

An Ecocritical and Ecofeminist Study: Rethinking of Women, Sexuality and War in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *The Book of Not*

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This research article investigates from an ecofeminist perspective Tsitsi Dangarembga's to demonstrate how she distinguishes the interrelationships among Shona females and the environment. This work intimates through this connectivity that Dangarembga is challenging the status quo and criticizing the cultural and social systems used to marginalize black females and the environment. The lens of ecofeminism is used to investigate nature writing in the literary text, showing the relationships between human nature and the meanings that can be drawn from it. The article will also investigate the nature of the internet of interactions between females and their environment using the ecofeminism lens. As such, it examines what relationship females should have to protect against over-exploitation and degradation against the natural world and preserve it.

An assessment of by Dangarembga will demonstrate that she utilizes the atmosphere in her writing, but very few literary critics undertook the task of determining whether or not it exists. Such an undertaking is this chapter's goal exactly. As such, the work argues that at a moment when the war for freedom is raging, Dangarembga explores the connection between individuals and the non-human world or natural environment in colonial Zimbabwe. An assessment of by Dangarembga will reveal that the connection between nature and the livelihood of people is a clear indication that African authors have always been involved with environmental issues.

The Book of Not is an ecocritical and ecofeminist assessment allows one to question the environmental voice of the narrative. This is consistent with Ramya's (2012) argument that feminism is based on feminism and environmentalism's theoretical foundations. While feminism, it analyzes why females are treated as inferior to males; it also demonstrates interest in identifying why nature is treated as inferior to culture. The landscape will be used metaphorically, based on this reasoning, to comprehend and explore the links between females and nature and to deconstruct the dichotomy of nature / culture.

The Book of Not questions the forms of cruelty including racism, sexism, classicism, speciesism, colonialism and the war environment. To illuminate the connection between the oppression of nature and human beings, these forms intersect. The connection between Netsai and nature is the forest room. Tambu is connected to nature by the racial setting at the Sacred Heart College and the Harare Gardens. Both the colonial environment and the ethnic landscape are used in a war setting to denigrate two young females. The brutal nature of the fight for freedom and the construction of buildings for the District Council not only destroys the natural environment, but also more impacts females. Female freedom fighters are objectivized as gender objects as masculine freedom fighters sexually abuse them. The garden of Maiguru is the only

room that provides women authority and power. The patriarchal, ethnic and colonial structures continue to oppress the protagonist Tambu in last part of the novel.

The Book of Not (2006) laid down in the 1970s, towards the end of the liberation struggle *The Book of Not* explores the path of Tambudzai's Sigauke ; the colonial education system and her attempt to redefine herself through the fresh setting at the Young Ladies ' College of The Sacred Heart and the Unhu philosophy and patriarchal atmosphere at Mutare's farm. The novel discusses the Shona women / girl-children's plight through a feminist perspective as they attempt to find themselves in an apparently patriarchal and multi-racial setting. The protagonist, Tambudzai Sigauke, give off how the black girl-child undergoes in the stifling and restrictive political and cultural environment in her fight against oppression and domination. Growing up in a racial social environment, this setting, which eventually denies her private development and self-definition, displaces and engulfs her.

The Book of Not utilizes the atmosphere but the task was undertaken by very few literary critics to determine whether or not it exists. While a number of critics concentrated on the cultural and political realities experienced by black females during the freedom fight, very few examined how nature and females are linked. For example, in her article "Black Women Walking Zimbabwe: Refuge and Prospect in Yvonne Vera's Landscapes The Stone Virgins and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and its Sequel, demonstrates how the Zimbabwean landscape," complicated by race, ethnicity and class "(Mabura , p. 89) is used by the protagonists of females to find themselves in the stifling colonial setting. In another article, "A piece of a individual," Gugu Hlongwane examines how Tambu is "battered and besieged by the chauvinistic setting as a black student in a multi-racial college that she give way to the very forces that threaten her life" (Hlongwane, p. 449). Thus, from a feminist view, the above analyzed Dangarembga's texts, some tried to investigate them using an eco-feminist gaze.

The brutal nature of the fight for freedom and its impacts on individuals and the environment shows how women's mistreatment and environmental degradation are linked. The fight for freedom also offers an chance to argue for the significant but often ignored connection between feminist and environmental degradation during military activity Nana Wilson-Tagoe points out in her book review of by Tsitsi Dangarembga that the narrative demonstrates Tambu's continuing "quest to redefine the social, political, and historical forces in her complicated globe" (book review). Furthermore, the book review by Terence Ranger sees it as a book that "reproduces a quarter of a century ago the feel, sight, sound and emotion of an African convent boarding school. He claims it's not about repressed sexuality, it's about repressed identity" "emotional abuse of racism that requires she perform better than a ' native ' and then denies her credit for doing so "(Book review). This is what *is* about at a fundamental and easy level. Nana Wilson-Tagoe and Terence Ranger concentrate on major feminist problems that other African women authors highlight as well as their effect on women's life in their book reviews and there is no mention of environmental issues. Ynestra King (Christiansen, p. 240) explains how this link is expanded to include problems of conflict: eco-feminism is about connectivity and theoretical and practical integrity. It argues every living thing's unique power and integrity... We are a women-identified movement, and we think we have to do unique job in these

imperilled moments. We see the corporate warriors ' destruction of the earth and humans and the danger of army warriors ' atomic annihilation as feminist issues. It is the same mentality of masculinity that would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and that depends on various structures of domination and state authority to have their way.

King's quotation emphasizes all living things ' inherent importance. In other words, in an ecological web-like existence in which one is an extension of the other, human and non-human nature are connected. Ecofeminists, as a social movement, play an important part in questioning all mechanisms of exploitation. Earth's devastation in any form, including projects involving war and development, not only displaces individuals, but also deprives them of their sense of selfishness. Arguably, the land is inextricably connected with the individuals, and no one can survive in isolation. Women realized that the same patriarchal violence that oppresses and dominates them is the same driving force that leads to nature's domination. Women should therefore be conscious of the fresh instruments of exploitation, such as capitalist patriarchy, economic reforms, land commoditisation, etc., in order to challenge this patriarchal abuse. These instruments operate together in to intensify oppression and violence against females and kids.

King ignores the freedom ethos context. Will show how Dangarembga is engaging in this discussion to show how warfare, environmental mistreatment, and women's exploitation are interrelated. Although the desire of Netsai was to join the fighters for freedom and fight for African land, the space of physical forests also puts patriarchal ideologies first. Under "brutal colonial circumstances" both male and female freedom fighters are subjected (Rwafa 2013: 324). However, as Rwafa points out further, "the toll on the woman is heavier... African male freedom fighters are consummating the perception of female freedom fighters as inferior" (Rwafa, p. 324) and they also see these young girls as sex objects. The female body's objectification is still applied as the female liberty fighters are thus handled. The African forest may be a "room where they redefine their identities" (Rwafa, p. 325), but for Netsai, sadly, it overpowers her and her victimhood is symbolized by her dislocated body and her "broken" arm. Motivated by the fight for liberation, Netsai becomes a fighter for liberty. Fighting for the liberty of her people and reclaiming from the colonizer her ancient fertile land is what drives Netsai to enter the conflict. As Grandmother says, while the colonizer occupied their wealthy and fertile landscapes, black people were shifted to the dry, stony and infertile lands. As a freedom fighter, therefore, Netsai is challenging the system that has exploited its people because of its ethnicity and social status. However, the patriarchal system in the forest room subordinates and makes her helpless.

The female freedom fighters ' denigration is strengthened by the reality that both Netsai and Dudziro are objectified as they are regarded as sex objects for the masculine freedom fighter, Big Brother, to become self-enlarged. We're told, "... love wasn't mentioned ... he was in love with both of them when he drank too much after the war. His first love was Netsai, selected as she brought sadza to the hideaway of this freedom fighter (TBN, p. 5). Rwafa also states in his assessment of the African forest that "the objectification by male guerrillas of the female body enforced traditional roles of females as sexual objects that the conflict had begun to allow African girls to question." Netsai is relegated to the feminine positions of

cooking and sex objects. She joins the armed struggle not because there was "this war outside which called her" (TBN, p. 5), but because "there was another war within which she made the air of her shimmer and sparkled with happiness when she talked about this Big Brother" (TBN, p. 5-6). She loved Big Brother, and he was an "indefinite and indecisive comrade" (TBN, p. 6) and "took and loved this young girl, Dudziro" (TBN, p. 6). The intention couched in these statements is to squash the newly discovered identity of women freedom fighters as their masculine counterparts sexually abuse them. In the interlocking partnership of patriarchy, war and the environment, the picture of the female as an inferior being and a sex object is entrenched.

With their status decreased to mere lovers, caregivers, and sex objects, I argue that the forest ceases to be a "reconstruction and reconstruction of the identities of female freedom fighters" (Rwafa , p. 321). The irony is that "masculine militants use the same bush to perpetuate African males and women's inequalities" (Rwafa , p. 321-327). They both present Netsai and Dudziro as passive and silent. Their function is to be "patriotic fans" (Christiansen, p. 246). According to Elshtain : We females are encouraged to turn back in the issue of women and war. War is men's: men are organized violence's historical writers. Yes, females were taken in and they had to watch, suffer, cope, mourn, honor, worship, witness, work. But men did describe and define war, and it "affects" the women: they react mostly.

Women are therefore excluded from fighting positions, but the conflict affects them. Both Netsai and Dudziro had no ammunition with them; it was "the Comrade, the Guerrilla, the Big Brother, the Mukoma" (TBN, p. 4) who had "a rifle slung over his back" (TBN, p. 5) and was able to use it as "an authorizing tool for his political arguments" (Christiansen, p. 246). Dangarembga articulates the oppressiveness of the patriarchal order that even in the forest room poses unchangeable male tendencies or "hierarchical domination" (Vakoch , p. 6). This document argues that while the Big Brother acknowledges his power and legitimacy in the forest room, Netsai is disabled and powerless and as such, the forest space ceases to be a liminal space where she can re-configure her identity and live a more satisfying life away from the "personal domain" of the home boundaries (Vakoch , p. 247). The forest arises as such as a room in which it submits to maleness and authority. It is a submission informed by a greater objective; that of freedom. Thus, although the woman's role in the freedom fight is recognized, the toxic environment of landmines seems to engulf and overwhelm her. She can never redefine herself as a heroine or a survivor, but as a victim she carries the brunt of the degraded environment. Thus, at the beginning of the narrative of Dangarembga, we see the connection between masculine forest domination and female domination in a war zone. Howell echoes this dual oppression of females and nature when she says, "Ecofeminism acknowledges that females and nature's historical ideological association has not been beneficial to either females or nature." But it is essential to point out that this is not to indicate an ecological revolution that "involves destruction of masculine force to create way ... for woman power or matriarchy, but for fresh egalitarian sex interactions between males and females and between males and nature" (Howell , p. 232 ; d'Eaubonne , p. 66-67 ; Merchant, p. 100).

The "extension of capitalist agribusiness" (Vakoch, p. 3) also symbolizes this dual oppression of females and nature. This is obvious when the colonialists make changes by constructing near the Nyamarira

River District Council Houses. Despite the cultivation of a connection with the river by women as a location to "rejuvenate" (Mabura, p. 106) and the "river as a trope and liminal room" (Mabura, p. 106), this connection is not valued by the landscape innovations of the colonial powers. The colonial government "infringes on the Nyamarira black women's bathing enclaves without taking into account their traditional rights to this space or adverse environmental effect" (Mabura, p. 106.). By building the Council Houses near the women's bathing site on the Nyamarira, "the part of the river is transformed into a transportation point without any privacy" (Mabura, p.107). Women are thus deprived as depicted by the Nyamarira River of their livelihood. Okonkwo (Mabura, p.60) notes in his assessment of the Nyamarira space invasion that not only the indigenous landscape is troubled, but also the "entrepreneurial, commercial and recreational activities it produces among the villagers." Women's washing and bathing room is transformed into an open space for anyone on their manner to the new stores. This space's invasion constitutes a disturbance to the power and liberty of women. Thus, the river we see in *Nervous Conditions* as a liminal room is declining in significance in *The Book of Not*. This obvious invisibility of the river as a trope is intended to resonate well with black women's invisibility both on the war front and in their homes "personal domain."

In a scenario where environmental degradation, killing other human beings, and women's sexual objectification are basic war realities, women as well as the natural environment are regarded as unimportant. Christiansen's argument that the Nyamarira River, as well as the woods and females, are not only treated as secondary but also "play a 'background' role for political and military action." Women in support the troops by offering support facilities (Rwafa, p. 201). They cook for them and give them moral assistance as well as sexual liberation. This function of "being a backdrop of support is comparable to the role played during the war by the environment" (Rwafa, p. 201.). Also regarded as unimportant is the forest where the community converges for the morari because it serves as the backdrop for using and supporting military action. It is readily intended to give up its resources without fail to the combat forces "and without the military objective supplanting" (Rwafa, p. 201.). During wartime, the key function of the forest is to provide refuge to the freedom fighters and "under the bush's camouflage," they waged the liberation war effectively (Rwafa, p. 323). The forest supplied the freedom fighters with the training bases.

This role played by the African environment is frequently underplayed, according to Rwafa. He states that it created the "geographic context against which the topics of energy struggles were played out within the bigger struggles for freedom" (ibid: 322).

The destructive nature and toxic nature of the conflict is also obvious when Tambu notes the "barren, blackened mountains where the military no longer leaves grows after the elder sibling's cover has been destroyed" (TBN, p. 178). When she attempts to look for familiar sights, she also realizes that "the kiosk at Alpha Estate where Babamukuru purchased oranges for her was no longer there" (TBN, p. 179) and wonders if the "farmer still existed" (TBN, p. 179). The oranges upheld Tambu as a Sacred Heart scholar. These instances show the "threat to the ecosystem posed by every war" (Christiansen, p. 254). The very sources sustaining mankind are being demolished. Dangarembga's obviously shows how Zimbabwe's freedom fight makes the environment and females invisible and unimportant. Ecofeminism challenges this

patriarchal twin domination, which is meaningless to females and nature. Christiansen (1997:255) points out that if this' patriarchal conceptual structure is not dismantled and our dedication to defending the ecosystem that supports us falls short, our next war may be fought not over land but over' water, forests and fertile soil' (O'Riordan, p. 1990).

The point that was being made here is that the war damages the ecosystems parallel to the war atrocities human beings face. Later in the narrative, disappointed with the outcomes of Tambu's A-Level, Babamukuru compels her to look at the "wild valley ripped in his flesh, where the dagger had gloved to cut the artery, the lengthy and broad path" (TBN, p. 189) with the "light flesh below the shoulder where the scars glowed more clearly" (TBN, p.187). Type in anything that you want. Then click Quill It on the right to paraphrase your input. The war harm on both the physical and the inner landscapes is apparent, leaving scars that may not cure. Therefore, the narrative proves the connection of victimhood between human nature and non-human nature. Ntombi contributes the following:

They said my aunt is feeding terrorists ... Yes, she talked because of what they did to the baby. But it was too late. My little cousin was broken, just broken! ... Then my aunt killed herself, because when it's like that, you'll never live. But they came back and now, at the homestead my sekuru, mbuya, babamunini, cousins! No one is alive! (TBN, p. 172)

The quotation above shows the nature of the violence that black women, children and men had to endure during the war. The war's victims are both human and non-human nature. Men, females are murdered kids. Homes are destroyed, destitute and homeless for the villagers. Armed struggle violence leaves people "broken" and "torn" into pieces by "cutting away the lips, ears, noses and genitals from the bodies of the relatives of the people" (TBN,p. 198). Furthermore, Benhilda complains about the death of her brother-in law who had just been "taken... one day he was just not there and no one could discover him" (TBN, p. 128). The essential link between human and nature's invisibility and insignificance reinforces their supporting roles for the action of politics and war. In this case, the narrative emphasizes the relationship between nature and humans and illustrates clearly how Dangarembga relates gender injustices to environmental exploitation.

The novel, *The Book of Not*, reveals the connection of females, nature, and the environment. The novel introduces interdependence between human and non-human nature in which people depend for survival on the ecosphere. It presents the environment as a personality that heals, protects and sustains human beings. While females and kids are treated as unreasonable, oppressed, exploited, and man-dominated, they have the power to fight back. In contrast, the mountain landscape of *The Book of Not*, the forest room and the racist atmosphere of the Sacred Heart are portrayed as threatening, continuous reminders of the fight for freedom. At the end of the novel, the protagonist Tambu faces a dark and uncertain future. The environment envelops and overwhelms her resulting in a discontinuous connection with nature and the environment. Unlike *The Book of Not*, it fails to claim the necessity of ending the black woman's oppression.

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