

Trans-corporeally entangled black body: Nnedi Okorafor's Africanfuturistic speculative fiction Binti Novella Trilogy



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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 26 June 2025

Revised: 2 September 2025

Accepted: 11 September 2025

Published: 19 September 2025

Keywords

Abject bodies
Africanfuturism
Black body politics
Black female body
Identity
Nigerian fiction
Post-human
Speculative fiction
Trans-corporeality.

This paper examines trans-corporeal entanglements in Okorafor's speculative Africanfuturistic fiction, the Binti Trilogy. Okorafor's novella narrates the journey of Binti, a Himba girl who traverses through the galaxies, facing various bodily mutations and cultural transformations. Through these changes, she realizes her interconnectedness with the environment, technology, and society. The entangled body of the female protagonist breaks the binaries that give rise to discrimination and undermine Black female bodies. Binti embraces changes that alter her identity and physical nature, dissociating her social position as a Himba girl. This study employs close textual analysis using Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality to investigate the fragile and frequently precarious nature of Black female bodies and the societal and psychological problems that trans-corporeal mutations entail. Binti provides a powerful Africanfuturistic lens combined with Black feminist and intersectional ecofeminist perspectives to examine how Okorafor's fiction depicts identity as fluid, relational, and materially embedded in the Black female bodies. The analysis reveals that Binti's altered body destabilizes binary categories of human/alien and natural/technological by depicting the bodily change as a form of adaptive agency rather than loss. Such transformations resist colonial, patriarchal, and ecological exploitation, presenting the Black female body as an active site of negotiation between tradition and futurity.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a detailed textual analysis of Africanfuturism and Black female body politics through the lens of trans-corporeality theory. It is among the few studies that examine race, gender, body politics, and ecology collectively. The work is original, unpublished, and adheres to academic standards.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Black female bodies have always been represented in the margins as a spectacle of violence and as a target for brutality. George Yancy argues that the Black body is “an entity that is to be feared, disciplined, and relegated to those marginalized, imprisoned, and segregated spaces that restrict Black bodies from 'disturbing' the tranquility of white life, white comfort, white embodiment, and white being” (Yancy, 2016). This is the aftermath of the hegemonic construct that the African Black bodies are unintelligent and devoid of spirit and soul. However, African tradition and cosmology connect the human body and spirit; they are not separate, but rather entwined. Peterson (2001), in the preface to the book (Bennett & Dickerson, 2001), points out that the colonial project of dissociating the soul and body of Black people is an aftermath of the “institutionalization of slavery and racialized violence” (p. x). Further, these bodies have long been the terrain upon which cultural and social dominance, racial othering, and power systems are often inscribed. In this context, the Black female body becomes a contested site, rendered visible only through tropes

of hypersexuality, grotesqueness, and servitude, while simultaneously being stripped of subjectivity and spiritual agency.

Within this framework, *Nnedi Okorafor's Binti: The Complete Trilogy (2015-2019)* is analyzed to understand the fluid interconnected nature of human bodies. The study argues that Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality provides a critical framework for understanding the gendered misrepresentation and racialization of bodies in speculative fiction. The theory engages with the fluid and interconnected nature of the human body, which is in constant entanglement with both natural and social forces. This speculative fiction series documents the fictional journey of the eponymous protagonist to an intergalactic university. The Hugo- and Nebula-winning trilogy follows the female protagonist who deviates from the Western discourse. Binti, the protagonist, utilizes her deep mathematical skills to enter into a meditative state (treeing) using equations to create a communication current between objects and mediums of life, creating harmony. This ordinary girl, belonging to the Himba tribe, tops the most prestigious exam conducted by the intergalactic university through her extraordinary mathematical skills. However, her success is not accepted by her parents or tribe, as the fact that she topped the exam leads to a potential severance with the tribe's belief system. The Himba tribe believes in staying rooted and connected to their land. She even receives death threats from other tribes who believe that she does not deserve to be learning with other gifted students, but Binti thinks that her life is different. Binti escapes in the middle of the night, carrying a piece of her land, Otjize (a mixture of red clay and oils which the women in her tribe apply on their skin), to the prestigious Oomza University (a planet-sized institution and the most prestigious university in the known galaxy, made up of only 5% human). This intergalactic journey from the Khoush launch pad on the Miri 12 (a type of intergalactic spaceship closely related to a shrimp) reveals her struggle to sustain her roots and tradition while her drive and curiosity make her want to connect and understand the "Other". The form of speculative fiction written by and about Black women expands the boundaries of the Black female bodies, contributing to and rearticulating the discourse on the contemporary Black female bodies in fiction. These bodies no longer exist merely as a site of trauma or cultural domination but become a fluid, transformative force that connects with land, memory, spirit, and scientific imaginaries in a futuristic setting.

Binti's journey is a striking illustration of trans-corporeal entanglement, even as a Himba girl, she had control over mathematical currents that made her a master harmonizer (a gift to bring harmony so delicate that we can make atoms caress each other like lovers). The narratives foreground the intimate and political entanglement of body, nature, and nurture, rejecting Western binaries of mind/body, spirit/flesh, or culture/nature. Binti initially experiences oppression and unwarranted discrimination she even has panic attacks that are the aftermath of her PTSD. Her PTSD stemmed from witnessing the death of students and people on the Miri Ship by the alien species Meduse. At the end of the journey, when Binti returns to Oomza University, she reclaims her body not just as a site of resistance but as a living archive of power, which is an entanglement of ancestral memory, ecological justice, nature, and female empowerment. Her entire journey rearticulates and rewrites the boundaries of Black body politics. Here, speculative fiction becomes the site for exploring these reconnections, challenging the colonial logics that once dehumanized the Black female body and forging a new politics of embodiment that is political, spiritual, ecological, technological, and liberatory. The counter-narrative offered here is one where the Black female body is neither hyper-visible nor invisible, but vibrantly alive, deeply connected to the natural world, and central to reimagining a more just and inclusive future.

Identity becomes more layered and complex as each encounter changes, adding to her physiology and genetics. Despite her appearance as a stereotypical hero figure who employs force and inhumane strength, Binti fights against broader misunderstandings that are both corporeal and communal, aiming to "defy gender stereotypes that cast women and girls as emotional, lacking decision-making abilities, and weak" (Oku, 2021). Binti struggles to balance her new identity with social and familial expectations. This paper depicts how the protagonist uses her body to negotiate terms with the oppressive regimes, further reclaiming her body as an epistemic site that disembarks from

colonial interpretations. The changes in her body provide an alternative understanding of social reality, and the "regulative principles of *epistemic friction*" (Medina, 2013) which arise from the intermingling of opposing natures of both the oppressor and the oppressed. The study engages in problematizing the historical portrayal of Black female bodies in media and fiction as an emblematic representation of violence and static, rigid materiality. Through the lens of trans-corporeality, which identifies bodies as fluid and porous, the study intends to shift the discourse on Black female bodies in fiction by locating and emphasizing Black female bodies' absorbable, expandable, and transformable nature.

The trilogy is modeled upon Okorafor (2019) vision of Africanfuturism, and the protagonist is deeply rooted in African tradition and myths. She subscribes to her tribe's cultural values but simultaneously expands on the futuristic aspects of African-based science and technology (Okorafor, 2019). Her body initially is an example of a vessel that solely holds her tribe's tradition, covered in the red clay Otjize, anklets on her legs to drive away snakes, her African bushy hair plaited in tessellated codes rolled in the same clay that covers her body. Binti's body, characterized by its dark color, is entangled with the alien Meduse species. This is reflected when her hair turns into translucent blue tentacles resembling the Meduse. Further, she is also connected to their hive mind, which holds deep values such as honor and war skills. Her third mutation happens when she comes in contact with the Enyi Zinariya tribe one of the old African tribes that had made contact with the aliens (gold people), who visited the Earth long ago. This interaction made them unique as they were infused with alien DNA into the tribe's system. This DNA created an alternate communication system within their body. These biological nanoids were passed on through generations as they are infused in their DNA. Because Binti was part Himba, her Enyi Zinariya part was dormant, and she had to undergo a ritual to awaken these nanoparticles in her DNA and establish the communication system, which is also connected to the long histories of alien technology that is integrated with their body. Binti's final trans-corporeal entanglement was with the sentinel exoskeleton ship Miri Third Fish New Daughter.

Although Binti tried to mediate peace between the warring tribes, the Khoush and the Meduse, she was caught in the crossfire and blown apart. The Meduse and the Himba tribe were deeply pained at the loss of their daughter. In order to give her a proper burial, she was prepared and was taken on the Miri Third New Daughter exoskeleton ship to the Saturn rings. The journey towards the Saturn rings creates a new entanglement, which shocks both Mwinyi and Okwu, who accompany Binti. Binti, who was dead and blown apart, was revived using the fresh microbes that inhabited the New Fish Miri chambers. The entanglements within her body help accommodate these microbes, and Binti is reborn. The microbes and the environment inside the New Daughter fish invaded her system, thus replenishing her and making her alive. Even though her entire DNA and cells resemble the bacteria and microbes, her consciousness is regained, and her self is still intact. Binti is connected to the exoskeleton ship she can expand her consciousness and combine it with the ship. The trans-corporeal setting in this part is very notable as it engages the body and the consciousness, and the soul remains intact even after death. The African belief that the body and the soul are connected and the body is not an empty hollow shell is highlighted and expanded through this entanglement.

The author makes a conscious effort not to mix the body with the Khoush, the other warring side, who are fair-skinned and highly prejudiced against all the other species. This is a conscious choice because all the transformations that Binti undergoes make her a hybrid, emphasizing a mixed nature. The changes are accepted within the species, and she expands, making her a part of each mutated species. However, the Khoush tribe symbolizes the exclusive and inaccessible White hegemonic culture. With all her mutations and changes, Binti will never be accepted into their traditional culture or society. Binti internalizes herself as an Other when she mentions "I was an outsider, I was outside" (Okorafor, 2019). This is rooted in her experiences with structured racism and gendered oppression. She was physically, socially, and culturally an outsider in her own eyes.

The constant entanglements that Binti undergoes through violent attacks, negotiation, and exploration cause her to metamorphose her physical body repeatedly, thereby redefining her identity. This realignment of the Black body with the nonhuman material world constitutes the crux of the trans-corporeal theory, as propounded by Alaimo

(2018). Alaimo (2018) stresses the concept of "trans-corporeal materiality," which is "a conception of the body that is neither essentialist, nor genetically determined, nor firmly bounded, but rather a body in which social power and material-geographic agencies intra-act" (Alaimo, 2010). She argues that through trans-corporeality, "all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them" Alaimo (2018). The metamorphosis of the Black body of the protagonist and the nonhuman materialities presents the permeability of the human body in an imagined world. Ironically, Binti's status shifts from that of a subaltern slave to that of an individual with agency only when she leaves her tribe and experiences physical changes due to the violence she endures.

The fictional series explores Binti's engagement with power structures and aspects of systemic oppression within a futuristic setting. A central argument of this study is the interconnectedness of epistemological relations with the material world. Bodily entanglement raises questions about power dynamics, the potential erasure of a distinct Black female identity, and the omnipresent gaze of a dominant culture. The series presents an intricate negotiation of bodily power within the context of Black female fiction. Binti is introduced as a young 16-year-old secretly escaping her home. The author emphasizes her vulnerable situation as she prays silently to leave unnoticed. However, her attachment to her land is evident through the Otjize, which, when applied, functions as a second skin and a powerful identification marker of the Himba community. The Himba are known for their technological ingenuity and their avoidance of conflict, as they "are happy and uninterested in weapons and war," and "can protect ourselves" (Okorafor, 2019). Meduse were the enemies of the Khoush, who treated the Himba like slaves (p. 260). Khoush, the dominant group, "settled on the most water-soaked lands on Earth, a planet made mostly of water, and they saw the Meduse as inferior" and considered the Himba to be beggars, polluted, and unclean creatures (p. 290). Binti's role as an ambassador for the Meduse during their conflict reflects the Himba tribe's connection to the land:

I come from a people who live near a small salty lake on the edge of a desert. On my people's land, fresh water, water humans can drink, is so little that we do not use it to bathe as so many others do. We wash with otjize, a mix of red clay from our land and oils from our local flowers (p. 46).

This quote about the Himba tribe is an exemplary portrayal that depicts the African futuristic nature of the text, which showcases how the natives have integrated nature and technology into their daily and material bodies. Further, these interconnections, which are based on age-old rituals and practices, serve as a practical means of adapting and expanding their traditions and technology through cohabitation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of Black bodies being illegible and unintelligible is contested and studied in many articles, especially in Dana Murphy's work "Imagining Black Stemminist Care: Nnedi Okorafor's Binti." The study argues that Black Stemminism is a theoretical approach that combines STEM subjects with Black Feminist principles that embrace cultural and gender diversity. In the narrative of Binti's experiences, the practices of Black Stemminism result in radical changes both in the body-mind continuum of the protagonist and in the discourses of the societies she encountered. In support of her thesis about Binti's game-changing pedagogy, Dana Murphy quotes Katherine McKittrick's statement about "how Black creatives work with scientific concepts in innovative and humanizing ways" (Murphy, 2024). Brenda Alvarez-Lora is another critic who explores the pedagogic value of the Binti narrative and points out how Black womanhood is reimagined in a technologically driven future. Similarly, Melanie Marotta opines that (Okorafor, 2019) fiction combines African culture and futuristic science fiction across the series, creating a blend of themes related to identity, belonging, and transformation (Alaimo, 2018). Janet Rosemarie Seow examines the impact of Africanfuturism as a defamiliarizing strategy to address normalized (Western, white) childhood and notions of futurity for Black children and youth (2022). Thus, from the foregoing discussion, we see that most of the studies on (Okorafor, 2019) work discusses the African perspective and the body's identity. However, the idea of engagement

with the Black female body and the contribution of fictional works to the ongoing debates on Black female body politics have been more or less overlooked.

(Okorafor, 2019) narrative resonates with the concept of trans-corporeality, which explores how bodies are interconnected and influenced by their environments and encounters with more-than-human entities. Binti faces repeated entanglements that transform her material body and enhance her abilities. The entanglement, "a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, ignored or uninvited" (Nuttall, 2009), shows the transformability and adaptability of the human body. Similarly, Alaimo states, "the trans-corporeal subject is generated through and entangled with biological, technological, economic, social, political, and other systems, processes, and events, at vastly different scales" (Alaimo, 2018). In this context, Binti's body is a trans-corporeal subject entangled and entwined with every system that comes into contact, transforming and expanding her body.

Invisibility and oppression against Black females are still prevalent in the public arena (Alvarez-Lora, 2024). All these discourses branch out from the corporeality of the Black female body, as female bodies are noted for their hypersexualized or invisible discourses. The intersectionality of the oppression of Black women, being Black and female, intensifies their experience and further pushes them to the margins. The Black female body is an oxymoronic site, simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible. These bodies often become invisible in spaces advocating for social justice and hyper-visible when a problem arises. Okorafor, through her Africanfuturistic fiction, discusses the adaptability, transformability, and expandability of Black female bodies, which are intelligent and legible in nature. The *Binti* series extensively uses bodily mutations to examine the power dynamics within society and in all hierarchical structures. These shifts occur at various levels, from intimate personal developments to significant cultural and political shifts. Each of Binti's physical mutations is carefully crafted, fracturing each power plane in the apocalyptic warring society. Binti is a tribal girl with multiple entanglements that challenge the normative boundaries between future and past, natural and artificial, female and non-human. This process infuses her with new powers and places her in settings where she must negotiate her new identity within her group and the larger interplanetary civilization.

In *Bodily Natures*, Alaimo highlights how global toxin flow disturbs the concept of a "bounded human subject," thereby revealing the inseparability of human beings from the environment (Alaimo, 2010). This study argues that bodies that are highlighted as bounded by biological systems are porous entities with a free flow of substances and the environment. This emphasis on the fluidity of the body breaks rigid divisions and discriminatory categories. Another critical component of speculative fiction is the interaction of trans-corporeal entities with technology and culture. Whether bioengineering, cybernetic augmentation, or other technical interventions, technology is the mediator or catalyst for trans-corporeal relationships in numerous narratives. This intersection between body, technology, and environment presents essential issues regarding human evolution's future, humanity's nature, and the morality of manipulating technology (Balsamo, 1996). Ultimately, Binti's body encompasses multitudes beyond the aliens, bionanoid particles, and fresh microbes from a technologically evolved sentient ship. This demonstrates her body's porous nature, identity, and self. As Alaimo notes,

As the material self cannot be disentangled from networks that are simultaneously economic, political, cultural, scientific, and substantial, what was once the ostensibly bounded human subject finds itself in a swirling landscape of uncertainty where practices and actions that were once not even remotely ethical or political matters suddenly become the very stuff of the crises at hand (Alaimo, 2010).

This is visible when Binti's body absorbs and transforms, and through this very biological and psychological change, defies the discriminatory and regulatory norms and stereotypes associated with the Black female body. Binti is often puzzled by her new self. She confesses her fear to her psychologist when she says, "I like who I am. I love my family. I don't want to change, to grow! [...] Am I human?" (Okorafor, 2019). Binti's DNA showed a mix of "Himba, Enyi Zinariya, and Meduse... but not so much New Fish" (p. 347). The doctor adds, "But your microbes are mostly

from New Fish, yes. Your microbes exist within your cells, so this blend is what makes you, you" (p. 347). All these elements, along with the trans-corporeal entanglements that consist of more-than-human entities, assert the porous nature of bodies and the fluidity of identity and belongingness.

Bodily mutations are used extensively in the *Binti* series to examine power dynamics. These changes can be perceived at many levels, ranging from intimate, personal developments to large-scale social shifts. This complete process subverts their historical marginality, which describes these bodies as mere shells devoid of soul and agency. This argument further cements the idea of dehumanization that is associated with Black slave bodies. This expansion of the Black body symbolically represents the possibilities of a future where the dehumanization of the Black female body shifts to a site of rehumanization through transforming and adapting. The author frames these entanglements and mutations as a reclamation. The acceptance of all parts, including her rebirth, is a declaration of agency and reclaiming the autonomy of body and choice against colonial, patriarchal, ableist, and capitalist systems. The Black female body is not only adaptable but expansive capable of interfacing with science, alien technology, and the organic, thereby reshaping what it means to be embodied. Her journey through space and the desert, where her body connects with various species, tribes, sentient organic technology, and spirits, becomes a literal enactment of trans-corporeality a reminder that the body is always already enmeshed in ecological, cultural, social, and political systems.

The proposed research addresses these gaps by examining how the new Africanfuturistic fiction by Nigerian female writers challenges and reimagines the representation of Black female bodies. Black speculative fiction writers emphasize the significance of Black bodies, engaging in the re-inscription of meanings and associations related to dehumanized, static bodies. Scholars such as Oku, in "Africanfuturism and the Reframing of Gender in the Fiction of Nnedi Okorafor," Alvarez-Lora in "The Harmonization of Identities and the Roots of Resistance through an Africanfuturist Lens in Nnedi Okorafor's *Binti*: The Complete Trilogy," and Joshua Burnett in "The Great Change and the Great Book: Nnedi Okorafor's Postcolonial, Post-Apocalyptic Africa and the Promise of Black Speculative Fiction," engage with Okorafor's works in detail. However, they overlook the decolonial project of the Black bodies, which Okorafor (2019) undertakes in her work. This study examines how the author shifts the Western colonial project, which undermines Black bodies as hollow, rigid, and unintelligible, thereby subverting the political, cultural, and materialistic meanings associated with these bodies. Okorafor (2019) centers the Black female experience to subvert existing stereotypes regarding the transformability, expandability, and adaptability of Black female bodies.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study follows a close reading of the *Binti* novella and the short story by Okorafor (2019). The data for the study rests on the instances depicted in the novel, using the theoretical framework of trans-corporeality proposed by Stacy Alaimo. The study engages with ecocriticism, Black feminism, and Black body politics. The study utilizes qualitative literary analysis and hence does not depend upon empirical data. The discussion section and conclusion are based on reading the text through a socio-political and literary lens.

4. DISCUSSION

The present paper examines the *Binti* series using the theoretical frameworks provided by trans-corporeality and posthumanism to reinterpret the nature of Black female bodies in literature. In doing so, it highlights their significance as sites where dominant Western hegemonic attitudes are subverted, allowing these bodies to emerge as agents of resistance and liberation. By integrating futuristic, posthuman, and ecocritical perspectives, the paper aims to reframe discourses related to embodiment, subjectivity, and political agency. Traditional narratives that stereotyped Black female bodies as unchanging sites of trauma, violation, or unintelligibility are challenged and rewritten to demonstrate how these bodies serve as sites of negotiation and sociopsychological reinvention. The characters in the *Binti* series reconfigure these bodies as dynamic, adaptive, and materially intelligent entities that are not confrontational but possess agency.

A close textual analysis of the series shows how literary representations of Black female bodies refuse to adhere to the rigid binaries of human/non-human, self/other, and victim/perpetrator. Rather, they move with ontological fluidity to an alternative paradigm in which the interwoven nature of the natural environment, technology, temporality, and memory allows for new modes of survival, presence, and becoming. This trans-corporeal entanglement in other words, this material and affective co-constitution of body, environment, and the inside-outside continuum highlights a body that does not merely bear history but rewrites and reclaims it.

The Black female body of the Binti series is thus a body that is not merely legible but also generative: that is, capable of forming new relationalities, intelligences, and futurities. Long having been marked as dehumanized or object in dominant discourses, it is reimagined as a harbinger of transformation an entity with agency that resists straitjacketing. Far from being passive victims of racist or patriarchal violence, trans-corporeal Black female bodies become spaces of epistemic innovation that bear the future more significantly than they bear scars of historical violence. Trans-corporeality becomes a force of liberation, deconstructing the inherited burden of objectification and replacing it with a radical vision of embodiment: intelligent, adaptable, resilient, grounded, and relearning and re-becoming according to the changing needs of time and place.

4.1. Trans-Corporeal Interactions and Assimilations That Open Up New Horizons

Identity in the *Binti* trilogy is inextricably tied to trans-corporeality as this series embraces the concept of porous bodies. As Alaimo argues, "Human corporeality, especially female corporeality, has been so strongly associated with nature in Western thought" (p.5). Even though Alaimo argues that the human body is "endowed with agency and substance," she says that the "critical engagement with the human body ends with the skin" (pp.9-10). Okorafor's writing starts with the skin, infusing the darker-skinned protagonist with science, magic, and transformative power. The writer places a fictional world that traverses the skin and body and situates bodies in visible, transformative, and political space.

In the first book of the series, Binti defies tradition and leaves her home to attend Oomza University on another planet. Binti's journey becomes a political and social stand against the restrictive nature of her own tribe. She acknowledges and reasons with the discrimination she faces throughout her journey. She is hyper-aware of her ethnicity, the color of her skin, and the social order to which she belongs. However, she acknowledges her social position as a Himba woman when she witnesses the mass massacre of her entire class on the ship. She witnesses the violence, which prompts her to be more vigilant and to try hard to survive. She calls upon the "Seven" (the cosmic beings the Himba worship) to save her. Even when the Meduse creature, Okwu, persuades her to die valiantly, she fights them off using a mysterious stone. Finally, using her power to control the situation, she establishes a communication system and talks with Okwu. Here, the trans-corporeal entanglement opens up a catalyst for communication, changing different beings and making them understand each other. The communication device is a trans-corporeal entity activated using her fingerprint.

The active communication and her harmonizing skills help her to communicate with the Meduse called Okwu. Binti had to give up her Edan and accept the stinger attack to establish a permanent mode through body communication, connecting to their hive minds. Binti becomes an ambassador for the Meduse and a negotiator for peace for the people of Oomza Uni and the Meduse species. During the encounter with the Meduse, she fights with her Edan, a mysterious alien stone. Her fingerprint activates the Edan, and the stone proves fatal to the Meduse. The tribe was forced to take in Binti and assimilate her into the family. Binti's transformed hair transforms into ten thick okuoko, transparent blue tentacles with darker blue dots at the tips (Okorafor, 2019).

In the second book of the series, the protagonist grapples with her past trauma and how she confronts her fears. Being a Himba girl, her life has little value. Binti believes she has died twice, once when she left her home and a second time when the Meduse stung her with their stinger. This act changed her physical anatomy; the hair that was the identity marker of the Himba tribe transformed, distancing her from her roots. Her new connection with Okwu, a

young Meduse, highlights the potential for unity amidst differences, making her question the beliefs and set values. Binti initially failed to comprehend the associations that transformed her. However, her acceptance and understanding of these mutations reveal the depth of her interconnectedness with various societies. Further, her ancestral roots in the Enyi Zinariya tribe, which possesses alien DNA, emphasize the porous boundaries between human and non-human entities. Binti's inability to comprehend and embrace the changes of her physical body makes her uneasy as she feels like an Other. This results in her lashing out at the Enyi Zinariya priestess Ariya before the initiation as she proclaims herself to be unclean and speculates that Edan, the God stone that she found in the presence of Ariya during her rebellious phase, could be the reason for all her suffering. However, Ariya calms Binti by encouraging her to exercise her agency. This aligns with Alaimo's argument that "transcorporeality emphasizes that there are a multitude of possibilities for human agency" (Kuznetski & Alaimo, 2020). Ariya further argues, "If you hadn't found the Edan, would you have questioned and grown? Would you have gone? And even if you would have, would you be alive now?" (Okorafor, 2019). These questions make Binti accept the changes in her, and she is interpellated into viewing them as choices exercised by her (p. 192). As this reflects the portrayal of the human body as a battleground, it is always a matter of negotiating different intersectionalities at that moment (Kuznetski & Alaimo, 2020).

The series culminates in *Binti: The Night Masquerade* (2018), where Binti assumes the role of a peacemaker, demonstrating the power of cultural understanding and empathy. Her ultimate sacrifice and subsequent rebirth emphasize the human body's cyclical nature. Her new identity results from the fresh microbes that invade her body from the breathing chamber of New Fish, a Deep Miri sentient ship. In his book, *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy discusses the complexities of identity and culture beyond geographical and racial boundaries, embodying a fluid, cross-cultural dialogue (Gilroy, 1993). This idea is reflected in Binti's journey as she constantly engages in cultural and political negotiations.

Okorafor weaves Binti's hair into the narrative, making it a symbol of her evolving identity. Binti's identity as a Himba lies in her tessellated hair rolled in Otjize, as it holds ancient knowledge and wisdom of her tribe. Her struggles with self-acceptance, marked by her perceived impurity due to her Meduse-like 'okuoko' hair, mirror the challenges individuals face while navigating hybrid identities in the real world. The changes happening in Binti's body, instigated through violence and negotiation, affect her sense of self, her connection to her culture, and her ties to the worlds out there. Consequently, Binti's identity becomes a case study of the complexities of living in a state of flux, where self-preservation and adaptation must coexist.

4.2. Trans-Corporeal Politics of Black Womanhood

Trans-corporeal entanglements have been a recurring motif in science fiction, from cosmic encounters in the classics to exploring human-machine interfaces in post-humanistic texts. External and internal trans-corporeal associations modify Binti's identity throughout the series. The Himba tradition of applying red clay is an identity marker for Binti, asserting her identity as a Himba tribe woman. The act of braiding her hair in tessellated codes to use it as a medium of communication for ancestral knowledge represents her identity. On the other hand, her connection with the 'Edan,' also known as the 'God Stone,' an alien object she finds in the desert, through mathematical currents, is more deeply rooted in her psyche. Edan protects her from Meduse's attack. The current from Edan is fatal, and activating it further helps Binti engage in a conversation with a higher being inhabiting the deep spaces of the universe. In interconnected mutations and assimilations, the internalized bodily mutation is critical to comprehending identity and self. The 'Meduse-like tentacles,' 'the golden alien DNA,' and the 'fresh microbes' from the New Fish that revive Binti from death all internally entangle Binti. This study argues that Binti's entanglements construct an alternative social perception of the Black female body.

Binti's entanglement with the alien technology connects her with her past culture. Binti's story highlights the ideas of slavery, colonialism, and racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination in a futuristic setting. These body alterations challenge conventional social, biological, and political discourses by becoming a potent catalyst. Binti's

decision to board the ship from the Khoush land exposes her to anti-Black violence. The exclusion of the Black body from specific locations justifies and excuses the brutalities inflicted on these bodies when they gain access to such spaces. These violences are propagated through diminishing agency or outright harming and killing. The Himba tribe Binti belongs to is perceived as a slave tribe, and she is considered a slave, discriminated against in terms of physicality and intelligence. Here, the body politic is relevant as Binti, being a Black female belonging to a marginalized tribe, is subjected to all forms of structural oppression. Even though the Meduse accept her, she is not entirely part of it, as she carries part of her Himba nature. Binti also embraces her Enyi Zinariya (Desert people/Old African tribe) lineage and accepts it through corporeal linking to past memories. The entanglements help her expand her consciousness and understand the true nature of her fluid identity, which has been constricted and crushed under the Western or colonial project.

During the encounter with the Meduse, she fights with her Edan, a mysterious alien stone. Her fingerprint activates the Edan, and the stone proves fatal to the Meduse. The tribe was forced to take in Binti and assimilate her into the family. Binti's transformed hair transforms into ten thick okuoko, transparent blue tentacles with darker blue dots at the tips (Okorafor, 2019). Through the presentation of a heroine whose body is an epicenter of cultural history and radical transformation, Okorafor subverts the conventional portrayal of the Black female body. The biological change challenges social and political adaptability, and her body becomes visible and acknowledged by all.

Binti conforms to her familial and tribal responsibilities, making astrolabes by projecting mathematical currents, but she also embraces her curious mind. However, she hates being the successor of her father's shop, which forces her to be dictated by the traditional values of the Himba tribe. Binti's resilience and resistance during the attack of Moojha Ki-bira, or the 'Great Wave' (p.12), gained her acceptance into the Meduse community. Her resilient corporeal assimilations showcase her expandability and adaptability. Binti, during various instances of humiliation, sees herself as unclean and polluted because she can't control her body. Speculations and discrimination projected by her peers and others around her led to the loss of her bodily autonomy. Binti's reconciliation with her father's tribe is one of the turning points. Her reconnection to the spirit world by evoking deep culture proves the existence of a strong and powerful-willed soul within her. Finally, her ability to regenerate and rebirth by combining with the Miri-12 New Daughter further showcases the expandability of the Black female body. Binti's body engages with all of the entanglements perfectly.

Women are traditionally said to be closely associated with nature. Alaimo presents this argument in her text on *Material Feminism* (Lynda Birke qt in Alaimo, "Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethical Space of Nature," 2008, p. 240). In the Himba tradition, women are expected to be covered in Otjize, the red sacred clay, and "oils from local flowers" (Okorafor, 2019), and any woman without the clay is considered an abject or an outcast. The relation of women with clay is employed as a metaphor to project the idea of women being entangled with earth and nature, with the statement, "People are sons and daughters of the soil" (p. 28).

Kristeva (1982) describes the abject as "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (1982). The Himba are a secluded tribe, and the female members must adhere to strict rules and norms. In the fictional world of the *Binti* series, women are expected to find good men and marry them subsequently. Binti's sister Veera's marriage chain is deemed more valuable than Binti's entire existence, as Binti's decision to leave home renders her abject. Her entangled trans-corporeal body with the Meduse tribe makes her visible and comprehensible to all sects within the larger community. Her bodily entanglements, which make her hypervisible and bring a shift in her social position, now she is no longer a simple Himba girl. Her intergalactic travel disrupted her identity as a suitable Himba girl who is ready to take on the legacy of her father.

The encounter with the Meduse tribe and the Khoush disrupts her traditional notions of self. Every symbol the Himba wear on their bodies reflects their tradition and ancestry. In the texts, black hair has always symbolized resistance and communication. There is a long history associated with Black hair and its trans-corporeal affiliation that is much less explored. Various studies trace the idea of hairstyles and techniques attributed to Black hair back to

slavery (Brown, 2023). Focusing on the argument of the "resistance of Afro-descendant women who continue to weave their identity processes, in which hair has played a fundamental role" (p.1). DeNeen Brown argues that "using braids and combs, these women built maps of freedom on their heads to live, in addition to saving seeds, for resistance and food supply in places of struggle" (2023, p.1).

Binti's body changes after the Meduse encounter; it shifts her physical appearance; however, the Enyi Zinariya entanglement leads to her DNA alteration. This genetic mutation shifts Binti's perceptions, powers, and sense of self, extending beyond her physical existence. This part of the narrative supports the theories regarding the tangible connections between the environment and the human body (Alaimo, 2010). Binti's trans-corporeal entanglements mirror the process of postcolonial assimilation. Her physical body was marked and rearticulated through the journey, making it a symbol of these assimilations. Her bodily metamorphosis, including aliens, bio-nanoparticles, plants, microbes, land, and water, consistently portrays Black bodies as more than background or symbolism, but as consequential participants in ecological, cultural, and political histories. The notion of the 'Other' does not conform to established conventions. Every entanglement shift changes her from within, expanding her understanding of the self.

In the end, accepting every mutation and understanding her social position as "Binti Ekeopara Zuzu Dambu Kaipka Meduse Enyi Zinariya New Fish of Namib" (Okorafor, 2019) was her act of finding agency within all these entangled selves and identities. She exercises her agency to herald peace and harmony. Her new name and identity embrace all the human and more-than-human entities acting through her. The 'okuoko' signifies a pivotal shift towards transcending fixed gender roles and represents entangled empowerment and change. Following her transformation, she receives a vision of the Night Masquerade, a celebration exclusive to the heroes and men of the Himba tribe. Because of her Enyi Zinariya ancestry, Binti has acquired new skills to negotiate her world. The alien DNA helps her to interact with others automatically without needing any external means, and it links her to the collective memory of her ancestors. According to Haraway (2013a), this hybridity allows for new kinds of agency by dismantling the boundaries of established power systems (2013, p.75).

Trans-corporeal materiality is "a conception of the body that is neither essentialist, nor genetically determined, nor firmly bounded, but rather a body in which social power and material-geographic agencies intra-act" (Alaimo, 2010). Binti imbibes Oomza University's motto of "experiencing, collecting, and becoming more" (Okorafor, 2019). Her initial position as the 'master harmonizer' shifts when her body assimilates with different species and beings. Bodily changes instigate changes in her identity, and consequently, she can become a bridge between various species and cultures.

4.3. "I Am Worlds": Vulnerable Bodies and Trans-Corporeal Affiliations

Binti, who was initially skeptical about her transformation, could not comprehend the changes. Binti becomes a conduit for ancestral power, spiritual energy, and environmental connectivity. Her trans-corporeal entanglements opened and helped her to connect, further expanding her identity and self. Binti announces that her body can pull energy from the ground, and she can awaken the earth from its slumber. Binti uses her ability to connect with the spirit world and awaken the deep Himba culture. The shift from vulnerability to agency symbolizes Binti's journey from her rigid Himba life to a trans-corporeal existence. Binti initially perceives herself as polluted and as an outsider. However, she embraces her enmeshed identity after the entanglement with the New Fish. When asked for her name at the Saturn ring by the mysterious people she encounters, Binti understands what her identity truly means. Binti identifies herself by actively claiming "My name is Binti Ekeopara Zuzu Dambu Kaipka Meduse Enyi Zinariya New Fish of Namib" (p. 331). Through her trans-corporeal experiences, Binti's initial vulnerability is marked by her marginalization as a Himba woman, which roughly translates from the term 'Otjihima' as beggars and intelligent slaves. Binti's initial fear of pollution and uncleanness stems from her status as a Himba girl who aspires to marry and establish a family. Her intense guilt about leaving her homeland and embarking on a journey pushed her to the

margins. She suffers from discrimination and humiliation at the Khoush port. Even when the Khoush woman touches her hair and makes discriminatory comments, she holds her silence.

Binti was further humiliated on the Miri 12 ship by various professors, who asked her to give up her tribe's symbols, which she refused. Binti showcased her capacity and intelligence through "treeing" and engaging with people. During the violent attack of the Meduse, Binti's resilience became evident. She unlocked the mysterious stone, prayed to the seven who fought against the Meduse, negotiated with them, and accepted the violent bodily change without a choice. Her becoming an ambassador for Medusa reflects on hybridity and language assimilation through the body. This reflects on the narratives of slaves, as they learn the language of their oppressors. With her ability as the Master Harmonizer, she saved the Oomza Uni from being attacked.

Okorafor's speculative fiction focuses on female characters and their entanglement with various bodily mutations. The author employs the diverse nature of mutation in her protagonists' bodies to carve space for Black bodies to display the body's adaptable, transformable, and expansive nature and mark the bodies as visible and agential. This is reflected when Binti acknowledges the facets of her newfound identity: "I was Himba, a master harmonizer. Then I was also Meduse, anger vibrating in my okuoko. Now I am also Enyi Zinariya, of the Desert People, gifted with alien technology. I was worlds" (pp. 203-204). Her acceptance of technology and alien DNA is an allegory for overcoming the hurdles of her sociocultural background. In the *Binti* series, the Meduse experience exemplifies a Black African woman's complexities in negotiating her position in a world where boundaries range beyond physical lines.

In his *Black Atlantic* analysis, Gilroy (1993) notes that cultural identities are fluid and circumstantially impacted (1993). In the presence of Meduse, Binti met with the Khoush leader, Goldie, who referred to her as a "foolish Himba girl" (Okorafor, 2019). All the tribes and alien species dismissed Binti's position based solely on her gender. However, Binti asserted her position, fought back, and announced that she had called for the meeting: "I spoke these words through my 'okuoko' to the Meduse chief in my roughest Meduse. "My hands moved as if they were owned by a part of myself that had its own intent, and soon I was pushing those same words into the desert" (p. 289).

Binti's altered and enhanced mutant body aligns with Hayles (2000) thesis of the posthuman, according to which it becomes more difficult to distinguish humans from robots. In her research on posthumanism, Hayles examines how integrating technology with the human body introduces new vulnerabilities and opportunities (2000). This part of the story follows (Haraway, 2013b) the cyborg concept, which finds the technical, organic empowering, and unstable (2013). The question of what constitutes the framework of humans is problematized in the story. Binti fully acknowledges that her DNA is a convergent site of all the beings she encountered and is still growing and learning. This growth adds layers and meanings to her corporeality and her identity. This makes her a modified human, making her identity more complex and layered. Her gender is fluid and dynamic. This change is consistent with the posthuman theories of Rosi Braidotti, who contends that identity is complex and multifaceted, and it is an ongoing process of becoming. Further, Braidotti's view of a posthuman body is reflected in Binti's mutation, as she advocates that in a futuristic world, "bodies are co-constructed through relation with nonhuman agents and practices of organic kind," she mentions three categories: zoe (animal, plant, other species), geo (planetary or terrestrial forces), and techno-mediated (nonorganic) (Braidotti, 2021). Binti's mutations are zoe-geo-technomediated in nature, thus making it an evolving process.

4.4. Trans-Corporeality and Identity

Binti's trans-corporeal experiences shed light on the issue of cultural hybridity through which the notion of rigid identity is questioned. Incorporating Meduse DNA into her body represents a merger of cultures and a biological alteration. This part of Binti's metamorphosis aligns with the theory of cultural hybridity by Bhabha (1994), according to which identity results from interactions between many cultures and historical periods (1994). One way to interpret Binti's journey is as a metaphor for the postcolonial experience of navigating identity within and outside cultural borders. When Binti evoked the deep Himba culture during her ultimate negotiation between Khoush and Meduse,

she asserted her positions: "Meduse tradition is one of honor. Khoush traditions are ones of respect. I am the master harmonizer of the Osemba Himba." Through all her connections, Binti called forth a truce to end the war (p. 290).

The series also interrogates the interplay between deconstructing and reshaping of identity as it navigates Binti's post-traumatic stress following the Meduse attack on her and her friends. In addition to being purely physical, Binti's experiences, especially her interactions with the Meduse and the resulting conflict, are also intensely emotional and psychological. Her "cyborg body becomes a symbol of self-determination, contributing to the wellspring of her resistance," ultimately leading to peace (Alvarez-Lora, 2024).

4.5. Performative Spaces Post-Entanglement

Binti's responsibility in the Himba tribe was to learn the craft of creating an astrolabe, become a master harmonizer, and learn from her father as she reiterates the fact that the Himba were obsessed with technology and innovation and liked to "explore the universe by traveling inward" (p.9). Binti had to follow her tribe's strict rules, and even though her tribe was a matriarchal clan, her position as a master harmonizer restricted her. Her intelligence and ability earned her respect. Her act of defiance and undertaking the journey was her way of announcing to the world her greater responsibility.

The memories she accesses also infuse Binti's journey. The Meduse transformation gives her access to the Meduse's memory and mind, which is a culmination of honor, valor, and violence. The collective of the Enyi Zinariya gives her access to the memories of her ancestors. From her home "Roots" to the intergalactic university and beyond, Binti's interactions in different settings demonstrate the fluidity of space in connection with the body in forming and reconstructing identity and culture. After being connected, Binti must traverse environments, like the Meduse, that blend aspects of the many civilizations she encounters with her Himba heritage. Her initial identification as a Himba daughter changed slowly, as Hall (2021) points out that one's cultural identification is an ongoing process that never ends (2021).

Space functions as a reflecting medium, mimicking Binti's internal transformations; the Meduse honors and accepts her as part of its family. Rather than being a spectator, Binti actively tries to mediate between Khoush and Meduse, occupying the position of the mediator. Earlier, after the Meduse attack of Moojh-ha Ki-bira (p.12) on the Miri 12 ship, Binti took up the role of the Meduse ambassador as she convinced the chief of Meduse, "Let me speak for you, let me speak to them, so no more have to die" (p. 37). Even though it was a temporary solution and the outcome was uncertain, she wanted to end this ongoing conflict. Her instinct as a master harmonizer gave her enough courage to find logic and reason to negotiate. In the *Binti* series, places are portrayed not just as physical locations but also as psychological landscapes that contain memories of Binti's interactions and experiences that have shaped how she views herself. Binti was an oppressed Himba girl at the Khoush launch port. However, on the Meduse ship, when she was transformed and made part-Meduse, she was honored as family. Binti's position at Oomza University was unique, as she was the first Himba girl to join the university, and she was now part Meduse, a species considered violent. Other students viewed her interaction with Ogwu/Meduse as a sin. She became a negotiator at the university, helping to stop the war. Binti's mutations helped her connect with the spirit world, enabling her to understand her motives. She was not a simple Himba girl; she now possessed parts of the world that gave her agency and control over herself and her narrative.

4.6. Suspended Vulnerability and Precarity in Trans-Corporeal Perspective

Okorafor's *Binti* trilogy examines trans-corporeal suspended vulnerability in speculative fiction, balancing the protagonist's transformation and fragility. Trans-corporeality is explored in Binti's physical and psychological alienation, which makes her vulnerable. Black women protagonists in sci-fi novels derive their power from communal resources and alternative ontologies, linking vulnerability to disruptive empowerment in societal challenges. As Duncan and Cumpsty (2020) rightly noted in *The Body in Postcolonial Fiction after the Millennium*, the Black female

bodies in African sci-fi “challenge not only the patriarchal gaze, but also the bodily exploitation and interventions sociocultural erasure of neocolonial and neoliberal rule and indeed might model strategies of embodied recuperation, where tradition is mediated on and through the body of female” (2020). Binti’s body challenges these social conventions and stereotypes. The Khoush tribe threatened Binti for securing the top marks on the Oomza Uni mathematical test, as she was a mere Himba girl. The intergalactic journey she undertook pushed her into precarious peril as she was alone, going against everyone her family, her tribe, and her tradition. Even though she belonged to a significantly marginalized tribe, she was the only one who could survive the Meduse attack and be honored and accepted by the Meduse tribe.

Binti’s acceptance of her mutations is reflected in her acknowledgment that she is “Worlds” (p. 203). She recognizes her ability to transform from an ordinary, powerless girl to a woman who can accommodate various DNA types in her body. The combination empowers her, transforming her body into an epistemic site of intersections that grant her agency and autonomy. The idea of the Black body as limited and unintelligible is shattered through her experience. Accepting vulnerability and precarity and understanding the power held in the margins of society make Binti’s body a figure of change.

Okorafor’s *Binti* trilogy examines trans-corporeal suspended vulnerability in speculative fiction, balancing the protagonist’s transformation and fragility. Black women protagonists in sci-fi novels derive their magic from communal resources and alternative ontologies, linking vulnerability to disruptive empowerment in societal challenges. Binti was threatened by the Khoush tribe for securing the top marks on the Oomza Uni mathematical test, and neither her family nor her friends supported her decision to join the university. The intergalactic journey that she undertook pushed her into a precarious peril. Even though she belonged to a significantly marginalized tribe, she was the only one who could survive the Meduse attack and even be honored and accepted by the Meduse tribe. Especially in the context of the Black body politics debate, it is argued that the transformability and adaptability of her intelligent body enhanced her ability to find autonomy and agency.

Binti’s precarious position is evident from the start. She has African skin, darker than the Himba color, and has inherited her father’s and mother’s knowledge and skills. Her duty was simple: become a master harmonizer, inherit her father’s astrolabe shop, marry, and settle down. Her curious nature made her more vulnerable to societal control. Her defiance and decision to enroll at Oomza Uni worsened her situation, as no one would marry her now. During the fight, the Meduse Okwu attacked her with much anger because she resisted and fought back. She was more vulnerable, as the Gold doors that protected her room were not strong enough. Binti had to negotiate, and once she could use the blue current from her Edan, she was able to establish a chain of communication with the Meduse. Okwu did not consider her a human, yet she made him listen and convinced him she was not a threat. Her identity shifted as the Meduse alien species accepted her. She proposed that she could negotiate on behalf of the Meduse at Oomza Uni, stating “The people on Oomza Uni are academics, so they’ll understand honor, history, symbolism, and matters of the body” (p. 34). This was important as Binti needed help in understanding her identity and her sense of self.

Binti is vulnerable because of her sudden trans-corporeal mutations, which combine her inherited alien features of the Meduse and the bionanoids’ alien DNA from Enyi Zinariya. As Judith Butler notes in *Violence, Mourning, Politics*, “bodies imply mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well” (Butler, 2003). Binti’s corporeal affiliations make her vulnerable but, in a way, become her tool for empowerment. This is in line with Butler’s concept of the “geopolitical distribution of corporeal vulnerability” (p. 29).

It was through her acceptance by the Enyi Zinariya tribe, who consider her their daughter, that she could comprehend and understand the power that she holds through her corporeal affiliations, and she can act through these changes. However, her tribe and Khoush see her as an object they cannot comprehend. The easiest way to isolate anything unknown is to consider it as “other.” This is reflected when the people of the Enyi Zinariya tribe explain that the physical abnormality that is connected to the psychological imbalances of the tribe was an advanced medium

of communication. As she navigates these various geographical and social positions, Binti must balance her need to honor her heritage with the social fallout from her entanglements. The difficulties Binti has had finding acceptance and understanding in a changing society serve as a metaphor for the more significant social issues that people who do not fit neatly into categories encounter. The idea of the black body being limited and unintelligible is shattered through her experience. Accepting vulnerability and precarity and understanding the power held in the margins of society make Binti's body a figure of change.

4.7. *Trans-Corporeal Links and Negotiating Power*

The democratization of power via trans-corporeal affiliations, which we see in the *Binti* series, is a significant concern of Digital Culture Studies. Jenkins (2006) discusses how new channels for involvement and technology's impact can help level the playing field (2006). This democratization is exemplified by Binti's travels, where her enhanced powers allow her to access areas and engage in conversations historically dominated by more powerful forces. In *Binti*, connections provide empowerment, but her power is problematized as she is a woman who does not belong. People often view women as highly emotional and shallow, assuming that their inability to dictate their power and modifications diminishes their agency. In an interview, Foucault reflects on the dual aspect of technological power, exploring its potential as both constructive and non-oppressive (Kelly, 1994). However, they also bring new risks.

Gilroy (1993) concept of the *Black Atlantic*, which sees identity as a malleable idea influenced by historical and cultural factors, aligns with this. This fluidity is embodied in Binti's effort to balance her new identity with her Himba background, which reflects the more prominent African concern of negotiating identity in a setting that crosses traditional cultural borders. The body is a political and ethical contestation site in postcolonial contexts, as described by Mbembe (2020) in his work *Necropolitics* (2020, p. 12). Mbembe discusses the idea of "bodies of extraction" (Mbembe, 2017). Under the ideal norms of enslavement, the [Black bodies] are made to extract maximum profit" (p.18) and designed in a way that it "could be ... discarded once it was no longer useful" (p. 40).

Binti's trans-corporeal experience also influences racial relations. Through her voyage, Binti dispels the myths surrounding black bodies and establishes herself as a figure beyond racial and species boundaries. Gordon (2023) states, Okorafor does not stop at dismantling the human/animal boundary: by the chronological end of the series (2023), her DNA test reveals all the intersecting identities, and her body becomes a catalyst in bringing change by harmonizing the nature of different species and tribes, thereby subverting the notion of a rigid body defined by the borders of hegemonic norms and regulations.

5. CONCLUSION

Trans-corporeality emphasizes that all living beings are fundamentally 'embodied' entities, constantly in flux with the external environment, engaging with its various aspects. Alaimo reiterates that such engagements transform the physical body and induce change in the material world outside. Binti's body reflects the social and cultural changes surrounding her. Her Black African female body resonates within a broader context, where the body evolves through entanglement and engagement with the outside world, and the outside world expands the symbols and meanings associated with the Black female. Through shapeshifting, magical rituals, and communion with the natural world, Binti's body destabilizes the Western conception of the body as fixed and separate. Instead, her form exists in interrelation with nature, spirit, and history—epitomizing the fluid, interconnected self that trans-corporeality theorizes. Her transformation is not individualistic but collective, ecological, and cosmic rewriting bodily politics through spiritual and environmental resonance.

The material world reflects these changes, projects them, and connects them to political, cultural, and social spaces. As the extraterrestrial beings that contact Binti toward the end say, "We're people of time and space. We move about experiencing, collecting, and becoming more" (Okorafor, 2019). This is what the Black female body

discourse comes to—the ability to transcend existing boundaries while still being rooted in the biological aspect. Her African identity and heritage, conventionally considered inferior, help her to assimilate and engage with all the beings that come in contact with her. From her initial acceptance of covering her body with Otjize and becoming a part of the Himba, to her acceptance of the ‘okuoko’ of Meduse, to her acceptance of being a semi-technological advance, these entanglements empower her to voice and assert her identity. All these entanglements empower her to voice and assert her identity. She can connect with deep cultures and technology from being oppressed and marginalized. Okorafor (2019) speculative worlds rewrite the narrative of Black female corporeality, foregrounding the Black female body as a site of fluid power, ecological entanglement, and spiritual restoration. These portrayals counteract the historical fragmentation and dehumanization of the Black female body and contribute to a new body politics one grounded in interdependence, agency, and transformation. Through speculative fiction, Okorafor (2019) reveals a transformative perspective on the ongoing debates on Black body politics, where the historical and social meanings assigned to the Black body undergo change and are made visible for the readers to understand. The study does engage with the Black female body; however, the decolonial interpretation of disability, illness, and performativity of these Black female bodies is limited in this study.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Transparency: The author states that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

Disclosure of AI use: The author used OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-4) to edit and refine the wording of the Introduction and Literature Review. All outputs were thoroughly reviewed and verified by the author.

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