

DOCTORAL VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

Centre for Research Services

Faculty of Education and Human Sciences

Topic: The Feminisation of Poverty and Victimhood in Dangarembga's Print Oeuvre: Cyclical Evocations of Nervous Conditions, Survival, and Agency

Candidate: Ms Penelope T. Midzi

Date: Thursday, 24 February 2022 | **Time:** 09h00

Via Zoom meeting find link below

<https://zoom.us/j/8091616810?pwd=UXNsS0ZlamlCeHMxRVdtSGd2RkhGQT09>

Meeting ID: 809 161 6810 | **Passcode:** KQ7312

Executive summary

Feminisation of poverty is the central idea that was applied in the literary analysis of Tsitsi Dangarembga's oeuvre, mainly focusing on the victimhood, cyclical evocations of nervous conditions, survival strategies and agency that Zimbabwean women experienced as elucidated in the selected texts.

This dissertation employed a qualitative desktop literary approach in the examination of four novels, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not* (2006), *This Mournable Body* (2018) and a play, *She No Longer Weeps* (1987).

The researcher employed Africana Womanism, STIWANISM, and Nego-feminism literary theories to underpin this study, for examining the complex position that African women face in light of the detrimental effects of colonisation and its impact and legacy as it integrates with traditional patriarchal structures as articulated in Dangarembga's print oeuvre. The study analysed how the

author used the texts to expose issues related to post-colonial conditions, gender inequalities, cultural limitations, female self-definition and struggle for survival.

The study found that the women in the Shona society are presented diversely depending on their socio-cultural background. Dangarembga strategically captured a world before and after independent Zimbabwe (1980s), where her main theme were her two protagonists' struggles to reshape women's heterosexuality and femininity in a religiously conservative society.

The shared themes of womanhood are the need for a shift of women from the margins of the society to becoming priorities economically, socially, and culturally. This is the recurring theme whether the setting is in the 1980s or the 2000s, rural or urban; Shona women are still victims of the 'nervous conditions' surrounding them.

About Viva Voce Examinations

In addition to writing a thesis or dissertation, postgraduate students who are registered for Master's or Doctoral by Thesis or Dissertation only, shall appear for a viva voce examination (an oral examination). This examination normally occurs after the dissertation is finished but before it is submitted to the university, and may comprise a presentation (often public) by the student and questions posed by a panel of specialists on the subject. The public can attend and is permitted to ask questions.

Purpose – a viva voce examination is to: confirm that the thesis is a student's own work; confirm that the student understands what they have written; investigate the student's awareness of where their original work sits in relation to the wider research field, and provide a developmental opportunity for considering future publication and research options.