

Proceedings of the one-day workshop on
**'THE BODY IN THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL
PRODUCTIONS: BETWEEN AESTHETICS AND
SIGNIFICATION'**



Actes de la journée d'études et de réflexions sur
**'LE CORPS DANS LES PRODUCTIONS ARTISTIQUES ET
CULTURELLES : ENTRE ESTHÉTIQUE ET
SIGNIFICATION'**

Sous la direction de
Klohinlwélé KONÉ

Revue Ivoirienne de Langues Étrangères, vol. 16, Septembre 2021

ISSN : 2076-6130



Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny



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RILE

REVUE IVOIRIENNE DE LANGUES ÉTRANGÈRES



Volume 16, Septembre 2021

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- DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », Diogène, 202, p. 145-151.
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FEMALE BODY AS A MUSE OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMMA DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

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This study postulates that female body is a catalyst for women's feminist artistry. This statement will be substantiated in analysing Amma Darko's novel grounded on Mara's history. Such an approach is justified by the scope of the body in gender discourse. Critics are used to retaining the institutionalised appearance of the body related to women's victimisation both physically and psychologically. But how the same dyad-dimension of the body structures and enhances feminism in writing is a less debated question. This work intends to reverse the pejorative perception of female body in gender discourse by showing how Amma Darko values it in the process of recreation and resistance to gender biases. In the light of a postcolonial feminist reading of *Beyond the Horizon*, the article will posit female body as one of the key elements in women's response to oppression.



Keywords: Female, body, gender, feminism, muse



L'étude postule que le corps féminin est une muse de la création féministe des femmes. Cette thèse sera étayée dans une analyse du roman d'Amma Darko écrit à partir de l'histoire de Mara. Une telle approche est justifiée par les possibilités d'interprétation qu'offre le corps dans le discours du genre. Les critiques ont l'habitude de se focaliser sur l'apparence institutionnalisée du corps relativement à la victimisation des femmes au double niveau physique et psychologique. Mais comment cette dyade du physique et du psychologique du corps structure et rehausse le féminisme dans l'écriture est une question moins débattue. Ce travail entend inverser la perception péjorative du corps féminin dans le discours du genre en montrant comment Amma Darko le valorise dans un processus de récréation et de résistance aux inégalités du genre. À travers un regard du féminisme postcolonial sur *Beyond the Horizon*, cet article analyse le corps (féminin) comme un élément essentiel dans la réaction des femmes face au sexisme/patriarcat.

Mots-clés : Féminin, corps, genre, féminisme, muse

Introduction

“Women are somehow more biological, more corporeal, and more natural than men”, writes E. Grosz (1994, p. 14). From this statement, one can assess the role body plays in dichotomous construction of identity linked to gender. Then, female physical appearance is reduced to sexuality and connotes *immanence*¹, condescendence, and locus of male dominance. Moreover, female body becomes a fertile ground from which emerges an array of gender biased theories justifying the social meanings of female anatomy/physiology viewed through sexuality according to K. Lennon (2019). Such a philosophy undermines the feminist approaches to resisting patriarchy and social parameters of womanhood linked to sexuality.

Some postcolonial female texts (such as Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon*) redeem that question and reveal the pertinent role female body can play in women’s struggle against male supremacy on female body and sexuality. Thereby, how does Amma Darko’s novel puts forth the corporeal argument of female consciousness about gender oppression? Or, to which extent does female body initiate Amma Darko’s feminist consciousness? These questions raise the issue of both physical and metaphysical body and sexuality in feminism.

The issue calls for H. Cixous’ view of women’s resistance (1976) that consists of throwing themselves into literary texts. It may also legitimate the materialistic vision of feminism (see C. Delphy, 2003 and C. Guillaumin, 1978). Thereby, taking into account all these aforementioned approaches, the paper is conducted with a postcolonial hint trying to unravel how the use of Mara’s body in the course of the narrative reveals Amma Darko’s feminist consciousness. This postulate will be analysed through three dynamic steps. First of all, female body will be analysed as the demiurge creating *Beyond the Horizon*. Then, the body as a poetic or aesthetic appearance in the novel is investigated as structuring lines of Amma Darko’s act of denunciation. Finally, the study will conceive female body as a tool of resistance to gender oppression.

I. Female body: the demiurge of *Beyond the Horizon*

If marriage is the central theme in that novel, female body is the gearbox from which Amma Darko reconstitutes Mara’s story. In other words, *Beyond*

¹ Transcendence/immanence is Simone de Beauvoir’s binary conception of opposition between male and female referring to active/passive, subject/object, possession/possessor...in *The Second Sex* (see vol. I, chapter 2, the English version trans. By J. Thurdman).

the Horizon does exist from Mara's body under oppression. To refresh the reader's mind about the meaning that female body may have in gender discourse, let's admit that it stands for a tangible appearance (corporeal) and metaphysical (psychological or ideological) conception of woman. As E. Grosz (*op.cit*, p. 10) puts it, "Bodies and minds are not two distinct substances" under the male gaze. This claim fits well the conception of female body in hegemonic gender discourse (patriarchy). Herein, woman's inside and outside or physical interior and corporeal exterior are combined into one to construe her as a sexual object. It is exactly what the French materialist feminist C. Guillaumin (1978, p. 9) calls the "sexage". It is that body the Nigerian writer and masculinist advocate I. Chinweizu (1990) clothes with a *supra-power* in his book entitled *Anatomy of Female Power*.

“The play of the body reacts as a reminder agent which calls upon a narrator so as tell its story.”

The perception of the female body mentioned above acts as a demiurge of Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. As an ultima res narrative, Mara's story telling opens on a look at her body: "I am sitting there before my large oval mirror. [...] I am staring at an image. My image? No! What is left of what once used to be my image" (p. 1). The excerpt is from the very beginning of Mara's story. It displays the context

from which the story-telling comes into her mind. One thing to acknowledge with is the way the narrator initiates her story starting with declarative sentences followed by a series of interrogative ones. These interrogations are about the narrator's self.

The "self" declared and questioned here is Mara's body revealed by the act of mirroring herself that day. It means that seeing her physical appearance makes the narrator put questions to herself. In so doing, she tries to reconstitutes events that shape the new her. The fact of reviewing these events sets her into a narrative pace. "Sitting there", "staring at an image", "no?", "what used to be my image" are the different sequences of the click that motions the story. One can remark that from action verbs, the narrator comes to the stage of a soliloquy or monologue. This monologue shows how the narrator builds a fence between her present day and her past day. Only her body affords such a distancing between the actual Mara and the once upon a time Mara. The play of the body reacts as a reminder agent which calls upon a narrator so as tell its story.

And yet, the story thereupon is being narrated by Mara (the narrator) just after she has observed her body and queried its strangeness:

I remember the day clearly. I return from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wetness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut and breathlessly told me the 'good news'. 'Your father has found a husband for you', she gasped, 'a good man!'. (p. 3)

Tracing back to remembrance in the first sentence of the above excerpt, one notices the fundamental role Mara's body plays in the whole story. It also highlights the fact that the story rests upon the same body because the latest exercises a power of remembering and reconstituting of causal facts/events behind the result or the object that is Mara's present body.

The excerpt is meaningful as far as the plot of the story is concerned. And the real object of that plot is the body. As stressed earlier, the conceptual female body is both physically and ideologically governed by the negativist male gaze that connotes sexuality. So Mara remembers that her body is equated to a territory from which men show their social supremacy out of marriage. That is why her father is the one who chooses her a husband in accordance with her body. It means that Mara's father sets into motion the marriage process when his daughter's body speaks to him in terms of physiological aptitude. This corporeal language/communication is conveyed through body signs or symbols of maturity the common sense canonizes as the ultimate stage to sexuality. More importantly, this body communication seems to be men's attribute. That is why only fathers decode their daughters' body language and conspire to get them married. Such a privilege brings Akobi's father and Mara's father to a deal on Mara's body. As for mothers, they are seen as mere messengers who just come as a conventional support to the plot. Mara's mother justifies this passivity when she replies desperately to her daughter: "Oh, dear child, [...] you know your father would consider it rude if I disclosed him to you before he did" (p.4). So Mara's body which may be considered as the true narrator in *Beyond the Horizon* sets Mara in search of responsible agents for its/her doom. The search unfolds events when Mara wonders about the deal on her body: "I don't know why of all the eligible women in the village his father chose me" (p. 6) to be married to his son.

But Mara's question is a rhetoric one because, as M. Latif (2017, p. 4) puts it, "It is [the] male gaze that defines and redefines the female body and its sexuality according to patriarchal terms". However, the reader can remark that it is just a wondering fitting in emotion from Mara's self-body observation. Her body puts questions to herself and plays on her mind so that she wants to understand how she has come to that point. The narrative unravels as the body dictates queries to Mara's mind. The whole deal is a current communication

between two entities: The body and the mind or between a tangible gear and metaphysical receptacle. In other words, Mara's imagination depends on her look at her body.

That look takes her through an imaginative voyage to her marriage to Akobi since this is the tremendous act behind the upheaval. Then the narrative keeps on with its different sequences. This is the second step or stage following the marriage:

To say I was shocked when Akobi brought me to his home in the city would be an understatement. I was stunned. Our homes in the village were of mud and leaves but no one needed to tell a visitor they were homes. Akobi had to tell me this was his home before I belied it. (p. 8)

The reader can notice Mara's emotional feelings within the above narrative discourse. But, why is Mara knocked out as the reader can notice? This question takes the reader back to the actual Mara. This Mara is a body in predicament in Germany. Before Germany, Akobi's "seemingly house" in Accra (according to the narrator's feeling) is the first place where that body starts turning asunder.

Beyond the Horizon as a narrative unfolds from a self assessment of the narrator's body. It means that Mara's body dictates her past events from the beginning to the end. This narrative system buys into A. Fausto-Sterling's idea (1992, p. 5) that we are acted by our body. Under that dictation, Mara describes Akobi's house that harbours her body in Accra:

Our room itself was just large enough for Akobi's dried-grass mattress, an old three-legged centre-table whose missing fourth leg had been substituted by a high pile of cement bricks pieces, and an armchair. In one corner was Akobi's one and only portmanteau and my one and only wicker basket that served as my portmanteau. From one corner to the opposite corner was a short drying line on which Akobi always hung his grey trousers, white shirt and black tie that constituted his daily office wear, while below it his Beatles boots found their resting place. (pp. 9-10)

There is a parallel between the place described in the passage and Mara's actual body in Germany. In fact, the narrator relates this sequence of her story because she is compelled to establish the relationship between her body and this step of her voyage. The agent of that obligation is the body. In this line, Mara's body becomes the main manager of her story-telling skills and performance. One can admit that there is a pact between the "narrator" and her "body" since they are interwoven in the story line. Professional managers like B. Kenneth and J.

Spencer (1996, p. 95) would say Mara's body is that "One Minute Manager [able] to get [Mara] to do what [it] wants [her] to do". This efficient management rests upon the implication of the body in the main character's story. In other words, Mara would have nothing to relate if she refused to stare at her image/body.

From this perspective, *Beyond the Horizon* can be seen as a narrative motioned by Mara's body. From sequence to sequence, the narrative reveals how two different images from two different spaces or circumstances conduct the artistic creation. These two images are that of a body, Mara's one. The first image, of course not factual, concedes the second image, which is of the actual Mara in Europe. More importantly, the narrator ends her narrative with a conclusive note on her disintegrated body condemned to stay forever in Germany because it is no more worth returning to her native Ghana. She confesses: "Material things are all I can offer them. As for myself, there is nothing dignified and decent left of me to give them" (p. 140). The very last sentence contains the scope of Mara's body in the narrative to the extent that it stands out to be the beginning and the end of the whole story and makes up Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. But using the female body in such a stance, the author shapes a poetics positing the body as a denouncing strategy in feministic writing as the following analysis deals with.

2. Poetics of the body: a denouncing strategy

The female body, more than a demiurge of *Beyond the Horizon*, constitutes the skeleton structuring Amma Darko's novel. From that stance, the novel can be seen as the embodiment of female body also used as the paradigm of feminist writing. In so doing, Amma Darko espouses L. Irigaray's theoretical reaction (1985) to gender oppression called "womanspeak" consisting in subverting sexism from a psychological point of view. But here, the writer inclines her policy to contextual reality that reveals the question of identity within global arena. Perceived as a more tensed and controversial area, the global space from which Amma Darko questions the African women's body calls upon her postcolonial mind of feminism in the use of female body in aesthetic work.

The female body is used from different perspectives by Amma Darko in *Beyond the Horizon*. These perspectives are materialised in the form of literary devices throughout the novel. The very first paragraph of the novel tells the reader about how the body is propelled in the text:

I am sitting here before my oval mirror. I like oval things. They are not too round and not too square, is what I say when people ask why my everything is oval, mirror, tables, all. Truth is, I just like ovals. I find them serene and they dispense more sympathy to me than other shapes. (p. 1)

First of all, it is quite difficult to talk about body when one reads the above sequence because it is not obviously distinguishable. But with a deep scanning, the reader comes across the body to the extent that the first sentence makes it obvious. To 'be before an oval mirror' means that the mirror conveys to the speaker (narrator) her own body image and makes her know who/what she is. Then the relationship between that mirror and the speaker discloses the narrator's emotional attitude in accordance with her body being similar to the oval mirror and many other things in the same shape. There is a kind of conformity between the body and the oval shape.

Within this first paragraph of the text, one can notice the use of simile as a figure of speech in which the writer embeds the female body. If the reader tries to put it in more noticeable way, he or she can say Mara's body is like the oval mirror or the oval tables in the rooms. So Mara is oval, she is not "too round" nor "too square" as she confesses with emotion. At this level, Mara's body is being rooted in the text and presents at the same time a poetic complaint from a feminist voice. This voice reveals the pain behind the oval shape. That is why the speaker changes her mood just at the beginning of the second paragraph:

I am staring painfully at an image. [...] and from my left and right, I keep hearing chuckles and pantings, wild bedspring creaks, screamings oohs and yelling aahs. They are coming from the rooms that are the same as mine, rooms where the same things are done as they are in mine. And in all of them there are pretty women like myself, one in each room waiting to be used and abused by strange men. (p. 1)

The excerpt helps distinguish two bodies contrasted in the text. One is in presentia representing the current/actual Mara and the other in absentia portraying or reminiscing about the once upon a time Mara. Both of them are acted in the text and they foreshadow a mindset of denunciation or refusal. So the idea of "pretty women" can be discussed because it is froth of meanings as put in the text. If "pretty women" is associated to what is done in the different rooms, it connotes malleable body ready to be used or to fit men's desire. In this line, "pretty women" suggests Amma Darko's ironical perception of prostitutes in Germany. On the other hand, the same phrase calls for these

women's past image before entering prostitution. For example, the Mara before Germany or Accra: She is a sane and pure African woman. Therefore, "pretty women" determines two dissimilar bodies: A wreck one, but tangible or present and a source body which is sound but intangible. This dichotomous appearance of female body in *Beyond the Horizon* expounds the feministic project of denouncing how capitalism manages women's body.

With regard to what has been previously said, female body in *Beyond the Horizon* presents both moral and depraved side. The protagonist's reaction to depraved side of her body underlines a female focalisation through which the reader perceives a dissent voice. The dissension goes against a visual body sunk into disintegration as the following voice reveals:

Tears are building up in my eyes. They always do when I stare at what is left of me. They are blurring my vision and are slowly rolling down my face in an agonising rhythm like beating of the devil's own drums...ta...ta...ta...dropping down one after the other, painfully slow, painfully gradual, **onto these two flabby, floppy dropping things I call my breasts, my tired graceless bosom.** (p. 2; my stress)

Sorrow, disdain, and vengeance characterize the voice in the above speech. There are emotions exhumed by the protagonist's stare onto her own body/herself. This self is unrecognisable because it has been disintegrated or disvalued. The stressed part of the excerpt confirms the contempt the protagonist feels about herself. As the depreciative adjectives are uttered as follows "flabby, floppy [...] tired", the female body is then portrayed as a failure or disgust so that it projects Mara as a distraught soul. It also splits the narrator into two distinct presences in the text. The first presence is the one we can grab within the last part of the quotation and the second can be distinguished in the voice relating the story.

Taking into account these presences, the reader remarks a feminist stance consisting of rallying women behind moralistic preservation of female body. That view may go against the materialistic thoughtlessness defended by C. Guillaumin (1978, p. 12) who thinks that female body in prostitution is less used than in private or marital use. Here, Amma Darko debunks Guillaumin's construct and postulates that the private, even if it is strenuous and oppressive,

“This dichotomous appearance of female body in *Beyond the Horizon* expounds the feministic project of denouncing how capitalism manages women's body.”

preserves women from depravation and may not cause serious corporeal damages to Mara as she confesses in this passage:

I have yet another handicap too, my little finger. [...] It's bent. Its bone's been displaced and it looks weird. I see it all the time and I loathe it [...] The injury was done to me by one of my best spenders, a giant of a man but who always, when he comes to me, cries like a baby in my arms, telling me about his dictator wife whom he loves but who treats him so bad she makes him lick her feet at night. Then filled with the loathing and rage of revenge for this wife he'd love to kill, but lacking the guts even to pull her hair, he imagines me to be her, orders me to shout I am her, and does horrible things to me like I never saw a man ever do to a woman before in the bushes I hail from. (p. 3)

The female body is described here as a physical malady inscribed in the text. It substantiates the narrator's will to subvert prostitution in positing it as a place where female body undergoes ruthless treatments. The extract shows that female body is used as raw material or the object at the foreground of the exchange. From that paramount position, the body is the first exposure which creates mercantile context between the prostitute and the clients or "spenders" as Mara calls them. The spender is also a villain without pity for the body. Therefore the contact between both aforementioned entities in trading is like a battle ground dominated by the one who spends the money. The way Mara paints "her best spender's" attitude can give us an idea about the deal: It is just a deal between a servile body and a super-arrogant ego. The latest is often a frustrated man who is in search of the ideal place where he can regain his lost authority or virility.

It is exactly the quest of affirmation and excessive virility that victimise the body on sale. The scene depicted in the quote suggests a crash between a solid object and a weak one. The probable result of such a collision is the destruction of the weaker body handicapped by the stronger one in the stance of a spender or client as one can notice in the quotation. Here again, Amma Darko utilizes the female body to call upon sensibility through victimization. For instance, the female body is written as sexual requisites deeply abused by users so that the mere look at that body sinks Mara into turmoil.

The turmoil structures a complaint against a social or mercantile practice: Prostitution. This denouncing strategy unfolds as the narrator or the victim assesses her body. Amma Darko's Mara makes the reader realise how she is forcibly initiated in that job:

Where we drove to I didn't know, but I was certain that it was outside Hamburg. Eventually we stopped in front of a gate and some bushes [...] I didn't know what in God's name could happen in a place like this, but I was with Akobi and I felt he at least knew he was about. And, oh yes, he certainly did. [...] Akobi returned some minutes later and brought me a glass of wine. Then I was left on my own again for a long, long while during which I finished off my wine and waited. Then something started happening to me. I was still conscious but I was losing control of myself. [...] Then suddenly the room was filled with people, all men, and they were talking and laughing and drinking. And they were completely naked! There must have been at least ten men for what I saw were at least twenty images. Then they around me, many hairy bodies, and they were stripping me, fondling me, playing with my body, pushing my legs apart, wide, wide apart. As for the rest of the story, I hope that the gods of Naka didn't witness it. (pp. 110-11)

The extract underlines three steps of Mara's baptism into prostitution. Naivety, unconsciousness, and passivity are the key words highlighting these steps. From the first to the third step, one thing comes into the reader's mind: Mara's body is under assault. The very last part of the quotation justifies this remark. "Stripping", "fondling", "playing", and "pushing" are action verbs showing that Mara's body is assaulted. It also convinces the reader of how the female body enters a vicious circle. Then it falls into the line of a portrayal that reflects the female body in terms of violence and crisis. When that violence is twofold, the crisis raises questions to prostitution as an industry run by men.

Body manipulation puts forth physical and psychological violence that Amma Darko denounces in *Beyond the Horizon* through Mara's situation in Germany. The play of body as a sexual ground makes the reader realise how pitiful the narrator is while relating her own story. Such a strategy calls upon a resistance to dehumanisation through the same body as it is scrutinized in the following chapter.

3. The Female Body as a Tool of Resistance

From Accra to Germany, Mara is under patriarchal rule. Her countrymen Akobi and Ossey constrain her to anything they want her to do. Once into prostitution Mara becomes a strong protagonist utilizing her body to subvert the myth built by the aforementioned male characters. The female body as a resisting tool can be analysed through the different metamorphosing figure the

protagonist (Mara) goes through as the narrative evolves according to the different spaces. This body-resistance starts unconsciously to reach a conscious and willing approach to/against oppression.

As a married woman, the first figure Mara epitomises is the battered woman/wife. One can admit that Mara has a strong body because she bears the brunt of Akobi's brutish treatment without succumbing. Just after her first astonishment that makes her say, "I understood the world no more" (p. 11), Mara realises that she must sacrifice her body for her marriage to work. It is a resolution from the scene she describes as follows:

Akobi returned home that night just after midnight. Though I heard him I continued to feign a deep sleep, when suddenly I felt a painful kick in my ribs. Astounded to the point of foolishness, I jumped up in confusion. What had I done? He had never kicked me nor slapped me before so what was wrong? He wasn't drunk. Before I could ask what had I done, he bellowed angrily, 'you foolish lazy idiot! What do you think you are sitting here all day doing nothing and yet refusing to work for Mama Kiosk. You think there is a pension house here?' (p. 11)

“women’s obedience to men includes the latter’s sanction upon the first, their sovereignty within the family”

The scene is the one through which Akobi baptises Mara by battering the woman fiercely. But Mara is trapped by cultural bounds that prevent her from dissolving the marriage. It means that the married woman should stay strong despite the treatment her husband inflicts on her. Or the rhetoric questions ending the above quotation can help understand how the husband is bossy and the status he (Akobi) scarves for his woman. So Mara is a battered woman within Akobi's courtyard.

In such a circumstance, the success of Mara's marriage depends not much on her will, but on the solidity of her own body because it is that body which receives Akobi's daily fury. In other words, the woman is a customized victim of domestic violence. She fears no more her husband's punch which she was experiencing on a daily basis to the point of seeing this ordeal as part of her destiny as she says: "I stood there, waiting for the doom I knew was coming. My fate" (p. 19). Resigning herself to such a destiny, the narrator realises that her survival depends on her body. Therefore, Mara realises that the best attitude she can have is to stay strong, resistant and courageous with a body ready to receive her husband's fury.

Mara's attitude reveals what some traditional rules mean when a woman enters the marital institution. In fact, women's obedience to men includes the

latter's sanction upon the first, their sovereignty within the family and on the members of that family with women at the brunt of that brutish reign. Being resolute to bear such a power, Amma Darko's protagonist gets out of detention and exercises a kind of power on her own body. It means that she is no more frightened by her husband corporeal punishment. Since then, Mara stands for a reckless character facing her husband on behalf of her body. That's why she succeeds in controlling herself and the cash she makes by prostituting herself.

The step of prostitution is a meaningful stage of Mara's conscious opposition to her husband supremacy on her. At the beginning, Mara was set into prostitution and Akobi to benefit from. As soon as the woman realises that over-control by Akobi, she manages to rectify by renegotiating the contract with Peppy. Things begin as the following passage tells us:

The situation was this: the three of us were watching a video film that showed me completely naked, with men's hands moving all over my body. Then some held my two legs wide apart while one another, men, many men, white, black, brown, even one who looked Chinese, took turns upon me. All this was captured clearly on the video film. And this was what Osey and Akobi blackmailed me with so I agreed to do the job at Peppy. (p. 115)

While reminding herself of this scene, Mara is now at the stage of action. She wonders how from passivity she can turn into an active woman with a complete control of her body within prostitution. This quest sets her into motion so that her colleague Kaye exclaims:

At least, Mara! You have woken up. I have been waiting for you to wake up by yourself. I could have waken you up, of course, but in this business, which operates in a world of its own and is far colder than the cold world outside, it is always better to wake up by yourself. Only then do you fight to remain awake because you know how difficult that waking up has been and what a long time and a lot of thinking it takes. And you also know what it means to be asleep. You understand? (p. 119)

What Kaye expresses gives more clues about the new Mara. It is the Mara who has decided to sink into prostitution for herself and no more for Akobi and Osey. That is why she says "[...] having resigned myself to my karma and feeling confident about myself because of my new resident status: what will be will be" (p. 121). In other words, the woman remains a prostitute but she resumes handing money over to Akobi. Resigning herself to her fate, Mara utilises her body to set up a mechanism for freedom and gain control over her job.

Mara's process to control her identity suggests a consciousness that reveals her actions in self-defence and vengeance on Akobi. Not without danger and pain, the protagonist comes out of her oppressors' subjugation on behalf of her body on sale as she tells: "Taking on seven men a day was crucifying but I was aiming for a certain amount of money, plenty money, and the sooner I raised it better, since the longer the time, the greater the danger of Pompey finding me out" (p. 120). It comes up that Mara gets her freedom from badness because postcolonial feminists' hint of female body is more moralistic and set against deprecation through prostitution. That's why most of these theoreticians refuse to buy into C. Delphy (2003) and C. Guillaumin's idea (1976) that collective use of female (prostitution) body may be less oppressive than private use (marriage). But one can remark that Amma Darko makes this argument acceptable into African feminism to the extent that, apart from Mara, some of her major female characters such as Tika in *The Housemaid* (1998), 5th Wife and Finger in *Not Without Flowers*, (2007) control men with their body/sex.

From distancing to appropriation, men's greediness of female body becomes a female weapon to empowerment and a hindrance to male supremacy on women's sexuality or body. This statement is confirmed in *Not Without Flowers* when Amma Darko's narrator comments on Finger's attitude as follows:

She grew up under the influence of society's salient acceptance of the culture of the objectification of the female body. While some complained and fought against that culture, she employed it to her advantage. The influence created a certain mentality in her mind, that her good looks were a means of survival and a form of security. (2007, p. 325)

The above remark made by the narrator subsumes the idea of women's self-control of their body within a society readily using women as sexual object from all points of view. Since then, Mara's attitude can be understood as a compelled reaction to the established psychology, unshakable and just requiring adaptation. It's worth trying this method because it provides Mara with freedom from her devilish husband. It also allows her to get a legal status in Germany. Priding herself on getting control on herself and sending Akobi to jail at the end of the tale, Mara becomes a prototype of a postcolonial feminist with an additional method that consists in returning men's weapon to men. In short, the "male gaze" is falling into its own trap.

Conclusion

Female body is of a great deal in gender discourse. Currently approached as the first place of women's subjugation, it has been argued as a counter-weapon to patriarchy in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. Therefore, the article debunks the pessimistic traditional view of female body in gender narrative and sets it as a key element of consciousness in female artistry. *Beyond the Horizon* as Amma Darko's postcolonial feministic discourse reveals that the narrative is built upon female body. It means that women's texts are created from their body through which the reader comes across a new feminist perspective acted on behalf of what exposes female lot. Such an approach celebrates an aesthetic grounded in the body with a reactionary attitude. The case of Mara unravels the body as a tool of resistance and a way to self-control or freedom from patriarchy. That process may seem absurd or ambiguous, but it comes as an extra-support to the orthodox of postcolonial feminism sometimes too moralistic to end up gender oppression in postcolonial society.

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