regain her lost self, the female body as an active site of resistance is mirrored in internal exile where she defies her uncanny surrounding to overcome her predicaments in the postcolonial space.

Another defining image of the female body from this research is the transfiguration process to subvert the socio-cultural wired images of the woman. The female body is portrayed as finding new identities of the self with regards to the roles and space that it occupies in the society. Madness or mental breakdown becomes one of the images that portray a woman on a mission to overcome the hurdles of double colonization. By treating madness as a form of internal exile, this investigation reveals that the subject delinks with her discomfoting situations and moves to a space that introduces freedom and autonomy. Tambudzai's mental breakdown as a result of her double colonization is studied as an aspect of creating new identity, refuting patriarchy and legacies of colonialism and finding a path that attains freedom of the self. For it is through mental breakdown that Tambudzai's ebbing stops as she begins to climb a more opportunistic path of her life.

Aside from madness, my analysis finds that the text creates a model of the 'Zimbabwean woman' as a process of transfiguring the female body. By offering new roles, depicting the deflections from ethno-cultural expectations and empowering the female characters, the text manages to design a new version of a woman in the postcolonial environment. This woman is given several attributes such as strength, resilience, economic prosperity in social and economic spaces, which then becomes the weapon of overcoming agents of double colonization. The prosperity of Lucia and Mai Moetsabi in security and business fields respectively depict the hardworking image of the Zimbabwean woman. The military strengths and affiliation of Lucia and Christine portray the female body as devoid of socially constructed roles and immense strengths that the subject can realize.

Notably, this research finds that the female body is reflective of the body of post-independence Zimbabwe. Based on the study of the protagonist and other female characters such as Mai

VaManyanga, Christine, Lucia, Mai Moetsabi and Nyasha, a reflection of Zimbabwe's history of pain and disillusionment in post-independence era is exposed by my analysis. These female characters and the events that surround them in the textual space are analyzed as symbolic of the postcolonial Zimbabwe. Tambudzai, for instance, mirrors Zimbabwe grappling with disillusionment from the optimism shared at independence as it struggles to attain a positive bearing. Tambudzai as a victim of racial inequality is interpreted as a symbol of the larger body of Zimbabwe that has plunged into racism as a legacy of colonialism. Nyasha and Tambudzai thwarted hopes in education and unemployment represent the disillusionments of most Zimbabweans. Mai Moetsabi's depiction as a victim of xenophobia reveals the country's ugly image of hatred and dissent for foreigners as a legacy of colonialism.

In *This Mournable Body*, the author employs the second person point of view in narration. The narrator is identified by the 'you' voice. This strategy deviates from the first-person point of view that Dangarembga employs in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*, predominantly, to relate the story of the same protagonist, Tambudzai. In so doing, this study finds out that the second person voice of narration successfully defamiliarizes the reader and narratee who is bothered to interrogate the identity of the voice. The argument furthered in this project is that, owing to the application of the second person point of view, the story manages to have multiple narrators and subjects.

The initial narrator is text-based and the protagonist who is also the focalizer of the narrative. As the narrator, this investigation reveals that Tambudzai narrates the story in the form of an interior monologue. This corroborates with Mieke Bal's claim that second person point of view narrations are disguised first person narrations. Having been battered by elements of double colonization to a point of self-doubt and shame, my analysis finds that the protagonist registers fear to narrate her own story. As a result, she projects her predicaments and the role of the narration to another narrator using the 'you' pronoun of address. What then happens is that the reader and the narratee, because of the pronoun of address that Tambudzai uses, identify with the voice, ascribes to it and are eventually engaged in the narrative as narrators and characters outside the text.

My analysis of the second person point of view in the text also reveals that it has been employed as a solidarity marker for the female body. The text narrates bodies in colonized situation. By using the 'you' voice of narration, the female body gains her agency through the eyes or perspectives of the readers and narratees. As a result, the capacity to tell the story of women suppressed by patriarchy and fragments of colonialism stops being the narrator's role but transcends to the audience. Due to the generic and ambiguous connotation implication of the pronoun of address, the reader and the narratee identifies with the voice and ascribe to it. By ascription, this study implies that the reader or narratee morphs into the owner of the voice. In so doing, he or she empathizes with Tambudzai and offer solidarity to her hero and antihero attributes. Additionally, it is only through this ascription and empathy with the female body that the narratee can gain insight to the conditions of the female body.

The second person point of view provides the reader and the narratee with the access to the mental workings of a suffering female body. Since the narration entails a protagonist in mental breakdown, the study finds out that the 'you' address invites the reader or narratee into the mind of Tambudzai to understand the causes and extent of her ebbing. As she sees illusions in the form of hyenas, ants and spiders that scavenge her body, attacks Elizabeth and later her mother, and fall into depression, the reader or narratee is permitted these events from the view point of their own minds. In other words, the narration by using the second person voice offers imagination effect on the reader and narratee who then can actualize the actions of the novel by the capacity to process them in his or her mind.

Given the above conclusion, it would be interesting to literary interrogate animal imageries that have been used in *This Mournable Body*. Dangarembga has a unique way of depicting the protagonists ebbing; bodily and mental deterioration with animals such as the hyena, spiders and ants. These animals, I argue, have a vital symbolic role in narrating the female body in the text.

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