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**Exploring Post-Colonial Traumatic  
Experience and Alienation in Tsitsi Dangarembga's  
*This Mournable Body* (2018)**

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## **Dedication**

To my supporter, my beloved father, who stands by my side in every decision no matter what it is; the one that I owe him every success that I ever achieved in my life.

To my source of kindness, my caring mother, who have raised me and did her best to make me realize what I am capable of doing and to encourage me to work hard.

To my lovely sister, the one with whom I shared my best memories.

To my dear brothers, who always cheered me up and protected me all the time.

To my angels, my nieces and nephew

To my loyal friends with whom we shared joyful memories

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## Abstract

Postcolonial narratives depict the severe conditions in the period of colonialism and decolonization, placing much emphasis on the physical and psychological sufferance of colonized nations. In this vein, Tsitsi Dangarembga's latest novel *This Mournable Body* (2018) portrays the mental distress of her characters in post-colonial Zimbabwe. It is noticeable that the victims of *This Mournable Body* cannot fully perceive the psychological dilemmas. Thus, this dissertation examines the traumatic experience and alienation of Dangarembga's characters through a psychoanalytical perspective. Likewise, it explores the disturbing status in neo-liberal Rhodesia, and the causes that led to the characters' breakdown. In particular, it also aims at exploring racial, classist, and gendered violence and its effects on the psyche of the characters. Moreover, it clarifies the author's intention in writing this narrative with affection and its link with the body's emotions. In order to achieve this aim, the qualitative approach is relevant to this work, and the analytical descriptive method will be used to depict and construe mainly the psychological collapse. Thereupon, this study demonstrates the characters' journey toward success and their attempts to exceed colonialization psychological effects. The characters remain focused on their goals and finally succeed in achieving them by rebelling against discrimination and the patriarchal society.

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

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At the turn of the twentieth century, European imperialism controlled a myriad world territory. In this regard, the period of the colonial era has started. Colonial literature and postcolonial literature are two different literary varieties. Each one was written in certain situations; usually, colonial writing was during colonization that placed the colonizer as heroes and the colonized as primitives. Also, it demonstrates how the settlers contributed to the development of the occupied countries along with helping the colonized, revealing that they do not have any culture or civilization. The colonizers' actions led to cultural, national, racial segregation as well as gender, and class-based issues, causing not only trauma, but also alienation to the colonized. Therefore, postcolonial literature emerged as a reaction to the colonial discourse, which tells the experience of colonialism and its experimental effects on the colonized. The natives at that time were confused about whether to accept the colonizer's principles or to maintain their standards.

It is necessary to explain that some authors decided to talk about these matters using the colonizer's language to indicate the intellectual and mental damage caused by the colonizer. Many writers were concentrating on the subject matter of discrimination in their society, specifically black African writers. Africans, especially Zimbabweans, were standing in the middle of the road, whether accepting the colonizer's culture and allowing themselves to live and adjust to the new life or maintaining their indigenous culture and keep on fighting.

In this context, this dissertation highlights the theories of trauma and alienation, particularly concerning women's cases in *This Mournable Body*. As well as how they manage to survive although the existence of the patriarchal obstacles that take them two steps back instead of moving forward, as it is exposed in *This Mournable Body*. Tsitsi Dangarembga explained that feeling alienated is not usually related to the condition of leaving the country; people can feel alienated without even leaving due to the colonizer treatment. Clearly, *This Mournable Body*

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characters were not aware of the psychological state they were placed in and kept on suffering as this psychological change turned their lives upside down.

This study aims to disclose and inspect life after colonialism, from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical perspective; specifically, in Zimbabwean writings through the analysis of *This Mournable Body* by Tsitsi Dangarembga (2018). In particular, this novel allows the opportunity to see the overall picture, and how the feeling of trauma and alienation are engrained in most of Zimbabweans' memories. Hence, in order to achieve the aim of this research set of research questions should be answered:

To what extent does the postcolonial literature and the Zimbabwean society inspired the Zimbabwean writers? Why does the writer continue in using the heroine of her previous books *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*? What are the traumatic experiences that the characters of *This Mournable Body* have faced? How does the traumatic experience affect the lives of the characters? To what extent does *This Mournable Body* protagonist suffer from alienation?

It is hypothesized that postcolonial literature is observed as a gateway to share many emotions and stories that were once hidden because of the colonizer. Hence, this encouraged the Zimbabwean writers to share their experiences and to elaborate on their society's problems. Giving voice to the voiceless in the concern of colonial issues, in which there is no doubt that modern African literature (Zimbabwean literature) gained more worldwide reorganization. The Zimbabwean authors are known because of their interesting style of writings that touches the reader's emotions.

*This Mournable Body* is the last part of the story that Tsitsi has been narrating since 1988 first, with *Nervous Conditions* (1988) next, *The Book of Not* (2006), and last, with *This Mournable Body* (2018). These three parts narrate the story of her protagonist in different

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stages in her life. Dangarembga's characters were struggling and trying to survive through all kinds of troubles, but the result is not always that good. The protagonist was not satisfied with the Zimbabwean capitalist system, the discrimination, and the patriarchal society. These situations cause her psychological problems and make her traumatized. Her trauma prevented her from progressing and succeeding in her life. The novel's heroine believed that she did not belong to any place, either her place of work or her hometown.

This study is worth research because it tackles and addresses one of the most essential and controversial topics recently; Dangarembga's novel *This Mournable Body* is a narrative that addresses psychological matters and demonstrates how bodies mourn. Considering that postcolonial and Zimbabwean literature has been recognized and reaped great fame during the past years. Zimbabwean writers aim at the transmission of the messages from their society and their own stories and transforming them into novels. Colonialism and its legacies placed the natives as aliens and caused them many psychological breakdowns. The colonizers made them forget who they were, live in a cycle of grief, and thus lose the value of themselves.

Tsitsi Dangarembga notably did deepen the issues of racism, sexism, trauma, and alienation in her novels for these two main reasons, first, the fact that she is a Zimbabwean woman, and second, being black. *This Mournable Body* is a masterpiece that made a huge hit and a remarkable entry in the world of books. Besides, without neglecting to mention that this novel won public attention, especially after it was nominated for the Booker Prize (2020).

A plethora of works have been done on the topic under study. In the light of what has been said about Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *This Mournable Body*, it is noticed that John Domini the author, translator, and critic did already tackle the novel from a feminist perspective. In his review of the novel, he highlights the struggles that can face women in order to make their way to success. He also clarifies the problems that the heroine suffers from no home, no job,

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and sustaining family bonds. Moreover, many writers and critics have approached the issue from a feminist perspective focusing on how women deal with their problems. Likewise, emphasizing the women's attempts to succeed giving less attention to the most crucial situations that caused their suffering, which is a psychological disorder, and the feeling that they do not belong anywhere.

In this regard, Dominick LaCapra's book *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) offers a comprehensive critical issue of trauma, especially in the historical field, as he has majored in history and trauma studies. Since post-traumatic testimonies are playing a major role in thought and writing, Dominick took advantage of psychoanalytic concepts along with historical analysis to clarify the effect of trauma in culture and people as well. The author's endeavour was not a compromise between 'writing history' and 'writing trauma'. LaCapra attempted to rethink in terms of picture a hybrid historical practice that aligns with the emotional, literary, and empirical dimensions of history, keeping in mind organizational ideals and socio-political activism.

In addition, trauma has also been the subject of research for the professor and philosopher Cathy Caruth in her book *Unclaimed Experience* (1996). She insists on the importance of the psychoanalytic concept of trauma and its intersection with literature (Freud's theory is taken as a reference in her works). Caruth did even edit Georges Bataille's book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, which contains a group of analysts and critics that contributed to this book. Also, they shared their information and researched traumatic experiences.

Another book was also made by Cathy Caruth; *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders in the Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience* (2014). The interest of this collection is researching trauma and evolving approaches to this topic, with the engagement of scholars, activists, researchers, and doctors.

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Besides, Werner Bohleber, the German psychoanalyst, indicates in his article 'The Development of Trauma Theory in Psychoanalysis'. His study concerns and tackles both Sigmund Freud "hypotheses on trauma and seduction" and Sándor Ferenczi "Revolutionary Therapeutic Approach". This author reveals and explains how psycho-economic and the theory of relationships between things are the fundamental adequate in understanding trauma.

Furthermore, in *The Resurrection of the Spectre: A Marxist Analysis of Race, Class, and Alienation in the Post-War British Novel* by the author Sercan Hamza Baglama. He examined the literary works of Alan Sillitoe, Sam Selvon, Doris Lessing, and James Kelman in order to complete his research and make sure that he tackles all parts of post-war Britain cases. His study mainly focuses on individual defence strategies. It concerns the processes of alienation and escapes mechanisms in capitalist cultures to reformulate the broader economic, cultural and social setting.

Also, in the review written by Bridget Grogan who insists on dealing with the subject of alienation and identity in the reviewed work *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature* by Sheila Collingwood-Whittick. She did mention that the work is a set of critical essays in the matter of post-colonial alienation. Grogan clarifies that this book focuses on the literature of white and indigenous authors. When white settler's writings abide linked to alienation, indigenous authors have a sense of indemnified affiliation in their writings.

Studying this novel from a psychoanalytical perspective would be suitable to clarify the traumatic experience and alienation in *This Mournable Body*. The researcher is going to use the analytical descriptive method to analyze and explain the characters' behaviour in the selected novel. Besides, it will focus on the effects of post-colonial experience and psychological problems concern the characters in order to acclimatize with their hard life.

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Therefore, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate and relevant approach to the chosen work. Data will be collected from books, articles, and websites to check the above hypotheses.

The present work is composed of three chapters. The first chapter will provide the theoretical and historical background for this dissertation and it offers an overview about the post-colonial age. Besides, this chapter discovers post-colonial literature and places a deep concentration on the Zimbabwean writings. Moreover, it checks the main basics concerning the trauma theory according to many psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth. Likewise, it elaborates the theories of alienation in the views of Franco De Masi and Erich Fromm, the ones who include the concept of alienation in the field of psychoanalysis.

For the second chapter will be concentrating more on exploring trauma in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *This Mournable Body* characters as it means discovering the psychological gaps that lead to crises and traumas. In addition to the analysis of the events that were the main cause of the relapse and deterioration of the novel's protagonist.

The third chapter focuses on exploring alienation in the novel mentioned before, and how the heroine and the supporting characters of *This Mournable Body*; felt lost in the world that was modified and controlled by the colonizer. For this reason, the protagonist and other characters were forced to live in a place ruled by white supremacy.

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## **Introduction**

Over centuries, there has been a remarkable power relationship between people. Race, skin color, gender, and religion were the essential standards of social classification. Powerful countries used the same strategy where they tried to occupy powerless countries for the sake of exploitation, and this presented what is called colonization. This concept is generally explained as foreign control over another country for the sake of establishing colonies. The purpose of expansion is taking advantage of the natural resources, and even slave trade. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a turning point in colonization history where countries shifted their attention to Africa. The reason for choosing Africa was because of economic, political, and religious affairs. The European countries competed to gather as many lands as they could. These actions were termed 'The Scramble for Africa'<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the depression in Europe led to economic crises, so they needed raw materials for their factories, markets for trade, and cheap labor, so African sources were their target.

African countries were oppressed and suffered from racism and marginalization, yet the colonizer insists that his presence in Africa is a positive attempt in order to bring civilization and new cultures for development. By the end of the colonization, African writers were searching for ways to let the world hear their voices, so they tried to write and illustrate how they were marginalized and maltreated. This huge transformation led to the emergence of new type of literature that clarifies and exposes the colonization maltreatment. Colonization and post-colonization were cruel periods for most Africans, which caused them a lot of

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<sup>1</sup> It is an expression used to describe the competition between the European countries to get Africa 1884-1914, Africa was divided into colonies, protectorates, and free-trade areas.

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psychological problems, such as trauma and alienation. Many authors were including and explaining the effects that caused their suffering in novels and books<sup>2</sup>.

This chapter presents an overview of the post-colonial age and highlights its writings, especially Zimbabwean literature. Moreover, it will present some postcolonial Zimbabwean literature and some of its famous narratives. Also, this chapter provides some theories of trauma according to Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, and Dominick LaCapra. Moreover, it clarifies the concept of alienation according to Franco De Masi, Homi Bhabha, and Jacques Lacan. Besides, this chapter situates trauma and alienation studies in postcolonial literature.

## **1.1. Exploring Post-Colonial Age**

The post-colonial age is the historical period that introduces the life of the ex-colonies after their independence. This period is also characterized by the colonized attempts to accept the changes of colonialism and neocolonialism<sup>3</sup>. This era demonstrates the struggles of the natives when the colonizer succeeded in modifying the traditional culture and language of the colonized and to privilege white over black. This was clear when the natives started to feel alienated in their lands.

The colonizer targeted the language, culture, and education because it represents the identity of the colonized. The main objective of colonialism was not to civilize, but it was an attempt to gain more territories and build an empire. Because the ex-colonies remain attached to the colonizer, many authors rebelled against using their pens. The latter paved the way toward the emergence of the post-colonial age. The issues of marginalization, identity,

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<sup>2</sup>Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*, Edward Said *Orientalism*, and Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>3</sup>A term first used in the era after W.W.II that indicates the reliance of the former colonies on the colonial countries and the attempts of the colonizer to produce a colonial-like country.

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alienation, cultural displacement, and traumatic experience were subtracted in the post-colonial age by authors to expose the colonizer's actions. Samuel Selvon states in his book *In Foreday Morning: Selected Prose 1946-1986*:

When one talks of colonial indoctrination, it is usually about oppression or subjugation, or waving little Union Jacks on Empire Day and singing 'God Save the King'. But this gut feeling I had as a child, that the Indian was just a piece of cane trash while the white man was to be honoured and respected – where had it come from? I don't consciously remember being brainwashed to hold this view either at home or at school.(211)

In effect, the colonizer and whites are always in a higher rank than the colonized while the colonized abide clueless and powerless and only need to accept the current state. Selvon raised a question that every person in occupied countries asks why the whites should be superior to them, and under what rules or principles.

### **1.1.1. An Overview of the Post-Colonial Age**

Post-colonialism was the period that resulted in the independence of many colonized countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Obviously, the colonies needed more control over their property, and most significantly, being a European colony limited their choices because of dependency and the inability to make decisions. From colonization, decolonization to post-colonialism, all these periods lead to the rise of many changes in the colonized countries' thinking as they fought to gain their freedom.

Many authors were thinking that post-colonialism not only indicates the period after colonialism, but also refers to the two previous periods of colonization and decolonization. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their book "We use the term

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‘post-colonial’; however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression” (2). Furthermore, the independence of the European colonies appeared to be just word on papers as the European imperialism sought to be in charge even after departure. Unfortunately, the joy of independence evaporated long after realizing that it was merely a fake independence. That is to say, the ex-colonies did not have complete control over the country's economic, social, and economic matters. This leads to understand that the imperial power did succeed in changing people’s minds and thoughts. Imperial power aims at controlling colonies from far through the national bourgeoisie, mainly described as another form of imperialism as they were responsible for the social, cultural, and economic issues of the newly independent nation.

Moreover, the colonized and persecuted countries were in misery, where the feeling of subservience and marginalization were prevalent at the time. Their aims to have self-governance faded as they realized their current situation. These circumstances affected the colonized in terms of how they were obliged to adapt in order to coexist and get used to their fate.

### **1.1. 2. Discovering Postcolonial Literature**

By the 1950s the colonies started fighting in order to get liberation; meanwhile, news began to spread about the emergence of new kind of literature. After the independence of the colonies, the postcolonial literature went extensively global and this new kind of literature was an opportunity to hear the voice of the colonized from different places. Generally, writers use the language of the colonizer in their writings. However, the writers add a touch of

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manipulation to the colonizer's language in the context of the challenge. They also insert their dialect to make it intractable and use words that contain more consonants to make it hard to pronounce, as if they are sending messages to the colonizer through their writings, such as the case of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Many of the postcolonial writings reacted to the colonial literature or, in other words, posture Correction. The colonial literature was giving erroneous information about the colonized correctly, known as colonial discourse. Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, mentioned that the colonized usually characterized as menservants, uncivilized societies while the colonizer as masters, civilized, and bounteous (127-135). Also, the term rewriting history has two versions—according to the colonizer, the colonies had no history, no culture, and they were considered lucky because they chose to civilize them. On the other hand, the postcolonial writers distaste the way were the colonizers behaved like heroes, insisting on the existence of indigenous culture and identity.

Post-colonial literature comes to relocate the stories and the life of people during and after the colonization. The pursuit of false expectation leads them to many disappointments, but it does not prevent them from continuing their lives. The European hegemony was all over the ex-colonies, most of the authors stated that they were embodying the society's issues, such as identity crisis, marginalization, traumatic experience, and alienation. Ex-colonies writers' responses were through books and novels including the arduous experience and obstacles.

Yet, it is worth mentioning that the postcolonial African writers left a strong mark in literature. As they are known, the black Africans' societies were traumatized because of the colonizer's abuse, especially their skin color. This discrimination caused a lot of psychological problems; which leads to the colonized alienation and marginalization. For the African writers, this was a hot topic to deal with; their narratives were such a great opportunity for them to demonstrate the situation and extrapolate aboriginal stories.

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It should be noted that many African writers participated and were an essential part in the progress of postcolonial literature, such as Chinua Achebe, who is a famous Nigerian novelist and critic. *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Achebe's renowned novel, covers the conflict between traditional values and the effects of colonialism along with gender discrimination. He rejected Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and was one of this novel's major critics because it pictures Africa as "the other world" and as a complete opposite of European civilization.

Hence, Postcolonial literature becomes more recognized because of the writers' efforts in delivering messages through novels, without neglecting to mention their strategies to unmask the colonization and its offal. This literature was the hope of the societies for change, wishing for the suppression of this system which was the reason for their anguish.

### **1.1.3. Examining Postcolonial Zimbabwean Literature**

Indeed, the imperial power back then was the ruler of the world because of the properties they earned. They took control over plenty of colonies, especially Britain. It did occupy thirty percent of Africa including Uganda, South Africa, Gambia, Sierra Leone, northwestern Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. When the colonies were separated into white settlers and occupied colonies, Africa was classified into the occupied colonies because of its wealth, agricultural lands, slave trade (Chief Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli et al par.6).

Africa was famous for its corn, maize fields, and tobacco. Michael F. Lofchie, and Robert Bates emphasized the agriculture development in Africa "as a point of departure, it is useful to dispel one of the most common myths about African agricultural history, the myth of subsistence production" (2). Africa back then was mostly self-sufficient in terms of agriculture, which means it did not require an import from other places, especially Rhodesia,

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also known as Zimbabwe, which was named the breadbasket of Africa because it has fertile agricultural lands.

Even though Zimbabwe had shaped its Responsible Government Association by 1923, and was one of the most successful colonies. Yet, the coming of the white people was not blissful at all as they tried to erase every single detail related to the country and the indigenous identity. They started with the deportation of Zimbabweans from their ancestral lands and to resettle them in old and crowded places. Furthermore, the settlers' discourses always intend to get the blacks out of the picture and make them aliens in their region. The colonizer's aim was to spread their Christian culture by erasing the colonized original culture and traditions. The Zimbabwean authors were concentrating on their literature aesthetics; especially the ones linked to their African tradition. Mbulelo Mzamane accused authors of stealing and not appreciating their culture according to him:

Literary analogies owe very little to the African tradition, and rob his work of a Zimbabwean authenticity. Indeed, there is a sense in which Marechera could try to write within the "African tradition" and that does not necessarily imply churning out conformist or imitational work. (213)

The old Zimbabwean literature represented pure and authentic writings. This desire of returning to the past was to revive the ancient literary traditions of Zimbabwe. The old narratives noticed a series of changes, such as the colonial discourse and post-colonial circumstances. Their writing before was about their traditions and folklore. After the colonization era, all their narrative intended to correct the false colonial discourse.

Hence, the subject of identity was one of the most important topics dealt with by black writers in their works written before 1980. Thus, here comes the up growth of the postcolonial

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Zimbabwean literature, where they choose to write to rebel against colonialism and its legacies. Sometimes authors develop their novels to be autobiographical novels, that is to say, auto-fiction techniques and mix reality with fiction. . In 1980 it was the beginning of the new era with the departure of the white settler rule since this freedom guarantees limitless possibilities for Zimbabwean writers and excludes censorship and limitation that was a hindrance.

Even though there were a lot of works which were posted right after the independence of Zimbabwe. However, a few of the real literary works were published (the case of authors writing in English). The road to find freedom was seen as precious and heroic, as portrayed in David Martin's book *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: the Chimurenga War*, the book *Guns and Rain, Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* by David Lan, and also Spencer Tizora's *Crossroads*.

As soon as societies and authors felt secure, more literary works began to appear and the Zimbabwean literature was seen as a powerhouse of Africa. The theme of war has been included in many postcolonial literary works, yet it also demonstrates the side effect of colonialism and explains the conditions that Zimbabwean societies have been through. They were trying to reconcile with themselves and their new community. The author's purpose behind this kind of writings is to indulge the reader in the story while the author is the reader's eyes and ears. Among the popular works, Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom*. This novel is based on the journey of an authentic black fighter and tells the story of a young boy who faced some hindrances in his African society. This narrative is also intended to highlight the experiences of the liberation war.

Also, Tsitsi Dangarembga, one of the well-known African writers, tackled these problems in her novels, and was recognized as an autobiographical novelist. *Nervous Conditions* was

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regarded as one of the top ten books in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the novel's main character faces many problems in order to reach success. The Zimbabwean literature witnessed a great expansion and abundant turnout because of its authors who fought and had the braveness to embody the truth and convey it completely. As well as correcting their reputation which was ruined by the colonial literature, the colonizer mocked the natives and claimed that they were barbaric, which provoked the Zimbabwean authors. Many questions arose about identity, deportation, psychological problems, trauma, and alienation.

### **1.2. Toward Theorizing Trauma and Alienation**

A psychological disorder can be defined as abnormal behaviors, ideas, and emotions, while Psychopathology is the study of its symptoms, causes, and cure. Each person can have psychological issues that could hinder his life. It can also be a result of war, or family and school problems. Trauma and alienation have received much attention and gained a substantial spot in the field of psychoanalysis.

#### **1.2.1. A Theoretical Background of Trauma and Alienation**

##### **1.2.1.1. Trauma Theory**

Generally speaking, trauma is a painful experience that is hard to be processed. It can be a result of frustrating events (incident, war, family issues....) that disturb the mind and prevents it from its ordinary functioning. The history of trauma can be recognized as recurring gaps and lacerations (Van der Kolk) that can produce amnesia and dissociations. In the last few decades, trauma has owned its position in literary and cultural studies. Basically, trauma becomes a hot topic to tackle; and because of that, trauma studies emerged as part of the humanities field. The trauma field reaped great fame and acknowledgment in academic and

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media discourses, and that made both trauma and memory among essential cultural concerns in academic research.

Viewing trauma theoretically and practically was extremely beneficial for researchers and psychoanalysts to explore the symptoms and the effect of the traumatic experience on the patient. These studies claim that trauma can lead to the loss of identity; the trauma theory supports the survivors and encourages them to show their trauma effects in order to know its values. Sometimes, this process drives people to get more traumatized when they face their terrifying and frightening memories.

During the 1860s, when the incident of ‘railway spine’ posed a debate among clinicians, they noticed an uncommon response that has no connection to do with the victims’ physical injuries. John Erickson’s diagnosis included that “disturbance to the nervous system might be physically produced in railway accidents” (Wounds and Words 44). These ideas lead to more research about psychosomatic. Significantly, in 1978, the importance of psychological disorder was rediscovered in the Second World War, the Vietnam War along with the women’s movement. Yet, the psychological studies only began in the 1880s, which mainly concentrated on women cases as they showed abnormal behavior without an obvious reason. At first, these effects were considered women's biological weakness. Some early psychoanalysts did some research about these conditions including Charcot Jean-Martin, Breuer Janet, and Sigmund Freud.

The study of trauma was first proposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1887). He was one of the pioneers to examine the connection between trauma and mental illness. Jean in his work *Lessons on The Illnesses of The Nervous System Held at The Salpetriere* concentrates on the idea of ‘Hysteria’ stating that it is not a physical defect, however, it represents a mental disorder caused by traumatic accidents. Pierre Janet Charcot’s student suggests that people during trauma suffer from forceful emotions which contradict

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their massive experience. This leads to the split of the traumatic memories out of the person's consciousness and clarifies how these memories return in an offensive attitude and physical ache.

Also, she noticed through her experiment on patients that the trauma experience resumption comes when they remember the trauma memories or see something related to it. When they remember, the hidden memory starts to energize the trauma in different ways. She proved that when patients separate trauma from their everyday consciousness, they can face problems such as depression and anxiety.

In the 1880s, Sigmund Freud, another neurologist who was the founder of psychoanalysis, his work guaranteed him an essential place in psychological studies, which was considered a reliable source. Many critics followed his steps, such as Cathy Caruth. Freud started with Joseph Breuer what is called the study of hysterical patients, paying attention to the roots of their symptoms which proved noticeable motor and sensory impairment. During their researches Breuer, Freud, and Janet also discovered that reactions toward trauma memories can result in negative mental conditions. They claimed that psychological trauma can develop hysteria.

Freud and Breuer gathered all their findings, information, and researches in their work *On the Physical Mechanisms of Hysterical Phenomena*. In this work, they delivered the term 'hypnoid hysteria' that explains the split of consciousness, where thoughts are segmented and then removed from the daily consciousness. Memory fading is considered normal under some circumstances whereas in trauma cases it can be regarded differently. Patients painful memories cannot fade, it is just absent from their consciousness. However, it remains in their memories, and it appears whenever they come across something similar.

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Furthermore, Freud mentioned in his book *An Autobiographical Study* that Breuer found out about a new method of treating which is hypnosis, thus he tries to interrogate a female patient to tell him what is passing through her mind to find a way to face it. Sigmund Freud writes: “is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience, instead of ... remembering it as something belonging to the past” (18). He kept on forcing the traumatic patients to repeat their traumatic experience as if it was a recent one rather than a shocking memory.

By the 1890s, Freud offered a new theory about women’s hysteria called ‘seduction theory’. He assumed that the unorthodox behavior from his patients was sexual trauma. But later on, Freud contradicted and retracted his theory (Freud, *Complete Letters* 184). He moved from searching about the source of trauma to developing theories when he found that recovering trauma memories can relieve the symptoms of hysteria. Then Freud presented ‘the conflict theory’, where he favored the intra-psychological theory rather than the exterior trauma, and assumed that external trauma can influence the mental state of the patient.

Freud also assumed in the book entitled *In Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) that traumatic neuroses patients are less interested in remembering their tragic memories as they experienced a shortage of conscious interest in these memories. He discovered ‘intrapsychic reality’, that is to say, the reality that existed or occurred within the mind or soul that patients usually discard their trauma for the sake of living. Pointing at the idea that trauma is an obsessive threat that haunts the mind.

Another common figure in the field of trauma, Cathy Caruth, a professor of comparative literature, one of the major analysts of trauma theory, she was following the steps of Freud and even adopted his theory. Caruth intended that trauma can be valuable and play a positive role, that is to say, it gives power to patients and allows them to fight back and put an end to

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their suffering; meanwhile, it can also be harmful and affect the mind and intervene in its stability which leads eventually to madness.

In the opinion of Caruth, “Trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena”(91). She stated that trauma is mainly a shocking memory that the mind could not absorb. This memory disappears right away after it happens, and it comes as a result of sudden or terrifying events. Yet, it will be restored later in dreams or whenever the patient faces similar events.

Caruth introduced in her book *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) a model of trauma theorizing with skepticism toward the narration. Transforming trauma into a narrative can offer meaning to something inapprehensible. However, there is a possibility that this narrative can misrepresent the trauma. Geoffrey Hartman confirms that words may not be enough to confront the trauma, but it can be a little bit close in describing it. Also, Whitehead and Vickroy found that narrative is not only representing trauma, but also performing it.

Yet, Caruth's ideas were different from the ideas of Geoffrey Hartman, Whitehead and Vickroy, as she mentioned that they focused on the unintelligible aspects of the trauma. She demonstrated those trauma sufferers may pass their trauma to others. She also emphasized on “repetition compulsion” considering repetition a critical feature in writing about trauma, insisting on the idea of compulsion. “Double-Telling”, a term Caruth launched about how history can be valuable in recalling distressful historical memories.

It is hard for the trauma victims to coexist. The trauma theory tries to keep the truth of shocking memories, but this leads to discarding the victim's need in recovering and incorporation. LaCapra assumes the historical, theoretical, and narratives response to trauma

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that focuses on 'the repetition compulsion' may become "compulsively fixated". LaCapra was also like Caruth which adapted "fetishistic narrative" more specifically critical attitude towards the reverse approach to trauma (Representing 192-93). In his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, he reviews novels that describe trauma and criticized them as he clarified that these kinds of trauma narratives lead eventually to arranged events and positive scenarios.

Moreover, Caruth was focusing on writings that were characterized by everlasting mutability, disintegration, aporias, and many others while she was rejecting narratives that contain the illusion of perfect mastery and final closure. These ideas proposed by Caruth were seen as a dubitable topic according to LaCapra (*Writing History* 71).

Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud were the first who introduced the trauma field, a fascinating domain that caught the attention of many psychoanalysts, critics, and scholars. They shared precious information and helped in the progress of this theory. Caruth and LaCapra technically gave birth to this theory, and they paved the way for more future accomplishments in this field.

### **1.2.1.2. Alienation Theory**

Traditionally, alienation has two particular meanings "to turn away the feelings or affections of anyone" (Schmitt 163) (OED)<sup>4</sup> or to transfer property. Thus, the meaning of this word was completely changeable over the centuries in the theological, social, and political-economic discourse. The first study of this term was done by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his work *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) where he proposed the two terms 'Entausserung' and 'Entfremdung' in order to indicate that in the principality of objectivity the soul becomes other than itself.

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<sup>4</sup>Oxford English Dictionary

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Without neglecting to mention that Ludwig Feuerbach's work *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) that dealt with religious alienation also played a major role in the development of this concept. Basically, years after, this term vanished from the philosophers' narratives, and most of them did not include it in their writings, even Karl Marx the famous historian, sociologist, and philosopher rarely included this term in his writings at that time.

It is worth mentioning some other theories of alienation, generally called non-Marxist conceptions. In the early twentieth century, the concept of alienation was used by many authors, and it was considered a universal side from the human presence. However, the entrance of alienation in psychoanalysis was after the Second World War. It started when some psychologists began to include alienation with psychoses; they tried to explain it as an individual incident.

Erich Fromm, the German social psychologist was the one who dealt with the concept of alienation in the field of psychoanalysis. He supported his ideas with Marx's work as he used the capitalist historical concepts, and did not separate them from his work as other psychologists did. He wrote works where he tried to link between psychoanalysis and Marxism, for instance, his two books *The Sane Society* (1955) and *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961). Fromm always focuses on subjectivity when a person feels himself or herself as an alien. His most concerns were individuals. He did refer to some of Marx's concepts. Fromm did misunderstand some ideas which prevented him from presenting the exact objectives of alienation in the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts (Musto 86). Fromm viewed alienation as a disease that it linked to the person's psyche, so alienation was considered as a mental illness.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel stated that alienation is a complex structure that causes the loss of reality. For him, this concept is a result of variance between the human body and

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mental existence. Franco De Masi, the Italian Psychoanalyst, viewed the concept of alienation from a psychoanalytic perspective; he demonstrated that when the individual senses an ongoing threat or susceptible situation, feeling differences from others. This means that the person experiences alienation. Here alienation transforms into a psychotic process that changes reality. This situation makes it hard for the patient to distinguish between fiction and reality. These issues hinder introspective thinking; in neuroscience, this can be explained as 'inhibition of higher cortical functions in the pre-frontal cortex. Therefore, the lower part of the brain becomes more primitive, which stops 'the symbolic thinking' and leads to the deterioration of the mind's state (Endre Koritar 341–346).

### **1.3. Trauma and Alienation in Postcolonialism**

Authors after colonialism intended to reveal the colonizer's actions and the kind of treatment that they were forced to handle even after their independence, however, the colonizer was never satisfied, and always wanted more. Meanwhile, the colonized felt psychologically and physically devastating; their memories and the effects of colonialism were seen everywhere. Thus, postcolonial authors presented these issues in their writings and explained them even more in their characters, making them face the exact emotions that the society was suffering from. These issues hindered the colonizer and left them in psychological pain, such as marginalization, identity crisis, class classification, trauma, and alienation. Trauma and alienation were major problems back then, and many novels tackled these problems because they affected the colonized mentally and prevented them from living normally.

#### **1.3.1. Situating Trauma Studies within Postcolonialism**

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The influence of Cathy Caruth guarantees her a remarkable spot in trauma studies. Her work usually discusses trauma as the main subject in literary, cultural, and human studies. In her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), and her edited work *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), she emphasized the bond between trauma, reference, and history.

As she clearly mentioned about the textualist approach, that through the concept of trauma, the process of 'rethinking the reference' aims for more understanding, not for distorting and removing history. In the light of the dispute between revelation and reference, Caruth addresses Freud's work on Moses and tells that the concept of trauma refuses and demands reference along with narration as a possible part in the narration of history.

Caruth paid much attention to Freud's theories and its interest in literary works to prove the conceptual topographies of his psychoanalytic theory in a better way. She insists on the fact that if Freud used literature to report trauma, so it means that literature can be similar to psychoanalysis in its concern with the relation between knowing and not knowing. Therefore, this may prove that literature and psychoanalysis can have a link in a specific point.

Many studies were made in the field of trauma, which was linked to various literary varieties. It should be noted that postcolonial study of trauma reaped great fame even though it has been critiqued for not being enough to the research schedule of postcolonial studies. Significantly, the book *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post Colony and Beyond* (2011) edited by Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué contains several essays that tackle trauma studies through literature and emphasize the link between 'cultural trauma' and 'personal trauma' in postcolonial fiction.

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The editors rely on the works of Frantz Fanon, Cathy Caruth, and others. They developed the concept of ‘cultural trauma’ in order not to think of it as a rush event, but as a social and psychological case. Furthermore, Herrero and Baelo-Allué face some problems in whether trauma lies on the side of fiction or context. Also, in Anne Whitehead's essay “*Journeying through Hell: Wole Soyinka, Trauma, and Post-colonial Nigeria,*” she demonstrated trauma and the experience of Africans, including their suffering during and after colonization. Whitehead utilized and referred to the work of the Nigerian novelist Wole Soyinka.

Moreover, the studies that Rosanne Kennedy did to both Tsitsi Dangarembga’s book *The Book of Not* and Franz Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks* that talks about the traumatized Algerian fighters, where she explained the similarities between the two works. Kennedy sheds light on the traumatic experience resulted by colonization and neocolonialism, and what both of the writers missed in their piece of work. She examined the characters of the novel and how they tried to handle this situation. She also showed how Dangarembga presented her character from a female perspective, unlike Fanon. Kennedy praised the novel *The Book of Not* for delivering the whole picture of the young woman struggles in an environment full with racism, class issues, colonialism, and war.

In addition, Mairi Emma Neeves was also interested in trauma within postcolonial studies, she studied the main character of “*Apartheid Haunts: Postcolonial Trauma in Lisa Fugard’s Skinner’s Drift*”. The protagonist was haunted by her past; a past that she did not even know that it did exist. In the view of Neeves, Fugard used repetition and narratives to demonstrate the traumatic experience. She explained that the key point was when the writer presented the characters in different perspectives in order to challenge and destroy the trauma effects.

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### **1.3.2. Situating Alienation Studies within Postcolonialism**

Alienation is among the prevailing topics in postcolonial theory and literature, mainly postcolonial literature aims at presenting the differences and overtaking the notions as ‘the Orient and the Occident’ that was proposed by the colonial discourse. Homi K. Bhabha is a critical theorist, famous for being one of the major figures in the field of postcolonial studies. David Huddart's presented the theories and the studies of the famous postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha in his book *Homi K. Bhabha*. According to him

Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations-We should not see the colonial situation as one of straightforward oppression of the colonized by the colonizer. Alongside violence and domination, we might also see the last five hundred years as a period of complex and varied cultural contact and interaction. (1)

Bhabha's ideas about postcolonialism were not mostly linked to the past. He focused on duality and the colonial discourse and he also explained that instead of letting the past interpret their present, the colonized need to understand the relations between cultures and rethink the conditions of colonization. Moreover, Bhabha also has a theory that is linked to the ideas of Jacques Lacan about ‘the self and the other’ and how a person can feel alienated because of the effect of colonialism and thus losing the native self. Alienation is characterized by the person’s separation from the external environment, usually, the individual self -split from the world as a result of external forces. Furthermore, Dean MacCannell referred to Lacan theories about alienation according to him

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In Lacan there is no escape from the process of symbolisation, which is essentially the process of alienation, in the relationship of self to other, self to self. In the glance, he writes, we see the other. But because we can see him or her, we also know the other can see us: we can take the point of view of the other in a transitive relationship. This is the moment, in Hegelian terms, of 'recognition'. (135)

Lacan's theory of 'Mirror Stage' includes symbolization where the self disappears instead of it; the third point of view appears in different shapes. The parasitic thoughts start to control the patients and lead to their alienation. Here the patients become alien to themselves. Lacan's theories of alienation are linked to self/self and self/other.

In Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, the protagonist faces a lot of troubles to coexist finding herself between two identities (the first one is her native identity and the second one is the alien self). In postcolonial theory, a specific concept was hugely diffused back then, when the self is transformed to the other alien self. It appeared when the person failed in protecting his/her native self and eventually leads to self-alienation 'self and the other' (Asim Mahmood, Muhammad, and Faiza Noureen 1-2).

Moreover, in the above-mentioned novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, most of the characters were alienated, the feelings of losing yourself including your identity were dominated in the novel. This novel pictures many of Bhabha's ideas about the ambivalence of colonial discourse and the process of harmony between the self and the other-self which leads to the crises of the self, and then the feeling of alienation (3).

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### 1.3.3. The Representation of Trauma and Alienation in Postcolonial Zimbabwean Literature

The occupied third world countries or known as colonized nations had suffered from inequality. They were described most of the time as savage, black, and other<sup>5</sup> by colonizers. This harsh treatment was noticed more in African countries, where it affected them badly and led them to feel insecure. For instance, Zimbabwe was just like other African countries judged by their race, gender, religion, and class. Zimbabwe has produced so many talented authors who were fighting to promote their societies' cases and let the world hear their voices. Their works usually discuss trauma, depression, subversion, alienation, and freedom. Thus, a set of literary works has tackled trauma and alienation in Zimbabwe, especially during post-colonialism.

The depiction of trauma in Brian Chikwava's novel *Harare North* was about isolation and lack of affiliation. Since he applied the trauma and psychoanalytic theories to represent the characters' experiences, Chikwava referred to Freud and Laing theories. Indeed, the circumstances that the protagonist has been through brought a sense of non-belonging, along with psychological and cultural trauma after moving from Zimbabwe to London.

Furthermore, trauma and alienation were both subjects under study in Tsitsi Dangarembga's works *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*. All three books tell the story of her protagonist Tambu and tackle her life step by step (childhood, adulthood, her beliefs ...). Her work detects Frantz Fanon book of *Black Skin, White Masks* where the issues of her main character were centered on skin color (black) and gender. All these conditions affected

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Said's book *Orientalism* demonstrates how the colonized were labeled other by western society; the colonized used this term to mock the Africans and prove that they were always superior to them.

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Tambu and threatened the stability of her mental health, and thus, experience the sense of non-existence, which eventually leads to alienation.

### **Conclusion**

In the light of what has been said, postcolonial narratives have been raised to a high level right after their emergence highlighting many realistic topics that turned the societies upside down. One of the main reasons this kind of narrative grows popular is the feelings and emotions of people regarding this period; they were mentally broken and seeking for solutions to live. Equally important, the aim of the authors was also to prove and give substance to the cultural and religious side of the countries that once were occupied.

This chapter also covered both sides of trauma and alienation. Besides, it does offer a general background of them and how these terms were first used. Also, it deals with trauma theory and its studies according to Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth, which focus on their achievements in the field of trauma. In addition, the definition of alienation from many philosophers' points of view including Franco De Masi, Jacques Lacan, along with tracing this concept's entrance to the psychoanalysis field. Moreover, it also intended to situate trauma and alienation in post-colonial literature and studies and deep concentrate more on the African literature especially, the Zimbabwean one.

## **Chapter Two:**

**Exploring the Character's Traumatic Experience in Tsitsi  
Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body***

## Chapter Two: Exploring the Character's Traumatic Experience in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

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### Introduction

Third world literature, commonwealth literature, and postcolonial literature, are various terms used to describe the colonized publications. However, regarding all names, most of these literary works covered the ex-colonies' cultural existence and the damage of colonialism. Novelists usually liberate diverse stories and seek to present new kinds of writings that demonstrate actual stories, not just create fictional characters to do it instead of them. Therefore, they developed works classified under the genre of autobiographical writings<sup>6</sup> and semi-autobiographical writings when the writer is part of the novel and one of its characters. African novelists followed this path and included their own life stories in the shape of a novel to express them more. In this vein, Tsitsi Dangarembga is considered one of the famous African and Zimbabwean authors that wrote in that genre and used the first-person narrator in some of her novels. For instance, Tambu Dangarembga's main character demonstrated at the beginning of the novel *Nervous Conditions*, "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling" (1). However, she surprised the reader when she wrote with the second-person narrator in her latest novel *This Mournable Body*, revealing the journey of her main characters Tambu in her patriarchal<sup>7</sup> society.

*This Mournable Body* is a novel that spotlights Dangarembga's main character's life in her late 30s, and how she manages to face the struggles each time to succeed. The writer provided the reader with the story of her protagonist Tambu since childhood in her previous two books. Dangarembga attempted to elucidate in her piece of writing the psychological issues that surround the characters in each stage of their life, including external effects, such as racism and sexism. The main purpose of this chapter is to display the protagonist and other

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<sup>6</sup>It is the works that tell the author's own story and the records of his life.

<sup>7</sup>Male domination, the case when the men control the family, tribe, or society.

## Chapter Two: Exploring the Character's Traumatic Experience in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

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characters' traumatic experiences with the use of trauma theory from the perspective of Sigmund Freud and Cathy Caruth. Moreover, this chapter will contain a general background about the characters' development through analyzing Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*, considering that both narratives are linked to the novel under study. In other words, tracing and placing more emphasis on the characters' traumatic experience from the beginning.

### 2.1. A General Overview of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* is a novel that expresses the characters' circumstances in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Dangarembga narrates the story of her protagonist, who is a familiar persona that the readers already know in her two pre-existing novels *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*. This narrative focuses on the character's attempts to succeed and cohabitation. Tambudzai Sigauke, the heroine of the novel is an adult that faces daunting challenges, considering that she is a character in her late 30s educated, but unfortunately unemployed. At the beginning of the novel, Tambu was obliged to stay in a hostel in the capital that she was not even welcome to stay in because of her age; she always sees the hostel as a horrible place that is hard to live in. After a hard time, Tambu gets the opportunity to leave it and move to one of wealthier neighborhoods in Harare, a widow's house along with having a chance to be a teacher in girls' high school.

Despite this occasion, Tambu lost its temper when she got in a conflict with a student, which caused the girl to go deaf in one ear and led Tambu to Psychiatric Hospital. Tambu wakes with no memory of the ancient, and while being in the hospital, Tambu comes across faces she knew before, her aunt Lucia and cousin Nyasha. Tambu was trying her best to stay away from her family. When she ignored them all the time, yet they stood with her and offered a place to live. Furthermore, she moved to live with her cousin that came back from

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Europe with her husband and two kids. As soon as she began to recover and hope for her future, she met Tracey Stevenson, her high school classmate, and an old rival, who offered her a job to start over again in her ecotourism business. Tambu returns to her village for the purpose of work and finds herself facing her mother and her rural homestead. She suggested organizing an African traditional event in order to transform her village into a tourist place, and through that Tambu faces an unpredictable sight that changes her life all over again.

### **2.1.1. The Socio-Economic and Political Context of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body***

As has been noted, *This Mournable Body* is a story that covers many sides of society starting from economic, political, and social matters. Back then the western values still had control over the country, and the person was being judged whether he or she was white or black, man or woman. The social state of the novel's characters was very different; Tambu was close to a social disciplinarian character although this behavior almost broke her down. While Nyasha personified the optimistic female persona, she was able to raise her kids even with her hard state of her and her husband. Also Tracey, a white Zimbabwean woman, the old classmate and the previous boss of Tambu in the advertisement agency, is a powerful character that has a clear goal and valuable social standing. Gertrude and Isabel Tambu's rude hostel mates, the ones who think that young age, beauty and fashion are all what is important in Zimbabwe.

Moreover, this narrative clarified that the Westerns were gaining profits from Zimbabwe even though it is an independent country. The capitalist system still existed in Zimbabwe, and the policy of Mugabe's 'reclaiming white-owned farms by force' was so popular, and everyone wanted to make profits from it. Fanon called this policy "nationalizing the robbery

## Chapter Two: Exploring the Character's Traumatic Experience in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

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of the nation ” ( *The Wretched of The Earth* 48). In this regard, Tracey tried to convince Tambu to work with her because she was valuable; this can prove more that Tracey is one of the colonialist bourgeoisies.

The setting of *This Mournable Body* is in neocolonial Zimbabwe. Tambu abandoned her family, lost contact, and left them a long time ago to be successful. She found herself in a country full with white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy. Even though she worked hard and gave her best to have a job, the racial classification in her country was an obstacle for her; the subjectivity of the colonized was devastating in *This Mournable Body*. This was clear when Tambu went to an interview proposed by Mrs. May, the hostel matron, Tambu was judged by her outward appearance rather than her knowledge. Madam Riley despised Tambu and mentioned “But there is no work here,” ...“So there is no interview. Try down the road. They’re hiring for a market garden. Potatoes, or maybe sweet ones. And on the other side someone is farming chickens” (16).Dangarembga closes Tambu’s story with teamwork where Tambu and the members of the community were working side by side.

### 2.1.2. The Significance of the Title “*This Mournable Body*”

The title “*This Mournable Body*” comes from an essay by Teju Cole, and his essay was about the different ways in which we grieve for different bodies, and his thesis is that some bodies are more mournable than others”(Tsitsi Dangarembga booker prize interview). Dangarembga explained how she selected her novel title, as she mentioned how the article of Teju Cole influences her to come with her title *This Mournable Body*. In the article Cole points at Menocchio, an educated person but was not a member of the literary élite, the one who thought that once the body died; the soul directly despairs and dies too. His beliefs were different than the others as he collected his information from many sources including the Koran and the Bible; regrettably, he was tortured and then burned to death. Cole

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also emphasizes the fate that many people are getting in Paris. People are cruelly murdered because of racism, religious, and cultural differences. When influencers were fighting for freedom of thoughts and opinion, the scenes of torture and willful killing were conquering the world.

The violence in Paris was horrible in which there was a clear insult to human rights, as if the human life was not worth anything, forgetting the fact that these people have families and friends that mourn them (Unmournable Bodies)<sup>8</sup>. The horrific massacres in Paris, Gaza, Mexico and many other countries lead to the idea of mournable bodies and demonstrate that it is part of it. Bodies mourn when losing precious people, because of racism, and the unfair social stratification. Dangarembga has a clear view when she chose this specific title. She knew that it expresses the real state of her characters, and it gives a deep meaning to the novel itself when a body grieved for another body or when a body is treated or maltreated differently than the other one.

### 2.1.3. *This Mournable Body* and Dangarembga's Trilogy

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* is known for being the third part in trilogy, and the famous storytelling of Tambu, the main heroine of the novel (childhood, adolescence, and middle age). The character was first introduced in *Nervous Conditions* 1988; Tambu was isolated and powerless because of the gender classification of her rural homestead. Suddenly, everything changed after the death of her older brother Nhamo when she got an opportunity instead of him to go to school. Tambu went to live with her uncle Babamukuru (he studied in England), and he was always respected because of his education and social standing, and she also met her cousin Nyasha for the first time (Nyasha lived in England before). Dangarembga's trilogy caught the attention of many researchers and critics such as Johanna

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<sup>8</sup>Article by Teju Cole.

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Russell as she wrote in her review<sup>9</sup> about it. She demonstrated that this trilogy tracks Tambu's life progression while she faces the gender and racial partiality in Zimbabwe and tries to withstand all the obstacles.

One of the main issues that were clear in *Nervous Conditions* was gender. Women were seen differently and they were supposed to live under specific rules. That is to say, men were always superior and women were regarded as inferior. Tambu was always inferior to Nhamo despite the fact that they live in the same world, the patriarchal society placed man on a higher level than women, which resulted in their marginalization (Peiman Baharvand, Zarrinjooee 32). Equally important, the novel also tackles the effect of colonialization more specifically on Tambu and Nyasha when they were struggling to find their places between the Shona and the English culture. Tambu studies are based on western education and this affected her original culture while Nyasha was judged by her father and classmates for not being African enough.

Essentially, *Nervous Condition* covered the protagonist's childhood experience, along with her school journey with Nyasha, and covers the issues of black/white, man/women, civilized/uncivilized. The story has been more captivating in the next part; *The Book of Not* was defined to be the perfect fitting continuation to the former book. It does comprise young women's efforts to face personal and political threats, including war and its consequences. Back then, Tambu realized that the world she lived in does not provide her with the equal chances that she was expecting; her rural village was an obstacle and a bond she wanted to escape from by adopting the colonizer's culture. Tambu's school duration in Rhodesia was before Zimbabwe obtained its independence, where she gained a scholarship in Catholic boarding school "The Sacred Heart College" at the end of the first book of Dangarembga's

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<sup>9</sup>The final instalment in Dangarembga's trilogy is a provocative exploration of identity and race in modern Zimbabwe.

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trilogy and she started in school in *The Book of Not*. This part highlights more the road of independence “the war in Rhodesia”, and Tambu’s conflicts in her elite school to prove herself in the light of the racial humiliations she was suffering from. The school allowed a small number of Rhodesians to attend, yet they do not offer those equal chances with white students.

In the last few chapters, Tambu started to lose hope in her school. She has higher grades, but she was not able to achieve the School Cup because she was black. *The Book of Not* is a novel that demonstrates the steps to the emergence of the new Zimbabwe along with Tambu’s young adulthood in school and in the capital Harare as well. Finally, in *This Mournable Body*, the last part in the trilogy, Tambu was an adult in her late 30s that missed chances and tried to rise after every failure.

It should be noted that Dangarembga narrates her novels with the use of the colonizer’s language. Edward Said mentioned in his book *Orientalism* about the domination of the colonizer’s language and how they imposed their language on the colonized (107). So many post-colonial writers intended to use the colonizer language as a response to the colonial discourse, and Dangarembga did follow the same path. She also used the First-Person Narrator<sup>10</sup> in her writings *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*. The pronoun ‘I’ can be seen as a voice that represents the post-colonial era, so in post-colonial writing ‘I’ is a textual counter-discourse that was caused by imperialism. In the case of Dangarembga, I refer to her novel protagonist, Tambudzai Sigauke, the young girl who reveals her journey to achieve success. In *This Mournable Body*, Dangarembga changed to the second-person narrator. Narratologists claimed that the second-person narrator<sup>11</sup> affects the narratives and veers it

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<sup>10</sup>A point of view with the uses the pronoun ‘I’ and ‘we’, the novelist is the one narrating the story or speaking about him/her in the narrative and sharing the event that he/she was experiencing.

<sup>11</sup>A point of view with the use of the pronoun ‘you’ to address the reader and get him more into the story.

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from realism unlike the first and the third-person narration. Yet in this novel, did remove allegations of realism and approached the future more. Even though the use of 'you' in *This Mournable Body* addresses the heroine of the novel, and also indulge the reader into the story; sometimes it demands the reader's collaboration and also to be involved in some ways.

### 2.2. Exploring the Character's Disturbing Status in the Neo-Liberal Rhodesia

Dangarembga's previous two novels delivered facts in the very beginning of the narratives, her brother's death in *Nervous Conditions* and her younger sister's leg incident in *The Book of Not*. But, Tambu changed her way in telling the third narrative. In the first few lines in *This Mournable Body*, Tambu describes her state in the hostel, and the moment when she was not able to see herself in the mirror, comparing herself to a fish that symbolizes weakness and fragility.

There, the fish stares back at you out of purplish eye sockets, its mouth gaping, cheeks drooping as though under the weight of monstrous scales. You cannot look at yourself. The dripping tap annoys you, so you tighten it before you turn it on again. A perverse action. Your gut heaves with a dull satisfaction.(Dangarembga18)

Tambu sees herself stuck in between the post-colonial corruption and the unfair cultural values, the more she grows in age she realize that the world she lives in will provide her only with more pain and suffering. She was aiming that her education will provide her various options and leads her to succeed; however, she become a victim of her society that prefers white than black, and man more than woman. Tambu being black and female prevented her from taking advantage of the most basic rights like education (Rushton 24).

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The post-colonial and patriarchal standers were the reason for the marginalization of the female character, and the capitalization system only made the situation worse. Tambu was treated offensively by her hostel mates Gertrude and Isabel, and she was pushed to leave the hostel because of her age. Furthermore, just like Tambu, Nyasha did not have a successful career as well. Even though she has a master's degree from the United Kingdom, she has a tough time fitting into the Zimbabwean traditions in the matter of accepting the reality of how women are treated in Zimbabwe and tries her best to change it. Nyasha was known to be the women who fight for her rights and tried to change the patriarchal society in *Nervous Conditions* even though she has limited choices (Odoi, Lesibana and klur 157).

### 2.2.1.Racial Violence in the Novel

Violence is regarded as an infringement of human rights. It can appear in many ways, physical or verbal, but this cannot make it any less harmful. The human is a precious creature that should be treated equally in terms of gender and race. *This Mournable Body* is a narrative that demonstrates plenty of insults that the characters had been through, either from man woman, the colonizer, and the system. In the first chapter, Tambu was seen as a burden in the hostel when Mrs. May, the hostel matron, kept telling her that she did not belong to the hostel because she was too old for it and convincing her that the Twiss Hostel is a better place for her age.

The protagonist's suffering did not includes just the hostel Marton, also her hostel mates made her feel uncomfortable as well. Gertrude and Isabel, two young ladies who enjoyed insulting Tambu whenever they got the chance, Isabel mentioned, "You're going to Sam Levy's, too. You love the sales, just like us. I didn't know old people like fashion" (13), and also when they call her "elderly". All these words affected her and made her feel less important, powerless, and depressed.

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Another point to focus on is the way people were classified in entering the combi or the minibus. The combi conductor was no different than others as he rejected old people from entering the combi saying "Parents, we aren't taking you," the youthful combi conductor shouts, with a smirk. "We're full. Did you get that? Full"(13). When Tambu finally succeeded in finding combi with her hostel mates, another scene happened there, but this time to Gertrude and Isabel by a rude man.

In chapter four, Tambu finally concludes that she made a big mistake when she left her copywriting position at the advertising agency. Back then, Tambu was always abused because of her gender and skin color, and most of her work was always attributed to white men rather than her. Now her age prevents her from applying for another job in the same previous field; pointing that she dug her own grave for mere principle saying, "You should have endured the white men who put their names to your taglines and rhyming couplets" (33). Tambu was presented as prey for racism in the colonial system of Rhodesia; she was among the few black girls who studied in the Sacred Heart College. From the start, Tambu has no chance against the white girls because they were privileged by the system. In addition to that, Tambu and the other black girls were not supposed to stay along with their white classmates, referring to them always by 'other'. Referring to the views of Edward Said, the colonizer used to point at the colonized as a primitive. The orient was always described as uncivilized, savage, irrational and 'other' (Lutfi Hamadi 40)<sup>12</sup>. The hard work of Tambu and her attempts to win all flew away, and with time her effort became unrecognized. In contrast, all the acknowledgment was given to the white student, her classmate Tracey.

Indeed, Tambu was thinking about leaving because the ruling system made the country a whole mess, saying: "You want nothing more than to break away from the implacable terror

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<sup>12</sup> Edward Said: *The Postcolonial Theory and The Literature of decolonization* PHD.

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of every day you spend in your country...by going away and becoming a European”(45). Furthermore, the injustice that Tambu was getting made her hate or detests all white races and bear hostility to them, and this was clear when Tambu met the white woman ‘Katrin’. She kept calling her by the name ‘Tracey’ that belongs to her boss at the advertising agency, the one who stole her ideas along with her white mates. Although she knew inside that she was not her, Tambu accused the woman and continued to scream at her “Don’t pretend with me, Tracey!”, “Liar!”(58). She admitted her hate for white people when the doctor asked her “Of course I do”(76) while she was in the hospital and re-mentioned her story again to the doctor, also she confess that she wanted to beat the white lady even though she was not Tracey. Moreover, she mentioned that white people do not recognize or acknowledge her “They never see me. It doesn’t make any difference who they are. Nobody sees me”(76).

Suddenly, Tambu started to remember her days at the Young Ladies’ College and comes to her mind an interview she sows once about a Ghanaian writer who first got to know that she was different when she was in a place that has white people. This story made her remember Nyasha actually, Tambu used to dislike her cousin; she was obliged to endure her just because she was her roommate. Nyasha’s ideas used to be against the Europeans. This made Tambu question the real state of Zimbabwe now, how people underestimate others and why they cannot accept each other as it is. This situation bothers Tambu the most ‘racist’.

Equally important, the work of Tambu as a biology teacher .Tambu holds grudge to her student who had the chance to rise in an independent country saying, ‘your pupils are all born frees ’(63). Here the internalized violence of Tambu has been released specifically, on Elizabeth, in other words; the main reason that Tambu behaved that way was because of Esmeralda a confident and powerful student. Elizabeth symbolized the young Tambu before

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she experienced 'racism' and 'sexism' and may be this is why Tambu targeted her.

### 2.2.2. Classist Violence in the Novel

The link between the psyche of the person and the political condition of any country can result in a new type of violence to a certain group in the community, and the society will be divided into two: the upper class (superior) and the lower class (inferior). The coming of the colonial power led to the appearance of white supremacy and the rise of classist violence, particularly in African countries.

The Superiors, directors, and all who had upper hands in the management of the country were corrupted people controlled by the imperial power. Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian Psychiatrist and political philosopher, who was also known for his works in the post-colonial studies discussed in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* about how decolonization is a violent phenomenon. He clarified "decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain species of men by another species of men" (35) when the white population elects cruel mobs, exploitative entrepreneurs, and mercenaries. Obviously, decolonization means another colonial rule by the emergence of what is called 'the national bourgeoisie'. The neo-liberal Rhodesia in *This Mournable Body* was not much different than what Frantz Fanon said; social stratification played a major role in the country people were treated according to their backgrounds. Equally important, Wallerstein stated in his World-systems theory that:

Fanonism has continued and highlighted the revolution in the Third World.

Fanonism has also revealed the colonized people are suffering unfair treatment and oppression in respect of humanity by the colonists and it has resorted to military force at the turning point in world history (251).

Wallerstein was the first one who used the term Fanonism to indicate Fanon's theories and studies. He explains the inequality between the classes in which the third world countries suffered from oppression and persecution.

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Undoubtedly, *This Mournable Body* is a model that presents the classist violence between the Zimbabweans themselves in the neo-Liberal era. As soon as Tambu left the hostel for an interview, she met her hostel mates and asked her about her next destination. Clearly, the answer left the young ladies questioning "Borrowdale"<sup>13</sup>, as if Tambu is not supposed to have any relatives in this city because of her social state. Then as a kind of insult, Isabel added that her uncle used to live there, but at some point he lost everything and went to jail. "Now he's in jail there. It's only people like that who go to Borrowdale"(13).

In another point of view, Tambu sees that failure is something expected from a person who has a background like her. Yet, what surprised her most is her cousin Nyasha and what she did achieve; she thought that Nyasha was a person who could get anything because of her background. Tambu thinks that someone who is like Nyasha was not supposed to fail regarding her stable economic state and the opportunities of education she had, and not forget to mention that the education system of Europe was way different than the one in Zimbabwe . Nyasha's master's degree in the United Kingdom could not save her. Hence, she ended being just like Tambu, a jobless and powerless person, someone who failed in obtaining chances.

### 2.2.3. Gendered Violence in the Novel

The novel highlights the idea of double invisibility. First, when a person is regarded as invisible because he/she is black. In this situation, whites can have advantages more than blacks, live in separate places, and even worse, black people are not recognized, and most of their accomplishments are given credit to white people instead. Second, being women, Colonial Rhodesia's education system favored boys over girls, and back to *Nervous Conditions*, the first part of the trilogy can make things easier.

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<sup>13</sup> Borrowdale is considered as one of the most affluent and prestigious area in north Harare Zimbabwe.

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The opportunity that Tambo got to study was meant for her brother, because it was given to Nhamo who surprisingly died. If all this never happened Tambu would never have the chance to go to school and maybe would get the same fate as her sister Netsais. This gender issue can justify why Tambu suffered during her education. She always thought that only education can give hope to women, and maybe she would have the chance to liberate from this unfair situation.

The idea of gender was devastating in this novel when the woman was seen as a tool and a weak person that can be manipulated at any time, just like the landlady widow Manyanga's sons' Praise, Larky, Ignore, and the tenant Shine were thinking. The widow's son's Praise and Larky tried to kill their mother in order to sell the house that she is living in. They did not have any respect for women including their mother, as the widow said, "Yes, Larky and Praise. The two want to kill me"(55). Also, this idea bothered Nyasha too when she dreamed of a country that offers equal chances, and then get shocked by the real state of 'sexism'; "You hope for the best. You believe," says Nyasha, in such a faint voice it is practically a whisper. "But it's all talk, talk, talk. There can't be a country that hates women as much as this one" (98). Nyasha regrets coming back to Zimbabwe as she thought that she could change thing with persistence saying "Sometimes I think if I had known, I wouldn't have come back here!"(99).

Nyasha's husband Leon gave another possibility about how women are treated in Zimbabwe, and how superiors choose carefully a woman who works with them, a one that cannot fight, only a title, and a tool that the men can use whenever they want to. He said

Women like you just haven't got it. Scale. Because no one wants you to have it. They have to make sure you never do! They don't want women like that.

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They want women the way they are now, just something with a shelf life, that ages. Can't you see there's nothing about women to interest any kind of capital unless it's solutions for aging?(99)

Here he points that Nyasha is not the type that would fit in work with this kind of corrupted superiors; they want a woman who has no voice, and no will to change this current situation.

### **2.3. Toward the Examination of the Traumatic Experience in *This Mournable Bodies*' Characters**

Since the beginning of Dangarembga's trilogy, most of the characters were having mental distress with the changes in the nation's condition from colonialization to post-colonialism. The protagonist felt injustice when she was always condemned to failure due to her being a black and African woman. She was not strong enough to bear the terrible events and the struggles she went through and ended having a psychological breakdown. In general, this mental illness was dominant in most of the novel characters, including Nyasha, Lucia, Christine, and Netsais.

#### **2.3.1. The Psychological Trauma of the Protagonist 'Tambudzai'**

*This Mournable Body* depicts the fall of the main character's mental state. Since *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu never regarded herself as a successful person; she realized that after fighting for years in order to achieve her goal. Tambu was overwhelmed with racism and sexism at one point; she lost control during her work as a biology teacher in girls' school. The steps that lead her to this trauma were justified in each part of the story; she was putting all her efforts to be someone who is powerful in the future just like her uncle Babamukuru. The protagonist Tambu was characterized by serious mental instability.

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First, when Tambu went with Christine wandering around in the night. She lost control of the way she was supposed to behave and attacked a stranger claiming to be someone she knows. After screaming and causing a commotion, Tambu refuses to leave the girl alone. After a long negotiation, Christine succeeded in getting Tambu out of that place and gave her money to return to the widow's house. Yet, When Tambu returned to her normal self she discovered that she was lying down at a bus stop, she was unaware of what she did and her memory does not recall anything saying; "What happened?"(60). This can be justified as a traumatic experience when she lost part of her memory and forgot about scenes she did during her mental breakdown. According to Sigmund Freud, this is called 'hypnoid hysteria'. It represents the split in consciousness where some thoughts do disappear from the daily consciousness, but they still exist in the memories of the patients.

Second, the situation that leads Tambu to Psychiatric Hospital is her job in girls' school. She challenged herself and searched a lot in order to gather information that can help her in teaching biology, and be a model teacher even though it was not her specialty. She realized while working that there will be a problem because of her student attitude especially Esmeralda. This girl is modal of corruption she kept on causing several problems making everyone at the school look as her followers although Tambu chooses to ignore her and focus on her work at first . Working as an outdoor supervision bothered Tambu seeing girls violate school rules and look at her despisedly made her reports these actions to the headmistress. The girls started insulting Tambu and pointing at her as 'Tambudzai the Grief' and 'Mega-Grief' (64) as revenge.

Tambu another time mentions an animal in her story "Now you understand. You arrived on the back of a hyena .....the hyena laugh-howls at your destruction. It screams like a demented spirit and the floor dissolves beneath you" (72). Hyena symbolizes a complicated

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emotion that is linked to Tambu's inner self and a threat to her at the same time, and the hyena's laugh is a sign of Tambu's breakdown and distress. David Lan mentioned in his book entitled *Guns and Rain* that the hyena was used in Southern African folklore as witches' familiars; he explained that when a person wants to become a witch he/she can be 'involuntarily possessed by the shade, or non-human spirit, of the hyena' (35-6), adding the fact that witches travel by using the hyenas. So, Tambu meant in her above-mentioned statement that she has something in common with witches, but she was betrayed by the hyena and dropped in empty land as his laugh proves that.

In the middle of her unstable condition, Tambu opens a conversation with a hyena. She seems lost and unaware of herself; she kept in thinking of answers to intuitive things and then finding the answer after a long time. This can be related to her psychological state. Tambu knew that she cannot achieve anything. She represented herself as an extra woman who could not make a useful thing with her abilities. The colonialization, patriarchy, and white supremacy these circumstances were all against her success. The hyena knows Tambu's weakness so well because the hyena is simply Tambu.

Tambu kept on falling and eventually found herself on the brink of an abyss although she is the hyena; she was frightened and felt insecure. Tambu chooses to drain her anger into the outside world instead of hurting herself. The anger and grudge that Tambu holds turned in this mournable body into violence and led to serious damages to others. Anger was not the only reason that led Tambu to have mental distress. Moreover, Tambu was avoiding her family, and she cut off contact with them even when she saw her young sister bleeding, she escaped this situation in which affected her and was part of her breakdown "You saw the blood spurt from your sister's leg during the war, just after you had graduated from your uncle's mission, and you fled from then on"(53).Also, her continued feeling of envying others was part of this

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issue too, such as Nhamo, Nyasha, her white classmates in the college, and even her student. Envy and anger drove Tambo to lose control of herself, and therefore, she resorted to violence.

Furthermore, the violence that was generated by Tambu caused a problem in the girls' school when she cast her anger on Elizabeth, her student, and made her deaf in one ear. This event caused Tambu to have trauma she was not stable when she beat her student, according to trauma theory Tambu's mind deleted this incident from her memory and her conscious mind to save her from collapse(Pierre Janet Vol 1-2)<sup>14</sup>.

### 2.3.2. Trauma, War and Memory

Dangarembga narratives contain several linked events, in each part of the trilogy Tambu retunes and gives flashbacks about the previous novel. *In This Mournable Body*, the characters reference situations that have affected them and completely changed their lives. Christine, landlady's niece, brought memories with her about the war she served in, and it turns out to be friend of Tambu's aunt Lucia.

#### 2.3.2.1. The War Scars of Lucia, Christine and Trauma

The war toward the independence left many damages in the Zimbabwean people including their physical and mental state. *In the Book of Not*, the second part of trilogy, Dangarembga highlights the Zimbabwean events during the war toward independence and its consequence. Tambu started the narrative with the unpleasant news of her younger sister Netsais who went to war and lost her leg. In this narrative, the memories of the war has been mentioned again, but this time not by Tambu .On the contrary ,Tambu was always running away the moment that anyone speak about her family, and what happened to them.

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<sup>14</sup>*Psychological Healing.*

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Christine remembered the war as if it had happened recently, for her the war was something unforgettable. She kept seeing people die in front of her, this made her learn not to care only about her self-interests, and she said "We were taught not to be selfish during the war..... Because then everyone dies"(52). Most of Christine's memories about the war were shocking, she lost someone she likes in the war, she was a witness of the murder massacres, and more than that, she was part of the killers that fought for independence. Christine's symptoms represent Post-traumatic stress disorder as Sigmund Freud suggested that it is a paradigm that focuses on past trauma that can affect the present life(James Strachey).

The female in the war was regarded as different creators not males, but something else, Christine was traumatized during the war every single memory of her there was horrible "I don't sweat," she says. "I run to town, three nights at least in a week".....That's the good thing about what the war taught us. There's only one kind of blood, not many like some like to say. We saw it seep from every wound. And even those who couldn't run knew how, after they saw it..... If you've seen blood, you know about running"(52).

The war-woman inside Christine prevented her from living, her war memories hunted her and continued to interfere in her present "When I was back home, just being there, pretending it's life, like everyone else "(57). Lucia, Christine's friend in war, was exactly feeling the same as her friend. She went to war to offer a better life for both of them, but her child has faced a terrible death by Rhodesian soldiers. The war made Lucia cold-hearted; she was ashamed to be a woman who saw a lot of blood. After the war Lucia declared that everyone hated them when they returned "It was so difficult when everybody was afraid and started saying that we who fought were going naked at night, drinking blood and flying with evil spirits" (103). Although she was broken inside after the terrifying views that she was obliged to see every day, Lucia tried to ignore all the words directed to her and began a new start.

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Nyasha's mental state was not that stable. Also, her memories of *Nervous Condition* started to return when one of her kids, Panashe, was maltreated in school. This situation made Nyasha remember her relationship with her father, the relation that led her to commit suicide when she was physically abused. Her daughter Anesu stated that Panashe's teacher beats the students; Nyasha could not stop herself from crying because she realized how painful this incident was. She knows how bad can affect the psychological of any person because she has been there before. Cathy Caruth's theory "Double-Telling" represented Nyasha's case; she remembered her traumatic experience when a similar situation was repeated again. Her trauma happens while she was young in *Nervous Conditions* Caruth concept is about recalling old distressful memories.

### 2.4. Writing as a Therapy in *This Mournable Body*

Dangarembga is a writer that fought to present unforgettable works starting with *Nervous Conditions* to be the first black Zimbabwean woman who published an English novel. She was one of the writers who wrote about pain and loss and dealt with them, Dangarembga gained attention because her narrative embodies and represents the issues that most of the society suffers from and provides solutions. The subjects that she delivers touch the readers and make them feel as if they are part of the story. *This Mournable Body* is a kind of novel that makes the reader dives and re-thinks his/her life and what he/she did to make it worthy. This period of Tambo's life was considered a complete failure; she was unemployed with no specific place to live in and without family ties.

This work can be viewed as Therapy it includes various subjects such as patriarchy, racism, sexism, and the effects of colonization. The writer manages to protest against the condition of Zimbabwe through her novel protagonist Tambu. She had been through a lot yet; she never stops trying even with the inequality of her country and the dominance of white

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supremacy. Dangarembga demonstrates that the woman is usually double oppressed first because she is a woman, and second because she is black. Each one of the characters in this narrative exemplifies one of the country's issues. So this work can be considered an opposition and insurrection for independence. The bodies were mournable, their loss was much more than they could handle, their voices were not heard, they were suffering in silence, hoping that conditions would change, dreaming of a better future.

### **2.4.1. The Body and the Text in *This Mournable Body***

The body was seen as the best way to express emotions more than words. Even though philosophers have since ancient decades underestimated women such as Aristotle, Plato, and Descartes, they linked the male with a higher level than the female, and sexism was an issue since then. This narrative was a form of healing more than a problem to be solved; the work presents how the body of women can handle and fight back against male dominance and white supremacy. So the relation between the text and body can be a complementary relationship to communicate various feelings through narratives for the reader to understand the characters' emotions.

The work of Tsitsi Dangarembga does concern the Zimbabwean more than others, the author wanted to change ideas, beliefs, political, and social affairs of this specific country. The situation of Zimbabwe was a controversial case recently, many influencers and activists started to rebel against the corruption and violations of human and citizen rights. Zimbabwean Lives Matter is the hashtag that the influencers used to display their discontent toward the Zimbabwe system; this hashtag went to the extreme and was trending on twitter. Yet the government starts arresting these activists considering their actions as riots.

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Fadzayi Mahere, the MDC<sup>15</sup> Alliance's national representative, Hopewell Chin'ono, a journalist, and Tsitsi Dangarembga, a writer, these famous fingers were among the people who were arrested. The Zimbabwean people became mournable as their words change nothing and always ended being sectioned. People were using narratives to clarify and to demonstrate how mournable they were, their bodies could not handle more persecution, the work was supposed to be their voice for alteration in a world assume that speaking about your rights a crime .

### 2.4.2. The Return of Tambudzai

Tambudzai Sigauke, a familiar name for many readers the protagonist of *Nervous Conditions*. She challenged serious circumstances to achieve her goal and to be an educated woman, she mentioned that she was not sorry for her brother's death because of him she went to school and broke free of her village, and moved to her uncle's house. Tambu was a selfish character from the start but in *The Book of Not* she became cold-hearted, severed her ties to her family, and made her interest the main priorities .the greed blinded her and made her only look for herself, the teenager Tambu hoped for a brighter future her scholarship was the key to be successful.

However, nothing works as she wished, being a black woman was an obstacle for her achievement, she knew that despite her hard work she won't win against her white classmate especially Tracey. Tambu opposed the traditions of her village and wanted to be a different person, a powerful one. Yet, her dreams were scattered away and she became a failure and a burden on others in the last part of the story *This Mournable Body*. A woman in her late 30s quit her job in the advertisements agency and became jobless living in a hostel that she was

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<sup>15</sup>Movement for Democratic Change.

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too old to be in it. She accepted the fact that her country was not a better place for living because of the unfair system.

Nevertheless, Tambu did not stop trying; she applied for work and had the chance to be a biology teacher. Moreover, the work with her old classmate Tracey for the second time was so successful and allowed her to come back to her village. She thought of changing her old village to a tourist place but she failed as well. Considering all that Tambu has been through she managed to survive and it can the end of this novel can be regarded as a happy ending, Tambu got a job again and she may rise this time.

### Conclusion

As shown above, Dangarembga was the kind of writer who insisted on delivering messages through her novels, and how the woman was situated in the Zimbabwean society. The perfect job for a woman before was preparing her to be a housewife; something like education never existed. Only a few females get the chance to be educated, but the society and the capitalist system of Zimbabwe hammer them from maintaining their achievements. *This Mournable Body* the last part of Dangarembga trilogy demonstrates the characters' circumstances and how bodies can mourn more than other bodies. The way people are classified bothers Dangarembga the most, black being inferior to white, men are better than women. She put more emphasis on the idea of hard work alone is not enough; her protagonist attended to do everything that could make her life easier and wanted to put her mark on society as a successful woman. Nonetheless, she was judged and oppressed because of her race and gender.

In addition to that, the condition clarified in the novel made many characters to have a mental disorder which leads to a traumatic experience. Many characters' were traumatized;

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they realized that Zimbabwe was not the perfect place for a person to establish his life. Their country was not considered a safe place with equal opportunities, nothing did change, and this made bodies mournable.

## **Chapter Three:**

**The Portrayal of Alienation in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This***

***Mournable Body***

## Chapter Three: The Portrayal of Alienation in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

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### Introduction

The colonizer's language and culture were a threat to the colonized traditions, identity, and social matters. According to Fanon, colonization was not just about the social, cultural, and geographical occupation, it does include the psychological part too. In the previous chapter, the subject of trauma has been tackled, along with covering most of the situations that were involved and the main reasons that led to the character's mental breakdown. The whole liberation idea turns to be a lie; the Zimbabweans could not gain anything from their independence. The conditions were the same, which resulted in trauma and alienation from society.

Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *This Mournable Body* is a good example that pictures the actual social conditions; she attempts to demonstrate the side effects of colonialism and its leverage on people, mentioning their traumatic experiences and alienation. This narrative traces Tambu's mental disorder and her struggles to fit into the new society shaped by the legacies of colonialism. This chapter, therefore, will concentrate on the characters' alienation and some of the reasons that led to it, using different theories, including Jacques Lacan, Frantz Fanon, Karen Horney, and other theorists.

Thereafter, it will elaborate on the main character's self-alienation and her alienation from her Shona family. This alienation was a result of the colonial inequitable system placing whites higher than blacks and women lower than men. Next, it will also present hybridity as a major cause of alienation and provide flashbacks from the previous novels in Dangarembga's trilogy. Last, this chapter will supply the protagonist's psychological state and her road to success.

## Chapter Three: The Portrayal of Alienation in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body*

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### 3.1. The Exploration of Alienation in *This Mournable Bodies*' Characters

*This Mournable Body* is considered as a novel that tackles and highlights the psychological state of the colonized and the main reason for these mixed emotions, emphasizing the most broken moments that the characters felt while living in the neo-liberal Rhodesia. After the colonization period, the Zimbabweans had a hard time fitting into the new system, even though the circumstances were not helpful. The oppression and the pressure made the Zimbabweans feel alienated twice, first from their community and second from themselves.

The previous two novels demonstrate the beginning of these emotions; and why the characters felt alienated. The first part of the trilogy puts the reader in a clear view of how all these events and their effects make perfect sense. The protagonist had a specific goal to fight for; she realized that leaving the village may offer her numerous chances and a free ticket for success. However, she lost motivation as soon as she figured that her country was under the domination of whites; Zimbabwe is no longer a place for blacks, especially after colonization. Under these conditions the main character started to forget who she was; she conducted unusual behavior and got influenced by the colonizer's morals while living with her uncle Babamakuru and his daughter Nyasha.

In *The Book of Not*, Tambu was more certain about her thought when she lost regardless her higher level in the Young Ladies' College. She was alienated and pointed at as 'other' because of her skin color. Equally important, Tsitsi Dangarembga continued in raising the issue of alienation even more in the third part, not only the main character but also the other characters as well. Moreover this tale could be somehow linked to Fanon's notes about this concept; alienation is a psychological matter in which the colonizer is considered the main reason for it (Rushton22). The British colonizer tried to erase the ideology of the colonized and replace it with their own, which led to alienation.

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### 3.1.1. The British Colonizer and the Alienation of Zimbabweans in *This Mournable Body*

Undoubtedly, Zimbabwe was a British colony before. Dangarembga did narrate her story approximately from 1968 to 1999, which means that the trajectory of her novels was held during and after the colonization era. With no doubts, the Zimbabwean society was affected by the rule of the British Empire and its legacies; the differences between the colonizer and the native are one of the essential issues proposed by Dangarembga in her trilogy. These conflicts launched more than one obstacle for the Zimbabweans, which driven to sensibility between black and white. Tambu confesses her hate for white people; every chance she got was squandered because of white supremacy, adding the discrimination she was suffering from being a black African Zimbabwean woman. Dangarembga's last novel accentuates Zimbabwean manners after the war of independence 'decolonization'; the colonizer erased any traces left from the old Zimbabwe and established new beliefs that turned the social, economic, and political positions upside down.

Furthermore, the independence of Zimbabwe did not change anything; in contrast, it proved that the plans of white machinery were successful after all. Their attempts at obliterating the Zimbabwean personalities did work in the end. Zimbabwe was not completely free from the repercussions of colonialism, and its effects remained firmly in the minds of Zimbabweans. Besides, the British colonizer was responsible for most of the higher posts and agencies in Zimbabwe. So after their departure, they hired some corrupted bosses who work with their orders to manage these posts.

The situation in Zimbabwe was characterized by malfunction, marginalization, racism, and eventually conducted alienation. While the natives were fighting to survive, white people

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plundered the local's job positions and turned Zimbabwe into a capitalist country. All these ideas were covered by Dangarembga through her novel characters' Tambu, Nyasha, Lucia, and Christine. Her work highlights more how the female character can be alienated by her surrounding environment.

The war toward independence was viewed differently for both men and women, Lucia and Christine were a clear example of this. After they came back from war, people always looked down on them and tried to keep them far away as Lucia mentioned "Yes, sometimes we wondered why we went to war when we came back and everyone was shocked and began to hate us" (104). The sense of alienation in Lucia and Christine's minds made them feel like strangers, and since their return, they had a hard time recovering.

Society's reaction to their comeback was a surprise and made them regret involving in the war in the first place. Christine was isolated, abandoned by her family, and then told to take care of her aunt because of her children's affairs saying; "That fighting was just like madness. Maybe they thought because I'd seen so much of it, I was the best one to deal with what's happening here in Harare" (56).

Over and above, Christine was forced to go, she didn't want to get involved in any other problems because of her war experience. She figured later on that everyone near is pushing her more to self-destruction while throwing her out of the family whenever they face the smallest problem just like her aunt's case. Christine was alienated from her own family after the war, no one mentioned anything, they just ignored her, "but now it is in the home. And still no one talks. They just say it happened, or they even say it didn't happen, and then ignore it"(56).She admitted that no one cared about her, when she comes back she was compelled to face every memory of the war on her own.

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### 3.1.2. The Alienation of Tambudzai from herself

Karen Horney, a German psychoanalyst, referred in her book *Neurosis and Human Growth* about the problem of self-alienation and described it as a dangerous mental problem that would fragment the self and ruin the human's stability, according to her

This beginning alienation from self is more basic because it ends to the other impairments their injurious intensity. We can understand this more clearly if we imagine what would happen if it were possible for the other processes to occur without this alienation from the alive center of oneself. In that case the person would have conflicts, but would not be tossed around by them; his self-confidence (as the very word indicates, it requires a self upon which to place confidence) would be impaired, but not uprooted; and his relations to others would be disturbed without his having become inwardly unrelated to them.(21)

She points that self-alienation can result in various issues to the person who's having this mental case as it can destroy his/her self-confidence. The relationship between the patient and the society will get weak over time and causes a decisive separation. So, the patient will be isolated from the community and become internally unlinked to them.

Self-alienation can be considered a reaction to a traumatic experience, and more like a response to all the surprising events that happened. Many critics were thinking about trauma and how it is a postcolonial legacy; one of them is Michael Rothberg, who insisted on this idea in his essay "Decolonizing Trauma Studies". He talked about how trauma theory provides the most convincing answer regarding the violence and the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized (226).

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The changes in the community can reflect the psyche of the person, so it's highly understandable that people who have experienced trauma would suffer from self-alienation and identity crisis (Nazan Turan, Özkan497). This theory can explain the situation that the protagonist Tambu was going through; her traumatic experience caused her many problems and made her self-alienated. Tambu changed her way in narrating, some unreal elements started to appear due to the use of the second person narrator. Her alienation embodied and taking forms as ants, fish, hyenas, spiders, and snakes (Rushton27).

Tambu's life kept changing, first when she left her rural village and moved to her uncle's house in *Nervous Conditions*. Next, earning a scholarship in a Catholic boarding school in *The Book of Not*, and, finally, to a homeless and unemployed person in *This Mournable Body*. She learned to accept her present; in a place where black women cannot achieve anything except failure and disappointment. The protagonist's alienation was expressed in the shape of insects; for instance, ants whenever Tambu sees ants, this can prove that her mental state is not stable. In some situations Tambu mentions ants either creeping over her or showing in her way, the reader cannot decide whether the ants are real or just imaginary.

Ants here symbolize Tambu's thoughts which are referred to parasitical and disturbing ideas that exist in her inner mind (Rushton27). She said; "Later, you open your eyes again and lean over to vomit. The mess fills the cracks in the pavement. Ants and tiny spiders scurry around in indignation...Ants and spiders trek over your body." (60), Tambu regains consciousness after a tough night the insects were everywhere attributing. Tambu's mixed thoughts led her to be self-alienated. It should be noted that this condition happened right after Tambu's breakdown (attacking a white woman). There is a possibility that these ants and tiny spiders do exist; nevertheless, considering Tambu's mental state, these insects may represent the hate and abhorrence she feels for herself.

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That was not the only time when Tambu saw ants; it happened to her once again in her cousin's house, Nyasha, "A battalion of ants creeps round the back of your neck as you sit in Nyasha's living room. You pretend to yawn and turn an involuntary gesture to brush them off into a polite pat of your mouth"(89). Tambu was trying to recover after her trauma, and Nyasha volunteered to take care of her. Even though Nyasha and her husband Leon tried to make Tambu feel comfortable, yet she was disappointed realizing that Nyasha's life was not as she imagined. Tambu's intrusive thoughts were embodied as ants, plenty of them; she has many ideas in her mind concerning her cousin's livelihood. In addition to that, while Tambu was heading to her room she noticed her uncle disk and also she saw an ant "An ant scurries along the grain of the wood. You regard it, suspicious that it has crawled out of your imagination"(92).

Tambu's thoughts kept on interpreting and appearing, both her thoughts and feeling seems to be separated from her, this can be justified as self-alienation (Rushton28). Later on, Tambu tried presenting another value to ants, from a symbol to her intrusive thoughts to a symbol of single-minded determination and success (Rushton 28). After changing its symbolization, she mentioned that she wants to be like the ant "You will be like the ant, you decide" (92). Yet, Tambu forgets her intention to be like the ant after she smashes it pages after. Self-alienation was preventing her from moving forward when her accumulated thoughts changed her into a stranger, even from herself.

Indeed, ants here is one of the animals who were displaying the protagonist self-alienation, the Portrayal of self-alienation in *This Mournable Body* also revealed from the very beginning of the novel "There is a fish in the mirror" (11). This is the first phrase that Tambu choose to start the novel with; this describes Tambu's psychical state. Tambu description of the fish was inconceivable, which calls into question if the fish was 'Njuzu' a myth that exists in Shona's

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traditions. Njuzu is 'a water spirit which sometimes has human head, arms, and torso and a fish tail', 'usually pale in complexion with long, straight hair'<sup>16</sup>. Njuzu has the ability to be good or evil it is known as a threat because njuzu can be a devastating creature, and as Grant Lilford demonstrates that it works as a 'catalyst' for struggles and social disturbance (Rushton 29).

Tambu at first presented the njuzu in the mirror as both herself and not herself "You pad away from the washbasin to pull your wardrobe door open. The fish bloats to the size of a hippopotamus in the oily white paint that covers the wardrobe's wooden panelling. You turn away, not wanting to see the lumbering shadow that is your reflection"(12). Njuzu also was a symbol for Tambu's alienation but this time not only from herself also from people where it signifies disarrangement and discomfort. Referring to Lacan's theories about self-alienation, the self can only display itself by its encounter or what is called 'Mirror Stage'. For Lacan, symbolization goes hand in hand with alienation, especially in the relationships between self/self, self/other, which creates the third dimension, and the third point of view that represents the alienated self (Kevin Goddard 54).

Furthermore, Tambu's self-alienation was not only symbolized just with ants and fish (Njuzu) but also with hyenas. It is mentioned in the previous chapter that the hyenas symbolize Tambu and are part of her mental breakdown; nonetheless, in this chapter, the hyena is a strong argument that proves Tambu's alienation from herself. The hyena's laugh is a sign of Tambu's separation from herself. Equally important, these animals are mainly from the protagonist's imagination reflecting the chaos caused by her thoughts. The hyena did appear again when Tambu accepted to work with Tracey. Here Tambu was overwhelmed with her thoughts; she was afraid that she was going to lose everything just like what happened to

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<sup>16</sup> Grant Lilford, 'Traces of Tradition: The Probability of the Marecheran Manfish' p286.

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her in the past. This time not to Tracey but to her new colleague Pedzi who seems to be compatible with her boss Tracey without neglecting to mention her impressive success at work. For Tambu, there is nothing called easy profits, always working hard, but she could not end either the constant conflicts in her mind nor her self-alienation; "You realize that although a hyena is laughing, the sound is only in your head" (148). Her self-alienation always rises and became at its peak whenever she faces a trauma; while she fights to survive her intrusive thoughts find a loophole and menace Tambu's stability.

### 3.1.3. Tambudzai's Self-estrangement

Due to colonization and decolonization, the main character of the novel never felt that she belong to a specific place, even her family house. She was looking for a chance to escape from her rural village because she did not like how they treat women there. She succeeded in leaving, but she never had an easy life. Her college career was an unforgettable duration where Tambu finally realized that white has the opportunity to do whatever they want, and this rule cannot be the same for black. Despite the circumstances and the hard time she experienced, Tambu never thought of returning to her family again and chose to stay in Harare.

Moreover, Tambu explained through the whole trilogy why she hated her village and family, she never stopped linking them with the frailer. Clearly, Tambu's Shona family is characterized by physical and social patriarchy which prevented her from the study in the first place. Her mother was not encouraging at all as she despises her along with her dreams and wanted her to fail because she saw that there is no good in white men's education. The rural village remained her with weakness and poverty, she distastes the fact that she lived there before because she never felt affiliated with her family's house. In the protagonist's mind, being a woman who lives in a Shona family, it is like slow killing because women are inferior

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to men, which make her always the last choice ( if her brother did not die, she would never have the chance to study ).

In addition, the journey of Tambu was full of disappointments in a country that represent racism, sexism, and colonization legacies; this turned Tambu into another person, an uncompleted person. Her alienation was not from herself only it included also her family as well, after she went to study in her uncle's house Tambu disconnect any relation would link her to her family. She went to boarding school to finish her studies in the second part of the trilogy; even with her younger sister's incident and her issues in the hostel she never thought of coming back to the village. Meeting one of her aunt friends was a surprise for Tambu because she never thought of seeing someone she knows; Christine tried to make Tambu remember her family saying "I have your parcel", "Your people at home are thinking of you"(43). Unfortunately, she had no intention to restore the connection with her family; instead, she was thinking of leaving Zimbabwe while writing a letter to her cousin asking for a piece of advice.

While she was far apart, the main character's principles and ideas noticed a change. Yet, she was alienated from both the Shona and the colonizer's culture. At some points Tambu was too embarrassed to come back again to her family, she did not want them to get to know her new version and the loser person she became saying "you do not want them to know this" (46). Tambu isolates herself from everything that reminds her of her past; in the hospital when Christine, Lucia, and Nyasha came, she hated the idea of their existence and tried to ignore them until they leave. Furthermore, she demonstrates, "Your spirit is busy with other things and you use all your strength for departing"(82), she has not enough courage to face them, and this was clear to her aunt Lucia as she clarifies, "Leave her now. Maybe she does not

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want us here”(82). Equally important, Tambu's mixed feelings when she was heading to her rustic homestead due to her work with Tracey she describes

You catch your breath as you greet these sentinels to your past, suppressing every twinge of regret at the events that brought you here or at the deed you are doing. You twist the steering wheel to avoid a ditch and compel yourself to focus. Provisions packed in the back of the SUV slide up and down. Enjoying beforehand the impact you will make with these gifts, you compose yourself for the meeting ahead (151).

Tambu's scene of alienation heightened more when she entered her village and tried as much as she could to concentrate and coexist with her current situation. Coming back to her past was not easy for her, without neglecting to mention that her past was the main reason for her trauma. This can be linked to Cathy Caruth's ideas about “rethink the possibility of history” in postcolonial trauma. Caruth suggested in her book *Unclaimed Experience* that to face the trauma, history should not be regarded as “straightforwardly referential” or as an obstacle for change, but as Sigmund Freud's notion of facing the trauma to get over it (12) . A lot of things did change in her village; she did not recognize as many homesteads were newly built, arriving at her house and meeting her mother after many years, plenty of thoughts were in her mind thinking of her family reaction.

Indeed, Tambu was right; her mother did not recognize her at all; she invited her in as she does to all visitors, and this reaction shocked Tambu and made her freeze in her place she mentioned; “You sense criticism in her lack of recognition. You move forward swiftly to forestall any disapproval about anything. Mai, I am back. I have come”(152) ,she tried her best to make her mother remember her. Tambu was alienated from her Shona family; she realized that through her mother's words “Ewo, Tambu,” she greets you. “You of the years.

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Isn't that right, so many years? If this womb agreed, this mouth would say you are one from afar, nothing but a foreigner visiting. Only the womb knows better.”(153). These words made Tambu feel frustrated although she chose to maintain patient as she was doing her whole life. The repentance of the word ‘womb’ may symbolize ‘her homestead’, after Tambu’s return, her family was blaming her for not asking and caring even though she was with them, but she felt like a stranger because nothing was the same as she left.

Furthermore, Tambu was hoping that she can find her place back; she hated everything in her village including her family. Now with a years of absence she had the chance to return because her job she explained to her mother “Mai, I am empowered. That is why I can come now, when so much time has gone. It was not a question of not knowing the womb, but one of not knowing how to come back to it”(155). At first, Tambu left her family and her Shona culture to study. She got influenced by the colonizer’s ideas and was convinced that her study would offer her a comfortable life, but in the end, she was not accepted there. Tambu was alienated from others, including her family; she rejected her Shona family and lost contact with them. Tambu never felt that she belonged to a place like her house, her uncle's house, Catholic boarding school, the hostel, Mai Manyanga’s house, or even in Nyasha’s house. She was alienated from herself and others.

### 3.2. Tambu and Nyasha as Hybrid Characters

Hybridity is classified under one of the most common post-colonial critical concept, which refers to the mixed cultures due to colonization and the emergence of new culture. This term is highly linked to Homi Bhabha’s works, when he describes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The British executed the policy of internal colonization i.e. forcing their language and culture on the colonized in order to expend and spread their ideas all around the globe. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* proposed that the

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responsibility of creating hybrid colonial subjects fell on the duplicity of the colonial desire; this desire was supposed to be both similar and different at the same time. So this strategy indicates that the colonial domination that was successful at the end in here the colonized may be aware or not of this hybridity (Decoteau 283).

Dangarembga's trilogy highlights the damages of the British colonial and does apply it to her narrative character. Tambu and Nyasha, two female characters, were more affected by the surrounding events; the author chose a female protagonist because she wanted to demonstrate how the woman is double colonized. The two girls grow under different conditions. Each one of them was raised differently; yet, they met because they were blood-related. Turning back to *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu was not able to get her chance in education because of the patriarchal system in her village. However, she detests the new identity that Nhamo did reincarnate after spending a year in his uncle's house, where he changed his personality, appearance, and language (Peiman Baharvand, Zarrinjooee 31)<sup>17</sup>.

Nevertheless, after Nhamo's death, Tambu was now the only solution for Babamakuru. He educated her in order to support her family in the future after she finds a job. After her opinion on Nhamo's state, Tambu was not different at all. She praised the white education, and she was grateful because they left their houses in Europe and came to civilize them instead; yet, she rejected colonialism. She adopted the colonial morals and hated her previous past, though she demonstrates a contender to the colonial system before, soon she was accepting the colonial ideas to find a place among them and get rid of her previous self. Tambu succeeded in having a place in a reputable college, but she was treated as other. While white students were living in large, expensive rooms, Tambu and other African students were placed and forced to stay in small, modest rooms. Here Tambu realized that getting rid of her

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<sup>17</sup> Article: The formation of a hybrid identity in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.

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culture and being a hybrid person did not help her to be accepted in the new circumstance (35).

Nyasha also has issues in acclimatization due to her former background; being an African who grew in England made her forget about her native culture. The ideas that were entrenched in her mind are only about how the Europeans are superior to Africans, where the Europeans were convincing the Africans that their intention was mainly to civilize. Life in Zimbabwe convinced Nyasha with new thoughts she was not able to see when she lived in England; she started to question the colonial authorities and their violent behavior. With time Nyasha freed herself from her false beliefs about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized; she challenged her father and accused him of corruption along with the colonizers (35).

Good African was a word the colonizer created for the African who accepted and helped them in changing Africa to a better place (accepting the colonizer's culture and language). While Tambu accepted to be a good African and tried to be one of them, Nyasha refused to be a good African. She rebelled against these manners and faced her father rejecting the colonial education and books. Nyasha represented intellectual resistance as she supported the equality between men and women, the way her mother was treated even though she was educated but Babamakuru treated her severely. Babamakuru tried to execute the European colonial rules as he challenged the Shona culture morals constantly (32). Nyasha started to defend women's rights, and Tambu tried to follow her, but she could not.

Tambu thought of a way to achieve her goals, and following the white seems to be the best method for her. Both of them were lost in the middle of two cultures; Tambu lost her self-esteem when she decided to follow the colonizer even though she hates it. Nyasha chose not to be subordinate neither to her father nor to the colonizer and considered women issues a

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priority that should to be solve (35). This hybrid idea develops more issues among them alienation; Tambu and Nyasha felt alienated even from themselves, so hybridity can be regarded as one of the causes of the phenomenon of alienation. The neo-liberal Rhodesia became a horrible place for most of *This Mournable Body* characters because they realized that their country was still under colonial rule.

### 3.2. 2. The Return of Nyasha

Tambu has an inferiority complex toward Nyasha, the person who represents a strong personality and background. Nyasha's appearance In *This Mournable body* was a complete surprise for Tambu; she didn't know that her cousin came back from Europe saying; "Your cousin appears to need the company. She chatters on about the courses she studied, the degrees she earned, and the places she obtained them in England and Europe. You do not ask and she does not talk of what she is doing now that she is back in the country" (84). Nyasha kept telling her cousin about her degrees but never mentioned anything about her condition here in Zimbabwe.

Moreover, Nyasha was not in good condition; her degrees in Europe are nothing new; she failed in her life just like her cousin. The circumstances she lived in and her background was an advantage to her, but, unfortunately, she did not use her chance well and turned her life into misery. Still, she invited her cousin over to stay with her. Nyasha and her children were happy for meeting a close relative as she demonstrates; "The children wanted to come too ...It's better they didn't but they can't wait to see you. They're so excited. Their father's an only child. You know what happened to us as a family. With my brother disappearing off the radar somewhere in the United States. So they never imagined having an aunt" (85). Nyasha was married to a white man 'Leon' and had two children 'Anesu and Panashe', living a modest life and owning an old vehicle.

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In other words, Nyasha did not change at all; she was still hoping that she could change the country's views about women, so she created her work shop. She mentioned that she chose to go to England before because she was disappointed with the non-helping conditions in Zimbabwe. After coming back Nyasha was upset from the Zimbabwean system, racism, and sexism. The subject of racism bothered Nyasha more when her daughter pointed that her aunt Tambu is a special guest. Leon and Nyasha wished a better life for their children and this was clear in Leon's words "We should have stayed in Germany. We should teach the children all guests are equal.... In Germany we do not have this kind of thing. You have it here from the British. From them because they have a class system which is terrible"(94). Although Nyasha lived half of her life in Europe, she was tenacious and determined on teaching her kids the Shona language rather than English. She hated the fact that the country kept treating women as objects, so she created her workshop saying;

"I'm glad anything's happening at all. You know me, Mainini. I had these huge hopes and ambitions. For all sorts of things. I wanted to start us telling different stories. Stuff that's uplifting. Not just the nonsense on television. Not all that tragedy, either, as though that's the only story there is. I've been dreaming of stories of things and people we can admire that in the long run make us better than we've managed to be so far."

Nyasha insisted on staying in Zimbabwe; she did not want to abandon her thoughts and ideas of altering the country and supporting women's rights. So, she decided to focus on sharing different stories from different women, real stories, not like the fabricated ones on television, some notions that bring satisfaction and pleasure to the listener. Part of her workshop is about giving her participants researches contains different subjects; the struggles began to appear when her participants could not understand the moral of the topic and wrote random ideas.

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In addition, Nyasha was so concentrated on her work and her attempts at a new vision of Zimbabwe; but she forgot how to take care of her own family. In her view, she was not supposed to be just a female mother. There are other responsibilities she was obliged to do like, her job as a workshop facilitator. Nyasha was an example of a strong, persevering woman; she had the chance to live outside Zimbabwe and have a comfortable life for her family. Yet, she chooses to fight and make her voice reach far and wide to demonstrate her determination to drive Zimbabwe to be eminent.

### 3.3. The Reunion of Tambu's Body and Mind

Tambudzai, the main character of Dangarembga's trilogy, narrates her tragic story that was characterized by instability, suffering, and misery. Tambu is known to be a character that accepts or quits; she was not able to display her voice and opinion about a certain situation except these two events when Tambu chose to comfort her ethical limits (Amy Rushton 33). In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu was finally lucky enough to study; she was so grateful for her uncle Babamakuru for the chance and promised to stay faithful to him. Nonetheless, she rebelled against him the moment he decided to manage a wedding for her parents as he did believe that they needed to be legally married at the church (Peiman Baharvand, Zarrinjooee 32).

Also, in *This Mournable Body*, when Tambu intended to transform her rural village into a tourist village due to her job with Tracey. Her mother and other women thought of performing one of their traditional events, but Tambu's mother suddenly became embarrassed and devastated the whole performance. This event led Tambu to lose her job in the eco-tourism company but made her more close to her family. She decides to stop running and start to face her Shona family and become more close to them. Unlike what happened in *Nervous Conditions*, this chaos was the main reason which made Tambu reconcile and integrate herself

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and become more active with her community, the same one that she tried hard to run away from (Amy Rushton 33).

In the last part of Dangarembga's trilogy, it looks like Tambu finally found her true self and does not feel alienated like before. Tambu's body and mind started to reunite, her alienated self started to find her way back after years of torture. Fanon's aims were the definition of Dangarembga's trilogy, he said "colonialism has not simply depersonalized the individual it has colonized; this depersonalization is equally felt in the collective sphere" this can prove Tambu's sense of isolation and alienation. Colonialism was the perfect system that changed the community into followers, please acceptance forgetting themselves, which leads to their alienation.

Tambu finally accepted the woman she became and began to realize the importance of her family, her work with Lucia and Christine made her realize that she could be patient, she began to rise from a small worker to assistant general manager. She ended the novel by saying; "now your knowledge is now also in your body, every bit of it, including your heart. You frequently offer to help her with her studies. This is a small first step toward maintaining your knowledge in the location of which Christine spoke"(184). Tambu's body and mind became one fraction, she discovered herself late but better than not to.

### **Conclusion**

The protagonist's journey was wearisome since her birth. The circumstances in Zimbabwe were discriminative, and the women were double-colonized because of race and sex. Tambu did not accept her life, so she chose to leave her house in the village to guarantee a new life away from her family. The decision she settled with made her more wretched, which breached

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the stability of her psychological state. The British colonizer put the society at bay, which created hybridity, marginalization, and thus alienation.

This novel reveals the true face of decolonization; the war consequences, and discrimination led to alienation. Tambu alienated herself from others and her family, although they were the ones who stood by her side in her most intractable cases. In addition, Christine and Lucia were alienated too; the society could not accept them after returning from war. Nyasha's return was to transform and build a country that respects and values women. Tambu's self-alienation was generated after she struggled with her thoughts; she was the one who destroyed herself because of wrong decisions. Yet, she finally understands the point of her education, which united her body and mind.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

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Psychological disorder is differentiated by unstable emotions and thoughts that prevent the patients from mind-controlling. These abnormal behaviors can affect the person's daily life and hinder his/her ability to synchronize with others. Trauma and alienation are usually classified under this term and considered as mental illnesses that attack human stability and leave patients in complete chaos. Scientists tried to find the causes that can lead to trauma; their main findings include physical abuse, natural diseases, terrorism, and war. While alienation can encompass some causes as anxiety, schizophrenia, war, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alienation can be caused by an unforgettable traumatic experience which highlights the idea that these two mental distresses can be somehow linked. War is a common factor between trauma and alienation and may be reviewed as an essential cause for both of them; more specifically, its causes can be traced back to the colonial period as an example.

By the end of the colonization, the social state of the ex-colonized countries was in deterioration; people had a hard time finding their true identity as they were stuck in a missing loop. The post-colonial era is characterized by the authors' rebellion against the colonial writings as they described the colonized as uncivilized and barbarous societies. Moreover, the attitudes of the colonizer toward the colonized were explained under the post-colonial theory when many narrators exposed the colonizer's authentic goal. Indeed, colonization left the community suffering not only from physical damages but also from psychological breakdown. Africa was targeted by European imperialism because of its land and its sources; Zimbabwe was also once a British colony that was occupied because of its wealth and agricultural lands.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe did not witness any changes in political, economic, and social matters. The same method used by the colonizer was applied over the country after colonialism, such as the capitalist system, class status, racism, and sexism. Various writers

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thought of giving voice to the voiceless; the society revolted on the unfair rule by demonstrating their rejection of the current system. People declared the issues that led to their mental distress, including identity crises, marginalization, alienation, and trauma. Zimbabwean writings which tackle these issues were once seen as the powerhouse of Africa because they presented different types of literature inspired by reality. Ultimately, this was a part of what has been discussed in the first chapter. Also, it imparted a general background of trauma theory and alienation from different psychoanalysts and theorists.

The second chapter was devoted to 4 main parts. First, it does introduce the narrative and offers a general overview of the story mentioning the socio-economic and political context of the case under study. In addition, this chapter is also intended to discuss Dangarembga's trilogy and the significance behind the title of the chosen novel. The second part was dedicated to explore the racial, classist, gendered violence generated by inequitable social norms such as patriarchy and sexism. Likewise, it explains the characters' positions in post-colonial Zimbabwe, in which the women are double colonized and suffer from submission, dependency. Third, it highlights the characters' traumatic experience; this chapter is based on the analyses of the status concerning the novel characters' the protagonist psychological trauma, Lucia and Christine war trauma, and Nyasha's traumatic memories using Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet, and Cathy Caruth theories . Last, the second chapter proves the author's efforts in writing as therapy in her novel *This Mournable Body* as she brought her country's problems and presented them in this narrative seeking change and improvement.

While the third chapter discusses the theme of alienation with the use of the theories of Karen Horney, Homi Bhabha, and Jacques Lacan, as it was proven, the period of colonialism and neocolonialism are regarded as a strong reason that can lead to alienation. The characters were trying to cohabit with the new system; nevertheless, they failed. Tambudzai attempts to succeed never worked; she adopted the colonizer culture and was educated under the power of

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the white. She abandoned her family and her Shona culture to improve her life. Yet, she was not accepted by the whites and was always considered other.

The main character was not alienated only from society but from herself as well. Her alienation was most of the time a result of her traumatic experience, and her intrusive thoughts that were symbolized by ants, spiders, fish, and hyenas. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of the British colonizer in the alienation of *This Mournable Body* characters concerning the effects of war toward independence. Lucia and Christine were alienated just like Tambu, especially after they came back from war; they were seen as wired creatures that do not deserve to live. Also, the last chapter delivers flashbacks from *Nervous Conditions* to evidence that hybridity can be among the causes of the characters' alienation Tambu and Nyasha and their unrest behaviors'. Equally important, it explains Nyasha's attitude after returning to Zimbabwe and her attempts for alteration. In the end, it presented Tambu's final solution for success when she realized that she needed to balance her mind and body to achieve her goals.

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## Résumé

Les récits postcoloniaux décrivent les conditions difficiles de la période du colonialisme et de la décolonisation, mettant beaucoup l'accent sur la souffrance physique et psychologique des nations colonisées. Dans cette voie, le dernier roman de Tsitsi Dangarembga, *This Mournable Body* (2018) dénonce la détresse mentale de ses personnages dans le Zimbabwe post-colonial. Il est à noter que les victimes de ce corps affligé ne peuvent pas pleinement percevoir les dilemmes psychologiques. Ainsi, un Mémoire examine l'expérience traumatique et la perte des personnages de Dangarembga à travers une perspective psychanalytique. De même, il explore les conditions de vie menaçantes dans la Rhodésie néolibérale et les causes qui ont conduit à l'effondrement des individus. En particulier, il vise également à explorer la violence raciale, classiste et sexiste et ses effets sur la psyché des êtres. De plus, il clarifie l'attitude de l'auteur en écrivant ce récit avec affection, et ses liens avec les émotions du corps. Afin d'atteindre cet objectif, l'approche qualitative est pertinente pour ce travail, et la méthode descriptive analytique serait efficace pour décrire et interpréter principalement l'effondrement psychologique. Ensuite, cette étude démontre le cheminement des personnages vers le succès et leurs tentatives de dépasser les conséquences psychologiques de la colonisation. Les personnages restent concentrés sur leurs objectifs et parviennent finalement à les atteindre en se rebellant contre les discriminations et la société patriarcale.

## المخلص

تصور السرديات ما بعد الاستعمار الظروف القاسية في فترة الاستعمار وإنهاء الاستعمار، مع التركيز بشكل كبير على المعاناة الجسدية والنفسية للدول المستعمرة. في هذا السياق ، تصور أحدث روايات تسييسي دانغاريمبغا هذا الجسد الحزين(2018) الضائقة العقلية لشخصياتها في زيمبابوي ما بعد الاستعمار. من الملاحظ أن ضحايا هذا الجسد الحزين لا يستطيعون إدراك العضلات النفسية بشكل كامل. وهكذا ، تبحث هذه الرسالة في التجربة المؤلمة والاعتراب عن شخصيات دانغاريمبغا من خلال منظور تحليلي نفسي. وبالمثل ، فإنها تستكشف الوضع المزعج في روديسيا الليبرالية الجديدة ، والأسباب التي أدت إلى انهيار الشخصيات. على وجه الخصوص ، تهدف أيضًا إلى استكشاف العنف العنصري والطبقي والجنساني وتأثيراته على نفسية الشخصيات. كما توضح نية المؤلف في كتابة هذه الرواية بعاطفة وصلتها بمشاعر الجسد. من أجل تحقيق هذا الهدف ، فإن المنهج النوعي وثيق الصلة بهذا العمل ، وسيتم استخدام المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لتصوير وتفسير الانهيار النفسي بشكل أساسي. وبناءً على ذلك ، توضح هذه الدراسة رحلة الشخصيات نحو النجاح ومحاولاتها لتجاوز الآثار النفسية للاستعمار. تظل الشخصيات مركزة على أهدافها وتنجح أخيرًا في تحقيقها من خلال التمرد ضد التمييز والمجتمع الأبوي.