

Writing Against Coloniality: Dismembering and Re-membering in Dangarembga's Novels

by

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## Abstract

This study explores Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not* (2006) and *This Mournable Body* (2018) through Ngugi's decolonial concepts of dismemberment and re-membering, attempting to answer the question, 'How does Dangarembga critique 'coloniality' in her novels?'

I relate 'coloniality' to dismemberment and 'decoloniality' to re-membering. Dismemberment, with reference to Dangarembga's novels, is projected through estranged relationships, broken family ties, self-hate, identity crises and nervous conditions, to name but a few. These are a result of colonial injustices that exist under the various guises of 'coloniality'. Re-membering, therefore, becomes a form of synthesis in which humanity is restored to all human beings. The desire to break away from poverty places Western education and modernity at the centre of the dismemberments experienced in the novels. Through the deployment of selected literary theories and analysing the narrative techniques and literary devices, the study reveals how the author skilfully uses language and characters to portray the injustices endured by the oppressed. The mode or style of writing used by Dangarembga to confront these injustices poses the question, 'Is Dangarembga a polyphonic writer?' Moreover, the author's creation of a dialogical field in which three incompatible discourses of the traditional, colonial, and decolonial engage initiates a pluriversal approach towards various forms of 'coloniality'. A further analysis of the various forms of dismemberments narrated in the novels defines the particularities of the injustices hidden in the hegemonic global practice of 'coloniality'. Following this, my argument outlines how 'decoloniality' as a thought is projected as a work in progress. The decolonial approach taken by the study hints at the beginning of a healing process and the possibility of 'decoloniality'.

**Keywords:** Decoloniality, Coloniality, Modernity, Colonialism, Dialogism, Monologism, Polyphony, Mournability, Dismembering, Re-membering and Tsitsi Dangarembga.

## Opsomming

Hierdie studie ondersoek Dangarembga se *Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not* (2006) en *This Mournable Body* (2018) deur Ngugi se dekoloniale konsepte oor verdeling en her-deelvorming in 'n poging om die volgende vraag te beantwoord: "Hoe kritiseer Dangarembga 'kolonialiteit' in haar novelles?"

Ek bring "kolonialiteit" in verband met verdeling en "dekolonialiteit" met her-deelvorming. Verdeling, met verwysing na Dangarembga se novelles, word geprojekteer deur vervreemde verhoudings, gebroke gesinsbande, selfhaat, identiteitekrisisse en senu-toestande, om net 'n paar te noem. Hierdie is 'n gevolg van koloniale onregte wat onder die verskillende dekmatels van "kolonialiteit" bestaan. Her-deelvorming word dus 'n vorm van sintese waarin menslikheid in alle mense herstel word. Die begeerte om weg te breek van verarmde plekke, Westerse onderwys en moderniteit vorm die middelpunt van die verdelings wat in die novelles ervaar word. Deur die ontplooiing van sekere literêre teorieë en analisering van die verhalende tegnieke en literêre instrumente, ontbloot die studie hoe die outeur taal en karakters kundig gebruik om die onregte wat die onderdrukte verduur het, uit te beeld. Dangarembga se skryfmodus of -styl om hierdie onregte te konfronteer, laat die vraag ontstaan, "Is Dangarembga 'n polifoniese skrywer?" Bowendien skep die outeur 'n dialogiese veld waarin drie uiteenlopende diskoerse van die tradisionele, koloniale en dekoloniale betrokke raak en 'n pluriversale benadering tot verskillende vorms van "kolonialiteite" inisieer. 'n Verdere analise van die verskillende vorms van verdelings, waarvan in die novelle vertel word, definieer die detail van die onregte wat in die hegemoniese wêreldwye praktyk van "kolonialiteit" versteek is. Daaropvolgens skets my argumente hoe "dekolonialiteit", as 'n gedagte, geprojekteer word as 'n werk wat nog in wording is. Die dekoloniale benadering van die studie dui op die begin van 'n genesingsproses en die moontlikheid van "dekolonialiteit".

**Sleutelwoorde:** Dekolonialiteit, Kolonialiteit, Moderniteit, Kolonialisme, Dialogisme, Monologisme, Polifonie, Roubaarheid, Verdeling, Her-deelvorming, Tsitsi Dangarembga

## Isifinyezo Esiqukethe Umongo Wocwaningo

Lolu cwaningo lucubungula Izimo Zokuthuthumela zikaDangarembga (1988), Incwadi kaHhayi (2006) kanye nethi Lo Mzimba Ozilwayo (2018) ngokusebenzisa imiqondo kaNgugi yokuhlakaza nokukhumbula kabusha ezama ukuphendula umbuzo othi, 'Ingabe uDangarembga uhlaziya kanjani ' isimo sokuba ikoloni' kumanoveli akhe?'

Ngihlobanisa 'isimo sokuba ikoloni' ekuhlakazeni kanye 'nokuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni' ekukhumbuleni kabusha. Ukuhlakaza, kubhekiselwa kumanoveli kaDangarembga, kuvezwa ngobudlelwano obungajwayelekile, lapho amalungu omndeni enezinkinga ezinkulu ezingokozwelo omunye komunye, ukuzizonda, izinkinga zobunikazi kanye nezimo zokuthuthumela, ukubala okumbalwa. Lokhu kuwumphumela wokungabi nabulungiswa kwamakhloni okukhona ngaphansi kwezinhlobonhlobo 'zesimo sokuba yikoloni'. Ngakho-ke, ukukhumbula kabusha kuba uhlobo lokuhlanganisa lapho ubuntu bubuyiselwa kubo bonke abantu. Isifiso sokugqashula ezindaweni ezimpofu, imfundo yaseNtshonalanga kanye nesimanje yikona okuphakathi kokuhlakazwa okutholakala emanovelinini.

Ngokusebenzisa umkhakha wokufunda ophathelene nemigomo esekelwe ekuhlaziyweni nokuqonda imisebenzi yemibhalo akhethiwe kanye nokuhlaziya amasu okulandisa kanye nethuluzi elisetshenziswa ababhali ukukhomba izindikimba, imibono, nencazelo enkulu endabeni noma esiqeshini sombhalo, ucwaningo luveza ukuthi umbhali ulusebenzisa kanjani ngobuchule ulimi nabalingiswa ukuveza ukungabi nabulungiswa okwabekezelelwa abacindezelwe. Inkambiso noma isitayela sokubhala esasetshenziswa nguDangarembga ukubhekana nalokhu kungabi nabulungisa kuphakamisa umbuzo: 'Ingabe uDangarembga ungumbhali olandisayo, ehlanganisa ukuhlukahluka kwamaphuzu kanye namazwi ngesikhathi esisodwa?' Ngaphezu kwalokho, umbhali udala inkundla yezingxoxo lapho izinkulumo ezintathu ezingahambelani zokuzibandakanya kwendabuko, ubukoloni kanye nokuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni ziqala umbono lapho umhlaba njengoba ucatshangelwe ngokombono wobuningi maqondana nezinhlobo ezahlu kahlu kene 'zasesimeni sokuba yikoloni'.

Ukuhlaziywa okwengeziwe kwezinhlobo ezihlu kahlu kene zokuhlakaza ezilandiswa kumanoveli kuchaza imininingwane yokungabi nabulungisa efihlwe emkhubeni wokubusa kwamandla womhlaba wonke 'esimeni sokuba yikoloni'. Ngemva kwalokhu, impikiswano yami iveza ukuthi 'ukuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni', njengomcabango, kuvezwa njengomsebenzi oqhubekayo. Indlela yokuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni ethathwe wucwaningo ikhomba ekuqaleni kwenqubo yokuphulukisa kanye nokwenzeka 'kokuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni'.

**Amagama asemqoka: Decoloniality = (ukuphonsa inselela esimeni sokuba yikoloni), Coloniality = (isimo sokuba yikoloni), Modernity = (ismanje), Colonialism = (inqubomgomo noma umkhuba**

wokuthola ukulawula kwezombusazwe okugcwele noma okuyingxenywe kwelinye izwe), **Dialogic** = (indlela yenkulumo mpendulwano), **Monologism** = (Inkulumo ende, engaphazanyiswa ngumlingiswa oyedwa), **Polyphony** = (isitayela sokuhlanganisa ngesikhathi esisodwa izingxenywe eziningana, ngayinye yakhe ingoma eyodwa futhi evumelanayo), **Mournability** = (ukuzila), **Dismembering** = (ukuhlakaza), **Re-membering** = (ukukhumbula kabusha), **Tsitsi Dangarembga**

## Declaration

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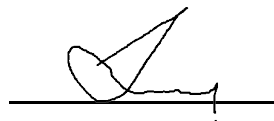
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### ***Writing Against Coloniality: Dismembering and Re-membering in Dangarembga's Novels***

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



**SIGNATURE**

**10 September 2021**

**DATE**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my late dad, Alois Munemo, who introduced me to literature's endearing world. I will always love you, Dad.

Moreover,

To all renegades of 'coloniality' out there.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This chapter serves to introduce the argument of this dissertation. In this process, the background, aims and problem statement will be explained. The limitations of this study will be highlighted for the purpose of future research. Moreover, the research question, methodology and chapter outline will be clarified as orientation towards the scope of the research.

### Background to the Study

Previous scholarly research on Dangarembga's novels *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006) covers various fields as discussed in the succeeding chapters of this research. These studies encapsulate the analyses of *isms* in an attempt to critically investigate the contexts and issues raised in the above texts. By *isms*, I refer to the theories, ideologies or philosophies discussed by these previous studies. Dangarembga's last novel, *This Mournable Body* (2018), has not been widely researched, making it one of the reasons why this study is necessary. As most African countries gained their independence, the transition from colonialism to post-colonialism led to the production of literary works (such as Dangarembga's novels) that contribute towards post-colonial debates on race, gender, identity and class, to name but a few.

Moreover, previous research has proven that the *isms* studied by scholars like Berndt (2005), Baharvand and Zarrinjooee (2012), Zhou (2016), and Anelezi (2020) focus mainly on debates regarding post-colonialism, male chauvinism, racism and feminism, amongst others. Some scholars, including Mbatha (2007), Bubenechik (2013), and Smith (2016), have conducted psychoanalytic studies of these novels to address the complexities of the afterlives of colonialism, provoking the need for further analysis and different approaches towards colonial debates or issues communicated in Dangarembga's novels.

The approach taken by previous studies asserts that readings of Dangarembga's oeuvre are based on what Pappas (n.d) refers to as a "theoretical global standpoint and a grand historical meta-narrative regarding injustices". This approach places colonialism at the centre of discussions in confronting postcolonial injustices narrated by these texts, and a decolonial critical reading of these novels may be a deviation from such an approach. The issues discussed in Dangarembga's texts go beyond theoretical or philosophical interpretations emphasised and assumed by previous studies; for this reason a decolonial approach further investigates the injustices depicted through the experiences of the characters presented in these texts. This

approach involves the investigation of the various dismemberments endured by characters in the novels and analyses possible solutions to the problems discussed in Dangarembga's novels.

As a continuation from these theoretical approaches, a decolonial approach projects the postcolonial Zimbabwean context as suffering from what I refer to as 'coloniality' practices. This, as shall be further explained in this dissertation, is a form of colonialism that persists after the end of colonial administration. 'Coloniality' has perpetuated a system in which the once colonised remain in bondages of oppression even after they have obtained their independence. Moreover, 'coloniality' as depicted in Dangarembga's novels results in some characters experiencing nervous conditions and various forms of dismemberments. Based upon this observation, Ngugi's concepts of dismemberment and re-membering are significant to this study as they elaborate on the actual injustices leading to such conditions. The hyphen in 're-membering' is crucial, as it distinguishes it from the non-hyphenated 'remembering' which refers to recollating or recalling. The word 'member' comes from a Latin word *membrum* which means limb, body part, member or organ. Therefore, to dismember is to lose membership, to cut off or to deprive of limbs. In relation to the notion of the body, dismembering is the breaking of the membership through separating body parts. In the hyphenated 're-membering' these dismembered parts are returned and reattached to the body, making the body whole again. The importance of the concepts of dismembering and re-membering in this study is that they emphasise how the body acts as a prism of tracing the movement from dismembering to re-membering. The argument of this study is that 'coloniality' practices in Dangarembga's texts perpetuate various forms of injustices that consolidate the oppression or dismemberment of those considered as lesser sentient beings. Towards the end of this dissertation, I refer to these characters as the more precarious lives.

Though Dangarembga seems to pay particular attention to her female characters, it is clear that 'coloniality', in the form of modernity, plays a crucial role in providing both female and male characters, those marginalised, with hope of empowerment. Poverty and class, amongst other factors, become the leading forces behind the various entrapments in which most characters find themselves. However, they find themselves dismembered rather than empowered, and the entrapments portrayed in Dangarembga's novels result in the 'derealisation' and dehumanisation of certain characters.

Through modernity, the creation of class structures results in certain groups of people being classified as 'the haves', while others are framed as the 'have nots' (this references the class segregation of the beneficiaries of modernity from those that are disadvantaged by the very system of modernity). Dangarembga's creation of these various contexts, in which certain groups of people are dismembered from their humanity (in other words, having their humanity questioned), 'decoloniality' becomes the only option to re-membering. For the dehumanised,

re-membering means being reconnected with their humanity, while the realisation of every human as fully being by those that consider themselves more human marks the beginning of a re-membering process.

'Decoloniality', also known as the Latin American school of thought, is associated with scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa, Walter D. Mignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel, and many others. Although these decolonial scholars are clearly Latin American, it is worth noting that African scholars such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, and Aimé Césaire have contributed a wealth of knowledge towards decolonial studies, creating a decolonial turn that is targeted at the African context. Today 'coloniality' continues to produce new forms of oppression that affect the lives of the more precarious, which is why 'decoloniality' will always be a work in progress. The case of Zimbabwe, as depicted in Dangarembga's novels, is a clear example of how the legacies of colonialism continue to haunt the independent or post-colonial Zimbabwe through 'coloniality'.

Both previous and current studies have demonstrated how 'coloniality' in the Global South survives through new structures of capitalism, including neo-colonialism. As shown in Dangarembga's novels, these structures have perpetuated the dismemberment of the once colonised. In the following chapters I discuss Nkrumah's (1965) view regarding neo-colonialism, which describes how neo-colonialism has expedited the creation of a dependency syndrome through retaining control of various economic structures in former colonised states. Linking this to Dangarembga's novels, I show how characters in the oeuvre have become dependent on Western systems for economic empowerment. Examples of this include *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006), wherein most characters believe in the empowerment through Western education. In *Nervous Conditions* (1988), the protagonist Tambu, and her brother, Nhamo, find themselves dismembered in their pursuit of a Western education: their dependency on Western systems for empowerment is premised on the belief that Western ways are superior and more empowering than the indigenous ways. Therefore, dependency syndrome can be viewed as a form of 'coloniality' that illuminates what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) refers to as the 'coloniality' of knowledge. This form of 'coloniality' involves the derealisation of other forms of epistemologies and the recognition of colonial epistemological designs that place the Global North at the centre.

In his book *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (2009), Ngũgĩ sought to offer solutions to these forms of 'coloniality' that have led to the dismemberment of the derealised. His suggestions towards a re-membering process are significant to the study of Dangarembga's novels, and his discussion of an African Renaissance elaborates on the need for Africa to go through a rebirth process. This process includes re-membering practises such as the re-linking of the dismembered through a collective mourning of those that lost their lives through

colonialism. In doing so, Ngugi links both post-colonial and contemporary complications with the unresolved past colonial injustices. Though Ngugi can be considered as being truthful in his suggestion of how to deal with previous issues, he seems to ignore contemporary complications caused by the new forms of injustices that exist under what this dissertation refers to as 'coloniality'. Moreover, this study demonstrates the dynamics of decolonial studies, as 'coloniality' practices are visible and can be detected throughout the various facets of human experiences.

In the Dangarembga novels studied in this research, the post-colonial problems depicted can be linked to both colonial and the new forms of injustices experienced in the independent Zimbabwe. This study expands on Ngugi's views by further investigating and exposing the particularities of these new forms of injustices. Moreover, these forms of 'coloniality' continue to dismember the once colonised from their humanity. The resistance noted in some parts of Dangarembga's literary narratives illuminates the fight against these injustices experienced in both dispensations: in Dangarembga's texts, 'decoloniality' tends to be the thinking pattern of the colonised, in which resistance is portrayed as one of the ways towards re-membering.

Current studies and debates on 'decoloniality' continue to ask questions in confronting the various forms of legacies of 'coloniality'. These studies focus mainly on three constitutive elements of decolonial thinking discussed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013). In addition to the 'coloniality of knowledge' deliberated earlier in this chapter, Ndlovu also writes about the 'coloniality of being' and the 'coloniality of power'. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the 'coloniality of being' involves the questioning of the humanity of those I refer to as the more precarious lives. As will be discussed in this dissertation, the 'coloniality of power' delves into the creation of power structures in global politics, perpetuating the construction of discriminatory human zones. Dangarembga's July 2020 anti-corruption protest which later led to her arrest, can and should be read as a decolonial move against the creation of superstructures that perpetuate the derealisation of specific lives. A detailed discussion regarding this protest is provided in chapter four of this dissertation. On the same note, using the decolonial thought instead of a reductionist political interpretation, the march by South African members of the Economic Freedom Fighters to Sahpra offices on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2021, during which urgency in the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines to all South Africans was requested, can be viewed as premised on a decolonial thought of the 'coloniality' of being. In other words, the march can be interpreted as engendering the need to perceive all lives as mattering and worth saving.

Following this observation, a decolonial approach becomes a relevant and significant ongoing project aimed at any institution that sustains 'coloniality' practices. It is for this reason that this dissertation serves to project the role of literature and its contribution towards decolonial

studies. Literature is part of a society or a particular context and its relationship with context is, to a certain extent, noted through the projection of contextual realities in literary works, regardless of whether they are classified as fiction or non-fiction. For this reason, a decolonial reading of literary works like Dangarembga's novels contributes towards a detailed analysis and comprehension of these realities. In an article titled 'Why Is Context Important in Writing? Four Types of Context, Explained', Master Class writes:

Context clues in a literary work create a relationship between the writer and the reader, giving a deeper understanding of the intent and direction of the writing. Literary context is background information or circumstances you provide to inform why something is taking place; context can also be the back-story of a character, provided to inform their behaviour and personality.

(MasterClass, 2020)

The above quote can be used to interpret the relationship between Dangarembga's novels and the excruciating post-colonial conditions in Zimbabwe. In doing so, her novels can also be understood as an attempt to challenge and question forms of injustices that still haunt independent Zimbabwe. Dangarembga goes beyond the question of global politics by exposing the particularities of experiences that continuously dismember the once colonised. Based on these assumptions, this dissertation will reference works of renowned decolonial scholars at various levels for a comprehensive analysis.

### **Aims of the Study**

This study seeks to contribute towards the field of literature by writing against 'coloniality' in analysing Dangarembga's selected texts using Ngugi's concepts of dismembering and re-membering to do so. Through exploring other literary concepts (including Bakhtin's dialogism, monologism, and polyphony) the study aims to demonstrate how Dangarembga successfully uses her characters and narrative techniques to present critical issues haunting the post-colonial Zimbabwe. Furthermore, in analysing the particularities of the injustices that still haunt the independent Zimbabwe; this study aims to identify possible solutions for a re-membering process. While modernity appears to be the main driver behind the various forms of 'coloniality', this study seeks to investigate this notion by approaching the rhetoric of modernity decolonially; that is, in a decolonial manner. Worth noting is how some decolonialists refer to modernity as the 'darker side of coloniality'. Briefly, scholars like Mignolo (2007) argue that modernity as part of a Western narrative facilitates the creation of discriminatory class structures that lead to dehumanisation. However, in as much as it is regarded as the darker side of 'coloniality', modernity has become part of the very fabric that society benefits from. Therefore, the inevitable question that this dissertation seeks to answer is, 'Will de-modernising in the name of 'decoloniality' ensure the re-membering of the dismembered?' To answer this question, I refer to decolonial scholars like Walter Mignolo, who have contributed

immensely towards possible answers regarding the question of modernity. Moreover, this research seeks to elaborate on what these scholars have contributed by analysing Dangarembga's texts and their presentation of the post-colonial Zimbabwean context.

This research will discuss the consequences of modernity as presented in these novels, taking note of the effect on family relations and the creation of discriminatory platforms upon which certain groups of people are derealised. According to Cranshaw's (1989) conceptualisation of the term 'intersectionality', such platforms include political and social identities that can be used to create forms of discrimination or privileges. Cranshaw's theory will be discussed further in chapter two of this dissertation. By analysing Dangarembga's depiction of Western education, the study aims to consolidate the need to decolonise the preconceived superiority attached to colonial education. This view has fostered the production of Africans that seek to dismember themselves from the Africa that has launched them into this world, aspiring to become part of the coloniser's world that refuses to accept them.

Biko and Fanon's views regarding colonial education are discussed to further elaborate how education has led to the creation of class structures between those that have obtained colonial education and those that have not. The creation of these class structures perpetuates the dismemberment of the educated from their own culture and people due to the dislocation of reason. In his book *Black Skin White Masks* (2008), Fanon emphasises how colonial education fractures the way in which the educated perceives his world. This form of dismemberment is further elaborated on by Dangarembga's depiction of the psyche throughout the three novels analysed in this study. Fanon aptly states the following:

The educated Negro, slave of the spontaneous and comic Negro myth, feels at a given stage that his race no longer understands him. Or that he no longer understands it. Then he congratulates himself on this, and enlarging the difference, the incomprehension, the disharmony, he finds in them the meaning of his real humanity.

(Fanon, 2008:7)

Regarding the fractured mind, Dangarembga's first two novels *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006) portray characters like Tambu, Nhamo, and their cousin Nyasha, as examples of how colonial education can be viewed as a tool of 'coloniality' that causes the various dismemberments narrated throughout the oeuvre. By investigating these causes, the study also aims to conduct a detailed diagnosis of the various nervous conditions that most characters find themselves experiencing. Biko (1987:53) attests that "we are aware of the terrible role played by our education in creating amongst us a false understanding of ourselves". Based on this affirmation, this study links Western education with the issue of identity crisis presented in the primary texts. In doing so, the 'decoloniality' of education and that of being, as explained earlier, commences. Nyasha's failure to fit in within her Zimbabwean

cultural society when she returns from England is partly the result of her exposure to a Western education, which leads to dismembering effects such as loss of language. In Chapter Five of *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Nyasha confesses how this exposure has turned her into a hybrid disliked by both her parents and the society she returns to.

In terms of language, this study aims to contribute to existing discussions by decolonially engaging with Ngugi and Achebe's debate on colonial languages, as well as to suggest a possible solution to this debate. While Ngugi seems to advocate for a total revocation of the coloniser's language in the name of 'decoloniality', Achebe's rationale appropriates the usage of the coloniser's languages. His justification is premised on the belief that language must be used as armour to fight the very system that seeks to sustain the oppression of the once colonised. In *The Book of Not* (2006), Dangarembga demonstrates how the coloniser's language is used to control the colonised while dismembering them from the main cultural aspects used to identify all human beings.

At Sacred Heart College, the Westernised school that Tambu attends, every student is forced to use English; the use of Shona is a punishable offence. As a result of this rule, Tambu begins to distance herself from other Shona-speaking girls, preferring to spend time with the English-speaking girls knitting gloves and hats for the Rhodesian soldiers. Noting such developments, it can be argued that Dangarembga's novels portray English as a tool of 'coloniality' that sustains the dismemberment of both the colonised and once colonised. The case of Nhamo, Chido, and Nyasha in *Nervous Conditions* (1988) is an example of how the 'coloniality' of language expedites the creation of estranged family relations due to language barriers. As discussed later in this chapter, some scholars share a different view regarding this observation. However, because Africa is linked to the coloniser's languages through its long colonial history, there might be complications in totally revoking their usage in a population which cannot fully remember its mother tongue. I attempt to deal decolonially with this complication by suggesting a pluriversal approach in this dissertation, which is a more inclusive approach that recognises the multiplicity of cultures when dealing with such issues. Therefore, by exploring the concept of pluriversality, this study seeks to consolidate the *unhu* African philosophy that represents inclusivity rather than a monolithic world view (which seeks to benefit certain groups of people by oppressing others). *Unhu*, as discussed later in this study, is a practice that uses reciprocity to cater for the well-being of every human. The aspect of reciprocity implied by the *unhu* philosophy illuminates the mattering of all sentient lives and their right to be treated as such.

This study explores the notion of re-membering through Teju Cole's (2015) 'Unmournable Bodies', with the aim of reconnecting all bodies that are considered unmournable with their mournability. This re-linking symbolises the restoration of humanity to all human beings,



regardless of race, culture, political affiliation, or religion. Furthermore, the linking of *unhu* with the concept of pluriversality hints at the possibility of re-membering. Based on this observation, the consideration of a pluriversal approach becomes instrumental to a decolonial healing process. As Gallien (2020:39) attests, pluriversality is “premised on the acknowledgement of the existence of other ways of understanding the world and positioning oneself in it”.

### **Problem Statement**

This study seeks to answer the following question:

#### **How does Dangarembga critique ‘coloniality’ in her novels?**

As previously discussed, previous studies on Dangarembga’s texts seem to agree that colonialism is the main source of the problems that current Zimbabweans are grappling with, including landlessness, poverty, trauma, political corruption, and class structures. Although these findings are relevant, it also appears that they are based solely on Dangarembga’s two novels, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006). The third novel, *This Mournable Body* (2018), which I also refer to as the synthesis of the trilogy, has not been researched much. For this reason, this study will include this third novel in an attempt to answer the question raised by this research. Therefore, by establishing how previous studies have placed colonialism at the centre of their approach, this study seeks to expand on existing views by decolonially analysing the continued forms of struggle, which I also refer to as ‘coloniality’. Importantly to note is the difference between colonialism and ‘coloniality’, and how this confirms the gap that this research seeks to fill. Based on Dangarembga’s texts, colonialism can be best defined as the pre-independence period in which Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) was under the British colonial rule and, after Ian Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence, white rule. ‘Coloniality’ can be defined as the continued, post-independence existence of colonial matrices of power after the demise of direct colonial administration.

The distinction between the terms ‘coloniality’ and ‘colonialism’ pertains to problematising the previous studies’ exclusive position in their reading of Dangarembga’s texts. These studies appear to be trapped in the historical interpretation of the current injustices that still haunt the once colonised: essentially, focusing on colonialism and overlooking the particularities of current forms of injustices makes re-membering impossible. Mabura (2010) argues that *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006) depict the struggle of women figures in finding their place in the discussions of land ownership, as they are not viewed as part of the indigenous people who have the right to own land. For Mabura, the exclusion of women from land ownership is based on race, ethnicity, and class factors. While these factors can be linked to the hegemonic discrimination of certain groups, Mabura falls into the trap of interpreting

such practices from a monolithic view of women, which can be viewed as a feministic approach. Mabura aptly states:

These works exhibit a de-silencing of women through landscape and a finding of womanist spaces of refuge in it, spaces that are liberatory and enable women to perform a psychological, economical, and even a bodily emancipation instead of using mental breakdowns as tools for female autonomy in situations of powerlessness.

(Mabura, 2010:88)

Austen argues that in *Nervous Conditions* (1988), relationships and the context in which the story unfolds confine Tambu as a girl child to life limitations caused by the country's poor economic situation and gender (2015:210). While these studies highlight the problems affecting black women in general, they seem to focus on correcting these problems rather than resolving them. By correcting I mean, replacing through eradication based on an assumption that the replacement is better than the former. As stated by Mabura (2010), the reference to womanist spaces portrays a fight for women to be recognised and the quest for adherence towards their womanist requests. The problem of this approach is that it excludes other groups, just as the very system it seeks to correct has done. In the process of liberating, suggested by Mabura, other groups are ignored in the name of rights. Such gaps are the main concern in undertaking this research. The decolonial approach taken by this study seeks to dispose of all forms of exclusive hegemonic elements that dictate conditions upon which the being of all humanity is qualified. The issues of language and education are part of the main discussion that this research will deal with. Scholars like Gorle (1997) and Miller (2018) portray English and colonial education in an ambivalent manner. Gorle's statement that "The several faces of internal exile through language, as seen in *Nervous Conditions*, tell different but complementary stories of the 'intentions' that are buried in language" (1997:192) describes how the English language can be both empowering and disempowering. Gorle further discusses how the English language and colonial education can be empowering to female characters like Tambu, who wish to be free from societal strongholds. At the same time, she projects how alienating it can be through Nyasha's nervous conditions as portrayed in the two novels *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006). Miller (2018) supports Gorle's view by attesting that "Tambu and Nyasha's education opens new opportunities for their advancement and expression yet it also coincides with their disillusionment and suffering" (2018:2). Based on these views, it can be concluded that neither scholar has a precise solution concerning language and education: at most, they have presented the pros and cons of the debate. Therefore, the problem rests in the ambiguity generated by these studies. A decolonial analysis of these problems seeks to remove any form of prejudice and to strip current findings and disciplines of any hegemonic or discriminatory connotations.

## **Research Questions**

To guide this research, the following questions will be answered:

**How does Dangarembga use characters, narrative techniques, rhetoric, and tropes to critique colonialism and 'coloniality'?**

**To what extent does Dangarembga's narrative confirm Ngugi's concepts of dismemberment and re-membering?**

**How does Dangarembga writing in English respond to Ngugi's decolonial approach towards the language of literature?**

**Does Dangarembga's critique of 'coloniality' contribute to a new or better understanding of her works?**

## **Research Methodology**

The study will make use of a qualitative and interpretative methodology. This will be applied to the primary texts discussed in this research. Considering the various approaches that have been used in analysing Dangarembga's novels, previous studies have confirmed that they need to be researched more extensively. The conspicuous ambiguity exhibited in the conclusions reached by the previous studies invites further critical analysis of theoretical and critical texts. Therefore, this research will make use of a decolonial approach to build on the work done in previous studies. As this research focuses on literary works, the qualitative approach will encapsulate a decolonial reading reinforced by interpretative and critical discussions of selected literary theories. These are theories propounded by the many scholars discussed in this dissertation, including Gerard Genette, Mikhail Bakhtin, Matt Delconte, and Julia Kristeva. By investigating conditions of 'coloniality' in these novels, I will engage decolonial scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Frantz Fanon, and Walter Dignolo. It is important to note that there is no 'coloniality' without 'decoloniality'; hence the relevance of the method. Considering the various forms of 'coloniality' investigated by this study, a pluriversal approach (which is part of the decolonial thought) becomes a suitable method for dealing with these diverse forms of 'coloniality'. Ngugi's concepts of dismemberment and re-membering expose the various forms of 'coloniality' investigated by this research.

Moreover, theoretical concepts like Bakhtin's monologism, dialogism, and polyphony provide a dialogical platform where various unmerged thoughts or voices engage independently and without bias. To ensure a profound understanding of the various contexts and plots depicted in Dangarembga's oeuvre, concepts and philosophies that detail specific human conditions will be

critically analysed and explored. For example, Nishitani's '*Anthropos and Humanitas*', the concepts of mournability, *unhu*, and Bulter's precarity and precariousness, amongst others, will be discussed. The critical analysis of both primary and secondary texts provides comprehensive reasoning required as groundwork for this research.

### **Limitations**

Considering the pluriversality of decolonial thought, the methodology and conclusions used and achieved by this study are limited to Dangarembga's novels and can vary from other literary texts by different authors. This means that the findings of this research should not be generalised but must be viewed as a contribution.

### **Chapter Outline**

This dissertation consists of five chapters as outlined below:

**Chapter One** introduces the research by providing the title and scope of the research, the background and aims of the study, and the research problem and questions. It also explains the methodologies, limitations, and chapter outlines.

**Chapter Two** analyses Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) as a point of departure or the thesis of the trilogy. In doing so, Ngugi's concepts of dismembering and re-membering are explained. The significance of these concepts in reading Dangarembga's texts is also discussed. Moreover, the link between Ngugi's concepts and a decolonial approach is established, which provides further clarification on the theoretical framework. Referencing various decolonial scholars allows for 'coloniality'/modernity to be defined, discussed, and problematised in light of the research question. The chapter also discusses intersectionality as a form of dismemberment that is endured by specific groups of people, those viewed as lesser humans. The critical interpretation of literary concepts such as character presentation, narrative techniques, and tropes is conducted in relation to the primary text analysed by this chapter.

**Chapter Three** examines *The Book of Not* (2006) as the antithesis (the tool of change) and engages Bakhtin's monologism, dialogism, and polyphony as the driving concepts upon which a critical analysis of various unmerged discourses is conducted. Various characters represent these unmerged discourses which lead to a pluriversal understanding of the 'colonialty' practises that lead to their dismemberment. For example, Mai represents the traditional discourse, Tambu represents the colonial, and Nyasha represents the decolonial. This chapter establishes the link between 'coloniality' and dismemberment, and the link between 'decoloniality' and pluriversality. Furthermore, it ascertains the connection between 'coloniality' and monologism, and between pluriversality with re-membering. Ngugi and Achebe's debate on the English language is discussed based on the manner in which

Dangarembga portrays Western education in *The Book of Not*. Finally, Chapter Three suggests a possible solution to the language question.

**Chapter Four** discusses *This Mournable Body* (2018) focusing on mourning as a way of re-membering the dismembered. In doing so, the chapter attempts a synthesis of issues presented in the trilogy. Teju Cole's (2015) 'Unmournable Bodies' is discussed in relation to the characters whose derealised lives have led to them being viewed as unmournable and not mattering. This chapter deploys Butler's (2004) concepts of precarity and precariousness to demonstrate how Dangarembga appears to advocate for the mattering of all lives.

**Chapter Five** provides conclusions arrived at from the critical analysis and interrogations conducted by the study. The conclusions are drawn from the engagements between the theoretical framework and the critical reading of the primary texts. Lastly, the limitations of 'decoloniality' in relation to Dangarembga's texts are discussed, together with suggestions for future studies.

## Chapter 2

### ***Nervous Conditions: The Colonised Protagonist***

*Nervous Conditions* (1988) is the first novel of Dangarembga's trilogy discussed by this dissertation. The novel tells a story of a young girl's journeys from her impoverished homestead to a mission primary school and later to a prestigious high school in search for education. The opening of the novel introduces the reader to a younger Tambu who lives with her parents and two siblings Nhamo and Nestai. The impoverished family lives off the land and relies on their Western educated uncle Babamukuru, the brother to Tambu's father. Babamukuru's success in academics which can be traced back to his early childhood secures him and his family the opportunity to go overseas and study further. During Babamukuru's absence Tambu's family battles to keep both Nhamo and Tambu in school, and the decision is made to take Tambu the girl child out of school. Determined to be educated, Tambu starts growing mealies to sell in town to White tourists in the hopes of raising enough money to pay for her school fees. Nhamo threatens her attempts by jealously stealing her mealies and sharing them with his friends. When Tambu finds out, she attacks Nhamo at Sunday school, prompting one of the teachers to take her to town to sell what she has left. In town Tambu meets an old White lady that takes pity on her poverty and gives her ten pounds towards her education. Upon Babamukuru's return after spending five years in England, he suggests that Tambu's brother Nhamo as the only boy child be given the opportunity to lift the family out of poverty. Babamukuru's plan involves taking Nhamo away from the homestead and sending him to a better school at the mission.

Babamukuru represents the head of a patriarchal family; he is in charge of both his home at the mission and the homestead where his extended family resides. However, his now Westernised children Nyasha and Chido fail to fit into their traditional culture upon their return to Africa which upsets him. They can no longer speak their home language Shona and Nyasha is resistant in acknowledging the male-headed patriarchal system that her father represents. After a few months of relocating to the mission school where Babamukuru serves as a headmaster, Nhamo is embarrassed to go back to his family homestead. His occasional visits at the homestead are marked with questionable behaviours, such as his deliberate failure to speak Shona and locking himself in his room pretending to study.

Nhamo's death in the first few chapters of the novel comes as an opportunity for Tambu to acquire a Western education, as she is the next alternative in lifting her family out of poverty before she gets married. Her exposure to the new lifestyle at Babamukuru's mission home changes her perception towards Babamukuru. It consolidates her passion for education as she likens Babamukuru to God. However, like her brother Nhamo, She develops a dislike towards her homestead. Her focus is mounted on developing herself boundlessly resulting in her qualifying for a scholarship to study further at a prestigious college, Sacred Heart.

In this chapter, I argue that the protagonist of Dangarembga's award-winning novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Tambudzai, whose name means 'trouble' in the Zimbabwean Shona language, also attempts to escape the impoverished conditions of her rural family life through aspiring to a Western education, but at the expense of having her mind colonised. It is only through interacting with her cousin Nyasha, whose own colonial education has infected her with nervous conditions that she begins to question her planned life trajectory. Through her characters, Dangarembga shows how the colonisation of African minds takes place and initiates a process of decolonisation in the mind of her readers, making use of Fanon's concept of 'nervous conditions' to do so. Through Ngugi's concept of dismemberment, this chapter also portrays the impact of colonialism which later evolves to 'coloniality' through the lives of specific characters presented in *Nervous Conditions* (1988).

Denotatively, dismemberment means to 'cut off the limbs of a body'. In *Something Torn and New, An African Renaissance* (2009), Ngugi elaborates the two stages of dismemberment: social, physical and mental dismemberment. Social and physical dismemberment involves removing Africans from their homeland and relocating them to an environment where they are enslaved to the desires and plans of their colonisers. In mental dismemberment, which he also refers to as decapitation, Ngugi details how the coloniser did not literally cut off the heads of the colonised but "rather dismembered the colonised from memory, turning their heads upside down and burying all the memories they carried" (2009:7). He further expands on this term and uses it metaphorically and on several levels: linguistically, culturally, politically, and economically. However, it is essential to note that in a synergistic process, dismemberment as a colonial process is followed by re-membering, which is taking many forms today. While African countries have managed to liberate themselves from colonialism since the 1950s through revolutionary means and political negotiations, 'coloniality' (a term that will be defined later in this chapter), as depicted in Dangarembga's final novel in the trilogy, *This Mournable Body* (2018), persists in African countries that appear to have achieved their freedom and independence. Their state of being colonised continues in more subtle ways than the historical territorial occupation, settlement, and political subordination, as highlighted in chapter two of *Nervous Conditions* through Tambu's recalling of her grandmother's story:

Wizards well versed in treachery and black magic came from the south and forced the people from the land. On a donkey, on foot, on a horse, on ox-cart, the people looked for a place to live. But the wizards were avaricious and grasping, there was less and less land for the people.

(Dangarembga, 1988:18)

Today, the dismemberment of Africans continues through other structures such as neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism, and economic exploitation. Though the novel is set in the 1960s, years before Zimbabwe had achieved its independence, *Nervous Conditions* serves as the beginning of Dangarembga's trilogy that critically addresses 'coloniality' issues that still affect black people in the independent Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. Regarding the forceful evacuation of black people from their fertile lands (imposed through the Land Apportionment Act of 1930), the colonial story told by Tambu's grandmother confirms the beginning of economic exploitation, which has evolved into neo-colonialism in independent Zimbabwe.

According to Kwame Nkrumah's 1965 book, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, neo-colonialism is a form of imperialism that expedites selfish colonist practices. These include controlling politics and economic conditions of ex-colonies, which leads to the creation of a dependence syndrome in the ex-colonised. Nkrumah argues that independence from the physical empire did not end colonial control, stating that "in place of colonialism as the main instrument of imperialism we have today neo-colonialism"(1970:ix). Therefore, the relationship between neo-colonialism and 'coloniality' can be summarised as follows. Neo-colonialism is a form of 'coloniality' that adopts former colonial laws and regulations of managing politics and economy, hence creating a political and economic dependence of ex-colonies. However, the difference between neo-colonialism and 'coloniality' is that, unlike neo-colonialism, 'coloniality' goes beyond economical and political borders; it sustains psychological and cultural dependence way after the actual colonial administration. This includes both ideological and epistemological dependence. Tambu's unconditional aspiration to Western education, in the hope of freeing herself from her impoverished background, emphasises the impact of neo-colonialism on most Zimbabweans. Nkrumah's (1965) use of the word 'neo-colonialism' guides this research as I trace the protagonist's trajectory, her endeavour to be accepted, and her alignment with what Quijano (2007) refers to as the colonial epistemological zone of being from that of non-being, a process Tambu also refers to as 'reincarnation' in Chapter Three. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Quijano talks about the colonial zone of non-being and being as zones in which two groups of people are divided by what he calls the abyssal line. The abyssal line divides the two groups based on superiority and inferiority; in other words, the group of people viewed as superior automatically falls into the zone of being, and those viewed as inferior into the zone of non-being. Therefore, the zone of non-being is a term that can be used to define the colonised and marginalised characters presented in the novel.

As defined by Maldonado-Torres (2007:243), 'coloniality' refers to, "a long-standing pattern of power that emerged as a result of colonialism; a pattern that defines culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge". According to Maldonado-Torres, "Coloniality is practised way beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. In this way, coloniality survives colonialism" (2007:243). 'Coloniality' therefore appears to be a process of continued dismemberment of the colonised. In Tsitsi Dangarembga's novels, 'coloniality' differs from 'colonialism' and is a crucial subject that requires further analysis. 'Coloniality' is the continued psychological, economic, or political state of dependence of the formerly colonised countries on the former colonial masters. Throughout her trilogy, the development of Dangarembga's protagonist, Tambu, represents the challenges endured by black people within a colonial historical context and defines 'coloniality' as a state of mind, or rather a condition of being dependent. Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines 'coloniality' as "a power structure that survives the end of direct colonialism and continues to sustain asymmetrical power relations and conceptions of humanity through racial, gender, sex, religious and ethnic hierarchisations" (2011:93). By using Ndlovu-Gatsheni's definition and by analysing the rhetorical devices, narrative techniques, and structure used by the author, this research seeks to explore the extent to which the dismembered characters of Tambu, Nyasha, and others succeed in re-membering themselves from within these strongholds of 'coloniality'.



Current studies and debates on *Nervous Conditions* (1988) have framed it as an attempt to unmask the old colonial exploitative systems disguised within existing ideological superstructures. Alenezi states that Dangarembga presents male figures as reflective figures of continued colonial exploitation, aptly stating that "male characters resemble or behave in a way similar to white colonisers in their treatment of African women" (2020:156). Zhou also argues that *Nervous Conditions* reflects how "struggles for African women continue even in post-independent Africa. The presence of human rights remains a promise for many African women" (2016:ii). In another view, Da Silva focuses on how the novel portrays discrimination as a continued form of oppression, arguing that "in the novel, the sadness, bitterness and sentiment of betrayal subsume women's feeling about their absence in the construction of a new nation" (Da Silva, 2019:1). Arguably, in what seems to be a denunciation of 'old wine in new bottles', *Nervous Conditions* interrogates these guises of 'coloniality' in which the arguably oppressive practices such as patriarchal dominance, gender biases, racial discrimination, and class structures are concealed.

The anxieties and conflicts experienced by the protagonist, Tambu, can be summarised through the demeaning portrayal of herself and other women characters such as Nyasha, Tambu's Western-educated aunt Maiguru, Mai Shingayi's sister Lucia, and Tambu's mother Mai Shingayi, who struggle to free themselves from the oppressive forces of 'coloniality' and traditional African culture. Tambu's aspiration to a Western education is amplified by the desire to escape poverty and the tense relationship between female characters and male characters in the novel, which I refer to as a cultural default of the traditional African. As a black girl child, she is denied the privileges and opportunities compared to those of the boy child, her brother Nhamo. The decision creates tension between herself and her brother, whose patriarchal privileges as a boy child deprive Tambu of the opportunity to be educated. The oppressive conditions are further exacerbated through the portrayal of male characters in the novel, which can be perceived as selfish and inconsiderate. Dangarembga's male characters, like Tambu's Western-educated uncle Babamukuru, demand nothing more than an unchallenged second-class treatment of black female characters. On the subject of Nyasha's behaviour in challenging his views, Babamukuru furiously declares:

She has dared,' he said, sweat pouring off him, his chest heaving with the grossness of the thought, 'to raise her fist against me. She has dared to challenge me. Me! Her Father. I am telling you,' and began to struggle again, 'today she will not live. We cannot have two men in this house.

(Dangarembga, 1988:117)

Tambu's only hope in freeing herself from such oppressive modern and traditional African patriarchal conditions is through a voluntary and contradictory assimilation, epitomised by Babamukuru's modern lifestyle, which conflicts with her traditional persona. The assimilation creates mental tensions, as her knowledge of what is 'traditionally right' contradicts what is acceptable in the Western culture. The conflict is further reinforced by Tambu's disappointment in discovering the universality of patriarchal oppression. She learns that men in general

victimise women in both traditional African (apparent in her traditional rural setting) and modern European (apparent in the modern setting at the mission) contexts:

[. . .] Just as I felt victimised at home in the days when Nhamo went to school and I grew my maize. The victimisation, I saw, was universal. It didn't depend on poverty, on lack of education or on tradition. It didn't depend on any of the things I had thought it depended on. Men took it everywhere with them. Even heroes like Babamukuru did it. And that was the problem.

(Dangarembga, 1988:118)

Her desire for a Western education creates estranged relationships between herself and her family and dismembers her further from her roots and the empowerment she has hoped for, resulting in the conflicted state of her own mental condition: "I didn't want to reach the end of those mazes, because there, I knew, I would find myself and I was afraid I would not recognise myself after having taken so many confusing directions" (Dangarembga, 1988:118). Her determination to succeed through acquiring a Western education becomes influential in her choices and development throughout the trilogy.

Scholarly research, critiques, and debates that have been conducted on *Nervous Conditions* (1988) include post-colonial studies, feminist debates, and psychoanalytic readings, to name a few. Alenezi's (2020) article, 'Political Reading of Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*', takes a post-colonial approach by exploring the relationships and identities in the novel from the perspective of the new dispensation in Zimbabwe. His argument considers patriarchal practices against female characters in the novel as representing oppressive colonial ideologies that characterise the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Alenezi also seems to suggest that the marginalisation of women in the novel resonates with the current and modern issues (now referred to as 'coloniality', the aftermath of colonial administration) that African women are still facing. Feminist debates, such as those articulated by Mbatha, revolve around the perspective that Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* portrays, amongst others, "the motive of resistance, positivity, triumph, quests for a better life, and emancipation from sexism, racism and poverty" (2007:4). Nyasha, Tambu, Maiguru, and Lucia's struggle against patriarchal dominance is thematised throughout the novel.

Smith (2016) argues that, amongst other debates raised with regard to *Nervous Conditions*, is the subject of psychoanalytic trauma. In his paper Smith argues against "Freud's view of trauma as an unspeakable void", stating that Dangarembga's novel speaks about psychological trauma through its narration of the characters' various nervous conditions. These studies have emphasised the need for further reading and research on Dangarembga's works; hence the decolonial approach taken by this study. Through the application of Ngugi's concepts of dismemberment and Fanon's psychoanalysis of the colonised's nervous condition, this chapter projects the social, economic, cultural, and epistemic 'coloniality' conditions resulting in the estranged and alienating relationships presented in the novel. The various dismemberments presented in the novel, including geographical and mental dismemberments, are transferred into a psychological condition. These dismemberments initiate and necessitate decolonial thinking patterns as the only way of achieving complete physical, mental, and emotional

freedom, which Ngugi (2009) refers to as re-membering. Therefore, the revolution implied by Fanon's violence becomes a requirement in disarming the guises of 'coloniality' haunting the African, and it is only through this revolution that an African can achieve total freedom. Concerning Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, I also argue that Fanon's call for 'violence' as the only alternative to total freedom has its limitations, as it excludes the probable consequential reality embedded in his suggested 'revolution'.

The call raises several questions: Does this suggested 'revolution' by Fanon expedite the attainment of complete freedom, 're-membering' the Africans as suggested by Ngugi (2009), or does this revolutionary act lead to a further 'dismemberment' of the African? Does Dangarembga's presentation of Tambu, Nyasha, and other characters highlight limitations embedded in Fanon's violence? Does Fanon's call for a revolution lead to total freedom or to perpetual incarceration and estranged relationships, as alluded to in Nyasha's nervous breakdown and Tambu's conscious and gradual break away from her impoverished family?

The novel's title *Nervous Conditions* refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's preface in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963:20), where he stated that "The status of the native is a nervous condition". Sartre's view suggests that the colonial context in which the 'man' who represents the coloniser and the 'native' who represents the colonised require decolonisation in 'rooting out' the coloniser oppressor that resides in both of them. Sartre's observation appears to encourage the restoration of humanity to all human beings, regardless of their race, gender, culture or political affiliations, in order to break every discriminatory boundary. The presentation and experiences of black characters in the novel emphasise Fanon's view on the 'native':

When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension. The settler's world is a hostile world, which spurns the native, but at the same time, it is a world of which he is nervous.

(Fanon, 1963:52)

In presenting the excruciating physical and mental stages that colonised black Zimbabweans endured before 1980, Dangarembga seems to critique colonial ideologies. She achieves this through ridiculing all forms of oppression that continue to exist as practices of 'coloniality', while simultaneously reconnecting Africans with their lost identity. Before relocating to Babamukuru's home, Tambu admires her uncle's lavish lifestyle and Western education. Her admiration can be interpreted as confirming Dangarembga's critiquing of 'coloniality'. In other words, through Tambu's desire to be part of Babamukuru's world, Dangarembga exposes how Westernisation and modernity, dismembers Africans through creating the need to be accepted in certain social circles. Tambu states that "Maiguru was well looked after by Babamukuru, in a big house on the mission. I decided it was better to be like Maiguru, who was not poor and had not been crushed by the weight of womanhood" (Dangarembga, 1988:16). Being educated like Maiguru becomes her main goal in achieving her assumed freedom from the burden of womanhood and poverty. Although the novel is set in the 1960s, it was published in 1988 – eight years after Zimbabwe had achieved its independence. The story's setting and the date of

publication could be interpreted as Dangarembga's unprecedented way of exploring foundational 'coloniality' issues.

As neo-colonialism takes over from direct colonialism, it perpetually dismembers most Africans from their identity and tradition. The once colonised gradually move away from their tradition and become dependent on the former coloniser's ideologies for acceptance. This view is thematic in most post-colonial critics of Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. Baharvand and Zarrinjooee (2012) discuss how Babamukuru labels his brother Jeremiah's traditional marriage, a sin before God. He arranges a white church wedding for his brother to save him from the sinful traditional marriage. Viewing traditional ways as sinful draws attention to the colonised's desire to be acknowledged by the Western colonial culture. It is significant that these critics also portray neo-colonialism as the nucleus of continued cultural dismemberment affecting most characters in the novel. Sofield (1999), unveils the perennial effects that colonialism has on colonised people; particularly the identity crisis evidenced through the presentation of Tambu. She [Tambu] experiences self-hate and the endless need to break away from her impoverished background, and the textual presentation of the colonised's mental condition accentuates a state of dependency. Viewing the coloniser's ways as superior and as a requirement for acceptance can be perceived as continued 'coloniality', aimed at dismembering the colonised from their cultural identities and traditions. This view is confirmed in Tambu's narrative, in which she asserts: "I could not imagine anyone actually wanting to go there, unless, like me, they were going to see their mother. This time the homestead looked worse than usual" (Dangarembga, 1988:125).

The above quote alludes to 'self-hatred', a state of mental 'coloniality' through which the colonised develops a hatred for his or her background; the very basis of his or her existence. In doing so, the colonised or the oppressed aspires to be accepted into the coloniser's culture, which he or she perceives as civilised and empowering. This colonised perception, which can also be viewed as mental 'coloniality', links with Fanon's (2008) assertion regarding the hierarchical discrimination of humans into the two zones of 'being' and 'non-being'. In this hierarchy, the colonised and the oppressed fall into the zone of non-being, while the coloniser, who is considered superior and more civilised, is placed into the zone of being. After her exposure to Babamukuru's Westernised home at the mission, Tambu acquires a new, colonised view that her impoverished home in the village is backward (as seen in the above quote). This change indicates the psychological dismemberment 'coloniality' has on most Africans. Ziauddin Sardar, in his foreword to the 2008 edition of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, quotes Fanon on how 'coloniality' has succeeded in dismembering black Africans and assigning them to zones. According to Ziauddin Sadar, the colonised black man finds himself in: "A zone of non-being, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, where black is not a man, and mankind is digging into its own flesh to find meaning" (Ziauddin Sardar cited in Fanon, 2008:vi). Quijano (2007) views the hierarchical division of humans into zones, as divided by the abyssal line. In this structure the 'self' places itself in the zone of being, and the 'other' is placed into the zone of non-being. Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2015:25) states the following about abyssal thinking:

[. . .] was deployed to justify pushing black people out of the human family and consigning them to what Frantz Fanon (1968) named as the 'zone of non-being'. This is where the beginning of an understanding of dismemberment is traceable genealogically and historically speaking. The second form of dismemberment can be conceptualised as a process of deliberately disconnecting African people from their history, culture, and memory.

(Gatsheni Ndlovu, 2015:25)

Abubuwan da naketunani's (2007) review of Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* emphasises what Sofield (1999) shares as the central theme among her critics. According to Abubuwan (2007), *Nervous Conditions* highlights the drastic impact of colonialism as it influences African natives' perceptions of themselves. Tambu's exposure to Western education and lifestyle lures her into applying the rule of analysis in which she places herself into the colonially acceptable 'zone of being'. In a way, her newly adopted Western lifestyle at Babamukuru's house qualifies her to place her impoverished family (which she does not wish to be associated with) in the 'zone of non-being'. According to Abubuwan (2007), Tambu's gradual dismemberment from her tradition and her denial to be identified with her family raises questions about the authenticity of her narrative, and he labels her an 'unreliable narrator' with no identity.

While Abubuwan's (2007) review can be perceived as ruthless in its questioning of the reliability of the protagonist's voice, both he and Sofield (1999) affirm the various effects of 'coloniality', which encapsulates the quandary of colonised African characters' identities in the novel. The analysis of literary devices and narrative techniques used by Dangarembga further explores how various characters find themselves trapped in the matrix of 'coloniality', which begets several dismemberments as noted in the novel. The ambiguity of identity, another form of dismemberment, is showcased through the portrayal of some characters in the novel. As highlighted by the above scholars, other forms of dismemberment can be further analysed by examining the literary devices and narrative techniques used in *Nervous Conditions* (1988).

In *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Dangarembga uses the first-person narrative, a style in which she, as posited by Gerard Genette (1980), distinguishes between the focaliser (the one who sees) and the narrator (the one who speaks). In her case, the older and mature Tambu is the narrator, while the younger Tambu is the focaliser and protagonist in the story. Berndt (2005) elucidates the distinction between Tambu the narrator and Tambu the protagonist focaliser. This summarises the notable bildungsroman marking Tambu's trajectory and the nuances confirming the estranged family ties endured by most black Zimbabweans in the name of 'coloniality'.

The advantage of this technique is that the reader is simultaneously given access to connect with the author's creation. The opening statement of Tambu's story, "I was not sorry when my brother died..." (1988:1), is an awkward confession brought before the reader by the narrator herself, which startles the reader with an immediate feeling of shared guilt. In terms of Genette's (1980) focaliser/narrator relation, Dangarembga's use of the first-person narrative can also be perceived as a dexterous attempt to interrogate and critique problematic issues presented in the novel without the reader's prejudice. An example of this is Tambu's

confession: "I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young, and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age" (Dangarembga, 1988:1). The above quote exonerates her from the audience's accusatory reaction to the appalling declaration in which she shows a shocking lack of sensitivity over her brother's death. However, Tambu's declaration creates a connection of interest and a need to investigate the cause of this awkward attitude. Her lack of concern, in a way, confirms a state of dismemberment, and it can be deduced that the use of first-person narration places the reader in the narrator Tambu's mind, allowing for an intimate portrayal of her emotions and thoughts. Regarding Tambu's development in the novel, Okonkwo (2003:55) observes that "it is the adult Tambu's first-person recall of what she says are factual events that necessitate and enable both the telling in the first place and her achievement of a private, public, intellectual, and critical voice". Using Okonkwo's observation, I link the author's creation of a shared world, in which the reader accesses the narrator's mind through first-person narration, with the theme of 'coloniality', as presented through the narrator's relation of actual experiences throughout the novel. This narrative technique gradually leads to the reader developing feelings of empathy regarding the ill-treatment Tambu receives from her brother, Nhamo. The narrative reveals that this ill-treatment is based on her gender: "He hesitated, then shrugged. It's the same everywhere. Because you are a girl. It was out. That's what Baba said remember? I was no longer listening. My concern for my brother died an unobtrusive death" (Dangarembga, 1988:21). Tambu's lack of concern over her brother reflects upon estranged relationships discussed in *Nervous Conditions* (1988). Through the narrator's eyes, the cruelty of a male-dominated society is exposed by how other female characters are treated. For example, Babamukuru takes Maiguru's salary and uses it for his own purposes due to the fact that Maiguru is a woman and married to him, "I felt sorry for Maiguru because she could not use the money she earned for her own purposes and had been prevented by marriage from doing the things she wanted to do" (Dangarembga, 1988:103).

Observing the extent to which Dangarembga succeeds to involve her readers through the first person narration 'I', it can be argued that the use of any other form of narrative could not have equally achieved the success of creating a relationship between the text and the reader. Moreover, this assertion comes after considering the degree of emotions and the sensitivity of issues portrayed in *Nervous Conditions* (1988). For example, if Dangarembga had rather opted to use the third person narrative which is usually marked by the use of the pronouns 'He, She, they'; the result could have been the deprivation of the reader from any form of empathy towards specific characters in the novel. This lack of attachment is created through narrated experiences told from an objective narrator's point of view (one who is not in the story). Through third person narration, the experiences of the narrated characters become secondary and the ability of the reader to connect with them will rely entirely on the view shared by the third person narrator who in other terms does not own the story. Currently, the reason why the reader is able to relate to Tambu's experiences is premised on the first person narration's ability to make the reader a part of the first hand experience. The language in this technique points to the 'here and now' making it more relatable and viable in the reader's mind. In third person the language is limited to the narrator's ability to tell a story, weakening the relationship between the literary text and the reader.

Tambu's retrospection on such depressing accounts can be seen as yet another method used by Dangarembga to demonstrate how patriarchal structures in the novel symbolise oppressive colonial ideologies. Lack of concern over her brother's death during her childhood and her refusal to apologise as an adult in the opening chapter can both be connected to unfair gender practices. For example, Nhamo steals the mealies that Tambu grows to raise money for her fees: "a few weeks later, when the cobs were ripe for eating, they began to disappear" (Dangarembga, 1988:22). When confronted about his actions, Nhamo displays a lack of sensitivity and exhibits the notion of traditional African male dominance by replying with "What did you expect, did you really think you could send yourself to school?" (Dangarembga, 1988:22).

According to Bubenechik (2014), *Nervous Conditions* (1988) exhibits other aspects of colonialism (the embodiment of Western cultural consensus on the level of political and socio-economic dominance), and the colonial relationship between the coloniser and the colonised evident through men's 'natural' ascendancy over women (Bubenechik, 2014:12). The gravity of Bubenechik's assertion is affirmed by Amai Shingai, Tambu's mother, who describes the role and position of the colonised black woman within an oppressive patriarchal society as follows:

This business of womanhood is a heavy burden she said. How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can't just decide today, I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated. When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them ... And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength.

(Dangarembga, 1988:16)

Bubenechik (2013) also stresses the lack of what African American feminist Kimberle Crenshaw calls 'intersectionality'. According to Crenshaw (1989), "intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways of multiple forms of inequality or disadvantages that sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that are often not understood within conventional ways of thinking about anti-racism, feminism or social advocacy structures present". In other words, the term serves as a prism to understanding social problems like the ones Dangarembga presents in the novel. The double marginalisation of African women sees their invalidation by men of colour in much the same way that the Europeans annihilate the selfhood of all colonised people. Using this invalidation of women by men, I also connect the annihilation of the colonised or the oppressed with Fanon's (2008) zones of being and non-being. According to Dangarembga's character presentations, women characters are treated as objects and lesser-humans. In my opinion, this can be interpreted as their confinement to the zone of non-being, while male characters are presented as superior beings based exclusively on their gender. The detailing of such classifications of humans within a patriarchal society is denoted through the retrospective narrative technique used by Dangarembga. When woven into the storyline as passages written from a third-person omniscient point of view, Tambudzai's (the narrator) retrospection elucidates the significance of the events as they take place. In the first chapter, Tambu remembers how the patriarchal family considered her education less of a priority than

they did Nhamo's, which resulted in her being far too old for her standard-three academic class at the time of her brother's death. Tambu confirms "the needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate" (Dangarembga, 1988:12).

Collins (2006) describes how Dangarembga's use of the narrator's mature voice, to comment on certain situations and characters, is advantageous. It enables the protagonist-narrator to put the pieces of the puzzle back together as she relates the events of her development from childhood going forward. Collins' (2006) assertion can be perceived as correct, and this is why. The use of the narrator's mature voice enables the reader to understand what Collins refers to as Tambu's insights, gained through personal development and Bildung. This is critical to Dangarembga's message concerning colonialism, patriarchy, and possibilities of expansion. Furthermore, the reflective and analytical tone of the narrative characterises Tambu as mature and educated, and therefore, adding to the validity of her story. It implies that her story contains insight worthy of consideration which marks the difference between the insensitive and immature younger Tambu and the older protagonist narrator Tambu. This also answers the question of reliability posed by Abubuwani (2007). Later in Chapter Two, it is revealed that she is denied the chance to go to school at an early age while her brother Nhamo as the only boy child, is granted the opportunity to do so. In explaining this decision, Tambu's father asserts, 'Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables' (Dangarembga, 1988:15).

By using the first-person narrative, Dangarembga projects the alienating colonial effect of language loss in *Nervous Conditions*. The language question, therefore, hints at one of the many challenges that still haunt post-colonial Africa. Chapter Three of this dissertation expands on the language debate and explores possible solutions to the quandary of language. Through *Nervous Conditions* (1988) Dangarembga demonstrates how 'coloniality' favours the coloniser's language and expedites the devaluing of indigenous languages. The author's use of the coloniser's language to write her novel poses decolonial questions about why she, as an African writer, makes that choice. Dangarembga's use of the English language can be linked to Steve Paulson's interview with Ngugi, who discusses how 'coloniality' perpetuates the creation of language hierarchies in which:

It [English] has become the language of intelligence, of education, of intellectual exploration. And it's the opposite with African Languages. They are good for speaking, but not good for ideas, not good for politics.

(Paulson, 2021)

In my view, Ngugi's assertion can be used to problematise Dangarembga's use of the coloniser's language to address decolonial issues in her novel. It appears that Dangarembga is herself guilty of the very crime she is trying to denounce through her portrayal of characters like Nhamo, Nyasha, and Chido, who have become victims of what Beach (2001:119) calls the "English metaphysical empire". Kalyani Mahavidyalaya elaborates on how the idea of the English metaphysical empire is consolidated by rewarding African writers that use English in their writing, stating the following:



Today, that the Commonwealth Prize is given for writing from Britain and Former British colonies, and that the few major African literary prizes such as the Caine and Etisalat prizes are awarded for African writing in English can be seen, for better and indeed worse, as a celebration and perpetuation of the metaphysical empire.

(Mahavidyalaya, 2019:8)

Considering the above quotation, I opine that acknowledging African writers who write in English rather than their home languages can be interpreted through Ngugi's assertion stating that "the condition for acquiring the glory of English is the humiliation of African languages" (Ngugi cited in Wade 2018). Both Dangarembga and her characters are guilty of this assertion, and I posit that recognition of English as the language of African literature has been carelessly internalised and normalised. English still finds its place in various systems of knowledge, and the education system recognises it as the language of learning – my writing of this very dissertation in English confirms the high intellectual status given to the English language. Normalising this notion confirms 'coloniality' of the mind, which perpetuates the dismemberment of Africans from one of the main facets of their cultural identity.

Concerning the dismemberment of the colonised or the disadvantaged, the readability of Dangarembga's work is brought into question. Her use of the coloniser's language, arguably, discriminates against those that cannot speak the language. Ngugi states the following:

[...] the work of liberating Africans out of the English metaphysical empire and neocolonialism had to be done in African languages. Pro-people and revolutionary literature could not contribute to decolonisation if written in a formerly colonial language the people could not understand.

(Ngugi cited in Mukoma Wa ngugi, 2018)

Therefore, the dislocation created by the inaccessibility of her work mirrors forms of dismemberment through exclusion based on language barriers. English has become the default vehicle for most African literature besides other colonial languages like French and Portuguese. For this reason, amongst others, decolonial authors like Ngugi have stopped writing in English to enhance the readability or accessibility of their message to the indigenous; Ngugi states the following:

And if you think, as I do, that people are an engine of change, then the question of their access to information and skills is very important. When you write a novel in English no matter how radical, no matter how progressive it can only reach people in a trickle-down fashion.

(Ngugi cited in Inani, 2018).

This potential alienating effect of language is discussed further in the succeeding paragraphs.

First-person narration illuminates the cultural dismemberment and estranged family relations amongst the novel's characters. It also aims to express the flow of the character's thoughts and feelings: as the reader gets the impression of being inside the character's mind, the author can

present critical views on specific issues in the novel, making it easy for the reader to relate to the ideas presented. Therefore, the internal view of the character's mind (Tambu's perceptions, for example) seems to critique the quandary of language loss as a form of dismemberment that Babamukuru and his family experience after exposure to Western culture during their stay in England. He is sent to Britain to acquire a Western education, which can also be perceived as spatial dismemberment; in other words, "the removal of the African from his homeland" Ngugi (2009). After spending five years overseas, Babamukuru's return to Africa together with his family is faced with drastic challenges as his now Westernised family fails to fit in with their traditional home back in the village.

Through first-person narration, the early chapters of the *Nervous Conditions* portray Tambu's ambivalence towards the change in her cousins' behaviour:

I remembered speaking to my cousins freely and fluently before they went away, eating wild fruits with them, making clay pots, swimming in Nyamarira. Now they had turned into strangers. I stopped being offended and was sad instead.

(Dangarembga, 1988:42).

The five years of exposure to Western education and culture dismembers Tambu's cousins from their cultural identity as black Zimbabweans and creates hybrids that fail to connect with their own culture and forget their mother language: "They don't understand Shona very well anymore, her mother explained. They have been speaking nothing but English for so long that most of their Shona has gone" (Dangarembga, 1988:42). The loss of language emphasises Ngugi's concept of dismemberment, in which Africans are dislocated from the crucial element of their identity (2009). As evident in Babamukuru's family, the process involves not only language loss, but identity crisis, and cultural degeneration as well. Steve Biko, an anti-apartheid activist, describes this colonial mental crypt of Africans as "the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor" (Biko, 1987).

Nyasha, a product of this mental crypt, confesses in Chapter Ten that her contact with Western culture has mentally alienated her from her African self; she battles to identify herself, feeling that she neither African nor European: "look what they have done to us, I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you" (Dangarembga, 1988:205). Recalling the novel's title, her nervous breakdown in Chapter Ten is a result of internalised colonial ideologies that conflict with the African culture imposed by her parents. She is forced to recognise and conform to the expectations of her new context, a change that fails to integrate with her current state of being. Nyasha fearlessly questions her own treatment and that of other black women to the extent that she physically fights this oppressive force, evidenced by her violent retaliation. She punches back at Babamukuru, her father, who represents both colonial and African patriarchal ideologies. The Western culture that she and her brother are exposed to from a tender age begets severe repercussions as they fail to fit in with their new African context in their Zimbabwean home. This type of cultural dismemberment is also exhibited through Nhamo's transformation into a semi-European intellectual – when he returns to his rural home in the village, he no longer fits into the humble context. Moreover, he deliberately creates a

communication barrier by using English to prove how superior and different he is from the less-educated family members. Tambu asserts:

All this was good, but there was one terrible change, he had forgotten how to speak Shona. A few words escaped haltingly, ungrammatically and strangely accented. This restricted our communication to mundane insignificant matters.

(Dangarembga, 1988:53)

However, the irony induced by Dangarembga's use of first-person narration serves to illuminate Tambu's mental transformation when she, like her dead brother, is allowed to study further at the mission. Through her incessant pursuit of Western education, Tambu allows her mind to be colonised by admiring and assimilating behavioural and intellectual traits from her mentally colonised cousin Nyasha: "... imitating her walk and the set of her head so that everyone would see that we were a unit" (1988:94). I connect this quotation with Fanon's reference to the epidermalisation of the inferiority, in which the colonised's behaviour strives to emulate that of his coloniser; to become like the coloniser and hoping to be accepted as a man (Fanon:2008). 'His' in this case refers to people in general. In Fanon's terms the word epidermalisation means internalisation. In the lavish Western lifestyle at Babamukuru's home at the mission, Nhamo's pursuit of a Western education kills both his pride in being a black African and his desire to uplift his family from its impoverished condition – he does not want to be associated with his own family because of their poverty.

John Gardener's *The Art of fiction* (1983) indicates the limitations of first-person narration as it locks out the possibilities of going deeply into various characters' minds. This means that the story is limited to the narrator 'I' perception. An example in the novel is Tambu's cousin, Chido. Apart from his alienated relationships with his family and cousins, little is known about him. He prefers to spend his holidays with the Baker boys, his white friends, instead of with his family and cousins at the village. Though Chido's alienation is a form of dismemberment perpetuated by the nature of his cultural hybridity, a dislocation is created by his inability to fit into his own African culture after being exposed to Western culture during his stay in England. However, it would have been fair to hear his independent view, other than mere perceptions that the author projects on his behalf through the first-person narrative. Based on this limitation, the use of the first person creates biased perceptions towards certain issues. The general judgment Tambu issues on every black man after Babamukuru calls his daughter a whore is an example of this: "Men took it everywhere with them. Even heroes like Babamukuru did it. And that was the problem" (Dangarembga, 1988:118). This audacious stereotyping of all men as 'bullies' (which is based on her experience) can be considered an unfair and generalised view of all men, thereby reducing them to misogynists in support of her biased perception. Though this disadvantage is a significant drawback in literary works that employ this technique, Dangarembga's use of the first-person narrative imparts an understanding of the narrator's view towards colonial debates presented in the novels. This is achieved through the eyes of Tambu, the character focaliser. The reader can also trace her development and how her perceptions shift as she matures throughout her encounters.

While Dangarembga's use of the first-person narrative provides an opportunity for the reader to experience the narrated events through accessing the narrator's mind – which Oatley (1999) refers to as “stepping into the protagonist's shoes” – she also uses dialogue to critique the subject of 'coloniality'. In this discussion I build on Rosa's (2019) article, which describes Dangarembga's style of writing as 'baroque'. According to a publication blog compiled in 2019, Nordquist refers to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012) in defining the baroque literary style as writing marked by rhetorical sophistication, excess, and play. A critical aspect he also points out is how writers using this style to challenge the conventional notions of decorum by using and abusing particular tropes and figures, metaphors, hyperboles, and paradox, to mention a few. Based on this observation, it can also be suggested that Dangarembga's use of dialogue, enriched with both the artfulness and transgressional usage of rhetoric devices, is a technique that confirms its identification as baroque. The evidence of free-thinking and unregulated presentation of problematic issues through the focaliser's dialogical engagement with other characters can be perceived as a method Dangarembga uses to critique 'coloniality'.

Although Brandon only considers how the baroque style plays a crucial part in portraying the events in Tambu's bildungsroman, my argument expands on this view by analysing the dialogical engagements of characters in the novel. In the second chapter, Tambu recalls the dialogue between Old Doris, the lady who eventually gives her ten pounds for her school fees, and the young man, who Tambu describes as 'beefy youth'. In their dialogue, which also concerns Mr Matimba, they discuss how the decision of letting Tambu raise her fees through selling maize on the street is a form of abuse, as well as shameful on the part of Mr Matimba, who helped her. Tambu recalls this particular dialogue's racial and discriminatory terms for black people: “They're kaffirs, interjected the youth. They don't want to learn anything” (Dangarembga, 1988:29). Through such dialogical engagements Dangarembga exposes the derealisation of certain societal groups in which the use of racist derogatory terms becomes a tool to dismember them. Butler (2004) uses the term 'derealisation' to describe how certain groups of people are perceived and treated as lesser beings, or as people whose lives do not matter. Halvatzis (2016) asserts that the function of such dialogue serves to provide information while exposing the character, as is the case of the young man referred to as 'the beefy youth'. His view of black people is underlined by the insensitive and continuous use of the racial word 'kaffir' in referring to both Mr Matimba and Tambu: “That's more than two crates of *shumba* wasted on a kaffir!” (Dangarembga,1988:29). The beefy youth's use of such derogatory terms serves to expose the epistemic conflicts between the coloniser and the colonised, with the colonised placed into the colonial zone of non-being, reducing them to parasites and 'kaffirs' (Fanon, 2008). An understanding of Tambu's present condition and the changes encapsulated in her bildungsroman is established by this dialogue. Therefore, the dismemberment she undergoes in pursuit of Western education and the need to break away from this prejudiced and reduced view of all black people is anticipated.

According to Rosas (2019), Dangarembga's use of the baroque style separates the protagonist Tambu from other characters. It is my opinion that she, through her narrative voice, recalls the interactions between other characters in the novel. Adding to this assertion, I draw attention to

a scholarly blog (Grammar book, 2019) that explains another form of dialogue that Dangarembga uses. According to the blog, 'indirect internal dialogue' refers to a character expressing a thought in the third person (the third person singular is 'he' or 'she', the plural is 'they') and is not set off with either italics or quotation marks. The function of this type of dialogue is to show what a character is thinking concerning specific issues, as in the case of Tambu. Considering this definition, Babamukuru's nervous conditions (which perhaps stem from the busy and oppressive colonial context in which he works as the headmaster of a mission school) dismember him from a warm and pleasant relationship with his family. Tambu uses this technique to share her own interpretation of what leads to his estranged behaviour: "Maiguru said his nerves were bad. His nerves were bad because he was so busy. For the same reason, we did not talk much when he was around either" (Dangarembga, 1988:104). The meaning achieved from this reading is that Maiguru does not actually say that Babamukuru's nerves are bad because he is busy the whole day at work; instead, Tambu perceives this as the reason for her uncle's despondency. Tambu's perception can be traced back to another indirect internal dialogue, where she refers to Babamukuru's responses at the dining table as grunting: "Babamukuru grunted again, at greater length this time, which indicated that the day had been tolerable" (Dangarembga, 1988:81). Again, Dangarembga's use of the word 'grunted' creates a rare experience through the implied zoomorphism. Babamukuru's talk after a busy day is likened to animal sounds denoting anger or pain. Through the above dialogues and interpretations, it can be assumed that the colonial context in which Babamukuru works (as the headmaster of a Western school) positions him in continued nervous conditions and further dismembers him from his family due to 'bad nerves', as indicated in Tambu's indirect internal dialogue. The extent to which 'coloniality' has affected African families is presented using this literary technique.

Indirect internal dialogue defines Tambu as self-aware, and in constant analysis of herself as she develops through the novel sets her apart from the other characters. The character of young Tambu who, in the first chapter, appears to be awkwardly insensitive over the death of her brother Nhamo, allows the reader to identify colonial issues contributing to the unpleasant circumstances presented throughout the novel. For example, Tambu confesses the following: "I was not sorry when my brother died nor am I apologising for my callousness as you may define it" (Dangarembga, 1988:1). The baroque style (Rosas, 2019) seems to be critiquing 'coloniality' and its creation of various dismemberments. This brutally honest voicing of her thoughts reveals not only Tambu's intelligence and acculturation, but also the acrimony that she feels about the injustice of her experiences. Her declaration in the opening chapter, which begins with the authoritative 'I', is significant towards the theme of 'coloniality' as discussed in this research, as the reader can easily relate to issues presented by the author. Gairola (2000) views the strange opening as a harsh reflection and illustration of Tambu's eventual conditioning into colonialist capitalism as a form of escape. In Chapter Six, Tambu confesses how her impoverished background and the disadvantage of her gender as a black girl child leads to a need to escape through allowing her mind to be colonised: "Whereas in the years since I went back to school I had grown content to let events pass me by as long as they did not interfere too deeply with my plans" (Dangarembga, 1988:118). She chooses not to question Babamukuru's patriarchal and oppressive treatment of Nyasha as he is her benefactor and gives

her the opportunity to acquire a Western education, which enables emancipation from her impoverished background: "I felt secure at the mission under Babamukuru's shadow, and I could not understand why Nyasha found it so threatening" (Dangarembga, 1988:119). The direct internal dialogue at this stage also conveys the conflicts that Tambu must deal with in her pursuit of economic empowerment using the opportunity provided by Babamukuru. In Chapter Six, Tambu is opposed to Babamukuru's marginalising treatment of her cousin, Nyasha, which includes him calling her a 'whore'. Initially, Tambu seems to be opposed to paternal ill-treatment of women, but she contradicts herself a few paragraphs later by succumbing to Babamukuru's patriarchal authority because of her disadvantaged position as a poor female relative: "So, to put myself back on the right path I took refuge in the image of the grateful poor female relative" (Dangarembga, 1988:118). Interesting to note is how, in the preceding paragraph, she questions the unfair treatment by labelling it victimisation, but soon allows herself to submit to this very patriarchal system, which she refers to as "going back to the right path" (Dangarembga, 1988:118).

The colonial inhumaneness that Dangarembga presents through dialogical engagements in her novel is further explained through what Torti et al. (1996) call vertical and horizontal violence. In my view, as mentioned in the introductory chapter and based on Fanon's 'violence' in his *Wretched of the Earth* (1963), the two forms of violence are metaphors signifying a total revolution against any forms of colonial oppression. According to Torti et al. (1996), vertical violence is presented in Dangarembga's text through the setting within which the story is told. In this setting, the colonial Rhodesia is marked by the continued tension between the coloniser and the colonised. Horizontal violence refers to continued tension amongst the colonised or the once colonised for example the tension between the ruling party ZANU PF and ZAPU opposition party during post-independence Zimbabwe. Both of the above are metaphorical forms of a total revolution against any form of oppression. Based on these findings, I unite the vertical violence with the critiquing of 'coloniality' as projected through the dialogue between Tambu and her cousin Nyasha in Chapter Ten. The dialogue's portrayal of the inimical relationship between Babamukuru and his daughter Nyasha emphasises how this literary technique exposes the dismembering effect that 'coloniality'. In the dialogue, Nyasha confides in Tambu by stating the root cause of the various dismemberments. The story of Babamukuru's dismemberment is also summarised in the dialogue towards the end of Chapter Ten. The estranged father and daughter relationship is caused by what appears to be the internalisation of Western ideologies, as Nyasha asserts:

It's not their fault. They did it to them too. You know they did she whispered. To both of them, but especially to him. They put him through it all. But it's not his fault, he's good. Her voice took on a Rhodesian accent. He's a good boy, a good munt. A bloody good kaffir ... Why do they do it Tambu, she hissed bitterly, her face contorting with rage, 'to me and to you and to him? Do you see what they've done? They've taken us away'.

(Dangarembga, 1988:204).

In this dialogue, Nyasha's referral to 'they' indicates the colonial system, which has led to the total disintegration of her family. Her nervous breakdown in this chapter can be perceived as a

reflection of a failed revolution: though not out of her will, her breakdown becomes the only form of escape from the perennial reality of patriarchal oppression imposed on her by Babamukuru. However, the above quotation can be taken as further confirmation of Fanon's (1963) view on nervous condition of the native. Importantly, this nervous condition leads to a violent ambush of the body, as represented by Nyasha's anorexia. Nyasha's body can be defined using Susan Bordo's (1997) essay, 'The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity'. Bordo explains a female body as:

A powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body.

(Bordo, 1997:90)

Nyasha's body and the disorders portrayed through her nervous breakdown and anorexia can be perceived as a manifestation of the cultural turmoil she is experiencing. Her failure to identify with her traditional African identity, cultural norms, and the colonial context in Rhodesia presents her body as what Bordo (1997) refers to as, "an aggressive graphic text" of the various conditions she finds herself subjected to. This dilapidated state of her body can be considered a quest for restoration of her humanity, which has been estranged from her by the colonial system. Referring to the earlier discussion in chapter one regarding the word 'member', it can be asserted that Nyasha's body and those of other women trapped in the same predicament, are prisms through which their portrayal of dissatisfaction is an attempt to be re-membered. The body to which they seek to be re-membered is a metaphor of their humanity. Therefore, the hyphen in re-membering can be interpreted as emphasising a breakaway, tension, an interruption and a dislocation which requires reconnection, relinking, re-membering. It is only after a reconnection that the body can move in a co-ordinated manner and towards a united goal. Returning to Fanon's 'nervous condition', I posit that through her nervous conditions, Nyasha, like Fanon's native, also notices the violence that 'coloniality' perpetrates through its superstructures. Babamukuru's patriarchal bullying, the humiliation of Tambu's parents through a forced white church wedding, and Tambu's acquisition of a Western education all suggest some form of dismemberment. In Nyasha's conversations with Tambu, she refers to this by stating that "Do you see what they have done? They have taken us away" (Dangarembga, 1988:204). Fanon affirms that such violence perpetrated by the oppressor, 'If it fails to find an outlet, it turns in a vacuum and devastates the oppressed creatures themselves. In order to free themselves they even massacre each other' (Fanon, 1961:18). Based on this assertion, I opine that Nyasha's resistance is conveyed through the manifestation of her violent bodily disorders. The quote can also be perceived as a confirmation of how the violence, symbolised by Nyasha's illness, turns to self-torment and self harm, the epitome of oppressive colonial ideologies. Nyasha sees how 'coloniality' has dismembered her family and the drastic effects of assimilating to the colonial system are shared in the conversation Nyasha has with Tambu in Chapter Ten, in which she states, "They have deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other" (Dangarembga, 1988:205). An analysis of this statement leads to the conclusion that Westernisation robs the colonised of their identity as they assimilate into a culture that dismembers them from themselves – a form of annihilation. The significance of this

presentation is that it echoes the title of the novel, with Nyasha's nervous conditions serving as the dismemberment resulting from 'coloniality'. Nyasha's condition and the advice Tambu receives from her regarding mental colonisation both play a vital role in educating her about the dangers of her aspirations (these are noted in the next chapter of this dissertation, which discusses Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*).

The dialogical presentation of the circumstances is proof of the entrapments brought upon Africans through 'coloniality'. It is evident through the analysis of Tambu and Nyasha's dialogue in Chapter Ten that 'coloniality', as Torti et al. (1996) point out, displaces Babamukuru and his family from their home country to England, where he is dismembered by receiving a Western education, leading to the creation of hybrid children. Chido and Nyasha are exposed to Western culture from a young age, and that they are strangers to their own culture when they return to Zimbabwe after their stay in England. Their struggle to fit into their new context upsets their parents, especially Babamukuru, who tries to play the role of an African patriarchal head. The prevalence of the use of dialogue in the novel serves to not only define characters and their development (as in the case of Babamukuru, Tambu, and Nyasha), but also to provide detailed information regarding the plot or events. In this case, it initiates a decolonial thinking pattern inside the reader's mind.

As stated earlier, Dangarembga dexterously distinguishes the older Tambu (who in the novel performs the narrative voice) from that of the younger Tambu (who actually experiences the events narrated) by telling the story from the perspective of hindsight. Dangarembga's use of retrospection can be considered a technique that the narrator uses to recall events that eventually lead to her becoming the person she is when she narrates the story. In the first chapter, she confesses that she feels many things today which differ from her feelings when her brother died: "I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age" (Dangarembga, 1998:1). Considering this statement, it is worth noting how, through the narrator's retrospection and introspection, the reader can monitor the narrator's bildungsroman and the various experiences embedded in her trajectory. These experiences include patriarchal oppression, poverty, and racial conflicts leading to various dismemberments portrayed throughout the novel. The need to break away from such conditions, as clarified by a quote extracted from the first chapter, imputes a broad experience which the colonised, especially women, endured and still endure in the various guises of 'coloniality': "my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion" (Dangarembga, 1988:1). Her need to escape from the oppressive colonial practices, which include patriarchal dominance, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and poverty, commences with her unconditional pursuit of a Western education in Chapter Two. She grows and sells mealies to raise money for her fees and, after her brother's death, gets the opportunity to acquire a Western education at the mission. By telling her story from a hindsight perspective, she, as affirmed by Berndt (2005), has reached maturity after being socialised by two divergent social systems. Tambu is socialised by both the Shona community and the mission school, which propagates Western standards, meaning that she can reflect on her past with more wisdom.



In her *World Literature and Its Times* (2002), Joyce Moss asserts that “The education of boys took precedence over that of girls, for economic as well as other reasons. Given the custom whereby a woman joined her husband's family after marriage, the better economic investment was to educate a son, since the money he earned would stay in the family” (Moss, 2002:299). In the first three chapters, Tambu finds herself fighting such societal battles, raising her school fees, and questioning the status quo, while she incessantly attempts to reorder her surroundings. Her battles against the patriarchal system supports Fanon's call for violence as the only effective way to expose and eradicate any guises under which colonial ideologies can find cover. As a result of this interpretation, the strained relationship between Tambu and Nhamo (brother and sister) confirms the dismembering effect of 'coloniality' operating under the guises of patriarchal dominance and Western education. A patriarchally-infused quote from the dialogue between Tambu and Nhamo can be considered confirmation of the consolidated tension between the two siblings:

And you better stop being jealous. Why are you anyway? Did you ever hear of a girl being taken away to school? You are lucky you even managed to go back to Rutivi. With me it's different. I was meant to be educated.

(Dangarembga, 1988:49)

Taking this into account, the reader may be less surprised by young Tambu's disgruntlement in her opening confession. Nhamo's death gives her the opportunity to achieve her dreams of acquiring a Western education. It is only after Nhamo's death that Babamukuru considers the idea of offering Tambu the opportunity to acquire a better education in the hope that she will, before her expected marriage, help her family out of poverty. In the discussion between Babamukuru and Jeremiah, Tambu's father, in Chapter Three, Jeremiah expresses how Nhamo's death has robbed him and his family of their only hope out of poverty, since the deceased was the only boy child in the family. Because there is no other boy child in the family, Tambu becomes the next option to carry out the duty of freeing the family from poverty. Babamukuru offers her the opportunity to acquire a better education which, according to patriarchal cultural practices, is a privilege granted only to male children because it is believed that a girl child will marry and benefit the family of her husband and not her paternal family. Jeremiah affirms with his dialogue, as quoted by the narrator, “It is as you say, my father agreed. Tambudzai's sharpness with her books is no use because in the end, it will benefit strangers” (Dangarembga, 1988:56). In quoting Jeremiah, the narrator's retrospection reveals critical information regarding the shared perception that male characters have towards female characters in the novel. This treatment enlightens the reader as to why Tambu's story is based on a need to escape. Her exposure to such brutality explains the mental and physical dismemberment she undergoes to free herself.

Using this technique of retrospection, the narrator can consolidate comprehension of the fictional story of the protagonist and analysis of the critical historical events to which it relates. Bubenechik (2013) asserts how 'coloniality', as a product of colonisation, was analogous to the dominance of Western men and masculinity over women and femininity. The colonial congruence, as presented in the novel, deprives men of their masculinity and creates tension in

the relationship between African men and women. Through Tambu's retrospection in the second chapter, it is clear that Babamukuru did not want to leave his home for England to study further, however, this option, as he describes it, would have been suicidal. He had no other option but to do what the white missionaries wanted if he was to have a better future: "Babamukuru did not want to leave the mission. He did not want to go further from home again [...], and further to decline would have been a form of suicide" (Dangarembga, 1988:14).

Dangarembga's use of the word 'suicide' could be a metaphor for the colonial annihilation of the black people, as emphasised by Bubenechik (2013). This systemically creates a dependency syndrome that Mhango (2017:1) describes as "any chronic behaviour affecting a person or society to force it perpetually to succumb to depending on someone or society to address his, her or its needs and sometimes problems in order to develop". The case of Babamukuru's arguably controversial dependence on the Western culture as superior and liberating confirms the above affirmation by Mhango. In Chapter Seven Babamukuru arranges a Western church wedding for Tambu's parents; an arrangement he believes will cleanse them from their 'sinful' lives, despite their old age. This arrangement by Babamukuru could be considered an attempt by the author to ridicule 'coloniality', as she exposes colonial ideologies' demeaning perspective on African cultures. Babamukuru states that "Yes Jeremiah, even now, so many years after our mother passed away, you are still living in sin. You have not been married in church before God" (Dangarembga, 1988:149).

In my view, Dangarembga's use of retrospection is an attempt to unmask the guises within which 'coloniality' patterns are hidden, for example, the church wedding organised by Babamukuru. This technique further submerges the reader in the world created by Dangarembga through calculated streams of consciousness, expressed through musings and thoughts. Tambu refuses to be part of this arrangement, considering it a mockery of her parents. Nyasha also opposes the oppressive Western ideologies concealed behind the planned church wedding. To her, this is a ridicules of African traditions, especially considering the ages of both participants: "She became quite annoyed and delivered a lecture on the dangers of assuming that Christian ways were progressive ways" (1988:150). Tambu does not want to see her parents being humiliated in the planned event and so refuses to be part of it: "I'm sorry, Babamukuru, but I do not want to go to the wedding" (1988:169). Babamukuru takes Tambu's refusal as a challenge to his patriarchal authority and threatens to stop paying for her fees. His ardent belief in the cleansing process provided by church weddings confirms a state of mental colonisation, in which traditional African ways of living are considered primitive.

Apart from Babamukuru being the head of the family and incessantly endeavouring to remain a respectable figure in his traditional African home, the Western education he acquires in England creates a noticeable dislocation between him and his African culture. His preference for a Westernised church wedding over the traditional cleansing ceremony, as suggested by Jeremiah, Tambu's father, supports Ngugi's (1986) declaration regarding a cultural bomb. This is a system that precipitates the disintegration of certain cultures. In a way, the fact that Babamukuru has been exposed to Western education in England and then became the

headmaster of a missionary school influences his view towards traditional rituals, which he calls 'sorcery':

Jeremiah, interrupted Babamukuru in an incredulous tenor, am I hearing you correctly? Do I hear you say you want to bring alcohol and – er – and witchdoctors here – into my home! Tonight Jeremiah, he said sadly, you are disappointing me. Every time you speak, senseless things come out of your mouth.

(Dangarembga, 1988:149)

In *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), Ngugi elucidates how a cultural bomb, as a product of 'coloniality', obliterates the colonised's belief in their traditional African heritage and makes them view this heritage as "one wasteland of non-achievement" (1986:3). I connect Dangarembga's use of diction, imagery, and hyperboles in the novel as an expansion of Ngugi's concept of a cultural bomb, which, in my view, is a form of dismemberment. In Chapter Five, Tambu refers to her newly adopted Western lifestyle and education as reincarnation, a process which, according to Umezurike (2017), means bringing back the soul after death in another body. When linked to Dangarembga's use of the word 'reincarnation', the definition can be perceived as imagery alluding to a spiritual transformation in which she is dismembered from her suggested primitive and traditional rural life.

With reference to Fanon's (2008) epidemiology of oppression, I connect this spiritual transformation with the zone of non-being which, through Tambu's transformation into a new and 'improved' self, enters what Fanon also refers to as the zone of being. Therefore, the reawakening process serves to highlight the inferiority complex in which Tambu devalues her previously rural, traditional life. The irony embedded in what she perceives as the good fortune of her brother's death (for which she is not sorry) is consolidated by Babamukuru granting her the opportunity to experience a Western lifestyle and education at the mission: "Thus began the period of my reincarnation: I liked to think of my transfer to the mission as my reincarnation" (Dangarembga, 1988:94).

The situational irony created by Dangarembga's use of the word reincarnation (amongst others) to suggest Tambu's liberation, empowerment, and enlightenment is noted in her final realisation of how entrapping and oppressive her reincarnated state turns out to be (which she realises through interacting with her cousin Nyasha, who is also Westernised). Through her interaction with Nyasha, Tambu notices the ills of her assumed paradise at Babamukuru's house. She notices the victimisation of women by men, illustrated by Babamukuru's treatment of his female family members: "The victimisation I saw was universal. It didn't depend on any of the things I had thought it depended on" (1988:118). In this case, 'I had thought it depended on' is based on Tambu's assumption that men with Western education should at least possess a better knowledge and understanding when it comes to the treatment of women. She finally realises that "Men took it everywhere with them. Even heroes like Babamukuru did it. And that was the problem" (1988:118). She also discovers that, despite Maiguru's educational achievements (Master's degree), she is also trapped by the 'coloniality' forces of gender and

patriarchal dominance. Tambu states: "something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed" (Dangarembga, 1988:208).

The projection of 'coloniality' as dismembering is consolidated through Dangarembga's use of situational irony. In Chapter Five, she uses the word 'sublimation' to suggest some form of transformation, and the word 'centripetal', which, in my view, suggests the harmonious gravitation of new knowledge and experiences towards her. Ironically, these words conflict with the reality she finally learns. In this case, Dangarembga uses irony to accentuate the dismembering effect of 'coloniality' – Africans drift away from their culture to pursue preconceived empowerment, as is evident in Tambu's aspirations.

In Chapter Three, Dangarembga uses the word 'oceanic' to describe Babamukuru's generosity in offering to pay for Nhamo's education. The word serves as a hyperbole, portraying an exaggerated and colonised view that Africans have of Westernisation. It also acts as an image, symbolising 'coloniality' fantasies. Tambu and other black characters dream of a life-changing opportunity like the one granted to Nhamo by Babamukuru. Nhamo's dismemberment begins when he is informed of his relocation to Babamukuru's mission house. Through Nhamo and Tambu's dialogue in Chapter Three, Dangarembga projects the desire of Africans to escape from poverty which, in my view, has led to the breaking of family ties and the creation of self-hate. As seen in the below quote, Nhamo refuses to be associated with his poor father, Jeremiah:

So I shall go and live with Babamukuru at the mission. I shall no longer be Jeremiah's son...I shall wear shoes and socks, and shorts with no holes in them, all brand new, bought for me by Babamukuru.

(Dangarembga, 1988:48)

As Nhamo pursues a Western education, his African pride and the desire to uplift his impoverished family fades away. He begins to adapt to the arguably better living conditions at Babamukuru's home at the mission and resorts to using his studies as an excuse to escape from his traditional patriarchal duties of ploughing and clearing the maize field. This quote confirms Ngugi's concept of dismemberment, as discussed in this dissertation. The above quote from *Nervous Conditions* shows Nhamo's excitement about his anticipated freedom from the impoverished conditions at his rural home. In other words, the epistemological quandary in Nhamo thinking highly of what Ngugi (2009) refers to as, "modernity, which is a product of colonization", lies in the final estranged relations it creates between him and his family. He is convinced that his exposure to the lavish Western lifestyle and colonial education at Babamukuru's house is his passport to a new life and an eraser of the past, with which he does not want to associate. This colonised perception of Babamukuru's Westernised and modern lifestyle is opposed by Tambu's appreciation of the natural beauty of the traditional rural setting. Before moving to Babamukuru's house in Chapter Four, Tambu fails to understand the change in Nhamo's character after he moves to the mission. Her description of the natural setting at her rural home implicitly criticises the imposed superiority of colonial modernity, symbolised by the city and the Westernised milieu at Babamukuru's mission house. Tambu

recalls, "The river, the trees, the fruit, and the fields. This was how it was in the beginning" (1988:3). She remembers the beauty in nature at the village, solidifying her pride in her roots and identity:

[...] when I was sure I had felt no one coming, run down to the river, slip off my frock, which was usually all that I was wearing, and swim blissfully for as long as I dared in the old deep waters. This was the walk that my brother detested! Truly, I could continue endlessly describing the possibilities that were in that walk, so I could not understand why he was so resentful of it (Dangarembga, 1988:4).

The protagonist's childhood orientation in relation to African tradition and culture before the coming of Babamukuru is a significant detail. The noticeable twist towards this orientation (evidenced by Nhamo's sudden estrangement from family tradition) confirms Ngugi's concept of dismemberment. Tambu looks up to Nhamo as her brother, whose patriarchal duties, as confirmed in her narration, include protecting and providing for his family, which is why Babamukuru chooses him to further his education at a better school: "He knew that it would be up to him to make sure that his younger sisters were educated, or look after us if we were not, just as Babamukuru had done and was doing for his own brothers and sisters" (1988:15). However, Nhamo's contact with the colonial culture at the mission prevents him from fulfilling these duties. In his work, *The Darker Side of Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (1995), the decolonial theorist Mignolo gives insight on how colonialism distorted, damaged and, in certain instances, destroyed cultures and their communicative forms. The change in Nhamo's personality confirms these disorders – he stops visiting his family during school holidays, preferring to stay at the mission and prepare for his end of year examination. The distancing of oneself from the very base of one's entrance into the world supports Ngugi's assertion that internalised colonial ideologies drive the colonised to "want to distance themselves from that 'wasteland'. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from them..." (1986:3). Nhamo's disgruntlement is a social dismemberment, which creates estranged relationships between him and his family due to their economic status. Tambu asserts:

All this poverty began to offend him, or at the very least to embarrass him after he went to the mission [...] But then something that he saw at the mission turned his mind to thinking that our homestead no longer had any claim on him so that when he did come home for his vacations, it was as if he had not: he was not very sociable.

(Dangarembga, 1988:7)

The decapitating process (which this dissertation, like Ngugi, calls dismembering) is a theme that appears throughout the novel. Most characters go through dismemberment unknowingly, but Tambu is a willing victim of the process, despite her knowledge, and she allows her mind to be colonised. Dangarembga's novel portrays a brutal voyage in which black Zimbabweans are alienated from their cultural and traditional norms through oppressive and estranging colonial ideologies. After Nhamo's death from mumps, Babamukuru decides to give Tambu the chance to take over from her dead brother and acquire better education. As the next eldest-child in

Jeremiah's family, she is awarded the opportunity to study and improve her family branch. As a result, Chapters Four and Five see the significant toning down of Tambu's outspoken character. The change in her character plays a crucial role in how Dangarembga addresses conditions expediting the mental colonisation of black people. This is also reiterated in Fanon's (1963) psychoanalysis of the native. Besides Nhamo, Chido and Nyasha, Tambu's two Anglicised cousins, are also victims of this disorder. Tambu decides not to question 'things' but rather let them pass:

But in those days, it was easy for me to leave tangled thoughts knotted. Whereas in the years since I went back to school, I had grown content to let events pass me by as long as they did not interfere too deeply with my plans.

(Dangarembga, 1988:118)

Using the above quote, I connect how Tambu's impoverished background influences her persona and her decisions after her relocation to Babamukuru's Westernised home with Fanon's assertion in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008). In his book, Fanon defines the leading cause of black mental colonisation as an outcome of a "double process: primarily, economic; subsequently the internalisation, or better the epidermalisation of this inferiority" (2008:4). Tambu and Nhamo's mental colonisation results from an attempt to escape their impoverished background. They internalise and assimilate colonial values in the false hope of becoming better and empowered. Tambu prefers to focus on her self-centred dreams and Western education, playing "the grateful poor female relative" (Dangarembga, 1988:118).

The young and assertive Tambu introduced in the early chapters of the novel is a victim of her aspiration to a Western education. Her embryonic view regarding education is in harmony with that of other black characters in the novel, with the exception of Mai Shingayi, Tambu's mother, who suffers a nervous breakdown as she loses her children to the alienating 'world' of Western education. Tambu's aspiration as an underprivileged black child is echoed by Moss (2002:298), who attests that "Under colonial rule, the Shona showed an almost passionate interest in education. Determined to attain it, whole families would strive to send at least one of their offspring to school, convinced that education led to money and betterment of the family". Between 1890 and 1900, with the increasing influence of colonial rule in Africa, the purpose of Western (commonly referred to as 'colonial') education changed. Ngugi (1981) explains the alienating influences of colonial education in Africa, which encapsulates the assimilation of colonial names, languages, environment, the heritage of struggle, unity, and mental abilities.

According to Ngugi, Africans that were exposed to colonial education did not only become deluded hybrids – as asserted by Nyasha in *Nervous Conditions*, "We shouldn't have gone... Maybe that would have been best. For them at least, because now they are stuck with hybrids for children. And they don't like it" (1988:79) –but also a people that longed for alien and more civilised cultures of the West. Tambu and her brother Nhamo are victims of this predicament. Colonial education, as learned in Dangarembga's presentation of her characters, comes at a high cost, exacerbating both the pecuniary predicament of black Africans and cultural degeneration. As affirmed in the article 'Colonialism and Education' (2011), Nwanosike and

Onyije argue that education in Africa has become universally accepted as the bedrock and engine of growth. Mandela (1994) expressed the same thought in very similar terms, stating that "Education is the great engine of personal development" and "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". According to Tambu, it goes as far as being the passport out of poverty; the highly prized possession needed to achieve higher living standards. It is a prize worth fighting for, as suggested in the dialogue between Tambu and Maiguru: "I studied for that [Master's] degree and got it in spite of all of them—your uncle, your grandparents and the rest of your family" (Dangarembga, 1988:101).

However, what Dangarembga engenders in Tambu's aspiration for a Western education is the mental and emotional distress underpinned by the complex alternatives that she, as the author, presents. Tambu is compelled to choose between her impoverished family or the alienated scholarly Western life offered by the mission and the prestigious Sacred Heart Young Ladies College. The treacherous implications embedded in the alternatives resonate with Rodney's argument that "colonial education in Africa was an education for subordination, exploitation, and the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment" (1972:264). Tambu's desire to be as educated as Babamukuru and Maiguru exposes her to both mental and emotional exploitation. Tambu internalises discriminative and oppressive conditions in her pursuit of acceptance and the desire to be associated with her Western-educated relatives. She confesses that:

I was flattered by everything she said...the examination, the approval, the teasing. Any attention from Nyasha, who did not often attend to things other than the excursions and forays of her unpeaceful mind, was enough to make me tingle with pleasure.

(Dangarembga 1988:92)

Towards the denouement in Chapter Ten, Tambu begins to see the effects of 'coloniality' through her cousin Nyasha's nervous breakdown. She consciously begins to distinguish her own state of 'coloniality' from Nyasha's one: "I told myself I was a much more sensible person than Nyasha because I knew what could or couldn't be done" (Dangarembga, 1988:208). In a way, this mature reflection on the development of her younger self, as depicted by the narrative voice, authenticates the author's deliberation of issues presented.

Dangarembga's literary style reveals a related aspect of Tambu's character that has developed since her childhood. The rhythm established in the text allows the older Tambu to express an ironic sense of humour that pokes fun at the inequities of her experiences. The ironic humour Dangarembga expresses through Tambu becomes a tool for criticising prevailing colonial hierarchies, as Pauline Ada Uwakweh (1995) suggests in her essay. Dangarembga writes with strong irony, stating that "The missionaries coming to Africa was a sacrifice that made us grateful to them, a sacrifice that made them not only superior to us but to those other whites as well who were here for adventure and to help themselves to our emeralds" (Dangarembga, 1988:105). The humour at this point highlights the cruelty of colonialism, revealing that she (Tambu) is conscious and perhaps complicit in the incongruity that she observes in the world. Therefore, Dangarembga's use of ironic humour serves to indicate not only when something is

cause for laughter, but also when something is cause for concern. Tambu's trajectory, as projected in this dissertation, is beyond any reasonable doubt a showcase of 'coloniality' issues that begin with early signs of dismemberments. Tambu's journey begins in the 1960s in *Nervous Conditions* (1988). Thereafter, her experiences through Rhodesia's transitional period are noted in the sequel *The Book of Not* (2006), and the eventual post-independence forms the story for *This Mournable Body* (2018).

This chapter has served as a point of departure, as it introduces critical aspects discussed in the dissertation as a whole. It has also shown how brutal the colonial system is through the analysis of narrative devices, rhetoric, and tropes, and has indicated that the various dismemberments endured by the characters can be traced back to 'coloniality'. The chapter exposes various guises under which forms of 'coloniality' are concealed. The resulting effect is evident in the dismemberment of certain characters from their traditional identity and culture. Dangarembga's presentation of estranged family ties in such dissatisfying light initiates a decolonial process in the mind of the reader, as the need to rectify this wrong is amplified. Ultimately, Tambu refuses to be brainwashed, which can be viewed as the beginning of re-membering, as further discussed in the succeeding chapters. Re-membering appears to be the only way forward in achieving an African renaissance. It involves identifying hidden colonial facets embedded in systems that Africans, as suggested by Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), have always thought of as emancipating.



## Chapter 3

### ***The Book of Not: Polyphony and the Dismemberment of the Colonised***

*The Book of Not* (2006) is a sequel to *Nervous Conditions* (1988). Tambu's passion for education and becoming an exceptional student has now secured her a place at one of the most prestigious schools in the country. Her educational ambitions are accelerated with the further objective to please her 'generous' uncle Babamukuru. The novel begins with Tambu recalling how her sister Nestai's lost her leg after stepping on a landmine. Netsai, who is now a comrade fighting against the colonial Rhodesian soldiers is everything that Tambu dislikes. The memory of how Netsai lost her leg haunts Tambu throughout the novel; for Tambu the idea of war is rather destructive. However, it is at Sacred Heart College that Tambu learns what it means to be a Black student amongst White people. The discriminatory system implemented by the Catholic Sisters including the head of the school Sister Emmanuel, leaves Tambu in utter disbelief questioning how such intellectual institutions can be part of an oppressive system? Through Nyasha's guidance, Tambu learns that the system is not in favour of people of her colour. Later in the novel her academic achievement award is given to Tracey because she is White. Disgruntled, and with a desire to be accepted, Tambu opts to join the girls in knitting gloves for the Rhodesian Soldiers, an act that earns her the title 'sellout' from her fellow Black hostelmates.

After failing her 'A' levels, Tambu becomes hopeless as she loses support from both her uncle and family. She is left with nowhere to go as she is also dismembered from her own parents. She finds temporary jobs, teaching being one of them and later working at an advertising agency. Zimbabwe's independence is finally achieved but this does not change anything in Tambu's troubled life. Her uncle Babamukuru is permanently paralysed after a bullet strays and hits him in his spinal cord. While attempting her break through at the advertising agency, her work is credited to Dick, a senior employee, because of his skin colour. Once again Tambu is demoralised and resigns wondering if there is a place for her in the newly independent Zimbabwe.

In this part of the dissertation I argue that Dangarembga uses Tambu's conflicted mind to stage a polyphony of voices or discourses. Arguably, Tambu's mind is projected as a battlefield upon which the three incompatible (even incommensurable) discourses of the traditional African, the colonial, and the decolonial are in continuous conflict. In support of my argument, I draw upon Bakhtin's (1984) concepts of dialogism, monologism, and polyphony. This will aid in providing a detailed analysis of the various forms of dismemberment in *The Book of Not* (2006). Furthermore, it will expose many forms of oppression: physical, brutal, and other ideological and subtle. In that sense, it can be asserted that Bakhtin provides a theory that enables writers to resist, subvert, and challenge monologism, authoritarianism, and oppression. While this chapter focuses mainly on the polyphonic aspect of the novel and connects it to the colonised's dismemberment, it also discusses concepts of dialogism and monologism and their relevance to the reading of the novel. It is important to note that the relationship tying these three concepts

together is premised on a unified, yet pluralistic, Bakhtinian approach of studying multiple voices in literary works.

According to Bakhtin's comment in Hall's *Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and Foreign Language Learning*, dialogism is "any form of utterance, whether spoken or written, that people use in communication with each other" (Bakhtin cited in Hall et al., 2005:72). Specifically, "with each other" can be taken to denote an interaction between parties during which meaning evolves. Concerning the writing of a dialogic novel, Bakhtin theorises that:

It is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitively) and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant.

(Bakhtin, 1984:18)

Following the above quote, I argue that Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*, in a way, projects her writing as a vessel that introduces the reader to what I perceive as a dialogical interaction of three different discourses: the traditional, the colonial, and the decolonial. These are presented as independent entities, with each carrying different ideologies. Their endless conflict throughout the novel (a conflict based on their ideological differences) indicates the reasoning that "dialogism is not simply different perspectives on the same world. It involves distributing utterly incompatible elements within different perspectives of equal value" (Robinson, 2011). The dialogical platform provided by the author, Dangarembga, allows the reader to become part of this dialogic world. The reader, who might also possess different or independent views from the ones presented by each discourse or voice in the novel, is caught up in a world where the possibility of an agreement is minimal.

Based on Dangarembga's style of writing, I assert that dialogism permits the posing of difficult questions directed at 'coloniality'. Therefore, 'decoloniality' appears to be the way forward in dealing with forms of 'coloniality' that have led to the posing of such questions. Moreover, the dialogic engagement of these three discourses leaves open-ended statements, as discussed in this chapter. Consequently, *The Book of Not* can be viewed using Bakhtin's assertion regarding a dialogical text:

The text appears as an interaction of distinct perspectives or ideologies, borne by the different characters. The characters can speak for themselves, even against the author – it is as if the other speaks directly through the text. The role of the author is fundamentally changed because the author can no longer monopolise the 'power to mean'.

(Bakhtin cited in Robinson, 2011)

These words explain how these unmerged voices respond and interact with each other based on how they, as independent discourses, perceive the world. This means their perceptions of the world around them are also premised on different realities. In such texts the author, like

the reader, dialogically engages with these independent voices/discourses. In an interview, Coetzee asserted the following:

Writing is not free expression. There is a true sense in which writing is dialogic: a matter of awakening the counter voices in oneself and embarking upon speech with them. It is some measure of a writer's seriousness whether he does evoke/invoke these counter voices in himself, that is, step down from the position of what Lacan calls 'the subject supposed to know'. Whereas interviewers want speech, a flow of speech. Those speeches they record, take away, edit, censor, cutting out all its waywardness, till what is left conforms to a monologic ideal.

(Coetzee, 1992:65)

It is my opinion that this quote explains how dialogism expresses the polyphony inherent in an author's writing. In Dangarembga's novel, dialogism can be perceived as expediting the engagement of critical issues concerning 'coloniality'. The manner in which Dangarembga presents these unmerged voices enables the reader to assess the 'coloniality' practices experienced by the characters presented in the novel.

Contrary to the concept of dialogism briefly defined above is the concept of monologism, applied on different levels throughout this chapter. Bakhtin further distinguishes the two concepts by juxtaposing two Russian novelists, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In his discussion, he identifies Tolstoy as a monologic novelist, stating that "a dialogic position with regard to his characters is quite foreign to Tolstoy" (Bakhtin, 1984:70). On the other hand, Dostoevsky is described as a dialogic novelist:

Dostoevsky realises a dialogic relationship toward his characters at every moment of the creative process and the moment of its completion; this is part of his general design and thus remains even the most finished novel as an indispensable element for shaping form.

(Bakhtin, 1984:63)

In Chapter Two of his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), Bakhtin describes the monologic text as a literary work that is structured or written to convince a single consciousness or to express the single world view of the author (1984:72). The underlying unity and sameness in a novel and, by extension, any other literary form, is what Bakhtin describes as monologism. Based on this view, this chapter also illuminates the degree to which monological traits are embedded in 'coloniality,' in that the voices of the colonised are suppressed. According to Hays, "monologic discourse is a discourse in which only one point of view is represented, however diverse the means of representation" (Hays, 2005:7).

However, the concept of polyphony marks a different perspective from the other two concepts. In considering the applicability of this concept, the inevitable question is, 'Is Dangarembga a polyphonic or a monologic writer?' This part of the dissertation seeks to answer this question by analysing the author's style and theoretical concepts. According to Bakhtin in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, polyphony literally means "multi-voicedness" (Bakhtin, 1984:279). In his analysis of Dostoevsky's work, Bakhtin asserts that it is:

*A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his work is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combined but are not merged in the unity of the event.*

(Bakhtin, 1984:6)

Based on the above explanation, I argue that polyphony can be identified when the author's unique position allows extensive freedom of interaction for these unmerged voices, whether in the form of characters or ideologies in the fiction. I would liken Bakhtin's definition of the polyphonic novel as it were; a reading experience in which the reader engages dialogically with different unmerged discourses, at the same time allowing an independent declaration of thoughts from both the reader and the novel. Bakhtin describes Dostoevsky's poetry as:

Voluminous literature leaving the impression that one is dealing not with a single author-artist who wrote novels and stories, but with a number of philosophical statements by several authors and thinkers.

(Bakhtin, 1984:5)

Learning from this comment, I opine that, Dangarembga's *The Book of Not* (2008) adopts the same approach in presenting several independent consciousnesses that stand equal and pose uneasy questions throughout the novel. A polyphonic approach will assist understanding of the debates presented in the novel. It will also be helpful for challenging monologic colonial discourse. This will further expedite the analysis of the colonised's nervous condition from different, unmerged perspectives. Arguably, an intrinsic insight into the conditions leading to their dismemberment will also be elaborated on. From an ideological perspective, the possibility of re-membering is highlighted. The author's nuanced approach towards a promising resolution through the destruction of Tambu's illusion creates conflict and challenging questions that are not easy for the reader to answer.

As highlighted in Bakhtin's dialogism and polyphony, the plurality of consciousness establishes its link with decoloniality's pluriversality. According to Mignolo (2007:159), "decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future, a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals". This means that, like with dialogism and polyphony, 'decoloniality' decentralises the locus of enunciation, debunking the hegemonic or monologic view that seeks to understand the world from a single imposed perspective. Through pluriversality, I also link the dialogic polyphonic engagement of incompatible discourses with the decolonial merging of several cosmologies, regardless of race or geographical borders. Mignolo and Walsh affirm that:

Decoloniality seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought.

(2018:17)

Like the decolonial pluriversality, Bakhtin's polyphonic novel seeks to challenge the monologic novel by allowing independent voices to engage dialogically. The writer's view is also challenged by these unmerged voices. On the other hand, decolonial pluriversality seeks to dismantle the hegemonic and monologic position inhabited by Western epistemologies. Mignolo attests that "pluriversality as a universal project means that the universal cannot have one single owner: the universal can only be pluriversal" (Mignolo cited in Reiter, 2018:x).

Having provided a brief background on Bakhtin's theoretical concepts, this chapter will focus on how the application of Bakhtin's concepts in reading Dangarembga's *The Book of Not* (2006) helps to convey the dismemberment of the colonised black Zimbabweans in her novel, and to suggest a path toward re-membering. By doing so, this chapter contributes to the research performed by other scholars and critics in creating an understanding of the effectiveness of theoretical aspects Dangarembga uses in her novel. The narrative is a projection of colonial debates and critical issues concerning the colonised and their nervous conditions. I will also analyse Tambu's conflicted mind based on Ngugi's concept of dismemberment and re-membering and on Fanon's nervous conditions. As suggested by the title, the *Book of Not* hints at what Muponde and Odhiambo refer to as *fototo*, a Shona expression that means squashed or deflated. At this point, I also argue that *fototo*, as stated by the two scholars, can be perceived as affirming the antithetical role that this novel occupies in Dangarembga's trilogy. The title, which will be discussed later in this chapter, hints at the contradictory antithetical role played by the novel. The failures and the disappointments projected throughout *The Book of Not* (2006) contradict Tambu's initial plan, which I label as the thesis in the trilogy. In my opinion, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) represents the thesis hinted at through Tambu's belief that she will escape poverty and tradition through acquiring a Western education. As suggested by the title, *The Book of Not* represents the antithesis. *This Mournable Body* (2018) can be perceived as the synthesis, as it attempts to integrate these contradictions. In her publication, Marshal (2012) discusses the trichotomy thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, thereby following the dialectical methods of Hegel and Marx. Thesis, as highlighted in my first chapter, is a starting point; a point of reference which could be an idea or ideas. 'Antithesis', is a conflicting idea that contradicts with the 'thesis' in which the contradiction results in a 'synthesis' or a resolution (Marshal, 2012). The method is recursive as the 'synthesis' becomes the new 'thesis'. Mueller's (1958) article 'The Hegel Legend of Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis' attests that Marxists have used this method to explain societal and historical changes in the world.

In their article '*Fototo: A Review of Tsitsi Dangarembga's The Book of Not*', Muponde and Odhiambo describe the novel as a "novel about the experience of living snubbed and stubbed ideals; hence it is about failure and loss" (2007). Their use of the adjectives 'snubbed' and 'stubbed' can be taken to refer to the predicament in which the colonised characters find themselves in. They are dismembered both physically, as in the case of Netsai, Ntombi's cousins, and culturally, as in the case of Tambu, Mai, and other characters. Tambu, the colonised protagonist who willingly allows her mind to be colonised with the hope of escaping her impoverished background, finds herself entrapped in nervous conditions. Her trajectory

incurs more 'nots' than the successes she had hoped to achieve in the first novel. Wanner (2007) summarises *The Book of Not* (2016) as a compendium of Tambu's disillusionment, stating that "Tambu takes heed of her uncle's words and believes that with education she can earn the world's respect, but this meets with disillusionment" (Wanner, 2007).

While Muponde, Odhiambo, and Wanner all ponder the relentless disgruntlement that clouds the colonised world, my contribution diverges from theirs. Using Hegel and Marx's antithetical method, I convey how 'coloniality', through Tambu, leads to further entrapments. The colonised are subjected to various forms of dismemberment. The approach should consequently fill what I perceive as the lacuna in understanding the particularities of 'coloniality' portrayed through the dialogical engagement of the three discourses – traditional, colonial, and decolonial. I also posit that these discourses are presented through certain characters and their roles in the novel. Tambu, Chido, Tracey, Sister Emmanuel, and Babamukuru represent the colonial discourse, while Mai adheres strongly to her African traditional beliefs. Characters like Nyasha, Ntombi, Netsai, and the freedom fighters represent the decolonial discourse. The presentation of these discourses makes it possible to view the 'nots' and the *fotos* (disillusionments) through Bakhtin's dialogism, monologism, and polyphony. The different ideological positions represented by these discourses in the novel can be perceived as confirmation of their self-governance, marking them full participants in the conflicted dialogical space that I identify as Tambu's mind.

The conflict of discourses can be noted from the poor relationship Tambu has with her mother. Dangarembga writes, "Mai was probably frightened of this girl who was growing beyond her into the European world" (2006:11), which confirms an estranged mother-daughter relationship based on their ideological differences. Tambu, who is enamoured of Western education and the Western lifestyle at her uncle's mission house, is dismembered from her biological mother. This is after she adopts a Eurocentric view which classifies uneducated people as primitive and backward. For Tambu, life at the mission symbolises civilisation, modernity, progress, and everything she wishes to become; that is, coloniality. She states:

Maiguru was well looked after by Babamukuru, in a big house on the mission which I had not seen but of which I had heard rumours concerning its vastness and elegance. Maiguru was driven about in a car, looked well-kempt and fresh, clean all the time. She was altogether a different kind of woman from my mother. I decided it was better to be like Maiguru, who was not poor and had not been crushed by the weight of womanhood.

(Dangarembga, 1988:16)

How Dangarembga consistently portrays the tension between Tambu and her mother from the first novel confirms a polyphonic engagement. Linking Dangarembga's style to Bakhtin's thoughts regarding the polyphonic novel, I draw upon his comment on Dostoevsky's novel, stating that:

The uniqueness of Dostoevsky lies not in the fact that he monologically proclaimed the value of personality (others had done that before him); it lies in the fact that he was able, in an objective

and artistic way, to visualise and portray personality as another, as someone else's personality, without making it lyrical or merging it with his own voice.

(1984:12)

Arguably, Dangarembga manages to create this 'objective and artistic' context by presenting Tambu and Mai as discourses possessing equal aptitudes to challenge each other and share different opinions freely while defining dialogical writing. Owing to the different ideologies embedded in their utterances, it can be theorised that Dangarembga stages a polyphonic conflict between the two discourses of the colonial and the traditional African through these two characters. In *The Consequences of Modernity*, Giddens (1990:36) asserts that "Inherent in the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition". In the first chapter of the novel, when Tambu returns home to visit from her uncle's home at the mission, Mai shows early signs of a dismembered mother-daughter relationship by sarcastically referring to her daughter as *wechirungu* a Shona term used to refer to modernised and more civilised Black people. Mai asks her "Oh, you, wechirungu! Do you still like matumbu, Tambudzai! Can you White people eat mufushwa with peanut butter?" (Dangarembga, 2006:7). Mai's innuendo in conveying her dislike towards her daughter's association with the modern world at her uncle's house and at Sacred Heart College affirms the incompatibility of the two discourses in discussion. Therefore, their dismembered relationship creates a perception that there is a conflict between modernity/coloniality and the traditional African.

The divergence between these two discourses, depicted through the character presentation of Mai and Tambu, can be further explained through the article 'Why Decoloniality in the 21st Century?', wherein Ndlovu-Gatsheni stresses that "Coloniality is the name for the darker side of modernity that needs to be unmasked because it exists as an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernisation, and being good for everyone" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:13). Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) reiterate how the two terms, 'modernity' and 'coloniality', are inseparable by stating:

The word coloniality has for us a specific meaning, theoretical and historical. Conceptually, coloniality is the hidden side of modernity. By writing modernity/coloniality we mean that coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and that there is no modernity without coloniality

(Mignolo, 2009:132)

In their article, Tlostanova and Mignolo suggest that 'decoloniality' can only be achieved through de-modernisation, as "to decolonise means at the same time to de-modernise" (2009:143). While my argument concurs with their earlier assertion, their approach seems too extreme and fails to consider the possibility of modernity without 'coloniality'; that is, non-Western forms of modernity. In my view, their idea to de-modernise should instead be replaced by focusing on a purely decolonised approach towards 'decoloniality'. Countries like Japan, India, Taiwan, and South Korea have successfully modernised and have done so largely on their own terms. Nguyen (2018:3) attests that "Japanese modernisation was motivated by external

pressure yet determined by internal dynamics". Affirming the case of India is Raghuramaraju's statement that "India is a place where modernity has to reckon with pre-modernity" (Raghuramaraju cited in Brooks, 2012). For this reason and referring to the novel, I propound that modernity is dynamic and inevitable; therefore, like in the examples above, 'decoloniality' should mean "finding ways of synthesising and blending tradition and modernity" (Gusfield, 1967:359).

Linking Tolstanova and Mignolo's view to Dangarembga's *The Book of Not* (2006), it can be theorised that Tambu's bid to be accepted by the sisters and white girls at Sacred Heart confirms the darker side of modernity, in which she finds herself dismembered from her fellow Black schoolmates. Tambu's hostelmate Ntombi notices this and tries to continuously remind Tambu of her identity as a Black student. In *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Mai criticises Maiguru's modernised lifestyle, which has dismembered her and her children. Mai points out that "Its Englishness. It will kill them all if they aren't careful, look at them. That boy Chido can hardly speak a word of his own mother's tongue and, you'll see, his children will be worse" (Dangarembga, 1988:207). Mai fears her daughter Tambu will end up dismembered like her Westernised cousins. She fights against modern ideologies that Maiguru and her family represents: "The problem is the Englishness, so you just be careful" (Dangarembga, 1988:207).

The state of Tambu's 'coloniality' is marked by her dedication towards the Western education system. The determination to develop herself comes at the expense of her family ties and cultural identity. The relationship between Mai and Tambu demonstrates how modernity/'coloniality' dismember families as they fight to break loose from the chains of poverty. This process, as depicted through Dangarembga's characters, encapsulates the desire to become a part of the world that perpetuates the discriminatory placing of people into zones. In the case of *The Book of Not*, there is a clear distinction between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Moreover, it can be interpreted through what Fanon (2008) refers to as the zone of being and that of non-being. Tambu's affiliation with 'coloniality' is premised on the need to escape from being identified with the 'have nots'. As explained in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the concept of zones sees the displacement of the oppressed or colonised into the zone of non-being. Under such classification, the colonised is 'thingified', Cesaire (1972:42) states that, "colonisation= 'thingification'".

Arguably, Mai is terrified of being deserted by her children, who aspire to Western ways and the zone of being. As she finds herself in these nervous conditions, she expresses an outrage, which again can be linked to Fanon's (1963) 'violence', a metaphorical concept denoting a total revolution against 'coloniality'. In the first novel, Tambu's brother Nhamo is dismembered from his family and culture after being exposed to the Westernised lifestyle at Babamukuru's home. Tambu, who appears enamoured of the very same dismembering system as her brother Nhamo is, slowly begins to distance herself, stating, "As far as I could see, the only affection anyone could have for that compound had to come out of loyalty" (Dangarembga, 1988:125). Tambu's newly adopted colonial view of her biological parents confirms Cesaire's equation on 'thingification' as she callously marginalises them: "My list of lesser mortals included Baba and Mai, whose better qualities were, as far as I could see, not more than an envious sluggishness"



(Dangarembga, 2006:82). I would like to heed her use of the adjectives 'envious sluggishness' as a configuration upon which she views Western education as a tool of empowerment and modern civilisation. Feeling that she is now better than what she considers less-educated people, including her biological parents, Tambu asserts:

There I was, a student at the most prestigious private school in the country, and not only was I there, I was an exceptional pupil! Taking my cue from my uncle, I was very glad to remind myself, with a degree of superior gloating over lesser individuals who did not have the ability, how you didn't enter institutions just like that by playing unless it was at sanctioned games

(Dangarembga, 2006:82).

Her bold assertion results from her contact with the Western world at Sacred Heart College.

The same tenacity noted in Tambu's assertions stands in contrast with Mai's vindictive and unapologetic postulations. Although uneducated, Mai voices her incompatibility with the negative concrete effects of the system. Her manoeuvre distances her from any form of association with the colonial world and is evident in her conversation with Tambu in Chapter One. Mai prides herself in the ability to independently organise meetings with the guerrilla soldiers back at the village, rather than living in the shadows of their Westernised relatives at the mission. Tambu states:

Mai's eyes gleamed with suppressed satisfaction. Yes, we have our own meetings! Here in Mambo Mutasa's land in Sabhuku Sigauke's village, we know how to have them! And the Big Brothers know us; she went on sounding excited and boastful. We are known, remember that, Tambudzai, and we have meetings.

(Dangarembga, 2006:8)

Interestingly, this quote shows how Dangarembga, through Mai, seems to address the question of intellectuality and Western superiority, stating that "we know how to have them". This appears to challenge the imposed Western intellectual superiority that views the colonised as intellectually inferior. Mai's statement gives the impression that traditional intellectuality is of equal merit, if not superior, to that of the coloniser's. At the same time, the view decolonises the colonial perspective that views specific knowledge as primitive. In my view, this competitive and conflicted presentation of discourses confirms a polyphonic engagement. The pride that Mai showcases through her uncompromising devotion towards the traditional African culture can be interpreted through Biko's Black consciousness, "a movement that expresses group pride and the determination of the black to rise and attain the envisaged self" (1987:92).

Biko seems to opine that traditional Africans lacked racial self-consciousness – the consciousness of themselves as not only human but as black humans. As a result of colonialism and the colonial gaze, they became conscious of themselves as both human and black, with the latter dehumanising them. Fanon (2008:72) writes, "what hurts him cruelly is to have discovered first (by identification) that he is a man and later that men are divided into whites and blacks". Dangarembga, as quoted in her interview with Thien (2013), comments that:

Tambu moves into the school [the elite Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, a convent school attended by mostly white students], where she is doing everything as well as everyone else. The only issue is her blackness. She has an experience, a different kind of movement, into that position. Because if you have always been aware of racism, I think that you develop ways of dealing with it.

(Thien, 2013)

Thien's comment suggests that Tambu's experience at Sacred Heart introduces her to racial discrimination, which she never knew existed. Black consciousness and 'decoloniality' result from this loss of innocence, which can also be viewed as a clash between thesis and antithesis – Thesis: I am human. Antithesis: You are black and subhuman. Synthesis: I am black and human. In the case of *The Book of Not* (2006), Biko's view can also be used to analyse colonial facets that go beyond the subject of race.

Mai's audacious character contradicts the oppressive and monologic view created by the coloniser. The contradiction seeks to factualise the view that, "Black culture above all implies freedom on our part to innovate without recourse to white values" (Biko, 1987:96). In this instance, 'white values' points to colonial ideologies. To further address the monological view of 'coloniality' I formulate upon Bakhtin's following comment:

Monologism is one transcendental perspective or consciousness integrating the field, and thus integrating all the signifying practises, ideologies, values and desires that are deemed significant. Anything irrelevant to this perspective is deemed superfluous or irrelevant in general.

(Bakhtin cited in Robinson, 2011:par.10)

Regarding the incompatibility of the three discourses the colonial, traditional and the decolonial, it appears as if the author's powers to monopolise meaning are forfeited. One question that keeps arising in the reader's mind is 'Where is the author or the narrator?', as the discourses seem to possess the same, or relatively equal, authorial qualities that challenge any conventional linear reading pattern. Therefore, it is less surprising that the reader, owing to how the discourses are presented, is drawn into constant prance, hopping from one discourse to another dialogically, comparing and contrasting. Based on this type of engagement, I would like to view *The Book of Not* as polyphonic and styled with conflicting, unmerged discourses that deny a monologic reading.

Kristeva (1986:81) explains that "According to Bakhtin, Socratic dialogues are characterised by opposition to any official monologism claiming to possess a ready-made truth". Taking this view further, I posit that the presentation of certain characters resisting the colonial system draws attention to the monologic facade of the colonial discourse. Bakhtin states that "monologism emerges wherever and whenever universal truth statements, called truth-istina, do not allow any other sort of truth, as truth-Pravda, to appear" (Bakhtin cited in Nesari, 2015:para.1). It is through Bakhtin's assertion that I equate 'pravda', a Russian term meaning unchanging or factual truth, to what I label a decolonial truth. Characters like Nyasha, Netsai, and Ntombi, who I will discuss later, seek to unmask colonial ideologies disguised in the name of truth-Istina.

'Istina' unlike 'Pravda', is obtained through informal definitions and structures. Shepherd further elaborates by affirming that colonial monologic discourses are “cannibalistic, devouring all images, offering closely chosen bits of information, displaying certain things and hiding others” (1993:263). This observation seems to validate the crucial role that the third discourse, which I have labelled the decolonial voice, plays in the novel. In *I Write What I Like* (1987), Biko explains the need for 'decoloniality' and how this can be achieved. He states that part of the main objective is to, “correct false images of us in terms of culture, education, religion, and economics” (Biko, 1987:52).

Characters representing the decolonial discourse in some way help Tambu to begin questioning the very system she initially views as her only ticket to success. Nyasha's nervous conditions, which precede Tambu's, hint at the drastic effects of 'coloniality'. Tambu opines that “She was deep in a reverie. She had done this ever since she became ill, departing to dream of flight where none was possible” (Dangarembga, 2006:91). Through Nyasha, Tambu learns how Westernisation can be destructive. Nyasha's nervous conditions are foregrounded in the novel. Tambu's nervous conditions are also incessant throughout the novel; her pursuit of a Western education alienates her and forces her to discriminate against her people.

Tambu's conflicted mind is the product of her desire to succeed. She later realises that her only option is to succumb to the oppressive practices perpetrated by the coloniser. In Chapter Nine of the novel, Tambu obtains the best O level results in the school, but because of her skin colour the achievement award is given to Tracy, a white student. She does not question or fight this unfair outcome despite her friend Ntombi advising her to do so: “Don't you want to find out what happened about the O levels? My classmate returned to the reason for her visit, I know I do, we can go together if you want to” (Dangarembga, 2006:157). Tambu's lack of resilience confirms an inferiority complex in which she views herself as undeserving. In Chapter Two, she recalls how her sister Netsai loses her leg when she steps on a landmine. Tambu vividly justifies her sister's loss by blaming her for even thinking that she and other liberation fighters could conquer the coloniser. She asks, “didn't my sister see how able such people were, which meant her own leg was in danger of being blown off” (Dangarembga, 2006:31).

Important to note is the background knowledge that forms part of Tambu's thinking patterns. Her schooling at Sacred Heart College is seen as a privilege and most black Zimbabweans will never receive a similar offer. The majority are oppressed because they are excluded from a 'superior' education. However, as proven in the text, the privileged few are also oppressed because Western education dismembers them. Fanon asserts that “the intellectual throws himself in frenzied fashion into the frantic acquisition of the culture of the occupying power and takes every opportunity of the unfavourably criticising his own national culture” (Fanon, 1961:237). In Chapter Four of the novel, Tambu and her African dormitory mates are publicly reprimanded and humiliated for allegedly causing a sewerage blockage. Apart from being racially driven, these allegations leave Tambu ashamed of being identified with her African dorm mates. She instead accuses them of being backward and arguably uncivilised:

I was sure there wouldn't have been any bans not on anyone from any bathrooms! Had these people I was forced to identify with been more able, those bathrooms would have been open to

all. No one would have been standing here in this humiliation. Now I had to be here when I had received proper training at my uncle's! Oh, I felt yet another surge of dislike for the other girls in my dormitory.

(Dangarembga, 2006:71).

In her quest to be identified with the Western elite, Tambu volunteers to knit helmets and gloves for the Rhodesian soldiers: "I knitted helmets and some gloves, I thought maybe it would help them" (2006:138). In doing so, she ironically serves the very source that leads to her dismemberment, stating that "You came to a school where you frequently had to pinch yourself to see if you really existed. Then, after that was confirmed, you quite often wished you didn't" (Dangarembga, 2006:114). Fanon observes this alienating colonial effect by stating that "the colonised people find that they are reduced to a body of individuals" (Fanon, 1961:293).

Though Dangarembga manages to portray a debilitated image of Tambu's colonial conundrum, she also provides clues to a possible resolution. The decolonial discourse does not merge with either Mai's traditional or Tambu's colonised view. In a nuanced approach, the discourse attempts a resolution towards the contradiction between Mai and Tambu. The revolutionary ideologies embedded in this discourse can be perceived as suggesting a move towards 'decoloniality'. A polyphonic presentation of discourses accommodates an intense dialogical engagement of both the reader and the author. Bakhtin (1984) explains that this dialogic presentation is "a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other" (1984:18). Based on this assertion, I posit that the conflicting discourses presented in *The Book of Not* portray independent views regarding the colonial context in which they exist. It is the self-consciousness of each discourse that, in my view, leads to an intrinsic understanding of the dismembering effect of 'coloniality'.

Tambu's dismemberment is an epitome of what Ngugi (2009:28) refers to as "the destruction of the base from which the colonised launch themselves into the world". In the novel, Nyasha hints at re-membering through her conversations with Tambu. It is through her that Dangarembga shows the damaging effects of 'coloniality'. Furthermore, Ntombi also appears to be radical and working towards the unmasking of discriminating conditions. The unmerged layering of the discourses plays a crucial role in providing the reader with more insight regarding each discourse. For that reason, *The Book of Not* materialises as a skilful portrayal of a disjointed profusion that opposes the concept of a monological novel.

Nyasha's character can be understood as the decolonial voice that provides Tambu with a pluriversal view concerning the realities of the colonial world. During their conversation in Chapter Six, Tambu learns of the shocking feedback that Sister Emmanuel sends on her report card. The report contains exaggerated comments regarding her unfavourable behaviour at the school as a black student. She is further enlightened as Nyasha advises on such colonial brutalities. Nyasha represents a dilapidated, colonised being, owing to her early and immediate contact with the colonial culture. She is dismembered from her culture. Based on her experiences, she counsels her cousin Tambu by saying:

You are there now she stroked. You will have to deal with it. Maybe it's not so bad. You will have to cope with [...] well this kind of thing, sooner or later. You know Tambu, don't you? I always told you a lot about England.

(Dangarembga, 2006:91)

Though Tambu contradicts Nyasha's advice at this stage by stating that, "In my case, I was a pupil at the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, which made me a member of a specific educational elite" (Dangarembga, 2006:94), the polyphonic contradiction serves a binary purpose. Nyasha's position can be perceived as portraying a transformation from 'coloniality' to 'decoloniality', while Tambu's position confirms a change from a decolonial state of innocence towards a state of 'coloniality'. In my view, the binary juxtaposing of these transformations further underscores the colonial facets embedded in these changes.

Nyasha's decolonial view, evident through her envisioning of an independent Zimbabwe, launches a decolonial thinking pattern. She whispers to Tambu, "Imagine what it will be like. You will be able to go into whichever toilet you like and any school, for that matter. And you won't all be packed in, crowded in stuffy dorm! You'll be treated like everyone else" (Dangarembga, 2006:94). Nyasha's view hints at the likelihood of re-membering, which in my view is a state of 'decoloniality'. Maldonado-Torres (2006:117) defines 'decoloniality' as, "the dismantling of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies that came into being or found new and powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world". Regarding racism and geopolitical hierarchies, I link Maldonado-Torres' and Nyasha's views with Kwame's (1992:30) opinion that, "the acceptance of differences along with a claim that each group has its part to play, that the white and the Negro races are related not as superior to inferior but as complementaries". Subsequent to the merging of these views is the probable birth of a re-membering process that Ngugi (2009:39) refers to as, "reconnecting with African memory to create wholeness".

Dangarembga does not shy away from projecting Nyasha as a self-conscious character that shares independent opinions. This characteristic can be noted from Dangarembga's first novel, *Nervous Conditions* (1988). Her independent opinions form part of what Lodge terms "a variety of conflicting ideological positions given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects" (1990:86). On that note, it can be concluded that Nyasha's nervous breakdown eventually leads to her re-membering. In the second novel, Nyasha, who in the first novel cannot speak her home language Shona, begins to speak her mother's language. In Chapter Six of *The Book of Not* (2006), she sings a Shona revolutionary song, "*Kure kure! Kure kure! Kure Kwandinobva, vana mai nababa, tondo sangana kuZimbabwe!*" (Dangarembga, 2006:94). When translated to English the words of the song describe how the liberation war in Zimbabwe has led to the assigning of freedom fighters for training and war planning in neighbouring countries, and how these fighters dream of coming back home to an independent Zimbabwe. Based on her transformation, I interpret Nyasha's fully valid voice in representing the decolonial discourse as cautioning Tambu against the dismembering effects of her colonised wish to gain from the coloniser's cultural milieu. Tambu's nervous conditions, evident in pre-colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, result from her internalisation of a Eurocentric

view. The drastic effects of this view are noted through her dismemberment from characters that vocalise decolonial ideologies. Due to this conflict, Tambu distances herself by not spending Saturday afternoons with her Black dorm mates: "so you are dashing off again? Where to, it makes us wonder what we are like now. Ehe, it began last year Tambu and it's getting worse. You are making us wonder what we are like since now we aren't the people with whom you can sit down and do anything!" (Dangarembga, 2006:135). She prefers to spend time with White girls, knitting for the White Rhodesian soldiers in the name of *unhu*:

Ehe, that's it! Ntombi spoke pointedly across me to Patience, aren't there other people she sits with now? Those ones we know of! They are the people who go there also, these new people of hers, the ones where she goes knitting.

(Dangarembga, 2006:136)

Tambu's aspirations position her in what Chikafa-Chipiro (2020) refers to as self-annihilation. The term self-annihilation is used metaphorically to refer to the self-destructing effect of 'coloniality' on the African personhood of the colonised. In her review, she states that, "*The Book of Not* presents Tambu as a non-person who goes through some form of psychic self-annihilation that reduces her to an 'I was not' as she struggles to cope with the racial exclusions at her White boarding school". Her misconception regarding the *unhu* concept, an African social philosophy defined by Sibanda (2014:28) as, "a broad philosophical concept that defines what is expected of a member of an indigenous African culture", confirms her self-annihilation. In other words, by allowing her mind to be colonised, Tambu feeds the beast that will eventually attack her. Tambu understands *unhu* to be, the principle of reciprocity. She states, "*Unhu* did not function, unless the other person was practising *unhu* also. Without reciprocation, *unhu* could not be *unhu*" (Dangarembga, 2006:119). The question about Tambu's understanding of the concept is, how can one, therefore, practise *unhu* if the other person, in this case, the coloniser, is not doing the same? She knits gloves and helmets for the Rhodesian soldiers, who are the very people that perpetuate her dismemberment. Her justification for these rebellious acts is based on a delusional demonstration of *unhu*. The coloniser does not reciprocate *unhu* but instead oppresses and discriminates against her. Tambu's condition at the school can be understood through Ngugi's observation regarding the dismembered African. He states that, "the educated African elite are ultimately cut off from the social body by the ideology of self-abnegation" (Ngugi, 2009:27). Tambu's self-abnegation is evident in her distancing herself from fellow black students and her own country, choosing to knit for the enemy. Tambu's actions confirm her loss of African memory, as suggested by Ngugi (2009), and the loss of wholeness embedded in her cultural identity. The culture she aspires to be part of denies her equal opportunities based on her skin colour. However, while Chikafa-Chipiro focuses on self-annihilation, she seems to omit that Tambu goes through the stages of annihilation willingly and consciously as she aspires to be part of the 'educated elite'. In doing so, Tambu repudiates the very base of her existence. The foundation of her aspirations leads to her self-annihilation, which Chikafa-Chipiro does not discuss.

The unmerged configuration of discourses presents Nyasha as Tambu's alter ego. Through her, Tambu begins to understand herself and the world around her. Nyasha, which means 'grace', as

discussed towards the end of this chapter, is the saving grace that shows Tambu the way to liberating herself. Her bulimia can be perceived as a metaphorical representation of the colonised's refusal to internalise 'coloniality' and its ideologies. Nyasha's refusal to consume food also affirms the mattering of the colonised lives, in which their bodies, like all human bodies, should be treated as bodies worth mourning. The concept of mourning will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. The unmerged decolonial discourse represented by the character Nyasha redefines the author's position in a polyphonic novel. Dangarembga's task becomes that of discovering the meaning communicated by each of these discourses. Moreover, the style can be perceived as a form of writing in which authors like Dangarembga challenge the notion of a single story that the colonial monological voice has since told. Polyphonic writing sees "no kind of passivity on the part of the author" (Clark and Holquist, 1984:244).

As pre in the chapter, the novel's title can also be viewed in light of the dismemberments presented in the text. The 'nots', as hinted by the title, are the result of Tambu's dismembered self; she is further entrapped in nervous conditions. Her estranged relationship with her mother, as discussed earlier, affects Tambu's progress, leading to her 'nots'. In his dissertation, Douglass (2005:17) affirms that, "the quality of mother and daughter relationship plays important roles in developing self-esteem". Based on this observation, I argue that Tambu's 'nots' are partly caused by her alienated relationship with her mother. Even in her times of depression, Tambu cannot seek solace from her mother:

How dispirited I was! How traumatised and discouraged! How gleefully I assured myself—now that I mistrusted the woman completely — yet also how wretchedly my mother would mock me over my predicament, if I was sufficiently foolish to allow myself to meet her. I reinforced my vow, and found good grounds to avoid her.

(Dangarembga, 2006:194)

While her cousin, Nyasha, questions her life experiences, Tambu's lack of personal esteem, as affirmed by Douglass (2005), is noted through her failure to challenge unfair treatment. While working for an advertising urgency, Tambu's hard work is credited to Dick, a White copywriter. Hesitating to confront such treatment, Tambu opts to resign rather than challenge this injustice. Her lack of self-esteem authenticates her dismemberment, as she sees no place for herself in the newly independent Zimbabwe. In Chapter Fourteen, Tambu states the following: "So this evening I walked emptily to the room I would soon vacate, wondering what future there was for me, a new Zimbabwe" (Dangarembga, 2006:246). Her conundrum at this stage is a contradiction of her previous Western-propelled ambitions. Meanwhile, Mai uses every opportunity of their occasional encounters to ridicule her daughter's attachment to the Western world, even if it means celebrating her failures (Tambu's nots). In Chapter Twelve, Mai publicly turns to sarcasm, ridiculing Tambu's humble teaching job at a small primary school by jeering "A-he, Tambudzai! Spending all that time with all those Europeans only to rot in a school that doesn't have form four" (Dangarembga, 2006:195). Moreover, she reminds her that Babamukuru is not of the same blood as hers, which is an ironic statement suggesting that he

can no longer be a brother to Tambu's father due to his Western education. Mai emphasises this point by stating,

No, there's no point in worrying! Which of your ancestors learnt those books? The blood that's in you is mine and your father's, not Babamukuru's! This is how I learnt a mother can speak in this way to her daughter.

(Dangarembga, 2006:195)

As Tambu internalises a Eurocentric view of herself, Dangarembga demonstrates how 'coloniality' cultivates an inferiority complex that leaves the colonised with a fractured sense of self: "I was just as worried about another encounter with myself. What if I did something else I didn't know I could do" (Dangarembga, 2006:57). The turning of events observed in *The Book of Not* (2006) epitomises what I will refer to as the disappointments of Tambu's colonised dream.

Through Tambu's conflicted mind, it can be opined that the title hints at the dialogic space upon which unmerged discourses, the author, and the reader engage in an attempt to find meaning. Making use of Coetzee's observation as highlighted earlier, I also posit that the 'nots' are unveiled through this dialogical engagement. For example, through Netsai and the guerrilla fighters representing the decolonial discourse, the reader is introduced to Tambu's moral dismemberment. She sees the liberation war as a futile exercise aimed at brutalising, rather than liberating, the people: "Oh, Netsai, how I wish you were not my sister, who informed you a woman's business is aiming communist rifles at people like kind and gentle Sister Cathrine!" (Dangarembga, 2006:31). This quote confirms her lack of support of the liberation war that seeks to liberate colonised Zimbabweans, including herself. Arguably, this type of dismemberment confirms a colonial memory mislay. Tambu's epidermalisation of the Eurocentric view disjoins her from both her moral and cultural personas, and she completely distances herself from her impoverished background and the barbaric and uncivilised culture represented by the war that Netsai is a part of.

Tambu's colonised view of war is also revealed in a comment she makes in Chapter One while attending a *morari* (community meeting) summoned by the guerrilla fighters back at her rural home. The revolutionary songs sung at this gathering cause Tambu discomfort: "I did not want to see whose voice was chanting so passionately, I sat now in the depths of the machine that brought death to people, and I was intolerably petrified to be in the belly of the beast that belched war" (Dangarembga, 2006:12). Her refusal to be part of the *morari* confirms Ngugi's (1986:3) assertion that, "the colonised mind develops serious doubts about the moral rightness of the struggle". The presence of Netsai and the guerrilla fighters gives rise to an ideological battle between the colonial and the decolonial discourses, as Tambu's mind is haunted throughout the novel by the thought of Netsai and the *morari* she attends back at her rural home. In Chapter Three, Bougainvillea starts a conversation about war at a dinner table. This conversation makes Tambu uncomfortable: "I was feeling terrible by now, experiencing myself as inhuman and treacherous person, so I was very relieved when the farmer's daughter changed the subject" (Dangarembga, 2006:45).



The tension prevents her from visiting her rural home during the holidays, as she would rather stay at Babamukuru's mission house, where the cultural resemblance of her desired Western culture is perceivable: "I was home for the holidays. Or more precisely, I was at the place I called home, which was the mission. I had long ceased finding the homestead appealing and could not now contemplate going there again" (Dangarembga, 2006:80). In the closing chapter, Tambu portrays a picture of an alienated destitute with nowhere to belong:

Now that I was not wanted here, what would I do for accommodation? There was no longer a place for me with my relative at the mission. I could not go back to the homestead where Netsai hopped unspeakably on a single limb, and where Mai would laugh at me daily.

(Dangarembga, 2006:246)

The role played by Ntombi's character involves questioning and interrogating forms of 'coloniality', thereby illuminating the need for the colonised to criticise all colonial epistemologies that carry a monological view. Ntombi's intolerance can be understood through Fanon's (1963:43) statement stating that, "In the period of decolonisation, the colonised masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up". This describes an uncompromising approach that can be connected to Ntombi's illustration of radical thinking. In Chapter Five, Ntombi castigates Tambu's selfish actions in snatching a biscuit from Tracey's hand, as she was handing it out to Patience. Fumingly, Ntombi utters, "Vasikana, girls, can you believe it! Me I can't, but yes, it was her! It was Tambu! She took that biscuit!" (Dangarembga, 2006:75). Although Tambu tries to explain her actions, what Ntombi appears to be disputing is the colonial trait, evident through her selfish behaviour.

The final realisation through which she learns of her 'Blackness' drives her into nervous conditions, and Ntombi's questioning of these colonial structures reveals Tambu's inferiority complex. In Chapter Three, Tambu is uncomfortable by Ntombi giving the impression that she wants to touch Tracey's chocolate powder bottle. Such actions are punishable, Black students are not allowed to be in physical contact with White students at the school. Ntombi's intentions in doing this can be interpreted as an attempt to decolonise the notion of White supremacy. Tambu's inferiority complex and behavior forces her to withdraw. Tambu confirms, "I wondered how it could be that Ntombi had outmanouvered one of the white girls" (Dangarembga, 2006:40). This comes from colonial teaching in which the colonised is, "taught inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair and behave like flunkeys" (Cesaire, 2000:43). Tambu's doubts about the capabilities of Africans confirm her undebatable acceptance of her 'nots' in the name of an inferiority complex. This complex is based on the view that White will always be superior to Black, and Tambu aspires to be part of the 'superior' group, whatever the cost. In Chapter Four, she uses unauthorised bathrooms meant for White students; an act that can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that her desire to be part of the coloniser's world annihilates her sense of Black 'Africanness'. The second is that her desire to be associated with Whiteness supersedes the reality of her limitation, as evident in her statement: "But I immediately felt guilty for having aspirations above my station. I was where I was not supposed to be. I was breaking the law, I castigated myself" (Dangarembga, 2006:67). Tambu's admission

of guilt after being caught can be viewed as illuminating the 'coloniality' of being, in which certain groups of people are viewed as subhuman.

Ntombi goes as far as using the prohibited Shona language at school. Her rebellious actions can be seen as a decolonial movement that seeks to reject colonial forms of oppression. As discussed in Chapter Two, a writer like Ngugi has demonstrated a decolonial step by switching to his Gikuyu language since 1977. His move seeks to deny the colonial superiority that has been accorded to the English language, but Dangarembga appears to favour English as the language to express her ideas. The reason can be interpreted as 'decoloniality' in progress, and her writing in English can be understood using Nishitani's book, in which she discusses conditions on which knowledge is accepted or recognised. Nishitani labels the producers of what became acceptable as knowledge the *Humanitas*, while those who learn and assimilate this knowledge are known as the *Anthropos*. The perception created towards Western knowledges in contrast to other forms of knowledge contextualizes Nishitani's theoretical scheme to what Dangarembga portrays in the Book of Not through Tambu. Moreover, this is rigidly monitored when it comes to works produced by Africans, or those marked as the *Anthropos*. In Nishitani's view, which I also discuss in Chapter Four, the *Anthropos* must learn and use the *Humanitas* language (the owners of knowledge, the coloniser) for their intellectual contributions to be accepted in the domain of knowledge. Nishitani states that:

The *Anthropos* were able to preserve their knowledge because they learned the language of the *Humanitas*. In other words, they had to become *Humanitas* to some extent in order to leave a trace in the domain of knowledge. The knowledge that is produced in this manner is preserved as yet another possession of *Humanitas*.

(Nishitani, 2006:268)

The above quote underscores the oppressive colonial strategy that Dangarembga also hints at through Sacred Heart and its language policy. In 1989, Dangarembga's contribution was recognised when she was awarded a Commonwealth Writers Prize for her English novel *Nervous Conditions*. Based on this observation, promoting the coloniser's language to the demise of indigenous languages can be viewed as the dismembering of the colonised through linguicide. Ngugi (2009:17) defines a linguicide as, "the linguistic equivalence to genocide", while Biko (1987:50-51) talks about, "the bastardisation of indigenous languages and how this collectively creates the hierarchisation of the indigenous/colonised into *haves* and *have-nots* based on language assimilation". Unlike Japan, which has shown success by maintaining its culture through limiting external influences, African countries have achieved modernisation through unlimited external influence. This has made Africa vulnerable to continued forms of 'coloniality', to which the solution is 'decoloniality'. This does not mean prohibiting the usage of the colonial language, but instead dismantling the hegemonic and discriminating perception associated with its usage.

Contradicting Ngugi's view, Achebe argues that, "Language is a weapon and we use it, there's no point in fighting it" (Gallagher, 2010:260). However, through this contradiction, Achebe hints at possible solutions and further alternatives regarding concerns raised by Ngugi, as discussed

in Chapter Two of this research. In other words, Achebe seems to suggest that the coloniser's language can be used to decolonise. While Ngugi propounds that African literature should be written in African languages for the indigenous people's readability, Achebe points out that most African countries have more than one common language, and it would be challenging to write in each. Writing in a coloniser's language at least allows widespread readability which could later be translated into various indigenous languages. Ngugi himself has had most of his works translated to the coloniser's language. Mphahlele (1997) also problematises Ngugi's view, indicating that Africa has urgent and crucial issues that require immediate readability and which cannot wait until a national language is established. Mphahlele (1997:337) states that, "creative impulse cannot wait for such developments before it expresses itself. So we write in English, French, and Portuguese, which we know and have mastered". In short, Africa has a history of colonialism, and many people are no longer proficient in their mother tongue:

There are not many countries in Africa today where you could abolish the language of the erstwhile colonial powers and still retain the facility for mutual communication. Those African writers who have chosen to write in English or French are not unpatriotic smart alecs.

(Achebe, 1997:343)

The above quote suggests that to deny the fact that the coloniser's language has a place in African literature is to deny Africa's colonial history and its impact on African lives today. Again, simply ceasing to use of the coloniser's language creates further dismemberments in Africans that do not understand specific indigenous languages, and the use of colonial languages becomes a way of unifying Africa and its diverse linguistic background. Based on this observation, it can be argued that through her 'weaponising' of the coloniser's language, Dangarembga succeeds in her attempt to convey colonial problems that still haunt Africans. Another possible solution to the language problem is what Phenuel Egejuru (1998) calls *Achebeism*, visible in Achebe's use of African proverbs, idioms, and stories borrowed from the Igbo language. Egejuru (1998:23) attests that, "It is Achebe's exploration and application of Igbo patterns of speeches that have created a distinctive feature which can be appropriately called *Achebeism* in literature". Learning from this analysis, I theorise that the language question can possibly be resolved through interlanguage. The word 'interlanguage' means "a language or form of language having features of two others, typically a pidgin or a version produced by foreign learner" (Lexico, 2021). This on its own suggests a decolonial move, as Achebe's interlanguage merges these languages, vetoing the colonial superiority implied by Ngugi's view.

Tambu's failure to fit in with her Shona-speaking dorm mates reflects 'coloniality' of knowledge, in which the colonised, "is socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe that rejects them" (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2013:11). Based on Bakhtin's polyphony, I view Ntombi's role as a free expression of the decolonial discourse that contradicts monologic epistemologies imposed by the coloniser. Tambu's failures are a result of her ardent belief that Western ways are more empowering and liberating, as she has gathered from her uncle in *Nervous Conditions*.

However, the limitations of Bakhtin's concepts should also be considered. In my view, these limitations do not seem to outweigh the profound results achieved when applied correctly. In using this theoretical concept, I confess that the temptation of over-emphasising the independence of the discourses presented is highly likely. In the *Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin affirms that, "like Goethe's Prometheus creates not voiceless slaves (as does Zeus) but free people capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (Bakhtin, 1984:6). This quote seems to suggest that the 'hero' polyphonic novel carries the free will that enables him to go as far as refusing to obey the author's instructions. Based on this, I argue that what Bakhtin seems to be suggesting is impossible. The very fact that the author creates these heroes or discourses obliterates the exaggerated view of the hero or discourses as independent from the author's creative power.

Bakhtin also states that the hero in a polyphonic novel can stand side by side with the author, giving him the ability to question the author's view. However, this style can result in the hero being misunderstood as an equal with the author. The limitation of this view is that it takes the creative credit of the author, and the hero is divorced from his creator (the author). Arguably, the author of the polyphonic novel should be recognised as the creator that gives life to the work, and Dostoevsky points out that, "genuine artists should not be lowered at any rate to the same status as that of the characters they have portrayed" (Dostoevsky cited in *The World Literature Encyclopaedia*, Volume Four, 1982). Lastly, the reader is also tempted to over-emphasise the aspect of polyphony, which focuses mainly on the artistic form of the novel. However, by doing so the content is overlooked. For example in *The Book of Not* (2006), it is easy for the reader to be caught up in Dangarembga's style of writing and language use, while overlooking the content and crucial 'coloniality' issues that she addresses in the novel. Bakhtin states that, "Instead of giving expression to the already found content, the artistic form correctly understood should first of all urge people to look for and discover the content" (Bakhtin, 1984:80).

Another technique that Dangarembga uses to convey the dismemberment of the colonised is the names of her characters. The names are not in isolation from the issues presented. Beginning with the name Netsai which means 'Be a nuisance'. An online blog titled *Zimbabwean Names* (2013) defines the name Netsai as 'Troublesome'. Both these meanings can be perceived as suggesting some sort of social unrest. Pfukwa (2007) states that "behind a name are social attitudes and perceptions; a vast social matrix that gives the name wider shades of meaning". Based upon this definition, I put forward that the name Netsai confirms the colonised's resistance from being colonised. It is not surprising that Nestai causes trouble for the coloniser as she is part of the liberation soldiers that fight for decolonisation. Again, through the struggle, she also loses her limb, which symbolically emphasises a state of dismemberment.

The trouble depicted through Netsai's name can be connected to Fanon's (1963: 43) boomerang effect of the colonised nervous conditions, stating, 'he [the colonised] begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory'. The conflict, therefore, can be seen as a rejection of these unwanted conditions of 'coloniality'. The revolutionary slogans and songs

that Netsai and the fighters sing is a quest for decolonisation. Tambu recalls these slogans and songs, 'Pamberi nerusunguko! Pamberi nechimurenga! Pasi nevadzvanyiriri!' (Dangarembga 2006:12). When translated, the songs encourage the colonised to continue fighting against the coloniser until freedom is achieved. The ideas reflected in the slogan tally with the notion of trouble embedded in Netsai's name. Tambu, who aspires to be part of the colonialist's world, is also troubled by the songs causing her discomfort. It can be concluded that Tambu's disgruntlement towards the guerrilla fighters and her rural home symbolises a polyphonic conflict of discourses.

Rambanai, Tambu's youngest sister, carries a name that can be translated to mean 'dismemberment.' The actual translation is, 'to repudiate', usually used to address disconnections or rejection in relationships. For this reason, I argue that naming, as depicted in the novel, points out to the ills within the society in which these names emerge. In this case, being the repudiated relationships between families and people of the same culture. Mai goes to the extent of even planning the murder of Babamukuru as she suspects him of being a 'sell out'. The antagonism conveyed through these relationships confirms the dismemberment of the colonised brought upon them through colonialism.

In fiction, names often have an essential connection with characters but are, in reality, merely contingent, social conventions. However, novelists often use names to hint at the essential qualities of characters. The limitations of this strategy are that the author's attitude or bias might reflect through the names of characters. An example can be noted when juxtaposing the names of Tambu and her siblings with the names of her cousins Nyasha and Chido. Judging from the interpretation discussed in this chapter, the names of Tambu and her siblings seem to depict violence and trouble. On the same note, Nyasha and Chido's names convey hope and promise. Such bias misleads the reader into a limited reading of characters based on the connotations that come with their names. Therefore, based on the reader's knowledge, a perception is created in the reader's mind, hence blocking comprehensive reading. This also implies that the character's development is anticipated and limited to the boundaries coded by their names. In summarising this view, Allagbe affirms that in some cases, "naming highlights the authorial attitudes, perceptions and biases" (2016:20).

Dambudzo is Tambu's younger brother; his name means 'problems'. Like Netsai's name, the name Dambudzo can be interpreted as referring to the colonised causing problems for the coloniser. The coloniser is made restless by those that he has colonised, as confirmed by the liberation war against the British colonisers in the novel. However, the meaning can also be interpreted vice versa, meaning the coloniser gives the colonised problematic conditions. The coloniser does so through colonialism which later becomes 'coloniality'. The novel depicts the colonial context in which the name Dambudzo emerges. Fanon (1963) defines these problematic conditions as nervous conditions in which the colonised find themselves dismembered. The polyphony of voices in the novel, as I call it, shows a clash of discourses owing to the problematic conditions caused by the coloniser.

Nyari, who is introduced to the reader as Nyarai in the first novel, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), is Netsai's friend, and she appears at the scene in which her friend Netsai loses her leg. She is also the friend who informs Tambu of how Netsai had joined the guerrillas and her love affair with one of the guerrilla fighters. Nyari's name means 'respect'; it can be interpreted as a quest for respect from the coloniser, who, through colonialism, disrespects the colonised. This can also mean respect amongst fellow citizens. Therefore, the name Nyari can be taken as sarcastically pointing out the shameful and inhuman practice of the coloniser, in which he should step back, reflect, and be ashamed of his actions. In a different view, the meaning of the name Nyari (respect) expresses the fundamental aspects of *unhu*, in which every human being cares about the well-being of the other, 'I am because you are'. Moreover, respect emphasises a re-membering process, in which every human is reconnected with their humanity. This means everyone is treated equally despite their race, gender or political affiliation. The understanding of this notion sees the beginning of 'decoloniality'.

African ideologies and concepts presented in the novel revolve around the *unhu* African philosophy, which has respect at its centre, Tambu predicates:

*Unhu* required an elder aunt, or a sahwira- someone you were related to not by blood but by absolute respect [...] What *unhu* prescribes for one who was moving against the current was to come to one's senses, realise the sovereignty of the group and work to make up for the disappointment. Then you would become somebody as more *unhu* would accrue.

(Dangarembga, 2006:164)

In an interview with Thien (2013), Dangarembga asserts, "In South Africa, ubuntu is exactly the same kind of philosophy, which is *I am because you are* or *I am because we are*. This is the kind of philosophy that used to bind villages and communities together until other forces interrupted those communities". What the coloniser reflects through his oppressive and discriminatory actions is an interruption of the *unhu* philosophy. Tambu, who is enamoured of the coloniser's ways, is slowly dismembered from *unhu*, as confirmed through her misconceptualisation of the concept. It is only later that she begins to ask questions quietly. In the same interview, Dangarembga discusses Tambu's confusion stating, "And this is why there is so much questioning in that book. Is this really the *unhu* that I believe in, that I came from? People are not behaving in that way anymore" (Thien 2013).

Wamitila asserts that, "Character names can be used artistically to achieve a number of goals like encoding a central trait in a particular character's signification, embracing crucial thematic motifs, ideological toning, as well as even showing the particular writers point of view" (Wamitila 1999:35). The affirmation can be taken to summarise the name Nyasha in the novel. The meaning of the name Nyasha, translated as 'grace,' has been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Based on the meaning of her name, the character Nyasha can be viewed as an antidote to the nervous conditions Tambu experiences in the novel. Their interaction leaves Tambu pondering upon the moral righteousness of her aspirations. Nyasha's significance in the novel portrays the severe consequences of assimilating to Western culture. Her nervous

breakdown, which requires medication to keep her sane, serves as a brutal example of how 'coloniality' disconnects the colonised or once colonised from their being; Tambu attests that:

I moved cautiously, beginning to panic [...] She kept staring at the wall, but not seeing it, as though not part of her body was moved. You didn't know what it was that did this, that sucked being from a person as sweet sap from segment of sugar.

(Dangarembga, 2006:91-92)

Through what I would like to view as the intervention of grace, Nyasha survives her nervous conditions. The same grace, in my view, is what Dangarembga evokes as a remedy towards the colonised, who, like in Tambu's case, aspires towards the very system that rejects them.

Bougainvillea, Tracey's friend and a student at Sacred Heart College, bears a name whose meaning Tambu translates as, "a beautiful plant that hedged in homes" (Dangarembga, 2006:45). Her name like Nyasha's, seems to resemble a solution towards the harsh and discriminating colonial conditions at Sacred Heart College. Although she is associated with the coloniser by virtue of her skin colour, Bougainvillea stands out as kind and loving towards the African students. In a way, her name and actions create the hope for 'decoloniality', a re-membering society in which all people are equal despite the colour of their skins.

This chapter has also discussed that Dangarembga can be viewed as a polyphonic writer through her adroitness in presenting a dialogue of conflicting discourses. Tambu's conflicted mind is a battlefield upon which these discourses pose difficult questions. These discourses engage polyphonically, sharing their unmerged views based on their ideological differences. The ambivalence created by the author shadows the reader's interaction with the novel, resulting in the ambiguity which makes it polyphonic. Through the application of Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism, monologism and polyphony, an effective method through which these independent views debate has been provided. This approach has also expedited the engagement of the independent reader, who also possesses different ideologies from the ones presented by the discourses. 'Decoloniality' requires perseverance as depicted through the dialogic conflict of voices. Dangarembga does not promise a bright future for the hero but instead leaves the task to the colonised to work towards re-membering.

The chapter also discusses the limitations of Bakhtin's concepts and the disadvantages if not applied correctly. However, the outstanding results achieved through the guidance of these concepts outweigh the constraints. I have also touched on the *unhu* concept and its inclusive ideologies. *Unhu* opposes the colonial monological approach that focuses on individualism, allowing every human to be recognised as a being. Therefore *unhu* can be understood to be the recognition of all lives as mattering. In others words qualifying all bodies as mournable bodies, a concept that I will discuss fully in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4

### ***This Mournable Body: Re-membering the Dismembered Bodies***

*This Mournable Body* (2018) is the final text which completes Dangarembga's trilogy. Alluding to the body, Dangarembga demonstrates how the derealisation of specific bodies contributes to the shattering of Tambu's dreams. The new dispensation has brought nothing tangible for the citizens, the infrastructure is falling apart, and the rich are getting richer at the expense of the poor. This reduces Tambu and other citizens facing the same predicament to nothing more than bodies to be mourned. A bitter and older Tambu is introduced to the reader, still staying at the girls' hostel where she is no longer wanted because of her older age. Her low class degree can not get her the job she wants, she is not married, and she is struggling to find a job and a decent place to stay. With fewer options, Tambu ends up renting a cheap room at Widow Manyanga's cottage, where she meets Betha and Marko, the other tenants. Tambu find out that the two ladies are being abused by Shine, a tenant residing in a room next to Tambu's one. Avoiding conflict, Tambu decides to stay out their business ignoring Shine's abuse of the women. Furthermore, she decides to keep silent after witnessing Widow Manyanga's violent attack by her son. The violence against women projected in this novel draws attention to the treatment of women bodies in the novel.

Tambu eventually finds a job as a teacher, though she is not qualified in the field that she is given to teach. She is faced with resistance from her female students who are not interested in the subject that she teaches. Infuriated by their impertinent behaviour, Tambu attacks Esmeralda who suffers a permanent hearing disability. Haunted by this incident, Tambu falls into a nervous breakdown, and she is admitted into a psychiatric centre for treatment. After weeks of treatment, Tambu recovers from this condition and is discharged into the care of Nyasha's home. Nyasha who is now married to a German Scholar runs a non-profit womens' club to empower young women, but this does not impress Tambu, who shows no signs of interest.

After a few months she meets Tracey, her old schoolmate, and she is offered a job as a consultant and a tour guide at the Green Jacaranda Safari. The company invites tourists to areas of interests in Zimbabwe, and Tambu's division excels before the war veterans occupy the farm of which she is in charge. She becomes depressed until Tracey offers her a chance to open a tourist resort back in her village. Tambu grabs this opportunity and goes back to her homestead after years of not returning home. Her mother is surprised to see her and accepts her proposal as it would help the community with jobs. However, Tambu's plans are disrupted after Tracey requests that the village women dance with bare torsos to entertain tourists from overseas. Tambu's mother reacts to one of the tourists after he requests to take a photo of her topless. She insults the tourist in front of the whole village, embarrassing Tambu and ruining the whole event. The experience forces to Tambu resign from her job and to find work at Aunt Lucia's company. She has to start from the bottom, sweeping the offices and preparing tea until she is promoted.



In laying the foundation of my discussion of Dangarembga's final novel, I quote Ngugi's view on the African renaissance as insight to the concept of re-membering discussed in this chapter. Ngugi argues that, "The European renaissance is the thing of the past, and we know the kind of modernity it generated and understand its impact on the world; the African renaissance is a work in progress" (2009:80). Cossa (2009) describes the African renaissance as, "the reigniting of the spirit of Pan Africanism which attempts to mobilise Africans to unite against colonialism's tyranny by redefining an African identity and freedom independent of colonial influence". Linking Cossa's 'reigniting of the spirit of Pan Africanism' and the extract from Ngugi's *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (2009), I argue that Dangarembga in *This Mournable Body* (2018) re-members the dismembered colonised through demonstrating the mournability of their bodies. Arguably, the re-membering process, which can also be viewed as a dialectical process, presents *This Mournable Body* (2018) as the synthesis to the debates raised in the first and second novels. Moreover, re-membering, as discussed in this chapter, is portrayed as work in progress that the once colonised still has to achieve fully.

The presentation of Tambu and other characters grappling to find a place in the independent Zimbabwe decades after the colonial era is proof of the colonial aftermath, which I have also labelled 'coloniality' in this research. I also assert that the post-colonial administration, which now exists as 'coloniality', marginalises certain societal groups and views them as unmournable bodies. That is to say; these marginalised groups are viewed as less-valuable than other societal groups. As guidance, I invoke Ngugi's concept of re-membering in collaboration with decolonial views from selected scholars. In my quest to achieving a comprehensive understanding of the argument, I will refer to characters in the novel as bodies. I will also make use of the characters' names in required cases for emphasis. To further clarify the notion of mournability, focusing on the once colonised bodies in the new Zimbabwe, I draw upon Teju Cole's (2015) essay titled 'Unmournable Bodies' and Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* (1993). Dangarembga's earlier novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006) are set in the colonial era; through them, she manages to portray colonial facets that serve as precursors to the actual state of 'coloniality' evidenced by the post-colonial era in *This Mournable Body* (2018).

Teju Cole (2015) writes about unmournable bodies drawing his argument from the Paris armed attack that saw the killing of more than a dozen journalists at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, a French satirical magazine. This was done by Islamic gunmen protesting against "the flouting of the Islamic ban on depictions of the Prophet Muhammad" (Cole 2015). In the same essay, he also mentions how *Charlie Hebdo* is associated with racist and Islamophobic provocations. Cole's main concern rests on how these killings have drawn attention to France and the overwhelming attention awarded at mourning the people that lost their lives on that day. He juxtaposes the attention on France's case with the trivialising of occurrences that bear the exact nature outside Europe. Cole also interprets Europe's lack of concern towards abductions and killings in non-Western countries as the discriminating designation of bodies as unmournable. In his essay, he emphasises this view by stating that:

We may not attend to each outrage in every corner of the world, but we should at least pause to consider how it is that mainstream opinion so quickly decides those inevitable violent deaths are more meaningful and more worthy of commemoration than others.

(Cole 2015)

In tandem with this view is Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* (1993), in which she, as purported by Cheah (2013:109), "articulates a feminist theory centered on a philosophical exploration of the status of the body". In her book, she discusses the body's materiality, in which she argues that the body's materiality emerges through the performativity of regulatory norms that carry the power to produce the body. In her lecture titled 'Why Bodies Matter' (2015), Butler further elaborates how bodies' materiality through society's dominant norms is problematic. In her argument, she problematises the prejudiced creation of misrecognised bodies, economic discrimination, cultural prejudice, and psychiatric pathologisation. Butler also discusses the September 2014 killing of forty-three university students in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, after protesting against austerity measures. In her argument, these students' unthoughtful killings are problematic as their lives matter and in their death deserve to be mourned.

Linking the views of these two scholars, I assert that the presentation of a struggling Zimbabwean context in *This Mournable Body* (2018) assumes an affirmation of two views. Firstly, that of the unmournability of the marginalised and secondly, the validation of their mournability under the new guises of 'coloniality'. In my argument, I connect mournability with re-membering as this nullifies the annihilation or dehumanisation of certain societal groups/bodies as unmournable. Tambu's failure to find a place in the liberated Zimbabwe decades after independence appears to solicit decolonial thoughts. Her Western education does not better her life in any way but rather entraps her into a dismembered state of impoverishment. She is not married, nor does she have a decent career despite all her years of studying. Tambu empathetically confesses to her predicament, "You with your worthless education intensifying your beggary, making it all more ludicrous" (Dangarembga, 2018:68). Women are victims of their gender, their male counterparts brutalise them, and little is done to remedy their predicament. Independent Zimbabwe's leadership has inherited oppressive colonial practices from the former coloniser, with neo-liberalism (a term that I will define later in the chapter) becoming the new policy model of the country's economy. Dangarembga showcases how neoliberalism has expedited new forms of oppression in Zimbabwe. These range from class and gender to race and ethnicity, which I will discuss in light of Dangarembga's novel.

In this chapter, I also posit that through these forms of oppression lies the view that other bodies are mournable while others are not. In my view, the mournable bodies are those that enjoy the privileges that come with being in power or their association with such, while the unmournable are those on the receiving end, the oppressed and the marginalised. The fight for recognition that Dangarembga portrays through Tambu and other characters can be viewed as a decolonial move towards re-membering. Re-membering, in my view, can be taken to suggest a fresh beginning that nullifies any form of hegemonic influence, which views some bodies as mournable and some as unmournable.

In her work written in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States and during the resulting "War on Terror", *Prekarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (2004) and *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2009), Butler further discusses the materiality of bodies through the concepts of precariousness and precarity. While the terms may bear similar

interpretations, I will use Butler's (2009) definition of the two terms in this part of the dissertation. She states:

Precariousness and precarity are intersecting concepts. Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. In some sense, this is a feature of all life, and there is no thinking of life which is not precarious [...] Precarity designates the politically induced condition in which specific populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differently exposed to injury, violence, and death.

(Butler, 2009:25)

The first part of the definition, which describes life's precariousness, attests the uncertainty embedded in the word's denotative meaning. Precarity, however, points to heightened precariousness resulting from social marginalisation and disempowerment. Sharryn Kasmir's (2018) article titled 'Precarity' summarises Butler's use of the two terms stating that:

She sees precariousness as a generalised human condition that stems from the fact that all humans are interdependent and, therefore, vulnerable. In her scheme, precarity is different precisely because it is unequally distributed. Precarity is experienced by marginalised people who are exposed to economic insecurity, injury, violence, and forced migration.

(Kasmir 2018)

Based on the above definition, which is a much clearer and simplified version of Butler's (2009) definition, I assert that Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* (2018) portrays the precariousness of bodies that are labelled as unmournable. The presentation of Tambu and the struggling masses in the new dispensation demonstrates such conditions. Following this, my argument seeks to prove how the precarity of these unmournable bodies serve as a platform upon which Dangarembga critiques the hegemonic conceptualisation of bodies. Her purging of such oppressive colonial ideologies that now exist under the new administration of 'Coloniality' can be viewed as a step towards re-membering. In doing so, Dangarembga seems to skillfully confirm the mournability of bodies seen as unmournable in the novel. The precarity of women's bodies and the less accommodating socio-economic structures, among others, appear to be the main issues that Dangarembga deals with in her novel. These post-colonial issues exacerbate the experiences of most Zimbabweans. Though she touches on the unmournability of Arabs' and Muslims' bodies, arguably, Butler's works seem to be limited in their overemphasis of Western issues. Based on such limitations, other parts of the globe are excluded. Her views are mostly directed at resolving issues engendered from the 9/11 incident and the ongoing wars in the Middle East.

The applicability of Butler's views towards a post-colonial African context, in this case, the post-1980 period in Zimbabwe, is significant as it addresses critical issues discussed by Dangarembga in her novel. In an interview, Dangarembga expresses concern about the precarity of bodies seen as unmournable or the 'derealised', as Butler (2004:33) calls them. To consolidate my argument, I briefly draw upon a recent experience involving the author. In July 2020,

Dangarembga was involved in a demonstration to denounce acts of corruption within the Zimbabwean government. In an interview with Sacha Pfeiffer in 2020, Dangarembga hints at how political corruption has led to most Zimbabweans' further impoverishment. However, in exercising this constitutional right, Dangarembga was imprisoned for voicing out her concerns and was further charged for inciting public violence. In the interview, Dangarembga expresses her concern regarding the justice system and its selective approach towards people it should be protecting and serving. Dangarembga states:

I am concerned about the way the justice system handles cases at the moment. I was not charged with demonstrating because that is, in fact, and legal. I was charged with attending a meeting to incite public violence, breach of the peace or acts of bigotry. And clearly, I wasn't doing any of those things. My friend wasn't doing any of those things, so I'm hoping that justice will prevail.

(Pfeiffer 2020)

Dangarembga's arrest, in an attempt to stand up for the more precarious, can be viewed as a way of silencing them. It suggests that their voices are not worth listening to, and by doing so the more precarious are dehumanized. The ill-treatment of the more precarious is based on frames and norms in which bodies are recognised. In other words, the current Zimbabwe depicted in Dangarembga's novel is guided through political frames that dictate what is said and who says it. Butler's use of the term 'frame' suggests that certain lives, or bodies, find themselves confined to specific ontological frames based on specific norms. It is through these frames that others are perceived as unmournable, disenfranchised and not mattering. Butler elaborates on the ontology of framing by stating that:

We cannot easily recognise life outside the frames in which it is given, and those frames not only structure how we come to know and identify life but constitute sustaining conditions for those very lives [...] thus, the frame functions normatively.

(Butler, 2009:23)

The silencing of voices from communicating their concerns evident through Dangarembga's arrest can be interpreted as the reality and part of the experiences her novel tries to present to the reader. *This Mournable Body* (2018) can be understood as portraying the frames in which ordinary Zimbabweans are cocooned and defined. The frames are used to identify those marked as the voiceless, ungrievable, and unmournable bodies. In such frames, bodies are exposed to violence, death, legal disenfranchisement, starvation, and underdevelopment, as summarised by Butler (2009). In Chapter Seven of *This Mournable Body* (2018), Christine, the ex-combatant also a cousin to the widow Manyanga, discusses the intensive suffering of the more precarious lives. In her conversation with Tambu, she highlights how silencing is part of what frames more precarious lives. This form of precarity falls under what Butler (2009:25) calls "legal disenfranchisement", a condition that deprives those perceived as more precarious of certain rights and privileges. Such treatment is also evident through incidences like the one of the author's arrest discussed above. In the novel, Tambu is resentful to talk about how the

widow Manyanga was violently attacked by her son Larky. Christine comments on such silence as follows:

We saw such things during the liberation struggle. Then it was in the bush, but now it is in the home. And still, no one talks. They say it just happened, or they even say it didn't happen, and they ignore it.

(Dangarembga, 2018:75)

Following the above observation, I argue that the normative silence [silencing] of more precarious lives marks their derealisation. In light of Dangarembga's text, it appears as if the depiction of the precarity of those marked as unmournable is, in itself, a cry out towards the recognition of their mournable status. In other words, the cry for recognition can be perceived as a decolonial step towards a total revolution against hegemonic thinking patterns used in framing lives as either mattering or not mattering.

At this point, the question, 'What then is a mournable body?' is worth considering. The significance of this consideration rests in the manner in which the title of the novel mirrors the depiction of unfavourable post-colonial conditions. In my view, the title of the novel is more of a statement than just a title. It appears to proclaim the mournability of more precarious bodies through showcasing their precariousness. For Dangarembga, these bodies matter as they are sentient bodies. In an attempt to theorise my understanding of her approach, I argue that the state of being mournable can be defined as the recognition of all bodies/ people as living entities. The recognition also includes the treatment of these bodies as such. On the same note, the beginning of recognition can also be perceived as the beginning of a re-membering process. The beginning of re-membering evokes a sense of catharsis in which the mournability of these bodies confirms some form of restoration.

Garvey's view on the concept of re-membering is worth noting in light of the post-colonial context depicted in Dangarembga's novel; Garvey asserts:

There is no desire for hate or malice, but every wish to see all mankind linked into a common fraternity of progress and achievement that will wipe away the odour of prejudice and elevate the human race to the height of real godly love and satisfaction.

(Garvey, cited in Ngugi, 2009:36)

Though Garvey's thought is targeted at racism, thus, "embracing the purpose of all black humanity to be free and equal members of the community of nations and people" (Ngugi 2009: 35), it also hints at decolonial ideas relevant to the understanding of Dangarembga's novel. Arguing Garvey's view that seems to be founded on the pedagogies of race, I assert that re-membering, which I also connect with 'decoloniality', should not only be understood as a tool of correction but moreover, as the locus of new beginnings. The pitfall of limiting 'decoloniality' to racial narratives lies in the danger of creating further dismemberments, particularly gendered and socially disempowered bodies. Such limitations veto the re-membering purpose implied by the meaning of the concept.

Going beyond the boundaries of race is the post-colonial context presented in *This Mournable Body* (2018), in which the mournability or unmournability of bodies is depicted amongst people of the same race. The quest for wholeness, which I would like to link to the precarious pursuit for mournability, can be viewed as vetoing 'coloniality' conventions that derealise certain bodies. In the novel, Dangarembga deals with the disappointments of the new dispensation in Zimbabwe. These have further expedited the dehumanisation of the indigenous people. Considering the state of affairs, the liberation war's purpose appears defeated; the new government fails to deliver its promises. In Chapter Seven, Tambu affirms, "Christine with her fruitless war that brought nothing but false hope and a fresh, more complete variety of discouragement" (Dangarembga, 2018:68). The failed promises referred to by Tambu exacerbates the precarity of the more precarious, in which the lack of urgency in resolving these issues can be perceived as the devaluing or rather the derealisation of certain bodies, particularly female bodies, as unmournable.

The outrage expressed by the war veterans in Chapter Eighteen of the novel can be taken as a quest for recognition which Ngugi (2009) refers to as a "quest for wholeness". Their invasion of the Stevensons' farm can be interpreted as a cry for mournability. Tracey Stevenson, Tambu's former classmate at Sacred Heart College, who also owns the company that Tambu works for as a tour manager, confirms:

Well, there's been trouble. Some of those ... thugs ... skellems who call themselves ex-combatants, or war vets ... they've occupied the rondavels. They're hunting the game. And they're camping in our tourists' village! It's not like we're not the only ones. There's whole lot of these ... these invasions.

(Dangarembga, 2018:225)

Tambu learns from this conversation that her company can no longer keep her at that farm due to these invasions. In her book *Re-living The Second Chimurenga* (2006), Fay Chung affirms that one of the main concerns behind the 1967 to 1979 war of liberation in then Rhodesia was the land issue. The liberation war, also known as Chimurenga, means a revolutionary struggle to resolve the land's quandary, amongst other issues. Chung states:

It was impossible to grow up in colonial Rhodesia without becoming aware from one's earliest age of the deep hostility between the races. The land issue was the main bone of contention.

(Chung, 2006:27)

The land invasions that began in 1998, close to two decades after independence, resulted from the liberation fighters' perceived betrayal based on the government's lack of delivery. In his article 'Land Reform in Zimbabwe' (2005), Mabaye states:

Of the thousands of these landless Zimbabweans who invaded these farms, a majority were veterans of the Chimurenga War. They had fought this war of liberation to have their birthright and heritage, the land, restored to them.

Based on Mabaye's assertion, it is essential to note that the indigenous people, also confirmed in Dangarembga's first novel, were violently dismembered from their lands. In Chapter Two of *Nervous Conditions* (1988), discussed earlier in this dissertation, Tambu's grandmother narrates the events leading to their landlessness. In my view, the government's failure to fairly reallocate land to the people soon after independence can be perceived as an act of dismemberment. It perpetuates colonial forms of oppression that view those labelled as more precarious lives as undeserving. In other words, through their derealised state, issues that concern their livelihood are trivialised. The last part of Mabaye's quote illuminates acts of betrayal by the government in not granting what they had promised the people during the war. Instead the government has left the people with a desire for restoration through regaining their birthright. The desire can also be viewed as the beginning of 'decoloniality', thus realising their self-worth and reclaiming their mournability. Therefore, it is important to temporarily set aside the legalities surrounding the war veterans' invasion of white-owned farms and focus on their relentless pursuit for mournability. Maldonado-Torres views 'decoloniality' as an ongoing project by affirming that:

It [decoloniality] reflects changes in historical consciousness, agency, and knowledge, and it also involves a method or series of methods that facilitate the task of decolonisation at the material and epistemic levels.

(2006:114)

I connect the above quote with the quest for restoration demonstrated through the war veterans' invasion of the Stevensons' farm in *This Mournable Body* (2018). In a way, it nullifies the view that places bodies into what Fanon (2008:VI) calls the "zone of non-being". In Chapter Three, I discuss how 'coloniality' has expedited the bifurcation of human beings into what Fanon (2008) conceptualises as zones of being and non-being. Based on Fanon's concepts, I also connect unmournability discussed in this chapter with the zone of non-being and mournability as the decolonised state of the human race. Though Fanon's concept is centered on racism, in *This Mournable Body* (2018), the bifurcation is perpetuated through what I view as inherited colonial practices that now exist as 'coloniality'. These are evident through the ill-treatment of specific bodies by those considered superior. In doing so, the humanity of certain bodies is questioned.

Drawing on Teju Cole's (2015) essay, the contrast between the mournability of Western bodies with the unmournability of bodies in the Third World can be used metaphorically to interpret the [un]mournability state of bodies in *This Mournable Body* (2018). The treatment of female bodies in Dangarembga's trilogy is worth investigating as it consolidates the metaphoric expression of Teju Cole's unmournable bodies. After Zimbabwe achieved its independence, arguably, the dawning of new hopes and the eradication of oppressive ideologies was anticipated. However, in the novel, Dangarembga portrays a non-progressive picture of such developments. Women continue to suffer abuse and are treated as second class citizens. The intensified depiction of physical violence in *This Mournable Body* (2018) exceeds that of its predecessors' *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006).

Considering the above observation, I argue that Dangarembga's presentation of the brutal treatment of women characters also serves an inverted purpose of affirming the mournability of the more precarious. *World Literature Today* (2019) describes Dangarembga's novel as a portrayal of Zimbabwean politics, economics and culture through women's experiences. The article attests that, "the novel focuses particularly on women's bodies, which suffer a tremendous amount of physical and emotional abuse throughout the narrative and display amazing strength and resilience" (World Literature Today, 2019). Following this, I discuss how Dangarembga uses women figures through what appears to be acts of misogyny to reveal the pathos of bodies and the mattering of all lives. On the same note, Dangarembga also demonstrates the need for a total turnaround from such forms of 'coloniality'. Apart from addressing the dehumanising experiences that women go through, such conditions can be interpreted as symbolising the derealisation of certain societal groups despite gender.

While misogyny is widely known as the hatred of women, Manne defines misogyny as 'the system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women's subordination and to uphold male dominance' (Manne, cited in Penaluna, 2018). The definition can be used to interpret the relations between mournable and unmournable bodies in the novel. Moreover, the definition seems to focus on the subject of women, as they tend to be more precarious than men, and black women the most precarious of all. I will discuss this notion fully in the next paragraph. Worth mentioning is how the focus of the definition can be best understood through Crenshaw's (1989) discussion on intersectionality, as discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation. Following Manne's definition, I assert that her rationale can be used to discuss the precarity of more precarious lives presented in the novel, irrespective of gender.

In Chapter Two of *This Mournable Body* (2018), Gertrude Tambu's female hostel mate is brutally attacked by male commuters at a public taxi rank. The details of the incident, as affirmed by Tambu, point out the dehumanisation of certain bodies. Arguably, the patriarchal view has always perceived women as lesser beings with lives that do not matter. During the incident, other women also join in Gertrude's attack and humiliation. As discussed in Chapter Three, the presentation of women in such modes can be taken as a metaphorical presentation of self-hate. The notion comes as a result of the discriminating colonial view of oneself. Possibly, the portrayal of self-hate evident through women's reaction against their kind confirms the psychological impact of 'coloniality'. Gatsheni Ndlovu (2013:12) refers to this as the "coloniality of being". In physically attacking Gertrude and exposing her nudity, the women perpetrators inhumanely comment that the attack was a way of helping her, "Helping is what we are doing, ehe a woman jeers back" (Dangarembga, 2018:21). Gertrude is attacked for her alleged indecent dressing; the attack portrays some form of hatred which I also refer to as misogyny, "A builder walks up to Gertrude. He stretches out an arm to rip her skirt from her hips" (Dangarembga, 2018:21). Srivastava et al., in their article titled 'Misogyny, feminism, and harassment' state that:

The term misogyny is derived from the ancient Greek word misogyny, which means hatred towards women. Misogyny has taken shape in multiple forms, such as male privilege, patriarchy,



gender discrimination, sexual harassment, belittling of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification.

(2017)

From this definition, I view Gertrude's violent attack by these commuters as the hegemonic patriarchal framing of certain bodies as un-mournable. In my labelling the bodies as 'certain bodies' and not limiting them to just female bodies, I project decolonial pluriversality in which the suffering of women can be taken to symbolise the suffering of all lives that are experiencing 'coloniality'. In Chapter Twelve Nyasha confirms the misogyny that women are enduring, "But it's all talk, talk, talk, talk. There can't be a country that hates women as much as this one" (Dangarembga, 2018:143). Arguably the magnitude to which Dangarembga displays the unremorseful sexual harassment and objectification by the crowd at the taxi rank triggers empathy towards the victim. In so doing, the process of mourning the un-mournable is launched. Dangarembga further describes the belittling of women by detailing the degrading acts that some of the male commuters intend to do on Gertrude's body:

The people are hollering now about holes in her woman's body. They compose a list of what objects have been or shall be inserted there, and the dimensions of such cavities belonging to their hostage's female relatives.

(Dangarembga, 2018:20)

The incident connects essential facets that are highlighted and paramount in the reading of Dangarembga's novel. The attack on Gertrude casts light on what seems to be Tambu's reluctance or instead silence that can be traced back to Dangarembga's sequel, *The Book of Not* (2006). Her choice to keep silent towards discriminating and oppressive practices can be viewed as an inherited oppressive act of un-mourning bodies. In other words, Tambu's crime in doing nothing ensures the perpetuation of oppressive acts. The heredity can be traced back to colonial views that have now evolved and exist in the form of 'coloniality'. An example in *The Book of Not* (2006) is Tambu's choice to keep silent regarding the unfair meriting of her academic award to Tracey. The school's decision to award Tracey is based on a colonial discriminating criterion that recognises one race as superior to others. In Chapter Nine of *The Book of Not*, also discussed in Chapter Three of this study, Ntombi questions Tambu's silence.

Learning from Gertrude's brutal attack, *This Mournable Body* (2018) also serves to integrate the passive role Tambu decides to adopt with the actual un-mourning of more precarious lives. In Tambu's view, Gertrude's cry for help is rather 'entombing'; she ignores her and looks away, "Her mouth is a pit. She is pulling you in. You do not want her to entomb you. You drop your gaze" (Dangarembga, 2018:21). Another critical observation of the incident is that Tambu picks a stone and is ready to participate in Gertrude's attack. Although she does not cast this stone, her intentions can be interpreted as violence against women bodies, and self-hatred as a woman. Basing on her intentions, I argue that her character's presentation at this stage reflects or expresses the oppressive and barbaric relations dominating the post-colonial context. The depicted context defiles the *unhu* philosophy that seeks the well-being of everyone. Bearing in

mind that Gertrude is also Tambu's hostel mate; her reaction seems to depict, in contrast to the communal ethic of *unhu*, an individualised context in which self-centered thinking leads to acts of betrayal. Tambu's denial to fight and stand for other women hints upon the theme of betrayal, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

The African philosophy of *unhu* discussed earlier in this dissertation is contradicted in every aspect of the post-colonial context presented in *This Mournable Body* (2018). There is a noticeable shift from the 'We', which underlines the *unhu* concept and a move towards the 'I', defined through the self-centered ideologies embedded in the new post-colonial context. Magumbate and Nyanguru, in their article 'Exploring African Philosophy: The Value of Ubuntu In Social Work' (2013), attest that the *unhu* concept, which is also known as *ubuntu*, is succinctly reflected in the phrase "I am because of who we all are" (2013:83). Hailey argues that the Western approach is guided by the phrase 'I think, therefore I am' (2008:7), which focuses on individualism. In *This Mournable Body* (2018), Dangarembga seems to have identified the problems underling the post-colonial context as concocted through facets that have accelerated the disappearance of *unhu*. The absence of this African philosophy expedites what I label the rapid growth of post-colonial individualism from a collectivist society. Arguably this transition can be perceived as cultivating selfish agendas, that lead to the unmourning of other bodies and labelling them as more precarious and lives that do not matter. Tambu's unremorseful thought after she refuses to help her hostel mate at the taxi rank confirms the exclusive approach. In Chapter Three, she recites a rather selfish Shona proverb to console herself from her earlier actions; she aptly states, 'your people say: you do not lose your appetite over another person's problems. Knowing this, you are impatient to sit down to your meal' (Dangarembga, 2018:23). Based on this view, I posit that Tambu's lack of care towards others can be viewed as the derealisation of bodies, finding them worthless and unmourable. Hofstede et al defines individualism and collectivism as follows:

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism, as its opposite, pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty throughout people's lifetime.

(2010:92)

In tandem with Hofstede's definition above is Triandis interpretation of individualism which states that "Individualism is generally used to describe the predominant cultures of Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Africa, Middle Eastern and Eastern Asian countries are characterised primarily by collectivism" (Triandis et al., cited in Vogt and Laher, 2009:42). After Shine sexually abuses Mako, both Tambu's housemates at Mai Manyanga's house, Tambu takes the same approach in deciding to ignore Mako's predicament. Unremorsefully she suggests visiting Mako later after the whole situation is under control. Ironically, Tambu finds herself consoling herself with the same Shona proverb which Dangarembga uses to criticise self-centeredness, stating:

That evening, when it is dark after you have finished up your hidden food because another's grief is no reason to lose your own appetite, as your people say.

(Dangarembga, 2018:55)

Dangarembga's portrayal of self-centred agendas through various forms of violence can be perceived as a reminder of the absence of *unhu*, which recognises the mattering of all lives and their treatment as such. The post-colonial Zimbabwe presented in the novel appears to serve capitalists' interests that are evident through various aspects such as neoliberalism. *Unhu* deviates from the core of such functionalities. The replacing of *unhu* with individualistic capitalist systems such as neoliberalism can be considered one of the main reasons behind the conflicted post-colonial context presented in the novel. Moreover, and as discussed in the following paragraphs, corruption and some government officials' incompetency has also expedited such excruciating conditions.

According to Monbiot (2016), the term neoliberalism was coined in 1938 in Paris. Two Austrian exiles, Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, were part of the delegates who defined the ideology. While research has proven that there are various categories used to define neoliberalism, I will develop my argument based on Centeno and Cohen's definition. In an article titled 'Neoliberalism and Patterns of Economic Performance' (2006), neoliberalism is defined as, "the new political economy that mandates governments' removal over the economy and the reintroduction of open competition into economic life' (Centeno and Cohen, 2006:33). Some of the defining categories can be noted in Hilgers' (2012) article 'The Historicity of The Neoliberal State' in which he references scholarly works from Harrison (2010), Clerk and Newman (1997), Ong (1999), and Hildyard (1997) to name a few. Hilgers (2012) writes, 'neoliberalism is characterised by the state and its redeployment'. As further explanation, Harvey divides the concept into theoretical neoliberalism and practical neoliberalism, showing how these differ based on the state's economic history.

Harvey (2005:71) attests, "In other instances, we may reasonably attribute divergences between theory and practice to frictional problems of transition reflecting the different state forms that existed prior to the neoliberal turn". Harvey's view can be used to analyse the contextual successes and failures of neoliberalism. Leaning towards Centeno and Cohen's definition is Ferguson's (2010) definition that views the *laissez-faire* and individual-oriented ideology as somewhat discriminating and oppressive. Ferguson writes:

Neoliberalism, in this sense, has become the name for a set of highly interesting public policies that have vastly enriched the holders of capital while leading to increased inequality, insecurity, loss of public services, and a general deterioration of quality of life for the poor and the working class.

(2010:170)

Reading together with Centeno and Cohen's definition, the above quote can be used to analyse the crippling effects that neoliberalism imposes on the lives of the people within struggling economies such as Zimbabwe. Sharing the same view is Haque, asserting:

Neoliberalism represents both an ideological position and policy perspectives that endorse economic individualism based on market competition, encourage free trade and foreign investment, and oppose state intervention and state-run welfare programs.

(2008:13)

Both definitions encompass critical aspects embedded in the issues raised by Dangarembga in *This Mournable Body*, moreover proving how neoliberalism has accelerated the framing of specific bodies as unmournable and exacerbated precarity in particular population groups. While this is true, important to note is that neoliberalism is not the only contributing factor leading to the socio-economic challenges of post-independence Zimbabwe. As highlighted earlier, the mismanagement of the government and corruption are also to blame. Such a state of affairs has been more damaging than private companies being involved in the economy. According to Maverick (2021), the 2019 'Transparency International Corruption Report' states that, "Zimbabwe is ranked as the twenty-first most corrupt country in the world, ranking below Nigeria, a country in which corruption has been regarded as endemic for decades" (Maverick Citizen, 2021:8). Nyoni (2017) breaks down forms of corruption that have perpetuated the derealisation of more precarious lives in Zimbabwe. In his article, he mentions 'fraud, embezzlement, extortion, bribery, abuse of power and nepotism as the most common forms of corruption' (Nyoni 2017:286). In her novel, Dangarembga demonstrates how three of the above types affect lives of the ordinary Zimbabweans. Concerning corruption Memory Kahuta, aptly states:

Corruption has become the ocean that we swim in and the air we breathe and as a result, poverty and family disintegration have replaced the aspirations for a decent life and a hopeful future. We do not know what is wrong and what is right anymore, it has become more like the struggle for the wealthiest or survival of the fittest.

(Kahuta cited in Bonga et al., 2015:11)

The above quotation also hints at the ideology of neoliberalism depicted discussed earlier in this chapter. Confirming Nyoni's (2017) assertion, Tambu bribes the Women's Club chairwoman and the village king for permission to open a tourism resort at the village; she confesses, "we are encroaching on the forest a very little bit, but when that came up, I paid the mambo a small additional, well, let's call it a close the mouth" (Dangarembga, 2018:257). Bonga et al. (2015:15) defines a bribe as, "an act of giving money or gift that alters the behaviour of the recipient". In Chapter Eight, the nameless mining official abuses power through his philandering escapades with young school girls, Chauke the school teacher attests:

He is the business face of the chairperson of the Mining Council; now that the country has discovered all these diamonds and platinum and oil, please let us be advised no one will touch him. Or anything he wants. In that position, he can't be touched by anything.

(Dangarembga, 2018:93)

The third and most common of these forms is embezzlement; Nyoni (2017:286) describes it as “the taking or conversion of money and other valuable items such as property by those who are not entitled to them but who have access to it by virtue of their position”. In his discussion, he hints at the 2011 embezzlement of the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM)'s resources which benefitted ministers and public officials. Arguably, in *This Mournable Body*, the same explanation can be given regarding the deterioration of public services such as post office operations. Tambu recalls how the post office services were once reliable and efficient compared to the current privatised services, “You last heard of her when she sent the shoes, propitiously at a time when the post office was still forwarding packages rather than pilfering them” (Dangarembga, 2018:38). Bonga et al. (2015:13) state, “Corruption is a global phenomenon found in all countries - but evidence shows it harms poor people more than others, stifles economic growth and diverts desperately needed funds from education, healthcare and other public services”.

Flores (2018) views *This Mournable Body* (2018) as depicting the disposability of Tambu's life amongst other issues discussed in the novel. Her review hints at how the new and excruciating Zimbabwean context rewards competition and innovation more than the high education Tambu has acquired over the years. Flores (2018) aptly states:

*This Mournable Body* is a relevant and painful testimony of the precarity that marks contemporary neo-liberal existence in a context in which privileges like higher education and work experience are not fulfilling the promises of social mobility that they once offered.

Based on the above observation, I construe that Flores' reference to the precarity that marks contemporary neoliberalism in Zimbabwe hints at the incompatibility of Western philosophies within African societies. Why is it so? According to Monbiot (2016), the neoliberal economy “sees competition as the defining characteristic of human relations. In focusing on competition, the drive to win has seen the annihilation of others for the sake of survival”. In Chapter Sixteen, Tambu finds herself competing to keep her job; she wants to be better than her colleague Pedzi who, through hard work, has elevated herself to a higher position. Pedzi rises from being Tambu's subordinate to becoming Tambu's equal.

The competition can be seen as symbolic to the view that positions other lives as not mattering through denying them recognition. The precariousness of those lives that deemed more precarious is projected through the various societal hierarchies depicted in the novel. For the very reason that Pedzi has been Tambu's subordinate for some time, Tambu's view disqualifies her of any opportunity ever to be recognised as an equal. Tambu contemplates blocking Pedzi's success, possibly based on the selfish viewing of other lives as undeserving, a total deviation from the *unhu* African philosophy. Tambu affirms this point:

You observe her elevating herself, finding yourself incapable of devising any action that will give you your own advantage or blocking the former receptionist who, since you are also a project manager, has herself to become formally your equal.

(Dangarembga, 2018:201)

The above quote can be taken as evidence of how the inherited colonial policy models like neoliberalism; have resulted in an insensitive and dysfunctional society that focuses on individual interests at the expense of other lives. To emphasise this view, I refer to Dangarembga's use of the *Clarion Newspaper* to depict a dysfunctional society. The juxtaposing of photos depicting wealthy government officials with those of the more precarious confirms the latter, "a photograph of several top government officials in well-cut suits beside another photograph of some bedraggled, if triumphant-looking, men [...]" (Dangarembga, 2018:254). The image seeks to propound the self-centered values represented by the government. In Chapter Sixteen, the government officials and their wives have their photos published in the *Clarion*, "[...] the leaders and their wives replace Kente and Ankara with Chanel, Pierre Cardin, and Gucci" (Dangarembga, 2018:198).

Self-centeredness seems to be the new trend within the neoliberal economy of post-colonial Zimbabwe, which vetoes the *unhu* collectivist approach. Focusing on personal achievements, Tambu grapples with staying relevant as she is continuously reminded to add value by her director Tracey, "We have to add value to our programme" (Dangarembga, 2018:224). Tambu's attempts to succeed and survive in such economic conditions confirm how toxic 'coloniality' and its capitalistic policies can be. Her actions can be taken as a mere reflection of how the post-colonial Zimbabwean context has seen the further dismemberment of its citizens. It can be argued that the conspicuous facets of capitalism, evident through the neoliberal economic setup, create dismembering human behaviours, which manifest in various forms human exploitation and betrayal. Through such depictions, I regard Dangarembga's narration of these events as qualifying those bodies deemed unmournable as mournable.

The unstable socio-economic conditions portrayed in Dangarembga's text see the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. Based on this thought, I posit that the purpose of the liberation war is debased, as affirmed by Christine, "Even though we fought the war, it was full of liars" (Dangarembga, 2018:67). Therefore the trust that the mass had during the war is betrayed. The derealisation of specific bodies is continued under 'coloniality', bringing the country's independence into question; "it is better to call it April 18. What do we know about independence? Maybe that it was just for people like my uncle" (Dangarembga, 2018:77). The quotation illuminates how Zimbabwe's independence has brought little or no change to those who lived more precarious lives during the colonial era. Therefore, post-colonial Zimbabwe is projected as beneficiation to those lives that perpetuate the unmourning or the derealisation of specific lives. For example, in *This Mournable Body*, actual beneficiaries of the post-colonial regime are the ruling party stalwarts and loyalists, as confirmed by their extravagant lifestyles published by the *Clarion* newspaper. In fact, party loyalty is valued above the country, social justice, law, constitution, and even God. Butler (2004) separates the beneficiaries from the 'derealised' by labelling them as the grievable and the un-grievable, also known as the 'other'. Butler describes their positions as follows:

Certain lives will be highly protected, and the abrogation of their claims to sanctity will be sufficient to mobilise the forces of war. Other lives will not find such fast and furious support and will not qualify as 'grievable'.

(Butler, 2004:32)

Based on the quote, I argue that *This Mournable Body* (2018) conveys a new social structure in which the post-colonial Zimbabwe seeks to serve those that Butler has labelled as grievable at the expense of the ungrievable lives. The theme of betrayal, amongst other themes in the novel, seems to illuminate conditions in which those marked as the 'other' or ungrievable are surreptitiously and yet conspicuously qualified as lives that matter. Mrs Samaita, the headmistress of Northlea High School, is part of the small group of those that question and identify problematic areas in the new Zimbabwe. In her conversation with Tambu at the school, she aptly attests:

I am one, Miss Sigauke, who is not afraid to say we did not set the right goals when we should have done so. I insist on setting them here at Northlea High School. You are welcome to the team if you will help me.

(Dangarembga, 2018:86)

Although Dangarembga's approach is nuanced, the invitation for Tambu to take part in the change process proposed by Mrs Samaita can also be taken as a decolonial step in which the school becomes a podium aimed at decolonising young minds. Maldonado-Torres's view consolidates this approach stating that, "Decoloniality announces the broad decolonial turn that involves the task of the very decolonisation of knowledge, power and being, including institutions such as the university" (2011:1). The same approach is noted through Nyasha's endeavour to reconnect disadvantaged young ladies (the more precarious) with their humanity. Nyasha, who in the novel is presented as an activist, creates a workshop through which she teaches the young and disadvantaged ladies to tell their own story. Leon Nyasha's husband confirms, "Nyasha's workshop is to give not only a voice but also an analytical one to the youth" (Dangarembga, 2018:129). Nyasha's role, as noted from the previous novel, appears to be that of re-membering the 'derealised' bodies with their humanity which has been taken away from them. Further reading confirms that these young ladies are from exploited backgrounds, and Nyasha embarks on a mission to take these ladies through a self-defining journey. In Chapter Thirteen, Nyasha's progress is stated:

She has almost finished the new concept for the next workshop in which the young women discover their own greatness, not in the cinema or in a boyfriend, but buried in themselves by means of telling their own stories.

(Dangarembga, 2018:155)

Nyasha can therefore be perceived as an antidote to the more precarious conditions depicted. Her trajectory marks a decolonial approach noted from Dangarembga's first novel. Towards the end of Chapter Ten in *Nervous Conditions* (1988), she reminds Tambu of how the oppressive system has trapped them and expresses her refusal to be trapped through living her own story. In Chapter Six of *The Book of Not* (2006), during her discussion with Tambu, Nyasha envisions a new and independent Zimbabwe in which everyone is treated equally. However, though the idea does not resonate with Tambu as it sounds too far-fetched, it enlightens Tambu on how

the colonial system perpetuates discriminatory practices. In *This Mournable Body* (2018), Nyasha's appearance expedites Tambu's restoration from a nervous breakdown:

Her visits are like what it was when you were growing up [...] Nyasha talking and giving of her energy, while you listen and take in silence. Degree by degree, your cousin's visits being something to look forward to, you feel better. Due to your new progress, Dr Winton changes your medication from injection to a mixture of tablets.

(Dangarembga, 2018:120)

In her representation of the decolonial discourse as discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation, Nyasha challenges the colonial boundaries in various aspects, including her marriage to a white German scholar. At this stage, it can also be argued that Nyasha seems to have started to heal herself, as she is depicted as highly damaged in the previous novels. In addition, her marriage breaks the discriminating colonial boundaries that view such developments as incompatible. Arguably Nyasha's decolonial approach can also be understood through Williams' view on re-membering in which she attests:

Re-membering our identities by virtue of our experiences allows us to integrate the multiple aspects of ourselves into a holistic existence where we are not conceptualised in unitary terms (black, rich, lesbian, poor, etc), but in accordance with our complexity.

(1998:87)

Though Dangarembga does not reach an ultimate resolution at the end of the novel, such depictions hint at the possibility of re-membering the dismembered.

In the novel, Dangarembga portrays tension between ordinary citizens and war veterans. The tension is not based solely on failed promises but also on their betrayal of the humanising ideologies that initially compelled them to go to war. Tambu's aunt Lucia, who is also a war veteran, confesses how she feels alienated from the nation she has sacrificed for, "Yes, sometimes we wondered why we went to war when we came back and everyone was shocked and began to hate us" (Dangarembga, 2018:151). Tambu's dislike for war veterans can be traced back to *The Book of Not* (2006) when she witnesses the dehumanising acts that her uncle and sister Netsai experience as a result of war.

The guerrilla fighters severely beat Babamukuru after he is accused of being a sell-out. Netsai loses her leg after stepping on a landmine, "Why is he doing that? Those people beat him up; Netsai hasn't got a leg because of them! Why does he want to forget all of it and just make it worse, open us up for anything" (Dangarembga, 2006:95). Tambu's resentment against war veterans can be interpreted as questioning the barbarising of specific lives, which, like Butler (1993), poses questions regarding bodies that matter. In Chapter Twelve of *This Mournable Body* (2018), Lucia confirms the people's adverse reaction towards the barbaric experiences stating, "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" (Dangarembga, 2018:151). The images of the violent events haunt Tambu throughout Dangarembga's sequel *The Book of*



*Not* (2006) to the extent that she relentlessly tries to distance herself from the liberation struggle.

In Chapter Seven of *This Mournable Body*, Tambu blames the war veterans for betraying the people's trust, as the suffering continues, "This came with war. All of it Nobody ever did things like that before you people went to Mozambique and went about doing what you know you did" (Dangarembga, 2018:78). Worth noting is how Dangarembga, like in Chapter Two of this dissertation, manages to use her characters as critiquing agents of 'coloniality'. At this point, the character presentation of Tambu is symbolic of what I argue to be the quest for mournability. This can be further explained as a technique that perpetuates the view that all human beings are lives that matter despite any aspects or qualities used to discriminate against them. Therefore, learning from the observation, I argue that mournability, like *unhu*, is the ability to identify with others; it involves the decolonisation of class structures. By that, I mean delinking or embarking on epistemic disobedience against any form of geo and body politics that disseminate dehumanising structures. Considering this approach, *This Mournable Body* (2018) can also be perceived as the synthesis of Dangarembga's trilogy, as will be discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation.

The dehumanisation of bodies can be associated with primaevial colonial terms such as *Humanitas* and *Anthropos* used to refer to specific bodies. According to the colonial locus of enunciation, "the *Humanitas* produces knowledge and enriches itself by possessing that knowledge. *Anthropos*, therefore, designates the position of the object that is absorbed into the domain of knowledge produced by *Humanitas*" (Nishitani, 2006:266). In other words, the two are defined by the subject/object relation. As further explanation regarding these terms, Nishitani writes:

The asymmetrical relation between *Humanitas* and the *Anthropos* is being continually reproduced: the former as the owner of knowledge, the latter as the owned object to be folded into the domain of knowledge.

(Nishitani cited in Tlostanva, 2017:25)

The objectification of the *Anthropos* confirms the 'otherness' which exonerates whatever is labelled as such from existence, "in other words *Anthropos* is an 'other' but who does not exist ontologically" (Tlostanva, 2017:26). For this reason, I posit that the post-colonial context depicted in Dangarembga's *This Mournable Body* (2018) seeks to convey the continual dehumanisation at the same time a societal structure based on *Humanitas* and *Anthropos* relations. Through what appears to be a colonial capitalist idea in turning Tambu's village into a holiday resort in the name of development, the *Humanitas/ Anthropos* relationship is accentuated. As attested by Nishitani, those perceived as producers of knowledge seek to benefit at the expense of the *Anthropos*. Maldonado-Torres describes such actions as 'misanthropic skepticism' (a term I will define in the following paragraphs), opining that, "Misanthropic skepticism provides the basis for the *preferential option for the ego conquireo*, which explains why security for some can conceivably be obtained at the expense of the lives of others" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:246).

In light of Dangarembga's novel, the relationship between the two concepts can be understood as the justification of dehumanising practices, such as violence, exploitation, intersectionality, corruption and betrayal fashioned in the name of development and capital accumulation. Based on that observation, I connect *Humanitas* with mournable bodies while the *Anthropos* can be viewed in light of unmournable bodies (the derealised). Tracey takes advantage of Tambu's desperate condition and compels her to turn her village into a holiday resort if she wants to keep her job. Such actions can be connected to Mignolo's view in which he expresses how *Humanitas/Anthropos* discriminating classification begets forms of dismemberment. Mignolo asserts that the discrimination: “[...] affects not only people but also regions or, better yet, the conjunction of natural resources needed by *Humanitas* in places inhabited by *Anthropos*” (2009:3). Though the tourism company appears to be rather interested in the cultural resources at Tambu's village, the manner in which this is conducted portrays some degree of exploitation. The dehumanising request to have the villagers dance with their bare torsos confirms 'coloniality' practices. The tension surrounding this discussion in Chapter Twenty One shows how Tracey's request is demeaning. Tracey cannot even utter some of the words in her request; she is hesitant, showing how the topic is uncomfortable. During this discussion she states, “like dancing authentically... minimal, like agh, loincloths, naked...torsos” (Dangarembga, 2018:258). Tambu also confirms the awkwardness of this request stating, “Naked male chests are normal in traditional dance. Tracey can only be talking about the women” (2018:259). In other words, by Tambu distinguishing what is normal from what is not, she affirms the derisiveness of Tracey's request. Pedzi also protests against this request, “M-m, Tracey, all of that kind of thing is too sensitive just now” (2018: 259). Tracey is aware that her request is not acceptable but she uses her superiority to enforce this request stating, “Please get this into your heads. There is no choice. We have to” (Dangarembga, 2018:259). According to Maldonado-Torres, 'coloniality' involves the sustaining of various forms of: 'domination and subordination' (2007:243). Maldonado-Torres's view can be used to interpret the relation between Tracey's engagements with her employees. Regarding the opening of the rural tourism division and the concepts of *Humanitas/Anthropos*, Tracey presents this option in a non-negotiable manner which can be viewed as confirming the *Humanitas* position; she states:

I've already discussed everything with the donors, and they like what I'm suggesting. [...] take on the brand we created up on the farm. This time in a village.

(Dangarembga, 2018:227)

The quote emphasises how those lives marked as *Anthropos* continuously subject themselves to hegemonic ideologies (also considered as knowledge) created by the *Humanitas*. Nishitani (2006:269) opines that, “The universality of that knowledge is guaranteed, however, only so long as *Anthropos* accepts it and transforms itself into *humanitas*”. Tambu's trajectory appears to reflect such colonial fundamentals. Her decision to deceive her mother and the village people is a manifestation of these ideologies. Tambu leads them to believe that the holiday resort idea is aimed at some development and employment creation, yet it is based on selfish motives of becoming better than Pedzi, her workmate and keeping her job. In selling this idea to her mother, Tambu asserts, “Yes, it is for everybody. It is being done properly, you assure

her. But it will be built here; you hurry on as her expression turns to doubt" (Dangarembga 2018:248).

While these concepts have been used to define the standards of universal domains, they, like most Western theories, inevitably attract decolonial questions. The questioning encapsulates the interrogation of what I perceive as the politics of epistemic enunciation. Challenging questions are as follows: what qualifies knowledge to be identified as knowledge? Based on whose ideas, qualifications, or references? For what purpose or reason is this knowledge being recognised as knowledge? In their construction, *Anthropos* and *Humanitas* concepts appear to perpetuate the derealisation and the devaluation of other forms of knowledge, framing them as primitive, non-existent and not mattering.

For this reason, the two concepts can be viewed in light of Maldonado-Torres's 'misanthropic skepticism', which he defines as, "a form of questioning the very humanity of the colonised" (2007:245). Therefore, the two concepts can be interpreted as propounding colonial inclinations, theories, and practices that require robust and yet creative ways to address them. With this knowledge, I argue that the discriminating relations have forged a context in which, like in my argument in Chapter Three, sees a polyphonic conflict amongst incompatible discourses of the African traditional, the colonial and the decolonial.

In my view, the polyphonic approach hints at the quest to eliminate a world view based on *Humanitas* and *Anthropos* identities and the adoption of one that recognises the human race. Tlostanova expresses this notion as follows:

Today the *Anthropos*, who have been reduced to their bodies and devoid of reason or spirituality, practice border epistemology, refusing to submit to *Humanitas* in their acts of epistemic and aesthetic disobedience [...] they stress the necessity of changing the idea of humanity itself, which is comprised of *Anthropos* as much as of *Humanitas*.

(Tlostanova, 2017:27)

In choosing to portray Tambu as the anti-heroine, *This Mournable Body* (2018) can be understood as affirming the view represented by the above quote. To an extent, the technique debases her initial Eurocentric approach, which has proved fruitless; Tambu attests, "How, with all your education, do you come to be needier than your mother?" (Dangarembga, 2018:37). The quote can be taken as pointing out how unfulfilling her initial Westernised dream is. The young, optimistic and resilient Tambu introduced in *Nervous Conditions* (1988), who goes to all strengths in fighting for her beliefs and education, gradually transforms throughout the trilogy. In *Nervous Conditions* (1988), she challenges her Father's decision to stop her from studying as she is a girl child; she states:

I will earn the fees, I assured him, laying out my plan for him as I had laid it out in my own mind. If you will give me some seed, I will clear my own field and grow my own maize. Not much. Just enough for the fees.

(Dangarembga, 1988:17)

The hero Tambu, who also appears to be the captain of a victorious ship in the first novel, abandons the ship in the final novel. She is replaced with a dubious and unreliable character uncertain of many things, including her own life. In Chapter Three of the novel, Tambu is unsure if she is still a virgin or not, “you nod, you believe you are still a virgin [...]” (Dangarembga, 2018:30). Furthermore, the older Tambu is uncertain of her political view, “you raise your shoulders and shake your head [...] I don't believe in politics, you say, hoping the answer is acceptable” (Dangarembga, 2018:185). The question paused therefore is, ‘what causes Tambu's conditions of uncertainty?’ In my view, Dangarembga attempts to resolve this by addressing post-colonial issues in the second person. She shifts from the first-person narration 'I' noted in *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006), to second-person narration 'You' in *This Mournable Body* (2018).

The shift can be interpreted as Tambu's denial to own her story, upon which ownership is arguably transferred to the reader, who now becomes a full participant in the story. Following this observation, Dangarembga's use of second person can be understood as a distancing technique that allows the narrator to have a more objective perspective. She can judge herself from a distance. The shift also illuminates Dubois and Fanon's double-consciousness, in which the colonised, “looks at one's self through the eyes of others” (Black, 2007:394), confirming 'cultural, emotional, and psychological consequences of coloniality' (Robinson, n.d:2). In a different scenario, the ownership could be with someone else apart from the reader, as discussed later in this chapter. The 'you' point of reception implicates the reader; every action, decision or experience is felt and received through the reader's eyes, who now is the focaliser. Importantly to note is the distinction and the shift from the notion of 'point of view' marking the first and third-person narration to 'point of reception', which marks the second-person narration. In terms of action, the reader becomes the receiver and doer of the actions narrated. Webb (2020), in her review, attests that 'the tactic allows Dangarembga to exploit the second person's accusatory form fully: the 'you' singles Tambu out, emphasising her egotism and isolation.

To add to Webb's (2020) review, I theorise that Dangarembga's idea to exploit the second person's accusatory form arguably invokes the reader's criticism of some decisions and actions taken by Tambu; and yet again invites the reader to understand her condition as 'you' the reader, is the perpetrator of her actions. Tambu does not want to be part of her failed hopes, and an opportunity curtailed context in which her pursuit for a Western education is conclusively rewarded with a series of misfortunes. She even contemplates suicide, 'you are concerned you will start thinking of ending it all, having nothing to carry on for: no home, no job, no sustaining family bonds' (Dangarembga, 2018:37). Her experiences are redirected and endured by the reader, which gradually channels the protagonist's loathing towards empathic feelings.

Prince (1980:84) defines second person narration as, “A narrative the NARRATEE of which is the PROTAGONIST in the story she/he is told”. A narratee or enunciatee is, “someone whom the narrator addresses” (Prince, 1980:7). In *This Mournable Body* (2018), the narratee is the protagonist Tambu, as learnt from her interactions with other characters. However, in fiction,

as affirmed by Phelan (1994), this position can be shifted to refer to the reader as well. In my view, it is through the latter that I assume Dangarembga seeks to create an interaction that connects with the reader. In doing so, the reader, arguably, identifies himself or herself with Tambu, the protagonist. Richardson defines second person narration as:

[...] any narration that designates its protagonist by a second-person pronoun. This protagonist will usually be the sole focaliser and is generally the work's narratee as well. In most cases, the story is narrated in the present tense, and some forms also include frequent usage of conditional and future tense.

(1991:311)

While the above definitions might appear to overlap each other, I would like to concur with Fludernik's (1994:286) observation in which he distinguishes the two. He claims that Prince's definition places the protagonist's narrateehood as the chief criterion of a second person narrative, whereas Richardson's one centralises the protagonist and views narrateehood as secondary. Arguably, Dangarembga appears to follow Richardson's definition as she does not go beyond the protagonist's involvement in the fabula. Instead, she focuses on the protagonist by applying the pronoun 'you' to engage the reader. However, this leads to the question, 'Why does Dangarembga shift from the 'I' to 'You'?'

The question's significance lies in how it resonates with the concept of mourning discussed in this chapter. To consolidate this view, I draw upon Delconte's analysis of the differences depicted by the two narrative techniques. Delconte argues:

Whereas first and third-person narrations (as well as Genette's categories of homo and heterodiegesis) are defined along the axis of narrator, second person narration is defined along the axis of the narratee.

(2003:204)

The shifting or the redefining of Dangarembga's narration along the axis of the narratee can be interpreted as defining the various levels to which she wishes the reader to engage with the novel. In the following paragraphs, I will highlight these levels and discuss how they also link with the re-membering of the dismembered. In support of my earlier assertion, I present Demjen's (2011) argument that second-person narration is, "[...] traditionally associated with various types of second-person narration: it can suggest emotional depth, emotional distancing, inner split and self-alienation" (Demjen, 2011:17). Following Demjen's observation, I argue that Dangarembga's use of second-person narration creates a reading context in which shared experiences eliminate literary conventions that demarcate the world of fiction and the reader's world. The breaking of these boundaries can also be perceived as symbolising a decolonial turn.

Therefore the 'you' or narratee's experience, which is the protagonist's experience, is endured first-hand from the receptive point of a participant reader in the story or fabula. Tambu's emotional instability is felt and endured by the reader, which leads to questioning some of her

actions. In pointing this out, I refer to the dehumanising practices symbolised through Tambu's brutal attack of Elizabeth, her student, she recalls:

You have seen how they do not want a qualification in biology, you say; in which case your pupils will receive a qualification in violence. Two or three young women pull at you. This has no effect. Instead, you escape yourself into an unbearable radiance.

(Dangarembga, 2018:94)

The shocking incident from which the above quote is taken also draws attention to the psychological condition of the 'you' perpetrator. In other words, the brutality performed by a teacher who is initially mandated to ensure the well-being of the students confirms a dislocation. Kennedy (2008) confirms that the brutalities experienced in post-colonial Zimbabwe are, "a potent reminder of how the unresolved legacies of colonial trauma haunt the global future" (2008:87). Dangarembga achieves this through the second person receptive position in which the narratee reader bears witness to the psychological trauma expressed in various forms, including the derealisation and dehumanisation of certain bodies. Linking this to the theme of mournability in the novel, I argue that the narrated student-teacher relationship shares the same structural analogy with the exploitative relationship between influential figures in the society and those framed as more precarious lives. Based on the observation, it can be concluded that the use of second-person narrative also serves to highlight thematic aspects of the fabula.

Cordeiro-Rodrigues (2020), in his article 'The Importance of mourning rituals to the dead', postulates that mourning portrays an act of, "honouring goodwill and identification with others". The reference to the aspect of identifying with others, in my view, proposes the motion of taking a step back and reflecting on deeds that enable this identification process. The process concurs with the *unhu* well-being philosophy, which proscribes acts of brutality perpetrated by the narratee participant towards certain bodies. Ademiluka also emphasises that mourning "indicates the desire to dignify the deceased" (2009:18). Therefore, learning from the second person experience, in which the protagonist self reflects, Dangarembga appears to be correcting the actions of the 'You' participant by calling out for the restoration of dignity and humanity to those lives enduring more precarious conditions. The restoration of humanity to these lives can be viewed as the restoration of their 'mattering' and mournability. Butler emphasises the notion of mournability by stating that, "for if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life and is not worth a note" (Butler, 2004:34).

While the above discussion introduces another function of the second person narrative, I argue that through the second person, the initial narrator 'I' (noted in the previous novels) is also provided with the opportunity to introspect. The process involves self-analysis and the examination of emotions and thoughts. Dangarembga achieves this through the protagonist's self-address. Fludernik (1994:289) writes, "second-person fiction is moreover, open on the scale between narration and interior monologue, where the text's address function can frequently be read as an instance of self-address". Again Margolin (1990:428) confirms that in second-person narration, "a speaker could thus speak to and of him or herself in second person, thereby

creating a situation of internal dialogue or self-communication". He further elaborates on how this technique can be, "indicative of inner split or self- alienation" (Margolin, 1990:428).

Extrapolating from the definitions and Margolin's elaboration, I theorise that the narrators' self-address can be interpreted as the protagonist's introspection hinting at the start of a decolonial turn. Through this technique, noticeable withdrawals from behavioural patterns that resemble 'coloniality' are witnessed. For example, in Chapter Two, she withdraws from casting the stone she holds in her hand at Gertrude, who is accused of being ill-dressed. In Chapter Seventeen, after an intrinsic soul searching, she visits Elizabeth's parents and apologises for her brutal actions against their daughter, "you nod, where is she? Can I ask you to forgive me" (Dangarembga, 2018:211). Whereas this move can be interpreted as the only option Tambu has in redeeming herself from the haunt she is experiencing, through continuous introspection, she is compelled to identify her follies and set things right.

Towards the end of the novel, Tambu resigns from the company that has attempted to invade her village. Through such retractions and noticing her wrongdoing, it can be concluded that the process of re-membering commences as she reconnects with practices of humanity. The narrator affirms, "at the cottage you tell Ma'Tabitha you are leaving. You write a letter of resignation. You deliver it in person" (Dangarembga, 2018:282). The second-person narration at this stage serves to remind Tambu of how much other lives matter and deserving of mourning. In the final Chapter Lucia reminds her:

She delivers several lectures [...] when she gives you a ride home in her car, concerning the *unhu*, the quality of being human, expected of a Zimbabwean woman and a Sigauke who has many relatives who either served or fell in the war.

(Dangarembga, 2018:271)

However, debates surrounding the effectiveness of the approach have been raised in previous studies. Culler attests, "[o]ur major device of order is, of course, the notion of the person or speaking subject, and the process of reading is especially troubled when we cannot construct a subject who would serve as the source of the ... utterance" (Culler cited in Schofield, 1997:107). Expanding on this assertion, I argue that the question, 'who is the narrator?' is inevitable when reading a text written in the second person narrative. The elusiveness of the narrator can arguably lead the text to be viewed as unnecessarily complex by the reader. The narrator's question is the same question posed regarding the second-person perspective applied in *This Mournable Body* (2018). The enquiry can be phrased on the following basis, 'Is it the author who is narrating or is it self-addressing by the initial protagonist?' as discussed in the following paragraphs. Linking this to the discussion on narrative techniques highlighted in Chapter Two of this dissertation, I assert that Dangarembga's use of the distancing technique through her focalisers helps track the development of her protagonist. In *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Dangarembga uses this technique when the mature Tambu reflects on her more innocent and unaware younger self.

Phelan (1994:351) argues that, “writers who employ this technique take advantage of the opportunity to move readers between the positions of the observer and addressee and, indeed, to blur the boundaries between these positions”. Continuing from this point, I argue that, in second-person narration, the reader is not sure of his or her position in the text. In some cases, it feels like the narrator is not addressing the same person. The result is confusion, causing the reader to miss out on crucial issues discussed in the novel. Later in the chapter, I will discuss how the narrator, through the second person, appears to be addressing another 'you', which automatically places the initial addressee in the observer position.

Another crucial argument raised by Delconte (2003) is the ability of the reader to relate with the second person 'you' narratee. In cases where the characteristics of the 'you' narratee fail to resonate with the narratee reader's, a sudden dislocation is created between the text and the reader. Delconte affirms:

Depending on how much the narratee is characterised and on how closely a flesh-and-blood reader shares characteristics with the narratee, that reader might or might not be pulled into the narratee position and feel addressed.

(2003:214)

Based on this view, I postulate that Delconte's view appears to dictate certain conventions that rob the author of his or her creative art. The creativity of the author cannot be limited to suit the reader's preference; therefore Delconte's view negates the creative divereness that marks every literary work. However, learning from this discussion, it can be concluded that the disadvantages of the technique are outweighed by the benefits gained through reading the text from the second person angle.

As hinted in the previous paragraphs, Dangarembga's use of the second person pronoun almost feels like the 'you' being addressed is the failed post-colonial system (the government) that has exacerbated the precarity of certain bodies. The tone, as stated earlier, is accusatory; it remorselessly interrogates corruption and the derealisation of bodies perpetrated by the 'you'. The approach can be viewed in light of Phelan's (1994:355) assertion in which he states, “narrataire .... is someone perceived by the reader as out there, a separate person who often serves as a mediator between narrator and reader”. The use of haunting images like the hyena that torments Tambu throughout the novel can be interpreted as representing the troubled bodies displeased with the decadent post-colonial system.

The image of the hyena can be perceived as a reminder to the 'You' narratee, the failing government, of its iniquitous approach, “the hyena laughs as you enter the gate. It has sunk once more as close to you as your skin, ready to drag away the last scraps of certainty you have” (Dangarembga, 2018:204). The iniquitous approach is also noted through the dehumanising quest for women to dance with bare torsos discussed earlier in the chapter. The request for nudity can be perceived as the humiliation of bodies. Tambu carries out this request of dehumanising her own. Her actions symbolise 'coloniality' practices that perpetuates colonial forms of oppression. In some cases, Dangarembga uses images of worms to indicate the filth,



neglect, and decay of 'coloniality'. Through second-person narration, these issues are addressed robustly to expose the particularities of 'coloniality' that continue to derealise certain bodies, "Shiny black worms wriggle in the water. The edges of the draining board look soft and rotten" (Dangarembga, 2018:125).

A possible solution is hinted at by the image of ants that also torments the protagonist in the story. Clifford (2021) aptly states, 'Populations throughout Africa value ants for their incredible characteristics [...] Apart from diligence and hard work; the tiny ant also symbolises wisdom'. Learning from this assertion, I posit that the image of ants serves as a reminder of the tremendous effort and hard work that still needs to be done in building a nation where all bodies are viewed and treated equally. It involves the acquiring of wisdom to materialise the possibility of re-membering the dismembered. In Chapter Eight, Tambu attests, "the ants file with you, past you, and into you as you open your door. You panic at this symptom that persists into relative sobriety" (Dangarembga, 2018:83). The tiny creatures make Tambu very uncomfortable, which in my view serves to indicate the urgent need for restorative engagements.

The failing neoliberal system and a call for restoration are portrayed through Mai's extreme reaction in the final chapter; she tries to destroy Bachmann's camera. The camera ends up in a tree, preventing it from being destroyed, perhaps suggesting the endurance or indestructibility of the colonial gaze. Herr Bachmann, a tourist, requests to photograph Mai's bare torsos with Tambu standing next to her. She reacts aggressively:

I am your picture, me! Your mother shrieks, rolling the camera cord over astonished Herr Bachmann's head. Me, that's what you think I am. Not a someone, but that I am whatever you want to put in your picture.

(Dangarembga, 2018:279)

Her reaction can be viewed as a rejection of the colonial ideologies that dismember and question the humanity of certain bodies. Mai, whom I have identified as representing the traditional African voice in my previous chapter, rages against such objectification, refusing to be 'thingified' for the sake of entertaining *humanitas*. Though not portrayed as harmful, Bachmann's intentions confirm how certain bodies are taken for granted and not mattering. Such dehumanising experiences turn back to the 'You' narratee who has orchestrated the events. Actions performed by the 'you', who, as noted earlier, represent a failed post-colonial system, arguably evokes pity towards bodies subjected to more precarious conditions.

In conclusion, I refer back to Ngugi's idea of an African renaissance, stating, "*Renaissance* describes a moment when the quantity and quality of intellectual and artistic output are perceived as signalling a monumental historical shift in the life of a people, nation, or region" (Ngugi, 2009:70). The assertion can be used to summarise Dangarembga's novel, but with a slight twist. Rather than limiting the shift to a specific race, ethnicity, political interests or religious views, the *Renaissance* should be decolonially inclusive in viewing all humans as beings and bodies that matter. On that note, it can be argued that the novel acts as the synthesis of

the trilogy, tying together the various debates and concerns noted in each novel while hinting at a possible solution. Tambu's belief in Western education empowerment, which is the thesis in the first novel, is contradicted by the antithesis in which her race subjugates her to a series of failures despite her dismembering strategies and hard work. However, *This Mournable Body* portrays the possibility of Tambu's reconnection with her humanity and a further understanding of *unhu*. Therefore, it attempts a synthesis of Tambu's experiences and issues raised throughout her trajectory. Through the *unhu* concept, Butler's questions regarding lives that matter, is answered. Dangaremba appears to suggest that all lives matter and all bodies deserve to be mourned. Furthermore, the novel exposes the processes and conditions that have expedited the derealisation of certain bodies. It unmasks the guises of 'coloniality' that exist in Zimbabwe's post-colonial administration. I have identified these guises as neoliberalism, corruption, misogyny, and discriminating Eurocentric philosophies in the discussion. Using the second-person narration, Dangaremba draws the reader into the 'monumental shift' in which all 'bodies' go through introspection as a way of reconnecting. In some instances, it feels like issues are addressed directly to the source of the problem, which I have identified as 'coloniality'. Through exposing such conditions, it can be attested that those lives regarded as the 'derealised' or more precarious are reconnected with their humanity, qualifying them as mournable bodies.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

In offering a critique of 'coloniality', Dangarembga uses literary devices, narrative techniques and literary theories to confront colonial legacies prevalent in Zimbabwe's post-independence administration. The decolonial approach taken by this study encapsulated Ngugi's concepts of dismembering and re-membering. Through Ngugi's concepts, I have established that the new administration still perpetuates colonial ideologies under what this dissertation has labelled 'coloniality'. This has sustained the dismemberment of the once colonised from their humanity even after the demise of the actual colonial administration. On the other hand, re-membering is an ongoing decolonial process that begins with realising that forms of colonialism still haunt the geopolitically postcolonised Zimbabweans and Africans in general. These forms exist through various guises of 'coloniality'. In that sense, I have argued that dismemberment is linked to 'coloniality' while re-membering is linked to 'decoloniality'.

Through her use of language, Dangarembga skilfully takes the reader through a detailed tour of the colonised's state of 'coloniality', and here I am careful in distinguishing between the geopolitically colonised and those geopolitically post-colonised but still colonised through 'coloniality'. The first and second-person narration in *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *This Mournable Body* (2018) provides close interaction with fictional characters. Again, second-person narration offers an objective view of the various entrapments the colonised or the once colonised are still subjugated to under 'coloniality'. It is through these entrapments that the various forms of dismemberment are portrayed. Tambu's vision, which I have also labelled as the thesis of the trilogy, can be summarised in the phrase 'I will succeed through a Western education'. The first-person, 'I', confirms ownership of this vision which later entraps her in nervous conditions. The use of hyperboles elaborates the falsehood of Tambu's vision depicted by the 'I' narrator. It is evident that despite her age in the first novel, the modern lifestyle portrayed by her uncle and aunty thrills her to the point of exaggerating her uncle's status to that of God in Chapter Four of *Nervous Conditions*. Following this and through Ngugi's dismemberment, I demonstrate that 'coloniality' is what Mignolo (2011) calls the darker side of modernity. The growth and consolidation of modernity and its dismembering effects in Dangarembga's novels is expedited through neo-colonialism, a system that has ensured the continuous subjugation and dependency of the more precarious. However, in my argument, I have also hinted at how modernity is inevitable and how it can be merged with 'decoloniality' going forward.

Though modernity has brought significant developments, Dangarembga shows how it [modernity] has affected the more precarious lives. The transformation of Nhamo and later on Tambu after their exposure to Babamukuru's modern lifestyle at the mission results in what Fanon (2008) defines as the 'epidermalisation of Eurocentrism'. During a dialogue between Tambu and her brother Nhamo in Chapter Three of *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Nhamo vows that he will no longer be his father's son owing to his newly acquired modern status. After Nhamo's death, Tambu voluntarily surrenders herself to 'coloniality' in order for her to reap the

gains of modernity. In Chapter Five of *The Book of Not* (2006), she refuses to visit her rural home, stating that it was no longer appealing, in other words, not good enough for her. Dangarembga manages to portray these forms of dismemberment through the dialogical engagement of her characters. Halvatzis (2016) confirms that one of the functions performed by dialogues is to provide information and expose the character's thoughts. This study has proven that modernity is part of 'coloniality' and has led to various forms of dismemberment. Modernity has led to self-hate and discrimination, as hinted at by Nhamo's assertion. Baloyi (2020:7) attests that, "self-hatred amongst black people is a very serious issue, which manifests itself in many forms, including we as black people abandoning our culture, becoming tribalist and xenophobic, amongst others".

Through a decolonial analysis of Dangarembga's novels in conjunction with the discussed colonial concepts, the inevitable question became, 'Is demodernising the way forward to achieving full 'decoloniality' or re-membering the dismembered?'. As a response to the question, this study discovered that it is an undeniable fact that modernity has also brought significant and life-changing developments. Therefore, the decolonial approach taken by this study sought to merge rather than to naively demodernise in the name of 'decoloniality'. By that I mean, removing the interference of any hegemonic elements or discriminatory tendencies attached to the concept of modernity. Consequently, for Africa to achieve a decolonised state of modernity, if I should say, Africa has to modernise on its terms. This study has also proven that this form of integration nullifies former colonial conditions, hence drawing closer to the possibility of a fresh start that recognises all humans as beings. The notion of inclusion suggested by the possibility of new beginnings is emphasised through decolonial pluriversality. Mignolo, cited in Reiter (2018:x), states that pluriversality "[...] is the viewing of the world as an interconnected diversity instead, setting us free to inhabit the pluriverse rather than the universe".

As a further elaboration of pluriversality, I invoked Bakhtin's dialogism, monologism and polyphony. Bakhtin's concepts conveyed a detailed view of how 'coloniality' renders monologic ideologies through its hegemonic and exclusive views. However, the main question that emerged was, 'Is Dangarembga, a polyphonic writer?' In answering this question, I argued that through character presentation, Dangarembga presents a dialogical conflict between three incompatible voices, traditional, colonial and decolonial. Characters like Mai represent the traditional, Tambu the colonised protagonist, representing the colonial, while Nyasha and those who question the system represent the decolonial. These characters are presented as independent discourses that carry views independent enough to challenge the author's view. In his article, Kakabadze (2010) states, "In literature, polyphony is a feature of narrative, which includes a diversity of points of view and voices". Through the inclusion of diverse points of view, which delinks from a single and monologic view of understanding the world, I linked Bakhtin's polyphony with decolonial pluriversality. Dangarembga creates a polyphonic text in which three unmerged discourses engage dialogically; Mai reacts to the adverse effects of a system she does not really know, Nyasha is aware of the effects, and she begins to decolonise, while Tambu aspires to be part of the system.

In *The Book of Not* (2006), Tambu's initial thesis, is contradicted as she learns of her Blackness in a colonial system. She faces a series of failures and nervous conditions, projecting *The Book of Not* (2006) as the antithesis of the trilogy. The presentation of these characters as incompatible discourses illuminates how decolonial pluriversality, "entangles several cosmologies connected in a power differential" (Mignolo cited in Reiter, 2018: x). Importantly, in the pluriversal world, the dominant cosmology, for example, Western cosmology is stripped of its hegemonic status and is allowed to be part of the diverse world of meaning. The inclusiveness of the decolonial approach resolved the language question raised in the study. Using Ngugi's argument on abandoning the coloniser's language and Achebe's justification of its usage as a weapon to decolonise, I asserted that language should not be a barrier to decolonial work. In chapter two of this dissertation I gave an example of how my writing of this very dissertation confirms the interlectual superiority given to English in learning environments. However, most importantly to note is how unlike Ngugi who has chosen to abandon totally the coloniser's language and write in Kikuyu, I use the coloniser's language as a decolonising tool, to address the unwanted 'coloniality' practices. Following this observation I assert that, the 'decoloniality' of languages should not exclude but rather include everyone. Decoloniality involves the dismantling of any notion that places one language as superior to the other. Languages should coexist, and where it is necessary, should borrow from each other through interlanguage. Achebe and Dangarembga successfully practise interlanguage through borrowing idioms, expressions, proverbs and folktales from their indigenous languages, merging them with the coloniser's language. For example, in most African cultures, the haunting image of the hyena portrayed in *This Mournable Body* (2018) plays a significant cultural role in presenting a troubled state of affairs. Dangarembga borrows such images from the Shona language and combines them with the coloniser's language to create a unique style that fully expresses an African experience. In Chapter Five of *This Mournable Body* (2018), Tambu recites a Shona proverb using the English language. The proverb best describes her selfish actions, though Dangarembga's actual intention is to discourage selfish acts. The role of interlanguage becomes that of decolonising the discriminatory hierarchisation of languages. The study has proven that the dismantling of colonial hierarchies marks the beginning of a re-membering process that views all cultures as equally important in as much as all human beings should be treated by the same token despite their race, language, culture, or political affiliations. Doing so projects all sentient lives as mattering in a pluriversal world.

Making use of Teju Cole's (2015) 'Unmournable Bodies' and Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* (1993), I argued that Dangarembga re-members the dismembered through exposing the frames or conditions that have robbed such lives of their mournability. By that, Dangarembga qualifies them as mournable bodies. Therefore, unmournable bodies are the dismembered, the more precarious, those with lives perceived as not mattering under dominant and discriminatory forces of 'coloniality'. To further elaborate on this view, I identified the various frames that perpetuate the dismemberment of Dangarembga's characters. Amongst them are state corruption, neoliberalism, capitalism, neo-colonialism and misogyny, to name a few. These ideological frames have continuously worked in favour of those that drive them forward at the expense of the more precarious lives. I also referred to the system's beneficiaries as the grievable, while the derealised or the dehumanised are the un-grievable.

Through analysing Dangarembga's use of the second-person narrative, the study revealed how all lives matter and deserve to be mourned. Her use of the second person implicates the reader and becomes a way for the protagonist to reflect upon the dehumanising conditions of more precarious lives objectively. As a decolonial move, mournability becomes a condition through which the discriminatory boundaries between the *Humanitas* and the *Anthropos* are broken. The result of dismantling these barriers is a reconnection of all human beings with their humanity. In other words, it reaffirms the beginning of a re-membering process.

In analysing the characters in Dangarembga's novels, the decolonial approach seemed insufficient with men projected as detrimental to the lives of women characters. The overemphasising of women's experiences directs her work towards a feministic approach which contradicts the inclusive and pluriversal approach denoted by the decolonial reading. In Dangarembga's trilogy, men characters evolve from being dominant patriarchal figures to figures of war against women, thus limiting 'decoloniality' to a specific group of people. In dealing with this limitation, the study took an objective and yet inclusive approach in which the emphasis on women was viewed as representing every life that is perceived as more precarious. By that, I mean both men and women. Through analysing Dangarembga's use of literary devices and techniques discussed in Chapter Two of this study, I argued that the oppressive male-to-female patriarchal relationship presented in Dangarembga's texts is symbolic of the injustices imposed on the lives of the colonised or more precarious lives. Moreover, using Bakhtin's concepts in Chapter Three of this study, I asserted that the experience of women, as marked by the estranged relationship between Tambu and her mother, can be used to interpret the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. At this stage, the analysis of literary techniques helped to identify the limitations of a decolonial approach while filling the lacunae.

While this is so, 'decoloniality' can be accused of being limited as it generalises the injustices of the more precarious by confining their injustices to a global theory of domination other than viewing these as complex and unique injustices, thereby showing insufficient attention to intersectionality. In other words, more often than not, 'decoloniality' tends to blame 'coloniality' for all injustices experienced by more precarious lives. In analysing Dangarembga's novels, this research has proven that while 'coloniality' is blamed for most of the injustices endured by the lives in Zimbabwe, a detailed investigation of these injustices unveiled that factors like corruption and agrarian societal traditions such as patriarchy, have also perpetuated the precarity of more precarious lives. For example, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) shows how the patriarchal set-up favours a boy child over a girl child; the case of Tambu and her brother Nhamo is an affirmation of such traditions.

Following these observations, 'decoloniality' bears the danger of excluding a detailed approach to such forms of injustices. Through such exclusions, 'decoloniality' suffers what Pappas (n.d: 11) refers to as, "the risk of oversimplification, blindness, reductionism, dogmatism, and corruption". In other words, by generalising the injustices as falling under 'coloniality', the particularities of these injustices are simplified, overlooked and silenced. Therefore, under such assumptions or blindness, 'decoloniality' tends to naively speak for the oppressed through its

generalised approach. Speaking for the oppressed is to silence the oppressed, which can be viewed as further oppression. Therefore 'decoloniality' suffers the danger of perpetuating the oppression of the colonised, making it less different from 'coloniality'. Following this observation, the study has established that 'decoloniality' differs from context to context as the particularities of the injustices are not the same in every context. For example, while 'decoloniality' in Zimbabwe might deal with issues like increased poverty and, to an extent, systemic corruption, this might not be the case in the Americas or Latin America. In *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *This Mournable Body* (2018), Dangarembga demonstrates how poverty and corruption also affect the lives of most Zimbabweans, resulting in their dismemberment. To understand these injustices as diverse and context-based, hints at a pluriversal approach.

The other challenge with 'decoloniality' is its historical and political connections with the founding terms, decolonialism and colonialism. Based on this thought, a decolonial approach tends to ignore the literary aspect of literary works, focusing exclusively instead on the political aspect. Reading Dangarembga's novels, I noted how a decolonial approach is prone to the danger of politicising the narrated experiences and underplaying the particularities of literary style and technique. Such limitations lead to academic laziness, as the pluriversal particularities of these injustices are lumped and not investigated in detail. In other words, I cautiously argued that, when confronting 'coloniality' and its legacies and afterlives, 'decoloniality' should pose dissecting questions that deal with the actual exploitations, manipulations or injustices endured by more precarious lives or the once colonised. Such questions provide a concrete diagnosis that marks the beginning of a decolonial process. The limitations of 'decoloniality' noted in the study can be eliminated if 'decoloniality' is taken as a thought rather than a theory. Theorising 'decoloniality' confines it to stagnant pedagogies of application, in which a generalised diagnosis of experiences is conducted, rather than a practical thought or turn towards human liberation. Mpfu (2017) states, "Decoloniality is in the political business of doing unheard-of things and instrumentalising every opportunity for liberation". This means, 'decoloniality' as a revolutionary political approach, should not be categorised as a single theory used to explain a phenomenon, but rather a group of theories or, like asserted by Pappas (n.d:4), "a project of liberation".

Considering these findings, 'decoloniality' should, therefore, be viewed as a re-membering key to restoring humanity to every human being. To consolidate this view, I linked re-membering with *unhu/ ubuntu*, upon which I argued that, Dangarembga's use of the *unhu* African philosophy hints at how all lives are precarious. Therefore as all lives are interdependent, *unhu* attests that 'I am because we are', meaning that like 'decoloniality', *unhu* provides the common ground upon which various races, cultures or discourses can coexist. In Chapter Four of this dissertation, I argued that *This Mournable Body* (2018) marks the beginning of a re-membering process with Dangarembga exposing all injustices and attempting to restore all humanity through mournability. In doing so, she initiates a coalition or a synthesis of the differences for the better of all humanity. The study has demonstrated that 'decoloniality' is an ongoing project as most people still experience various forms of 'coloniality' in various contexts.

Conscious of the limitations and dangers of 'decoloniality', future studies can further investigate the particularities of injustices that continuously emerge in different forms and hide under the hegemonic global theory of 'coloniality'. They should be exposed, singled out and dealt with as such. Moreover, while I argued that all human lives are precarious, it is worth mentioning that every human being experiences 'coloniality' differently from the other, which is why a pluriversal approach should be conducted when confronting these various forms.

The research contributes towards the field of literature by proving how literary works play a significant role in engaging with the emerging paradigm of 'decoloniality'. The guidance of Ngugi's concepts of re-membering and dismembering has affirmed how authors like Dangarembga use literary devices, narrative techniques, and literary theories to confront the various forms of 'coloniality'. Through analysing Dangarembga's works, the study has managed to push the boundaries of 'decoloniality' from dealing with 'coloniality' from a generalised Eurocentric standpoint towards a more detailed approach. In saying this, the dissertation has continued from previous colonial debates associated with Dangarembga's texts by exposing the particularities of the actual injustices hiding under the umbrella term of 'coloniality'. This has provided further understanding of the concrete issues leading to the dismemberment of the more precarious lives in the novel.

Moreover, this approach provides a starting point upon which future studies are better informed regarding the strengths and weaknesses of a decolonial approach when reading literary texts. Furthermore, suggesting possible solutions in dealing with such limitations. By that, I mean understanding 'decoloniality' as a way of life and not a theory. A shift from these dangers expedites the recognition of 'decoloniality' as a lifestyle that takes moments to question any order that trivialises the being of all humanity. The emphasis on all humanity consolidates the pluriversality of a decolonial approach that seeks to re-member the dismembered.



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