

Charles Dossou LIGAN
Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU
Flavien GBETO
(Editeurs)

LA REPRESENTATION SOCIALE DU LANGAGE DE LA FEMME



Les Éditions LABODYLCAL

**LA REPRESENTATION
SOCIALE DU LANGAGE
DE LA FEMME**

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Laboratoire de Dynamique des Langues et Culture à Calavi

BP : 1049 Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)

Tél.: +229 95869956

Courriel : flavien.gbeto@gmail.com

Contacts des Editeurs

Charles Dossou LIGAN

Tél. + 229 97 87 01 44 ; courriel : dr.ligancharles@gmail.com

Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU

Tél. + 229 97 32 27 46 ; courriel : houedenoul@gmail.com

Flavien GBETO

Tél.: +229 95869956 ; Courriel : flavien.gbeto@gmail.com

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Pascal TCHOKOTI

+229 97 72 21 70

**Charles Dossou LIGAN
Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU
Flavien GBETO**

Editeurs

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Editeurs

Dr (M.A) Charles Dossou LIGAN

Dr (M.C) Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU

Prof. Flavien GBETO

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Secrétariat de rédaction

Charles Dossou LIGAN
Tél. + (229) 97870144 ; courriel : dr.ligancharles@gmail.com
Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU
Tél. + (229) 97322746 ; courriel : houedenoul@gmail.com
Pr Koffi Julien GBAGUIDI
Tél. + (229) 96669852 ; courriel : gbaguidikoffijulien@gmail.com

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Courriel : flavien.gbeto@gmail.com

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Dédicace

A toutes les Femmes d'Afrique, quelles que soient leurs conditions sociales ou économiques. Les chercheurs que nous sommes n'avons d'autres moyens que d'éclairer les opinions et d'influencer les décisions à travers nos productions en vue de la prise en compte de vos préoccupations pour l'avènement d'un monde meilleur pour nous tous. Mais, sachez-le : sans vous, il n'y a pas de vie.

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PRÉFACE

Dans la perspective de la promotion de la « Femme », le présent ouvrage paraît au moment où les Objectifs du Développement Durable (ODD) prônent l'autonomisation et le renforcement du leadership des femmes. La thématique « Femme » a fait l'objet de plusieurs préoccupations et réflexions sous l'inspiration de divers acteurs institutionnels, de chercheurs de divers domaines des sciences humaines et sociales. Des conférences importantes et de nombreux travaux ont contribué à l'avancée des connaissances sur l'image, le rôle, la place, le statut et le leadership de la femme dans le monde. La prise en compte des différences individuelles et des spécificités, la considération mutuelle et le leadership en matière de conduite des affaires publiques deviennent des fondements d'une société plus juste, transparente, dynamique, responsable et ouverte. La représentation sociale du langage de la femme se veut un ouvrage collectif qui a réuni une trentaine de chercheurs de huit nationalités africaines qui ont travaillé dans des perspectives théoriques et des approches méthodologiques variées. En se fondant sur des exemples de la vie courante, les perceptions et les opinions, les contributions montrent que la représentation sociale de la femme et le langage y afférent ne se résument pas à une question d'égalité du genre mais résulte de l'adoption de comportements intelligents, compréhensifs pour une vie - socioéconomique, socioculturelle, politique, professionnelle, morale, éthique, spirituelle et entrepreneuriale - réussie.

Dans les contributions contenues dans cet ouvrage, les auteurs lient la force de la lucidité critique au courage des propositions pragmatiques pour des expérimentations utiles en vue de (re)construire la représentation sociale de la femme. Les contributions révèlent avec précision, les facettes de la femme dans le contexte convoqué.

Loin d'être une fin en soi, cet ouvrage est une contribution aux débats scientifiques sur l'essence de la femme. Les réflexions proposées aiguisent le plaisir de lire, chatouillent la mémoire et façonnent les représentations. Cela est de l'ordre normal des choses en ce sens que la science, toute vérité objective et élaborée qu'elle est, est toujours sujette à réflexion, remise en cause et à la critique. C'est justement ce qui fonde son originalité et sa capacité à toujours nourrir de nouvelles recherches.

J'invite les lecteurs à la découverte de cette originalité et à s'en inspirer pour relancer les débats scientifiques. C'est le seul mal que je puisse leur souhaiter !

Professeur **Maxime da CRUZ**
Recteur de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi

FAILED RE-THINKING WORK: A FEMINIST READING OF TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S TRILOGY

Koffi Noël BRINDOU

Université Alassane Ouattara- Côte d'Ivoire
brindouchristmas@yahoo.fr

Abstract: Tsitsi Dangarembga is a Zimbabwean writer who portrays in her trilogy, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions* (2006) and *This Mournable Body* (2018), the protagonist Tambu who struggles to be educated in Western school and to get capitalist work. Tambu's Shona culture being patriarchal, she struggles to break through gender-specific expectations which assure her development inside the house in order to be developed outside the house. Mostly placed by post-colonial critics as a feminist whose writings challenge hierarchy; Dangarembga, however, can be said to fail to bring to the fore Shona traditional work to be at an equal foot with capitalist work in order to challenge post-colonial hierarchy when reference is made to her protagonist Tambu's consideration of only Western work-as-work. Standing on deconstructive feminism, specifically, Bell Hooks's deconstructive perspective of capitalists' notion of work, this article argues that Tsitsi Dangarembga fails to re-think the nature of work and culture to challenge Western hierarchy. The study goes on to demonstrate that Tsitsi Dangarembga's literary production is nothing but the promotion of Western capitalist work to the detriment of the traditional notion of work.

Keywords: Housework, tradition, feminist, re-thinking, capitalist.

Résumé : Dans sa trilogie, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions* (2006) et *This Mournable Body* (2018), l'écrivaine Zimbabweenne Tsitsi Dangarembga prend Tambu pour une protagoniste qui lutte pour son éducation à l'école occidentale et pour son emploi dans la société capitaliste. La culture Shona étant patriarcale, Tambu lutte pour briser la division des rôles basée sur le genre qui assure

son évolution dans la maison pour embrasser la culture occidentale. Considérée généralement par les critiques ou penseurs post-coloniaux comme une féministe dont les écrits défient la hiérarchie, Dangarembga, cependant, peut être vue comme une féministe qui échoue de réévaluer ou du moins transvaluer les travaux et pratiques traditionnels au même titre que l'emploi capitaliste pour défier la hiérarchie quand on fait référence au monde capitaliste dont rêve Tambu. Par une approche féministe de déconstruction à l'endroit de Bell Hooks, particulièrement sa politique de déconstruction de la notion de travail comme défini par le monde capitaliste, cet article défend que Tsitsi Dangaremba échoue de transvaluer les travaux et pratiques traditionnels pour défier la hiérarchie occidentale. L'étude poursuit pour démontrer que la trilogie de Tsitsi Dangarembga n'est rien que la promotion du monde capitaliste au détriment du travail traditionnel dans la communauté Shona.

Mots clefs: Travaux de ménage, tradition, féministe, transvaluer, capitaliste.

Introduction

In “Re-Thinking the Nature of Work,” when redefining capitalists’ notion of work as embraced by the early feminists, Bell Hooks criticizes: “Early feminist perpetuation of the notion ‘work liberates women’ alienated ... women [to] economic structures of capitalism” (Hooks, 1984, p. 96). Being in such a sharp contrast with capitalist definition of the nature of work, Bell Hooks proposes: “The challenging idea [is] that *any* work would liberate women” (Hooks, 1984, p. 98). It is this Bell Hooks’s stance of deconstructing capitalists’ notion of the nature of work that when used to reflect on Tsitsi Dangarembga’s portrayal of Tambu, the novelist can be said to perfectly fail to re-think the nature of work. As such, Bell Hooks’s insight into the notion of traditional work-as-work that brings liberation to women which contradicts Western notion of capitalist work as the only work that liberates women is the deconstructive feminist discourse that constitutes the theoretical framework of this present study.

Published in 1988, 2006 and 2018, respectively, *Nervous Conditions*, *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions* and

This Mournable Body constitute a trilogy written by the prolific writer Tsitsi Dangarembga. In the novels of the Zimbabwean feminist writer, the story takes place in Zimbabwe specifically in Shona traditional community named homestead and in different Westernized places such as the mission and Harare. Throughout the three novels that constitute the trilogy, the protagonist Tambu struggles for her school education and capitalist work. In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu alienates herself from the homestead activities in preference to school education. Refusing Shona patriarchal norms for which women are made for kitchen and to be developed inside the house, Tambu struggles for her school education in the homestead and pursue such an education in the mission. Being to her uncle Babamukuru and his wife Maiguru for her school education, Tambu refuses to go to the homestead for domestic and traditional activities during holidays. She further in the novel refuses to attend her mother's Catholic wedding organized by her uncle Babamukuru for reason that the marriage illegitimizes her birth. In *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions*, Tambu furthers her education in school for Europeans named Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart and begins her career of working. She becomes a teacher, then a copywriter who never sets her feet in the homestead. But Tambu ends in resigning as copywriter for willing to get married. In *This Mournable Body*, Tambu excels in capitalist domain. From teacher, she becomes a project manager, then tour supervisor of the white Tracey's NGO named Green Jacaranda Safaris. Despite this pursuit of capitalist work, Tambu does not find any liberation in Western capitalist world. She resigns the white Tracey's NGO to Join an NGO created by her Shona aunt Lucia where she becomes assistant general manager. Through Tambu's story in the trilogy, this present study aims at showing that it is because Tsitsi Dangarembga fails to portray Tambu to take the homestead activities to assert her identity before embracing Western world that this protagonist does not succeed in embracing the capitalist work with enthusiasm and ends into loss. The study sustains that Tambu's traditional activity is the work through which she must assert her cultural identity. It is only at

this cost that she can grow into self-assertion, self-reliance and self-confidence to embrace the capitalist work without any cultural loss.

Taken in the post-colonial context, Leonard A. Podis and Yakubu Saaka do not read Tambu in the above position held by this present study. The two critics view Tambu as Shona girl who is painfully challenging Shona traditional and Western cultural hierarchies. They see Tambu's school education as her breaking Shona tradition for which only men are worth being educated. They, by the same token, view Tambu's refusal to attend her mother Catholic wedding organized by Babamukuru and her resignation from advertising agency for marriage as her refusal of admitting the hegemony of Western culture. Robert J. C. Young, Charles Sugnet, Rosanne Kennedy also fail to read Dangarembga's portrayal of Tambu as her failure to re-think the notion of work. They stand on post-colonial criticism to read Tambu's school education as the condition of her psychic traumatic split: bearing two worlds that conflict each other in one soul as Molefi Kete Asante puts it when refuting W.E.B. Du Bois's stance of double souls in one body. By the same token, being a postcolonial critic, Michelle Lynn Brown takes Tambu's education as trope for traumatic testimony.

The post-colonial critics' views as aforementioned make believe that Dangarembga portrays the trauma of cultural hegemony to bring rectification to both male supremacy in the tradition and Western cultural superiority. If it can be accepted that with Tambu's school education, she challenges male domination in the tradition, transgresses gender-specific expectation or labour division; it is problematic to assert that she challenges Western cultural superiority when consideration is given to her dwelling in Western cultural world. Put in central question, can Tambu be said to bring to the fore Shona traditional culture which is in a dying position to combat the hegemony of Western culture when knowing that she struggles to achieve Western education and capitalist work to the detriment of traditional work-as-work? Put in specific questions, how does Tsitsi Dangarembga's portrayal of her protagonist Tambu to negate the housework bring the novelist to fail to challenge capitalist work?

How does Tambu's emancipation in Western work as her healing from traditional womanhood stand for Tsitsi Dangarembga's failure to re-think Shona traditional culture? It is to resolve these questions that I take my cue from Bell Hooks's discourse of deconstructing the nature of work as conceived by capitalist thinkers. Through the feminist Bell Hooks's deconstructive discourse of capitalist notion of work, I demonstrate that blinded by their post-colonial view, Tsitsi Dangarembga's critics failed to see that Tambu's education and capitalist work are the novelist's failure to re-think the nature of work as defined by capitalist society. I analyse the story of Tambu as trope for Dangarembga's failure to bring work in the traditional realm and capitalist work at an equal foot. The analysis shows that by painting Tambu to be alienated to Western culture, Dangarembga prioritizes Western notion of work to the detriment of traditional notion of work. If only Tsitsi Dangarembga had made Tambu take the homestead activities to assert her identity, Tambu would have embraced the capitalist work with enthusiasm and not to end into loss. All these failures of the novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga to re-think the nature of work in her trilogy are organized in this present article in two parts. The first part entitled "Negating Housework: Dangarembga's Failure to Challenge Capitalist Work" turns around the fact that Tsitsi Dangarembga's negation of the housework is her failure to challenge capitalist work. The second part which is entitled "Western work as Healing: A Failed Rethinking of Shona Tradition" deals with Tsitsi Dangarembga's portrayal of Tambu's dwelling in Western work as her healing from patriarchal gender-specific expectations as the author's failure to rethinking Shona traditional culture.

1. Negating Housework: Dangarembga's Failure to Challenge Capitalist Work

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu praises her transplantation from the homestead into Maiguru's house in the mission as her "liberation" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 64). Her consideration of such a transplantation as a liberation results from the fact that in her community, families give privilege to boy's education. Women are

left in the kitchen for cooking and marriage. Leaving these conditions of women in the Shona patriarchy for her school education is what brings Tambu to consider the mission as her liberation. She is liberated from kitchen and marriage activities for school education. By portraying Tambu to pursue Western education that cannot but lead her in capitalist work by the simple reason that women are marginalized, Tsitsi Dangarembga fails to reevaluate the housework as a cultural identity to challenge colonial cultural hierarchy in the post-colonial Shona community. Bell Hooks is rich in giving light to women's failure to use housework for the confirmation of their identity before embracing capitalist world. When advocating the re-thinking of the nature of work in order to bring traditional and Western works at an equal foot, Bell Hooks writes:

Girl children, though usually compelled to do housework, are usually taught to see it as demeaning and degrading. These attitudes lead them to hate doing housework and deprive them of the personal satisfaction that they could feel as they accomplish these necessary tasks Had they been taught to value housework, they might approach all work differently. They might see work as an affirmation of one's identity rather than a negation. (Hooks, 1984, p. 103)

Tsitsi Dangarembga fails to portray Tambu to use the housework in the homestead to confirm her identity before embracing Western education and capitalist society. The Zimbabwean novelist fails to go along with Bell Hooks to consider the kitchen and womanhood activities as the affirmation of her identity before being educated in Western school.

When it is holidays, Tambu stays in the mission because of homestead activities. She sees the domestic activities in the homestead as a burden in such a way that she prefers expending her holiday in the mission. For this, it is worth considering her following voice: "It was the end of May holiday I spent the holidays at the mission I did not have the heart to return three times a year to fetching water from the river" (Dangarembga, 2006, p. 7). Tambu in such a standpoint devalues the homestead activities. She presents the traditional household activity

as a burden. Simply put, she particularly devalues the homestead activities. This attitude of Tambu makes the novelist comply with Bell Hooks's insightful reflection into women's view of work in the context of capitalism. When commenting Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs's *In Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* Bell Hooks writes: Women "do not develop an attitude towards work that sees it as an expression of dignity, discipline, creativity" (Hooks, 1984, p. 104). This is what Dangarembga as a feminist does. As a feminist, the novelist does not paint her female protagonist to use housework-as-work for self-realization. The novelist rather presents her protagonist to take homestead activities as self-denigration. Paul Connerton is rich in giving details of how women can use housework for self-assertion. The critic shows how women (in America), excluded from most recorded history, therefore excluded from memory, use housework (traditional work) to remember live, therefore to build memory which helps them live. Paul Connerton puts it as follows: "Women, ... within the private sphere of their homes, have, particularly in America, used quilting as a way to remember live. Excluded from most recorded history, women turned to the art of quilting to create an art of memory" (Connerton, 2011, p. 15). In the light of Connerton's reflection, it can be said that even though Tambu is marginalized in her traditional family, she could have used housework-as-work to achieve her self-realization instead of seeing her education in Western school as her self-realization.

Tambu's failure to take homestead activities as her self-realization brings her to fail to care about her family in the homestead. Put in other words, Dangarembga's portrayal of Tambu to learn to appreciate housework before embracing Western educational world makes Tambu to fail to care about her community. Tambu expresses it well in *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions* when she considers her ethics vis-à-vis her mother to be the worst misfortune that there could ever be in the world. For this, suffice it to mention Tambu as follows: "I wonder whether there was any misfortune in the world as bad as being the daughter of this woman [her mother]" (Dangarembga, 2006, p. 28). Tambu disgraces her mother.

She presents the traditional woman as not being worth to be her mother. It is because Tambu is not taught to practice the homestead activities with joy that she sees her mother who is in connection with the tradition as misfortune. In this vein, Bell Hooks contends that children and adult must accept responsibility for ordering their material reality. When they learn to appreciate housework, “they learn to appreciate and care for their surroundings,” (Hooks, 1984, p. 103). Tambu refuses responsibility in the homestead. She refuses to fetch water from the river and to be a kitchen woman. The fact that she depreciates the homestead activities bring her to fail to care about her mother who embodies the homestead. She finds refuse in the mission.

The mission that Tambu thinks is her liberation is in reality for her doom. When she thinks that she is safe by running away from the homestead, she finds herself in Maiguru’s family whose attitude is in antagonism with mothering in Africa. In Babamukuru’s family in the mission, he has a sense of what in African culture can be seen as living in community. In addition to his own children, Babamukuru makes his extended relatives live in his house for their education. This is the case of the missionary education of Nhamo and Tambo. But, Babamukuru’s wife Maiguru rebels against his African view of living in community. Her rebellion against his sense of living in community lies as follows: “Let me tell you Baba Chido, I am tired of my house being a hotel for your family. I am tired of being a housekeeper for them” (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 174). Taking a close look at such an attitude of Maiguru, there is no doubt that though she has a Western degree (Master’s Degree), she is a housewife who is in antagonism to mothering in African context. In Africa, the community is what forms the family. Molefi Kete Asante (2007, p. 142) puts it well when he writes: “In Africa, it is the community that elevates the individual.” Maiguru’s attitude shows that she dislikes the presence of the extended family of her husband in her house. In this context, instead of community, individualism is what singles out Maiguru. For her freedom, she opts for Western individualism.

Maiguru's psychological well-being risen by her status of individualist housewife is opposed to Mary Clare Lennon's finding on women's psychological well-being risen by housework. In her insightful comparative analysis on women's psychological well-being in housework and in employed wives, Mary Clare Lennon comes to the point that contrary to capitalist work, housework-as-work gives to women a psychological well-being. She summarises it as follows: "housework involves more autonomy, ... fewer time pressures, ... than paid work." (Lennon, 1994, p. 235). Maiguru's mindset of opting for individualism because of thinking that she is a slave for everybody shows that she does not use housework as her self-realization. She rather uses Western culture for her self-realization as it can be seen with her Western education and attitude. This makes her echo more Catherine Bicknell who argues:

by putting off marriage and children, in order to acquire an education and establish themselves in careers, women ... have alienated themselves from their mother's generation, for whom the only honourable roles in life are those of wife and mother. And because career women are a new phenomenon in post-independence society, they also find themselves without role model to follow. (Bicknell, 1998, p. 129)

With her Western education, Maiguru fails to see well-being in housework. She is not happy in her house despite her Master's Degree. Such a Maiguru discredits feminist thinking for which "women who worked were 'already liberated'" (Hooks 98). What is striking is that such a Western path that leads Maiguru to be sick of housework, is what Tambu decides to follow. As she follows Western path, Tambu alienates herself from the homestead activities. She is "enervated by smoky kitchen ... frustrated by wood fire" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 59). Tambu's anxious psychic mood shows that she takes distance from the kitchen activities. Because of the kitchen activities in the homestead, she prefers staying in Maiguru's house in the mission. Tambu in such a standpoint brings Dangarembga to be a prototype of Bell Hooks's stance when she writes: "All too often, focus on professions and careers within feminist movement led participants to

act as if all other jobs, especially those that are low [or non-] paying, have no value” (Hooks, 1984, p. 102).

When Dangarembga portrays Tambu to be anxious about the homestead activities and dream of Western work with a wage, what Dangarembga does is standing on women’s liberation movement to advocate Marxist notion of work. In this perspective, in her review of *The Politics of Housework* edited by Ellen Malos, and Pauline Hunt’s *Gender and Class Consciousness*, Michele Barrett contextualizes: “If women’s liberation movement views in housework ... women’s oppression it is because they relate housework to the ongoing reproduction of capitalism” (Barrett, 1980, p. 29). Like the women’s liberation movement, Dangarembga’s portrayal of Tambu to pursue a capitalist work is Dangarembga’s failure to attribute value to housework and the homestead activities. Expressed in Bell Hooks’s words, Dangarembga is a “feminist activist who fails to provide alternative self-concepts and self-definitions for women” (Hooks, 1984, p. 102). In this line of reflection, Tsitsi Dangarembga cannot be said to challenge colonial hierarchy as her postcolonial critics put it in their reflection on her works. She is rather a feminist who fails to re-think the traditional notion of work to challenge capitalists’ definition of work.

2. Western work as Healing: A Failed Rethinking of Shona Tradition

This Mournable Body is Tsitsi Dangarembga’s confirmation of failing to make use of traditional work to challenge hierarchy. This last novel of the trilogy of the Zimbabwean writer presents the protagonist Tambu who finds satisfaction and stability in Western world. The epigraph shows it well when it reads as follows: “There is always something left to love” (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 5). The epigraph mostly addresses Tambu’s and Nyasha’s concerns. Nyasha returns back to Shona tradition despite her education in England and in Germany. As Nyasha drives Tambu home, the family greets Tambu as follows:

‘Anesu, say hello to your auntie Tambu. Maiguru Tambudzai,’ she instructed. ‘You, too Panashe. When we are here, children, we say welcome outside, then we say hello inside the house. We clap the way I showed you. You have to ask how everyone is.’

‘Nyama Chirombowe, Maiguru.’ Leon, who has not yet gone out, begins the ritual. His nicely domed hands produce a soft, warm resonance.

The children comply their father.

‘You say nyama shewe, because you are a girl,’ Nyasha instructs Anesu, giving you a glance of consternation.’ (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 137)

Though Nyasha acquires a degree in political science at London School of Economics and a degree in filmmaking in Hamburg, married to a German husband and bears children, her family welcomes Tambu in the traditional custom. They respect the norms of the greeting ritual. Nyasha’s husband Leon and son Panashe use the expression “Nyama chirombowe” to welcome Tambu because they are men. Nyasha instructs her daughter Anesu that women say “nyama shewe.” In such a standpoint of being well rooted in the tradition, Nyasha and her family show that they have turn back to love Shona tradition. In *Nervous Condition* and in *The Book of Not*, Nyasha who sharply combats Shona traditional practices has turn to love this tradition. Her family does not mind living a traditional lifestyle. They life standard lies as follows:

You swallow a wince at the mention of this lowly sum, while Nyasha says bitterly, ‘Yes, so you can imagine what they think of me. And then of course they laugh at Leon too, saying he’s murunguasina mari. To them, if you’re white there’s something wrong with you if you’re not wealthy.’

Cousin-Brother-in-Law stretches his arm across the back of his chair. The two hold hands.

‘Yes,’ says Cousin-Brother-in-Law. ‘People here think too much about money. But what does it mean to be without money? Nyasha and I are happy.’

‘...we agreed on a token. Every culture has them, such tokens. And it was good for us to follow the culture in any way we can. That’s where I learnt the clapping.’

‘And some other cultural practices,’ says Nyasha drily. ‘He even had to skin a goat.’ (Dangarembga, 2018, pp. 138–39)

Nyasha and her family do not run after Western way of life in *This Mournable Body*. They live an African way. They live in community, solidarity and do not dream about Western life. As well, they practice Shona culture and customs. From the second person narrative perspective, the reader discovers that as Tambu sees Nyasha, her well educated cousin, in such a traditional life, the following thought rises in her psyche: “Living in Europe has not improved your cousin at all; if anything, it has made her more ill-mannered. You continue to smile with all of your face. Inside, your head shakes angrily” (Dangarembga, 2018, p135). The second person narrator presents that the traditional lifestyle that Nyasha’s family opts for set Tambu into psychic crisis. Tambu hates and despises this traditional life.

Nyasha finds comforts in both the Shona tradition and Western culture. In addition to being well set in the traditional way of life, Nyasha creates her “workshop to give not only a voice, but an analytical one, to the youth” (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 140). Nyasha in this standpoint is the equal of protagonists such as Kambili in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, Nefert Lihamba in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Resolutuionaries* whose identities occur as the result of different cultures. They are hybrid in the sense of Homi K. Bhabha mentioned by Nicole M. Gyulay when he writes: “Homi K. Bhabha ... conceives of hybridity as a ‘third space’ in which cultural identity is negotiated in a way that subverts the power relations between colonizer and colonized” (Gyulay, 2011, p. 636). Koffi Noel Brindou gives credence to Kambili’s and Nefert’s hybridity when he shows respectively that Kambili bears “third space hybridity” (Brindou, 2020, p. 82) and Nefert Lihamba receives “centricity education” (Brindou, 2020, p. 390). These phrases are meant to emphasize that the characters bear fair hybridity. These female characters’ identities are the negotiation of both the tradition

and Western culture. They collaborations with both the tradition and Western cultures break Western culture from its dominant position and the tradition from its margin to form a new identity within which the two cultures meet by consent. The three character's identities are thus a hybridity of third space.

Contrary to Nyasha, Tambu finds love in Western institution which is nothing but a melancholic cultural institution. Western cultural institution as melancholia is given light by Koffi Noel Brindou in his article "Gender Otherness and Melancholia in Dangarembga's Novels." In his insightful reflection on the trauma that occurs as the result of othering Shona women, Koffi Noel Brindou concludes that Shona patriarchy, and Western cultural institutions (Education and work) are respectively endowed with intrinsic sexism, and intrinsic and extrinsic racisms that set Shona women in general and Tambu in particular into "melancholia" (Brindou, 2019, p. 680). The protagonist Tambu in both *Nervous Conditions* and its sequel *The Book of Not* that the novelist presents as traumatized by Western cultural institutions is portrayed in *This Mournable Body* as a protagonist who finds love in Western work but still hunted by Shona tradition. Tambu's siding with the following stance of the widow Mai Manyango, her landlady, strengthens her revulsion risen by homestead cultural practice. Tambu abides with Mai Manyango as follows: "The widow has gauged you well. She is aware of it. You accept her terms immediately, as there is no question of your returning to the family homestead in your father's village." (Dangaremba, 2018, p. 42). This answers of Tambu is a response to the widow Mai Manyango's mentioning of her helps to the homestead inhabitants because of considering them as poor. Tambu sides with Mai Manyango's idea for which the homestead is poor. Behind the poverty, it is the entire homestead tradition which is rejected. Since Mai Manyango is a Christian, she rejects the traditional people as poor people to whom she must bring Western civilization. She considers Western civilization as light for people who live in the homestead. Put in other words, she rejects the traditional practices, life and belief of the Shona people, a perception shared by Tambu. This shows that the

homestead tradition is still phobogenic to Tambu. It rises both fear and revulsion in her psyche.

Contrary to Shona tradition, Tambu finds comfort in Western cultural institution. Teaching in the headmistress Mrs Samaita's secondary school, though the students are difficult to deal with, Tambu finds comfort in performing perfectly her work. She voices:

Mollified by the impact of your intervention, you unlock your office in a calmer state of mind. Following assembly, you spend the early part of the morning grading examination papers. It is an enjoyable task as you feel you exhibit considerable benevolence in allocating your students their grades. Completing the work well before tea time, you enjoy a sense of control. (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 102)

Tambu who in *The Book of Not* teaches with no "stamina and lashes knowledge into her pupils" (Dangarembga, p. 196) makes use of her work to feel release. When the students misbehave, Tambu finds her sense of control by doing perfectly her work. Contrary to the traditional culture, it is Western work which brings Tambu to enjoy her sense of control. Tambu's success in Western world makes reconsider critics such as Leonard A. Podis & Yakubu Saaka's standpoint when they write that Dangarembga challenges hierarchies. A feminist novelist who is said by the critics to challenges Western culture portrays her female protagonist to find comfort in that dominant culture while denigrating her traditional culture. The true sense of challenge is to bring Tambu to find social and cultural cohesion through her traditional culture as Ayi Kwei Armah does with the case of Nefert Lihamba in *The Rosolutionaries*. The pan-African novelist brings his female protagonist to make use of Egyptology to find psychic healing to her Western cultural loss. Koffi Noel Brindou gives credence to such a stance. For Brindou, Armah's *Revolutionaries* conveys that "to have sustainable psychological and social cohesion, the African child needs to make recourse to the ancient tradition" (Brindou, 2020, p. 397). The phrase is meant to emphasize that Armah writes about Africanity or African traditional values as solution to sustainable development.

From teaching, Tambu excels in Tracey's NGO. Tambu is employed by Tracey in her NGO which is Green Jacaranda Safari and lives in a bungalow. Tracey who is a prototype of Western victory on the colonized is the Westerner whose enterprise Tambu finds comfort. In Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, the headmistress makes the O-Level trophy benefits Tracey because she is white student at the detriment of Tambu because she is black student. This discrimination brings Koffi Noel Brindou (2019, p. 674) to contend that "Young Ladies' College of Sacred Heart practices an intrinsic racism." This is meant to denounce white supremacy in Western cultural world. The privilege that Western world gives to Tracey because she is white makes her be first-class worker while Tambu is second-class worker. In the advertising agencies of *The Book of Not*, Tracey is the advertising executive for Afro-Shine and Deputy Creative Director at Steers *et al* while Tambu is copywriter, a lowly profession. In Green Jacaranda Safaris, the NGO for ecotourism, Tracey is the employer and Tambu the employee. Tambu finds comfort in Tracey's ecotourism enterprise. At first, she is project manager, then tour supervisor. She also acquires her driving licence with a Mazda SUV car for her service at Green Jacaranda Safari. Tambu even considers that her Englishness which is mocked by her mother in *The Book of Not* by saying that "it is the Englishness, it will kill them all if they aren't careful" has tuned into a grand advantage in *This Mournable Body*. Her success makes her be subject of the expression: "If only I could be like her" (Dangarembga, 2018, p 226). Tambu enjoys her position of tour supervisor by meeting people all over Zimbabwean country. She sees herself as a star. She even considers it as God blessing in the same way she considers her transfer to the mission by Babamukuru in *Nervous Conditions* as her liberation. She puts it as follows: "You surrender to this new task, as though your job is the God whom you met for the first time decades before when you arrived at your uncle's Methodist mission." (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 229).

Tambu's failure vis-à-vis Shona tradition is undeniable when consideration is given to her rising into revulsion as Tracey charges

her with the Village Eco Transit project. Tracey charges Tambu as responsible for Village Eco Transit in homestead as follows: “‘I’ve already discussed everything with the donors and they like what I’m suggesting. You have a rural background, Tambu. You embody it. That’s how you can, if you’re up to it, take on the brand we created up on the farm. This time in a village’” (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 240). As Tracey charges Tambu with the Village Eco Transit in the homestead, the second person narrator voices about her as follows: “‘The meeting ends soon after this. While you all clear the things away, you screw up the nerve to tell your boss you cannot answer her at once. You inform her you need time to consider taking on this new responsibility’” (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 241). Though Tambu has a rural background, she feels anxious in going back to the village. While she enjoys touring around the country, she feels anxious as soon as Tracey charges her with the village project. The only culture through which Tambu mirrors her life is Western culture. Tambu in such standpoint expends Western cultural hegemony. The portrayal of such a Tambu is Tsitsi Dangarembga’s failure to valorise Shona traditional culture. The novelist rather valorises Western culture.

It is the Village Eco Transit project that brings Tambu home. She does not return home willingly. As she arrives in the homestead, she testifies it to her mother as follows:

‘So it is time to thank my boss,’ ... ‘She is a good boss, the one I work for,’ ...

‘Ms. Stevenson,’ ... ‘that is her name. She’s the one who has put me where I am at last. After so long, Mai, I am empowered. That is why I can come now, when so much time has gone. It was not a question of not knowing the womb, but one of not knowing how to come back to it.’ (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 249).

Not only does Tambu not come home willingly but also, she comes home to fulfil the dream of Green Jacaranda Safari enterprise. The Green Jacaranda Safari enterprise sends Tambu home for Village Eco Transit project. At the end of the novel, Tambu succeeds in gathering all the villagers in the homestead to see the Village Eco Transit project that she has brought from her adventuring in Western world.

As the second person narrative voice puts it: "A good many of the relatives who gathered those decades ago to welcome Babamukuru have gathered again, to see what his daughter, the daughter of the village who has been away so long, has brought" (Dangarembga, 2018, p. 288). Tambu sees this as a great success. She succeeds in gathering the villagers in the same way that Babamukuru succeeded in gathering the villagers to see the Englishness that his Western education made him bring home from England. Decades ago, she was told by her family that only men can achieve such success. But in the present days, she has achieved such a success. In term of gender equality, Tambu visibly achieves success. But her success is simply the expansion of Western culture that her uncle Babamukuru started decades ago. Tambu brings the capitalist society to be imposed to the traditional community. She does not develop Shona tradition in order to make it discuss the market with Green Jacaranda Safari. She rather brings the enterprise to be implanted in the homestead as if it were part of the traditional way of life. This accounts for the final failure marked by the episode of the photograph and Tambu's resignation from Green Jacaranda Safari enterprise to Join Lucia in her nongovernmental organization. Tambu's alienation from the homestead tradition brings her to be ignorant about the bans of the custom. She does not inform the photographer Herr Bachmann about the traditional norms for which it is banned to take pictures of women's necked bodies during the ceremony. As the photographer takes pictures of the necked bodies of Tambu's mother during the ceremony, the mother rebels against him, an act that brings shame to Tambu. This causes the down fall of Tambu in the Green Jacaranda Safari enterprise. As Tambu leaves the White Tracey's enterprise, she joins her aunt Lucia's enterprise of security where they prosper together. This final prosper of Tambu is significant. It is because Lucia embodies the homestead tradition that Tambu finds herself in this enterprise. This confirms that the use of the tradition for the assertion of her identity before is the condition for Tambu to embrace Western world with enthusiasm

Conclusion

In her trilogy, Tsitsi Dangarembga fails to make use of the traditional work to re-think the notion of work as defined by capitalist society. She does not make use of traditional activities-as-work as advocated by Bell hook and the alike to challenge capitalist notion of only pay work is a work. The novelist brings the homestead activities to be denigrated at the benefit of Western capitalist society. The prototype of such a failure is the novelist's protagonist Tambu. Tambu fails to use the homestead tradition to challenge Western cultural hierarchy. The protagonist is alienated from the homestead activities and prospers in Western capitalist society. Tambu who is said by critics such as Leonard A. Podis and Yakubu Saaka and the alike to challenge Western cultural hierarchy fails to transvaluate or give value to the homestead activities. The only time in the last novel of the trilogy where the new generation among whom the Westernized Nyasha goes from the tradition for her psyche and social cohesion, Tambu considers it as failure.

Tambu finds recomfort in teaching. Then she finds recomfort in Tracey's ecotourism NGO named Green Jacaranda Safaris enterprise. Reversely, she considers traditional activities in the homestead as a burden. She fails to use kitchen and fetching waters and other womanhood activities for her self-realization. She rather makes use of Western culture to mirror her life. Her failure to use the homestead activities for her self-definition reaches the peak when with the order of her boss Tracey she implants the Village Eco Transit in the homestead without respecting the traditional cultural norms. The lack of consent of the encounter of the capitalist project and the traditional culture causes Tambu's down fall in the enterprise. By bringing the capitalist enterprise to the homestead, Tambu transfers capitalist definition of work to the villagers. She makes the villagers believe that the non-paying work of the homestead is not worth being considered as work. It is the capitalist enterprise that she has settled in the homestead to bring them money which is work. But, the non-respect of the cultural norms that brings Tambu's mother to rebel against the project is a sign of the doom that Western

cultural hegemony causes. Dangarembga is aware of the fact that the Shona girl's use of Western capitalist work for self-realization without taking into account the traditional culture causes nothing but her doom. This shows it well with Tambu's resignation from the white Tracey's enterprise to join her aunt Lucia's NGO. Lucia being well rooted in the tradition before creating her NGO, Tambu's entering in this enterprise is considered as her working in a cultural domain where her tradition is taken into account. Tambu's prosper in Western educational institution and white capitalist enterprise helps classify Dangarembga as a feminist activist who sides with the capitalist notion of work. Dangarembga failed to comply with Bell Hooks's stance when she writes: "A well done housework contributes to individual well-being, promotes the development of aesthetics, or aids in the reduction of stress" (Hooks, 1984, p. 103). From my reading of Tsitsi Dangarembga's trilogy on the perspective of Bell Hooks's deconstructive feminist discourse, I comply with Bell Hooks to assert that, as long as feminist writers will fail to take the traditional activities to

be a sphere of human activity women participate in for the purpose of developing their personalities, self-concepts, women who achieve economic self-sufficiency will continue being unable to liberate themselves from oppressive interactions with sexist individuals as those women who do no wage labor and depend on others for their economic survival. (Hooks, 1984: 104)

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Charles Dossou LIGAN est Maître-Assistant (CAMES) en linguistique africaine descriptive et terminologie au DSLC-FLLAC/UAC. Sociolinguistique, linguistique générale, terminologie et enrichissement lexical et langue et littérature gun¹ sont quelques-uns de ses enseignements. Lauréat du Prix Unique de l'Innovation en Langues Nationales de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Mai 2019) et du prix du meilleur écrivain en langue nationale (Février 2008) décerné par le Ministère en charge de l'Alphabétisation et de la Promotion des langues nationales, il a dirigé en février 2020 l'ouvrage collectif intitulé « *Au nom des Ancêtres* ».

Florentine Adjouavi HOUEDENOU, psychopédagogue béninois, Maître de Conférences des Universités/CAMES, Cheffe honoraire du Département des Sciences de l'Education et de la Formation (DSEF), elle œuvre pour un meilleur apprentissage de la psychopédagogie de la communication, de la philosophie de l'éducation, de la citoyenneté et discipline, de l'éthique et la déontologie du métier de l'enseignement. Lauréate du Prix Grand Oscar 2010 de l'Education et de la Promotion des Valeurs Citoyennes et membre de Laboratoire de recherche d'Anthropologie Appliquée et d'Education au Développement Durable (LAAEDD), elle est auteur et co-auteur de plusieurs articles scientifiques et ouvrages.

Flavien GBETO est Professeur titulaire de Linguistique et d'Etudes Africaines (CAMES) depuis 2009. Directeur Scientifique du Laboratoire de Dynamique des Langues et Cultures à Calavi (LABODYLCAL), il s'intéresse aux sous-domaines tels que : phonologie-tonologie, analyse contrastive, contact de langues, structure des langues africaines, standardisation et enseignement des langues africaines, théories de la grammaticalisation, tabous et langues ésotériques, etc. Auteur de plusieurs dizaines d'articles et quelques ouvrages scientifiques, il a dirigé une quinzaine de thèses de doctorat en didactique des langues, communication, description linguistique, linguistique contrastive, sociolinguistique, traduction et enseignement du français.

¹. langue transnationale, commune au Bénin et au Nigeria (ogu, gugbe, etc.)



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Laboratoire de Dynamique des
Langues et Cultures à Calavi
BP : 1049 Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)
Tél. : +229 95869956
Courriel : flavien.gbeto@gmail.com

