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Education and Reshaping of Female Identity
in *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga

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Dedication

“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”

Willie Nelson

Infinite thanks to ALLAH for keeping those whom we love beside us.

We would like to dedicate this fruit of the serious work to our beloved parents for their emotional and spiritual support, for being our sources of strength and inspiration that keep us moving forward.

We dedicate this humble work to our dear brothers and sisters and to all those who believed in us.

And to ourselves for all the good and bad times we passed together.

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Abstract

The study under investigation examines the issue of education in *Nervous conditions* (1988) by the Zimbabwean novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga. It also tries to highlight the influences of colonial education on the female identity among the colonized Zimbabwean community. This research aims at providing a clear analysis on the way the colonial education affects the formation of the female identity through the analysis of the theme of education in the novel, in addition to the study of the female character "MaSingayi", "Maiguru", "Loucia" and paying a special attention to the two protagonist "Tambu" and "Nyasha". The study conducts a descriptive analytical method depending on the post colonial feminist theory to demonstrate the statue of female identity and the effects of the colonial education on them. The findings of the study reveals that education does not necessary prevent women from being entrapped. In addition, it may affect negatively the formation of female identity which leads to lose the national identity as expressed by the character of "Nyasha" who suffers from identity crisis. Furthermore, "Tambu" realizes that the formation of her female identity depends on her choices by refusing the total acceptances of the colonizer ideology that is delivered through its educational system besides questioning things in building her female identity above the root of her national identity. Finally, the implications for further research for this novel is recommended so as to shed light on other aspects.

Key words : postcolonial feminism, colonial education, female identity

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General Introduction

1- Background of the study

Postcolonial literature and postcolonial studies have attracted the attention of many readers and scholars over the world since their emergence in the 1950s and 1960s. The intellectuals revolted against the colonizers' domination which intended to erase the culture and identity of the colonized people contrary to that what G.W.F. Hegel originally stated in Introduction to the Philosophy of History, that Europeans brought civilization, progress, and history for the first time to that savages uncivilized people who are unable of self-government or of putting their land and its resources in good use in Africa, or Ireland, or India. Furthermore, they saw the African people and other colonized people as mentally and physically adapted only for menial labor or routine clerical positions like working as slaves in cotton and sugar plantations in Americas and colonial settlements ensuring that their laws and regulations are enforced upon those colonized people. As a reaction, many academics, thinkers, authors, and intellectuals took upon themselves the responsibility of correcting that "false image". The western colonizers had drawn about the colonized people emphasizing interests in the postcolonial thought and this appears clearly in Postcolonial literature and postcolonial studies.

It is worth mentioning that colonization was not just occupying the land but the minds as well. Bill Ashcroft et al. (1989a) state that “more than three-quarters of the general population living of the world today have had their lives molded by the experience of colonialism” (p. 1). Despite that, political change occurred and numerous nations achieved independence, numerous difficulties and crises ensued, and consequently these new nations remained in perplexity about their culture and identity. Because of the population movement on the one hand and the migration from former colonies to colonizer's countries on the other hand, there was an economic and cultural crisis for people of the former colonies and the immigrants in the colonizer's

countries. Those people often clash with a set of questions such as who you are, from where? what are your origins? During the colonization, the colonized found themselves unconsciously incorporating the aspects of the colonizers' ways in their original identity. Through education, the colonizer worked to eliminate the national identities and control the thoughts and ideas of the new generations through implementing colonial ideologies in their minds. As a result, the original culture and identity of the coming generations are lost in the new world.

African women writers and thinkers tackled the issue of identity and more particularly the female identity. They focus on the representation of women in the colonial and postcolonial literature and struggle against the assumptions drawn about women in literature and society. For them, women in colonized lands experienced the double marginalization. Colonialism, patriarchy, and the formal empire did not end the oppression against them in former colonies considering colonialism and patriarchy as two sides of the same coin. Among those writers we cite the Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga. In her novel *Nervous Conditions*, she reflects the issue of African women identity in relation with education. The novel portrays the ways the identity of the different female characters are affected by the western educational system.

2- Statement of the problem

Before colonization, African people were characterized by harmonized and organized social structures with original traditions, customs, and beliefs. All these fundamentals formed the African indigenous identity. However, with the arrival of the colonizer this pure African identity had been destroyed by different policies and tools. One of these policies is education. African women's identity, in particular, had been changed and reshaped because of colonization.

3- Research Questions and Research hypotheses

- **Research Questions**

In this study, we aim to answer these questions:

-Has the British educational system affected African women identities?

-If yes, how has the British educational system reshaped the African women identities?

-To what extent did Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* express the change in African women identities resulted by British educational system?

- **Research hypotheses**

The current study is built on the following hypothesis:

The British educational system reshaped the African women identities.

Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions expressed the African women identities that are reshaped by British educational system.

4- Aim of the Study

Colonialism, culture, education, gender, and identity are amongst the issues that are tackled in the novel. Thus, this study aims at introducing one of this prominent themes in this novel which is the female identity by showing how women's identities are reshaped as result of western mode of education.

5- Research Methodology

The current research follows a descriptive analytical method to provide a general view about the impact of western education on women's identities through a close study on *Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*.

6- Significance of the study

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* was published in the United Kingdom in 1988. It was the first book published by a black woman from Zimbabwe in English. It is considered as an icon in the African literature, and voted in the Top Ten Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century. Thus, it is very worth to conduct a study about this work since it reflects a sensitive topic in postcolonial literature related to women and their identities and to what extent colonizer's education affected them.

7- The structure of the dissertation

This work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the Zimbabwean society. It portrayed its different cultural and social dimensions with a special reference to women's identities and the way western education affects on these identities. The second chapter, is devoted to clarify postcolonial feminism and postcolonial feminist literature which were explained in details. It focus on Africa and the issue of identity as an important element in postcolonial African feminism literature. As for the third chapter which is the practical side of this study takes the novel *Nervous Conditions* as a case study, as it was written by an African woman who is the Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga. The work enfolds behind an analysis of the main female characters to detect the changes caused by British education on their identities.

CHAPTER ONE:

Historical Background of Zimbabwean Society

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Introduction

Western literature has always depicted Africa as that dark spot on the earth inhabited by wild, barbaric, and savage people who must be civilized by the white men under "the white's man burden" label. However, they did this to justify their greed to rob the goods of the African continent pursuing all means of enslavement and injustice towards the indigenous people in general, and the woman in particular. The latter had the largest portion of suffering due to the double marginalization she was subjected to from the part of her society on the one hand, and by the colonizer on the other hand. The Zimbabwean society is one example of those African societies that were destroyed by the colonialist force. Therefore, this Chapter are going to provide an overall picture of the Zimbabwean; society before and after the coming of the white men who were keen to disturb that harmonious organized society, and how it was an organized and rich society in terms of culture and knowledge unlike that false image the westerners have promoted. Later, we will shed light on the Zimbabwean women and their marginalized position in their society highlighting the fact that their situation has worsened with the presence of the brutal colonizer. Then, we will show the effect of western education on African women identity.

1.1 Image about Zimbabwe :Location , Society and History

Zimbabwe, or the republic of Zimbabwe is one of the countries in Africa. It is a southern African country known by southern Rhodesia, Rhodesia, Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and its capital is Harare. It achieved its independence after a period of 15 years of British colonization in April 1980. It was internationally recognized, and instituted after the minority regime's known as Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. Zimbabwe is bordered by the republic of southern Africa in the south and by Botswana along the southwest and west. It is bounded by Zambia in the north, and by Mozambique in the northeast and east(Bradley, Kenneth, et al). The

Shona people are the majority tribe in Zimbabwe with 80% of the population. Their language was also known as the Shona language. It is the official language in Zimbabwe with more than two – thirds of Zimbabwean speakers in addition to English and Ndebele(Mlambo 3).



Figure 1.1. Zimbabwean map with capital Harare; Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in south-central Africa. (africa guide.com).

1.1.1 Pre-colonial Zimbabwe

African societies are known for their diversity in their traditions and beliefs which differ from one country to another. Chinua Achebe's fundamental theme show that African people were not exposed to culture from the European. In the fact they were mindful and had value ,beauty, poetry and the most important thing they had dignity which was lost in the colonial period (Historical Background to the Rhodesian Novel 26). Before the coming of the white colonizer, each country had a particular code of conduct within its community to organize the peoples' daily lives. People strongly believed in the traditional religious and beliefs such as the traditional gods, chiefs, legitimate rulers and worshiped the ancestors who are the most important in their

religion. Even If anyone was not convinced by the beliefs of the society where he/ she lived in, he/ she must respect and act like others or he/she will be subject to punishment (Gueye 28).

Zimbabwean society is as such a diverse society. The pre-colonial history of Zimbabwe shows that this society produced culture because the country was organised and ruled by different kingdoms. The life before 1890s was well-organized with different economic and socio-economic goals and practices. The Shona people were very attached to the land which was the core of their lives as they depend on it for agriculture and the extraction of minerals like gold(Historical Background to the Rhodesian Novel 26). Traditions of the Shona people, in addition to their obsession with land, are also concerned with the genealogical relationships which were learned from the childhood of the Shona people because it is very important for them that their traditions are closely related to them. The Shona people had basic traditions which are inherited from one generation to another such an education of the youth. Added to this one, the firm cultural practices are like those practices that are concerned with marriage (the bride-price system). Besides, they did not always believe that "a woman place is in the kitchen"; The Shona woman also worked in many fields, too ,like agriculture and the mines of the gold (Ibid 41-43).

The Zimbabwean believe in many deferent religions " approximately 70 percent being member of mainstream Christian churches (Mlambo 3). The main religious sects are: Roman Catholic, Anglican,"The Shona of the Mutapa state were emphatically not idolaters, and it is difficult to believe that Zimbabwe's rulers were that different"(qtd. in Historical Background to the Rhodesian Novel 40). This should be known because in some of their novels, the indigenous people are presented as having no religion based on personal deities(Ibid 41).

1.1.2 Zimbabwe during Colonialism

By the coming of the British colonizers to Zimbabwe since 1880s to the early 20th century, the indigenous socioeconomic life, culture, customs and traditions had changed and replaced by new languages, religions commodities, identities, ideologies, political and economic aspirations caused by colonial transformations, and resulted a fusion of Christianity, mercantilism, colonialism and capitalism(Hart).

In 1888, Cecil Rhode assigned an agreement with the Shona people in Zimbabwe to own their land to start searching for gold. He gained a charter from the British government formed by the British South Africa Company (BSA) in 1889 and settled the land in north southern Africa and renamed it Rhodesia what became later Zimbabwe. New settlers kept coming to Rhodesia and Rhodes and imposed taxes on the Shona people what led them fought against the(BSA). The struggle overcome and Rhodesia fell under the control of BSA in 1897. The initial government in Rhodesia was formed with seven officials of BSA and two settlers. By 1914, the settlers gained most of the seats. When the BSA charter ended in 1923, settlers in southern Rhodesia chose to become a self-governing British colony and awarded the responsibility of the government(Ibid).

In southern Rhodesia the Responsible government faced a set of issues represented in land segregation, segregated governance, ensuring political and economic privileges for the white settler community. As being rich of minerals resources and agricultural potential, Rhodesia's land was the biggest interest for the settlers(Ibid).

Africans responded in different forms to the white colonizers oppression and exploitation ranged from the explicit resistance, adoption and adaptation of Christian ideologies, to trials to return Ndebele land isolated by the settlers. In 1923, other complex forms of resistance appeared including the formation of a relatively national organization, the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association, Women's league that succeeded to boycott of the beer hall in 1934. The

South Africa African Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) that strived for workers' rights. In addition, the orthodox Christian churches were replaced by the African churches to minimize the effect of colonialism (Hart).

The position of women changed in the colonial period in contrast with their position in the pre-colonial period.

1.2 The Weight of Tradition on Female

Traditions in Africa have a deep relationship to the status of women. Zimbabwe is a good example of those traditional beliefs that do not consider women as an independent part in the society, women are marginalized. Traditional beliefs keep her in a subordinate position. This secondary status prevents her voice from the decision-making process because customs there are stronger than law, stronger than even the religion. This shortcoming is the core of the problem of the analysis that handles the issue of women under the sacredness of traditional beliefs toward women. In general, women are robbed of their tongue. (GUEYE 33)

The African writers focus on this issue and one good example is Yvonne Vera. Yvonne Vera explains the effect of colonialism coupled with the sacredness of traditional beliefs that prevent women's voice. In her essay 'A river in my mouth' and also in her book *NEHANDA*; she shows women as victims as this is the only way to face the traditional beliefs. She depicts the protagonist as a commander in chief who strives for her people for freeing themselves from gender discrimination and retrieving the lost land from the white.

Yvonne Vera's writing offers a critique of colonialism, oppositional nationalism and patriarchal structures, and their customary ideas of land ownership and control over the female body.... Silence is posed as the standard response to the trauma and national rape.... This silence operates most fully under the

restrictions of taboo, which mute the cry of pain from the female body.(p.15)

The sacredness of customs lead also to raise the issue of language and forbidden it. For females; they cannot face their community or protest against them when they falls in harsh position or clarity(34) .

In *Under the Tongue*, another book by Yvonne Vera, she tells the story of Zhizha who raped by her father, the girl want to speak about her pain but being a woman from shona society , her tongue does not strong enough to speak:

Father whispers an embrace of lightning. I bite hard on my tongue, hold my breath deep in my chest. My voice is sinking down into my stomach. My voice is crumbling and falling apart and spreading through his fingers. My voice hides beneath a rock. My voice burns beneath (3).

another aspect that marginalized women in Africa, in Zimbabwe in specifically, is the religion . Christianity has strengthened the traditional customs . To exemplify, as they claim that the creation of Eve from Adam's rib makes her play a subordinate and secondary role in church and family; she is devil because she led Adam to fall into sin. So women must be ruled and kept under the control of men .This patriarchal attitude and beliefs make her the weaker sex under the supervision of men who justify their control by Christianity (Kambarami).

In Zimbabwean context ,marriage is one of the major portions of civilization. It is a social contract with structured rules and standards. Marriage is classified into two types

- Levirate Marriages

Levirate marriage happens when one's husband died ,the widow should marry her husband's brother and if she does not accept that she will be directly sent to her parent's house without her children. In the other hand, when a man is widowed, he will marry his wife's virgin sister without even her consent simply because of the culture.(Ibid)

- Arranged marriages

Arranged marriage is usual in Shona traditions. It is well known also by Apostolic sect where young girls are married to older male members of the sect based on prophetic revelation. And those girls cannot deny this marriage. In some cases, when there is a dry period in the country, the parents marry off their girls to the rich's sons for exchanging money or food or grain. In extreme cases, fathers marry their girls to their debtors. Also, in the situation of murdering, girls are given to the wronged family as a wife to settle the situation (Ibid).

To conclude, the female in Rhodesia plays a second role; as it mentioned before they are marginalized by the traditional beliefs, marriage and religion. Furthermore new domination that increase the suffering of female is the oppression of the European colonization, and this affects her identity to reborn many new identities.

1.3 The Colonizer Educational System

Before the arrival of the colonizers, Rhodesia as a country in southern Africa, the educational system was no longer than teaching the children the importance of functioning in his\her environment physically and socially. There were no professional schools or teachers in traditional African education system. The instruction was simply about the beliefs of the society; it was community oriented.

After the coming of the Europeans in 1890, proselytizers found it easy to spread their influence among the native people due to tow main reasons. On the one hand, under the colonial rule settlers could now control the society. On the other hand, the new economy exchange that was introduced by the missionaries creates an interest among Africans for formal Europeans education (DOUGLAS).

Colonizers use their education system to dominate the Africans their land, their people. The colonial administration want to educate Africans but in a way that they did not challenge its

legitimacy. Missionaries teach them in professional schools just the skills of reading and writing (nehera). White settlers need a literate African labour force for their agriculture and industrial sectors.(Atkinson , Dorsey).

The Africans who had been converted to Christianity and gained some western education were treated in a less hostile way and were more accepted by the colonizers. Contrary with those who were against them. (ibid)

African education was planned to keep the racial distinction between blacks and whites. It deliberated to prepare Africans to be semi-skilled-labour force that would work under the domination of the colonizers.

To sum up, the history of formal education for Africans in Rhodesia is simply the synonym of Christian missions. Formal education system or the colonizer education program in Africa; specifically in Zimbabwe was intended to control the indigenous people socially and economically. It also aims at controlling female and marginalize her.

1.4 The Situation of Woman in The Colonial Educational System

Since the Zimbabwean society was patriarchal, the woman in Rhodesia was considered subordinate to the man and she was keen to satisfy all his desires at home. Thus, women were illiterate because of racism, poverty, and African cultural traditional practices. Colonization also contributed in worsening the women submissive status. They worked in the land which was previously the preserve of men who went in long trips to gold and copper mines to work for the oppressing colonizer. Accordingly, few women had chance in education. When the family could pay the fees, only boys received education as they are considered to be superior to girls in every aspect (Chengetai 13).

The colonial education system in Zimbabwe was distinguished by two characteristics. Firstly, it was based on racial discrimination. Secondly, education directed to blacks, who were

few compared to the number of white children who had the opportunity to learn, was intended for exploitation. Schools of white children were receiving equipments, financial aid, and privileges. Schools intended by blacks were totally held by Christian missionaries and were denied from any financial assistance. Black children compulsorily spent their time in hard industrial training rather than studying, such as brick making, farming, road making, building, carpentry, and iron work to ensure that blacks stay uneducated and unskilled (Ibid 13). Girls were directed to domestic work. Education of colonial and postcolonial system brought no benefits to women. Equality was not its concern. On the contrary, patriarchy is protected and gender imbalance continued to be the operating basis for education. Thus, Black females went through sexist and racist pressure (Gorden).

1.5 The Identity Confusion as a Result of the Colonizer Educational System

Identity is the most controversial issue in the colonized countries, and it becomes the most important question because of the crisis that exists in colonized African community . where the colonizer dominates the African under the cover of civilizing the uncivilized , or savages imposing the sense of inferiority and trying to destroy the colonized identity using different strategies , such as replacing their national identity with an imperial one . the strategy used by the colonizer to achieve such goal is to educate a certain class from the colonized .

Boehmer stated that " Macaulay strongly supported giving a European education to Indians because of the attendant benefits of encouraging —civilized behavior and hence profitable trade among former savages " (Boehmer 35) . David Livingston in the African side argues that it is for the sake of " two pioneers of civilization commerce and Christianity " .Education then is used as a means of control by the colonizer on the natives , which the main aim from educating black south African population is to create new identities . those people who go through the colonizer educational system were called : national elite.

Though the national elite group found themselves as a bilingual and bicultural and despite the fact of identifying with two societies (colonial and colonized) . this group of population found themselves in alienation that is rejected by two types of society. In the one hand the colonizer people saw them belonging to the coloniser . On other hand they were seen as inferior , controlled and oppressed by the Europeans.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we provided an overview of Zimbabwean society before and during the British occupation, and we indicated how the colonizer worked to demolish the main components of the Zimbabwean social structure. We also focused on the women's marginalized position in the Zimbabwean male-centered society and the presence of the colonizer who made the situation worse and more offensive to women. In addition, we showed how women rebelled against that oppression through education as means of reshaping their identity.

CHAPTER TWO

An Overview of Postcolonial African Literature and Feminism

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Introduction

Marginalization of women in the third world countries led a group of them to rise voices. Those voices appeared clearly in literature especially in African literature. This sub field of literature has given rise to great range of theoretical ideas, concept, problems and debates .This chapter presents a selection of those theoretical assumptions. The issue that was tackled is the post colonial literature. Moreover, this chapter shows the similarities and differences between post colonial and feminist theory as they gave voice to the oppressed people in society both in postcolonial. The aim is to give hand to post colonial theory that indicates the suffering of female in colonial /post colonial and in inequality in gender societies. Finally, the chapter deals with the female identity in African literature, starting with fundamental concepts such as double colonization and moving to the issue of identity between hybridity and ethnicity, concluding by education and mimicry. The object of this investigation is to give a clear overview of post colonial feminist theory that plays a brilliant role in analyzing the issue of education and reshaping the female identity.

2.1 Introduction to Post Colonial Studies

Neil Lazarus in his introduction to the Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies pointed out that before the 1970's, postcolonial studies did not exist as a field of academic study. Many schools concerning postcolonial studies have been created not only in the literary field, but also in the other fields such as culture, history.

This is not to say that postcolonial work did not exist before the 1970's. Many reviewers were interested in this issue, such us African literature. Today the term " postcolonial" is manly used to refer to the following colonialism as Neil Lazarus emphasizes :

Post-colonial (or —postcolonial- the American variant), in these usages from the early 1970s, was a periodising term, historical and not an ideological concept. It bespoke no political desire or aspiration, looked forward to no particular social or political order. Erstwhile colonial territories that had been decolonized were postcolonial states. It was as simple as that (02)

In the light of what is written above , post colonialism was purely historical issue. For this the term " postcolonial writer" has not been used; instead, writers were described with a historical reference. For instance, Chinua Achebe was described as" —an Igbo writer, a Nigerian writer, an African writer, a Commonwealth writer, a Third-World writer, but seldom if ever as a "postcolonial" one (Lazarus 03). In addition, "postcolonial" was used to refer to a historical period concerning the new decolonized states which appeared after decades from the WWII in Africa, Caribbean and Asia. After two decades following the decolonization, the birth of the academic specialization on postcolonial studies was in the late of seventies and during the eighties.

In this context, Depika Behri, Associate Professor in the English department at Emory University, in her article *Introduction to Postcolonial Studies* (1996), states that post colonialism is a reaction against the power and the domination of colonialism that used to abuse the natives and steal their wealth. On the other hand , with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, many studies claims that post colonialism is concerned with the social and cultural changes after the colonization. The great development of this academic field is due to the publications of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989), and so it makes an end for the use of terms such as : Third World, Commonwealth...etc.

2.2 Postcolonial African Literature

The term African postcolonial literature refers to the writings after the political independence of different African states that were under the European colonial rule. Most of this literature that was written by African authors tackles the issues of the colonial experiences or decolonization. However, Graham Huggan indicates that the term African postcolonial literature is a problematic concept because it conveys a fiction of homogeneity.

Gikandi claims that the appearance of African literature is due to the process of colonization, eg through the education system that was presented by the Christian schools which enable to form literature. The African writer uses it to oppose colonialism. African novelists use their novels and stories to facilitate and break the boundaries between 'first world' / 'third world', self / other, 'white' / 'black' and to break the control of colonialism over her people in Africa and correct the image of Africa as Khayyoom (1988) states :

Africa, for many an outsider, is a gloomy phenomenon, a dark continent of dense forests and wild life, a fantasy world inhabited by bushmen ... a literally swinging Tarzan. The thrilling silence of thick forests, sudden sunsets, formidable vultures, black water fever, the throbbing big drums and primitive customs of Africa have prompted the European mind to dismiss Africa as a trackless wilderness devoid of meaning (42)

The ugly incident of colonialism in Africa has effects on language, education, religion, artistic sensibilities, popular culture and the like. Post-colonial novels are considered as an actual weapons used by the African novelist to handle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power, based on binary oppositions such as "Us" and "them"; "First-world" and "third-world"; "white" and "black", "colonizer" and "colonized". The African writer was in the situation that his/her duty to correct the erroneous views.. Most of the African

writers- Olive Schreiner, Sembene Ousmane, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer, Laurens Vander Post, Ferdinand Oyono, Camara Laye, Ayi Kwei Armah, Cyprian Ekwensi, Gabriel Okara, all of them have strongly presented the impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism to the oppressed masses of their country in their works. Most Post-colonial African literature is an expression of a country.

2.3 Feminism and Identity in Postcolonial Studies

Feminist theory and postcolonial studies share their interest in the analyses of inter-human oppression like other schools which belong to cultural studies. The post colonial studies deals with the political and cultural oppression while the feminist theory focuses on the patriarchal one. Therefore, due to their similar interest, it is obvious that those two approaches can be used together to analyze a social situation or a literary work, according to Deepika Bahri "Feminist and postcolonial are occupied with similar questions of representation, voice, marginalization, and the relation between politics and literature"(201). As an instance, Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel of *Nervous Conditions* is considered as one of the postcolonial literary production in addition to that it sheds the a light on the women's situation in Africa. Hence it can be also considered under the field of feminism.

In the light of what is written above, both feminism and postcolonial studies both can be parallel in some aspects. On one hand, the two schools shed light on two kinds of subordinated people whether by patriarchy or by imperialism. Hence," the experiences of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a number of respects, and both feminist and post-colonial politics oppose such dominance " (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Hellen Tiffin 93). On the other hand, post colonialism and feminism concerned with " the ways and extent to which representation and language are crucial to identity formation and to the construction of subjectivity." (93).

However, the two academic fields may fall in a controversial aspect that feminism may criticize postcolonial studies or vice-versa. In the first case, feminism is concerned with the postcolonial analysis that does not give an obvious attention to the aspect of gender that completely omits and silences the voices of the colonized women and does not put a light to their suffering. These critics argue that colonialism puts the women in a very different situation of imposing her in a condition of double colonization; The 'double colonization' that resulted when women were subject to both general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination as women, needs to be taken into account in any analysis of colonial oppression (Spivak 1985a, 1985b, 1985c and 1986; Mohanty 1984; Suleri 1992). As a second case, the feminist approach has been criticized of being obviating the different realities between third world women and western women. These critics argue that this obviation is a production of the imperialist discourse. In the light of this, Mohanty criticizes the issue concerned with gender which faces a similar problem to those concerned with classes, and argues that it is a mistake to analyze this issue by adopting the same way in all classes and cultures, and he states :

the assumption that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogeneous group identified prior to the process of analysis. . . . Thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of 'women' as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of groups of women. (338)

Many other critics are provided to feminism; among them Spivak's rejection of western feminism regarding its ignorance of third world women. She challenges the claims that feminism speaks for all women. Spivak then recognized a goal in French feminist theory to examine the experience of third world women in term of western female subject constitution. Such an approach clearly ignores some very important differences in culture, history, language and social class" (Morton 73). Western feminism therefore is charged with failure to deal adequately with the experience and the circumstances that third world women found themselves in.

To sum up, it is important in the two schools of postcolonial and feminism to deliver " a broader analysis which would be able to integrate gender to the postcolonial approach, as well as the different cultural contexts in which women have to struggle and make their own path without necessarily following western feminist patterns." For this context, the postcolonial feminism emerged as a field in literature that examines women situation in a patriarchal and a colonized society.

2.4 Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Throughout history, Female and colonized people experience the position of "other" by different forms of colonialism and patriarchy attitudes. Both of them live in a situation of unfairness and oppression. Hence, feminist theory and post colonial theory seek to strive them and keep their rights in paralleled way.

Postcolonial feminism as a field in literature that puts into the light how women are marginalized and stereotyped by both colonialism and gender inequalities, and sometimes continued to be marginalized even by post colonial writers who might indicate that they claim to be challenging the culture of oppression, In addition, post colonial feminism does not share the same assumption of white middle-class women. For this context, Tyagi in *Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation to Postcolonial and Feminist Theories* asserts that:

Post colonialism and feminism have come to share a tense relationship as some feminist critics point out that postcolonial theory is a male-centered field that has not only excluded the concerns of women but also exploited them. Postcolonial feminist theorists have accused postcolonial theorists not only of obliterating the role of women from the struggle for independence but also of misrepresenting them in the nationalist discourses.(46)

This new field of criticism progressed over years by an ethnic female writer and such as Carole Boyce Davies and Anne Adams Graves edited *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature* in 1986, in which they created an African feminist criticism. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa edited *'This Bridge Called My Back' : Writings by Radical Women of Color* in 1981, in which they claimed, in the second edition, there are difference between American women of color and third world women, so there is a big gap between them.

Postcolonial feminist criticism contributes in linking many literary studies, for challenging the western ethnicity and resorting the plural subjectivities to literary history. Global "sisterhood" as a term appeared in the mid of 1990'S, Sisterhood can be defined as a union created between women for creating inclusive voices for women around the world to challenge and to claim their rights and reject male dominance, unfairness and oppression. In sisterhood, women support themselves to change their social and political weak position in society (Sabri 09).

To sum up, postcolonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in one's colonized countries and in Western locations. It concentrates on construction of gender difference in colonial and anti-colonial discourses, representation of women in anti-colonial and postcolonial discourses with particular reference to the work of women writers. The postcolonial feminist critics raise a number of conceptual, methodological and political problems involved in the study of representation of gender.

2.5 The Issue of Identity in Post Colonial African Feminism

the postcolonial African feminist theory is concerned mainly with the female identity under the situation of being in a colonized or ex-colonized country. The women in such a situation experiences what is called the double colonization in addition to the identity confusion whether through mimicry or by being hybrid.

2.5.1 The Concept of Double Colonization

Double colonization arises in the mid of 1980, it refers to the observation that women are subjected to both the colonial domination of empire and the male domination patriarchy as identified by Holst-Petersen and Rutherford's *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing* published in 1985. In this context, colonial and patriarchy powers have a control over female. Women are doubly colonized by imperialism and patriarchal forces.

The notion of double colonization became a catch-phrase of postcolonial and feminist discourses in the 1980s (Ashcroft et al. 249). Women are suffering as they experience the oppression of colonialism and gender inequality. Double colonization indicates that in the colonized nation women are doubly oppressed due to their race and gender. Moreover, the worries of women as marginalized group in post colonial societies has a long history of unbroken oppression as an indigenous minority (Shenmugasundaram 389). Beside that, it appoints that women fall in condition that they are oppressed by patriarchal and imperialistic ideology.

Patriarchy, the term is a social system described as a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate women physically and psychologically. It is a structure that hamper female from making their economy, sexuality, mothering, or childbearing choices. Therefore this system aims to break up women's identities, abilities and powers. Patriarchy it is a that treats women as different from men and less than him, inferior, something belong to men that lack independence.(Sabri 08).

The circumstances that women fall in and led to fight for their freedom and independence, as Parveen states in *Feminism: A General Survey* that are illustrated as follow:

Feminism is an organized movement for women's rights, interests, freedom, and equality. There should be the political, economic and social equality of sexes in a male-dominated society. It is the aim

that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men
and so it needs struggle to achieve this aim. (344)

As it mentioned, the colonialism rises the suffering of female, even after the national independence so the domination continues and follows the national independence. Post colonial feminism continues to analyze the situation of double colonization. Most celebrated example is Hazel Carby's *White Woman Listen* (1982), and similar issues are addressed by Mohanty (1984), *Suleri* (1992) and others.

2.5.2 Education and Mimicry

Colonialism uses many strategies in ruling the colonized land so that to empower its people and practise domination on them. Among those strategies, is the use of the schooling system since education has a profound effect on the behavior of the colonized individuals, leading to what is known as "mimicry". This subject of the importance of education and its negative consequences on the colonized people is an important theme in Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel of *Nervous Conditions* .

The colonizers' goal of imposing their hegemonic culture on the indigenous culture does not end up in just political colonization – dominating people and ruling land by applying physical domination – but also a psychological one which seeks to wipe out the colonized culture. To achieve such a goal, the colonizer imposes his culture through teaching institutions, as Hena Ahmed points out “ The task of psychological decolonization is made complicated and difficult, the text indicates, by the educational system which fosters values that generate a sense superiority that goes along with the teaching of English literature in the colonial context” (57). By using such a strategy, the colonization seeks to make the indigenous population accept the metropolitan hegemonic values of the settlers' minority which is called the colonization of "people". The indigenous African colonized people who enter the system and became educated

suffer from becoming an alienated African and even lose their part of their self-identity during the process of education; then, the decolonization of the mind, of those new values and ideas from the colonized culture, is more difficult to undertake than the decolonization of the country. Finally, those newly taken values and ideas from the colonized concerning the indigenous people lead to the appearance of what Homi K. Bhabha defined as mimicry –when the colonized mimics the habits of the colonizer.

Mimicry is a concept that appeared in the colonial and post colonial literature. It describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and colonized in which the indigenous people hope to have access to that power of the colonizers(Ashcroft et al. 124) By adopting the colonizer's cultural, habits, assumptions, institutions and values" and wiping out their own identity and culture. The result will be the representation of those traits in a wrong way and simply it is a blurred copy of the colonizer, and that is why the mimics men called "coconut" or "Oreo".

Mimicry is an interesting term in Homi bhabha point of view, for him, mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject reduplicated as "almost the same, but not quite"(bahabha 86). So, imitating the colonizer's culture, behavior, manners contain both mockery and menace, so mimicry has double face one is resemblance other is menace.(bahabha: 86).

Mimicry shows the limitation of authority of the colonizer discourse, so that, the colonizer authority shaped his own destruction. The mimics man that appears in Macaulay's writing ,Bhabha's claims, Kipling's work is the effect of "flawed colonial mimics in which to be anglicized is emphatically not to be English"(87).

Mimics is a complex term and for this context Naipaul shows it in his novel "the mimic men" and states while he is describing the landlord:

I paid Mr Shylock three guineas a week for a tall, multimirrored, book-shaped room with a coffin-like wardrobe. And for Mr. Shylock, the recipient each week of fifteen times three guineas, the

possessor of a mistress and of suits made of cloth so fine I felt I could eat it, I had nothing but admiration. . . . I thought Mr. Shylock looked distinguished, like a lawyer or businessman or politician. He had the habit of stroking the fore of his ear inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it. I knew of recent events in Europe; they tormented me; and although I was trying to live on seven pounds a week I offered Mr. Shylock my fullest, silent compassion. (Naipaul 7)

2.5.3 Female Identity Between Hybridity and Ethnicity

As it explained in the previous title, the colonial schooling system can lead to the loss of identity of the educated colonized elite. Then, the difficulties for the colonized to not lose their identity in the situation known as " hybridity ", which imposed by colonialism effects at a sociological and a psychological level leads to self alienation to the educated indigenous population. Therefore the Africans find themselves, concerning their identity especially for the female case, in a situation of conflict between their ethnicity and hybridity.

The term " ethnicity " was first used in 1960s to " account for human variation in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns and ancestry, rather than the discredited generalizations of race with its assumption of a humanity divided into fixed, genetically determined biological types ." Richard Alonzo Schermerhorn defines ethnicity as:

A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry (that is, memories of a shared historical past whether of origins or of historical experiences such as colonization, immigration, invasion or slavery); a shared consciousness of a separate, named, group identity; and a cultural focus on one or

more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. These features will always be in dynamic combination, relative to the particular time and place in which they are experienced and operate consciously or unconsciously for the political advancement of the group.(Schermerhorn 12)

In the light of this definition, the fact is an individual has a particular nationality or biological characteristics does not necessarily make him belong to an ethnic group, otherwise it is the belonging to a particular culture. Hybridity in general indicates the combination of two elements of culture and beliefs or any aspect of culture that makes meaning or creates a new one that did not exist before. As a term, it appeared clearly in post colonial discourse till now as Ashcraft et al. state, “one of the most widely employed and disputed terms in postcolonial theory” (118). It is mostly associated with the work of Homi Bhabha, who uses it in analyzing the relationship between the colonizer and colonized . Other vision about hybridity is, postulated by Marwan Kraidy in his book *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* in which he explains that hybridity has a relation with terms such as “Creolization”, “Syncretism”, “Transcultural” and the mixing of races together or “Miscegenation” and those notions used for linking the natives' culture to the colonizing culture .

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter presents a clear explanation of the theory which is used in the analysis of Titsi Dambarenga's *Nervous Conditions*. To tackle the issue of female in third world countries that faced two ideologies –one is patriarchal and the other is colonial. This study paved a way to give a comprehensive analysis about the post colonial feminist theory and female identity.

CHAPTER THREE

Education and Female Identity in Nervous Conditions

Chapter Three: Education and Female Identity in *Nervous Conditions*

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Introduction

Postcolonial feminist African literature is generally concerned with the subsequent impacts and interaction between the culture of the colonizing power and the traditions of the colonized people showing how the colonizer imposes his culture, language, and a set of attitudes upon the colonized people, and the degree to which the colonized people resist, adapt, or subvert that imposition. African women began the journey of self-determination process making it an important phase in the history concerned with different issues including the issue of identity and the several factors that affect this matter. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is one of these works that concerned with identity and more particularly female identity and education that has its effects on African women's identity. This chapter attempts to discuss, through two different sections, how Dangarembga presents the issue of education and female identity in her novel *Nervous Conditions*.

3.1 Section one : An Overview of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Nervous Conditions is considered as one of the important novels that rises the voice of women who are faced marginalization from their society on the one hand and from the colonizer on the other hand. In this section, information about Tsitsi Dangarembga and her novel, the significance of the title and the plot summary are provided.

3.1.1 Biography of the Writer

Tsitsi Dangarembga is a playwright and a novelist born in 1959 in Mutok in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe now). She went to England with her family at the age of two and she began her education in British school till the age of six, after that she returned to Rhodesia. What is obvious

that there is a clear relationship between her life and her central character Nyasha. In her novel Nyasha also spends her childhood and got her education in England. In addition, Tsitsi's return to England can be identified through Tambu's character. Both characters in a parallel way reflect the life of the author which make the novel seem to be an autobiographical one. In this context, Pauline A. Uwakweh, in her essay entitled "Debunking Patriarchy", points out that the "self-referential nature of the autobiographical mode adopted by Dangarembga as a literary strategy marks her attainment of voice in the Zimbabwean male-dominated literary arena" (Uwakweh 75). Although, in an interview with Tsitsi in 1989, she states that *Nervous Conditions* is not an autobiography (Wilkinson 190).

Dangarembga said that she wrote "of things I had observed and had had direct experience with, larger than any one person's own tragedies... a wider implication and origin and therefore were things that needed to be told" (190). In the light of this, it is obviously noticed that *Nervous Conditions* contains autobiographical elements from Dangarembga's real life experience, among them, her return from England to Rhodesia at the age of six after finishing her early education, which is portrayed through Nyasha's struggles being a black educated female and above all anglicized in Shona society.

Tsitsi Dangarembga entered Cambridge University to study medicine in 1977, after she returned to England. Despite the fact that she had a dream to become a doctor in order to help her people and society as well, she did not complete her study there but she returned to Rhodesia in 1980 (before it attained its independence). The novelist completed her education in Harare University studying psychology. Besides this, she was a member of a drama group in the university where she wrote many plays which are produced in the same university. During her studies she was working as a copy writer at a marketing agency.

In 1995, the writer entered the prose writing starting with a short story in Sweden entitled "The Letter". After two years, she also published a play in Harare called "No Longer Weeps".

Despite of her previous works, she gained her real success and popularity at the age of 25 with the publication of *Nervous Conditions* .

3.1.2 About the Novel

Nervous conditions by Tsitsi Dangaremba, which is published in 1988, is the first novel published in England by black Zimbabwean women. As Wilkinson states in his interview:

Written when the author was twenty-five, *Nervous Conditions* put Dangarembga at the forefront of the younger generation of African writers producing literature in English today...*Nervous Conditions* highlights that which is often effaced in postcolonial African literature in English--the representation of young African girls and women as worthy subjects of literature...While the critical reception of this novel has focused mainly on the author's feminist agenda, in [this] interview...Dangarembga stresses that she has moved from a somewhat singular consideration of gender politics to an appreciation of the complexities of the politics of postcolonial subjecthood (Wilkinson 309).

The novelist faced some difficulties in getting it published until she took it to women publisher. Dorris explains the reasons behind the rejection of publishing the novel stating that "it was criticized by male critics as being 'negative', and presenting an unfair picture of the lives of black women" (03).

In 1989, *Nervous Condition* obtained the Commonwealth Writers Prize. In addition to this, it won a second prize in the Swedish Aid Organization, SIDA's, short story competition. *Nervous Condition* has gained an important literary claims like Alice Walker and Doris Lessing, who wrote, "This is the novel we have all been waiting for... it will become a classic" (Thien).

Many literary scholars consider *Nervous Conditions* to be one of the most important African novels of the 20th century.

3.1.3 The Significance of the Title

The title of the novel *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga is taken from Jean Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's book of *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), in which he writes, "the status of 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among the colonized people with their consent" (20). Dangarembga uses Fanon's expression as a title in order to highlight the situation of female character in the novel (Nyasha, Tambu, Maiguru and MaShingayi), who experienced a nervous conditions because of the double oppression. On one hand, they experience a continued oppression under the Shona power system (social classes, gender discrimination and cultural norms) which put this women in inferior situation. Through the character of Nyasha who suffered from identity crisis, she asserts the novelist attitude toward her traditional culture .In the light of this, she states that "I do not have a fund of our cultural traditions or oral history to draw from' (Wilkinson 02). On the other hand, they experience the colonial domination.

3.1.4 The Plot Summary

The story begins with a statement "I was not sorry when my brother died." (Dangarembga 01). This statement is told by the narrator Tumbudzai ("Tambu" in short). The event is arranged in 1968, but accidentally tambu looks to the year 1965 when her father ,Jeremiah, decided that her oldest brother, Nhamo, goes to the mission school and stays in Babamukuru's home. Babamukuru is Tambu's uncle, Tambudzia sees her father grateful toward

her brother. Babamukuru is the educated man in the clan, who travelled with his wife Maiguru and his children Nyasha and Chido to England and stayed there for five years. Babmukuru gains through education a financial success and he supports Tambu's family.

Mr. Matimba, Tambu's teacher advises her to sell the maize that she grows in her garden. A white couple does not accept that and they say that the place of this child should be in the school. After her teacher advises, she gives the money to the school's headmaster to keep her in the school while her father want to get the money to himself. The headmaster keeps the money for Tambu's place in the school.

When Babamukuru and his family return from England. His children appear strange because of their Englishness. In family meeting, Babamukuro decides that Nhamo will go with him to attend the mission school. After the first year, Nhamo starts to change and becomes anglicized and he claims that his Shona will be forgotten. The event jumped to 1968, when Babamukuru declares that Nhamo died because of a mysterious illness led him to replace his place in the mission school by Tambu. Her mother becomes nervous and cannot eat or work because of the decision to take Tambu to the mission.

In the school, Tambu realizes that her cousin the rebellious Nyasha is not liked by her classmate. They think that she wants to be white. Tambu becomes fluent in English and learns quickly. She notices how her cousin is headstrong and how she is seen ungrateful toward her parents , who gave her all life's opportunities.

The story progress, Chido becomes old enough and Babamuruku sends him to Salisbury to attend the mostly white secondary school. Nyasha studied hard to succeed for the two examinations. When Chido came back, he went with the girls to attend student Christmas party. Andy, one of Tambu's friend and Nyaradzo's older brothers, walks home with them. Babamukuru entered in conflict with his daughter when he saw her flirting with Andy and calls her a "whore".

Babamukuru, Nyasha and Tambu returned to the homestead to attend Christmas day. Now, Tambu looks at her previous life in different way. She sees the dirtiness she used to live in. Lucia is Tambu's youngest aunt who is pregnant with the child of Babamukuru's lazy distant cousin, Takesure. Takesure has two wives who live elsewhere; for this, Babamukuru did not allow him to live there. In addition to that, Ma'Shingayi is pregnant and ill and she cannot do any sort of work. There are twenty four members in the house to spend the holiday and women should take care of them. In the meeting, in which Babamuruku determines Lucia and Takesure's fate, she hears how Takesture accusing her of witchcraft. She becomes angry and starts defending herself. Babamukuru states that all family's calamity is due to the sins of MaShingay and jermiah, in which they should have a wedding.

When the preparation of the wedding starts, Babamukuru returns to the mission with Nyasha and Maiguru. Tambu becomes nervous because she was left in the homestead to help in the work. Ma'Shingayi goes to the mission hospital in March to give birth to her child with her sister Lucia. Nyasha and Maiguru helped Tambu in the wedding works. In the wedding's morning all the family goes to the wedding except of Tambu and she said: "I'm sorry, Babamukuru, but I do not want to go to the wedding." (Dangrembga 169). Babamukuru becomes angry but he lets her in the mission. Later, she was punished with fifteen lashes and two weeks of maid's work. Tambu finds pleasure in her punishment, since it is the result of having stood up for herself. Maiguru told Babamukuru that the punishment is very harsh and tells him that she wants to go because she is unhappy to stay there. Babamukuru tells her to go wherever she wants. Five days later, Maiguru returns much happier and refreshed.

Before the graduation of Tambu, the nuns arrive to the mission school to recruit for a Catholic convent for a school called Sacred Heart. Tambu is chosen to the scholarship; Nyasha thinks that she will be brainwashed. All the family does not accept her trip; her mother becomes anxious and she does not eat or work. Babamukuru did not allow her at first but after the persuasion of Maiguru he accepts. Maiguru did not go with her husband to the Christmas and

she said "spend another Christmas catering for a family of two dozen," Tambu's brother "Tambudzo" develops diarrhea and Ma'Shingay is unable to take care of him. Jeremiah goes and sends for Lucia, who comes and forces her sister to get up, take a bath, eat meat stew, and take care of her baby.

Tambu falls in a situation of neglect among her old friends, Maidei and Jocelyn, claiming that she is leaving them to go to a "white" convent school. When it is the time to go to the school, Babamukuru, Nyasha and Maiguru drive Tambu to the convent school. The building is very high and beautiful but the Africans have a poor quarter to segregate them from the white students. As the semester starts Tambu works hard, Nyasha sends her many letters one of them is an emotional one in which she is not getting along with the girls at the school and with her father.

When Tambu returns to the mission, she observes a change in Nyasha, she becomes thin and "grown skeletal." She notices that her cousin after eating she throws up in the bathroom. Babamukuru wanted Tambu to return but she cannot leave her cousin in that situation. Babmukuru takes her to psychiatrist, who claims that she should stay for days in the clinic until her recovery. Ma'Shingayi affirms that Nyasha is being killed by her "Englishness" which makes Tambu question things and refuse brainwashed, "something in my mind began to asserts itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story." (Dangarembga 204).

3.2 Section Two : The Presentation of Education and Female Identity in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Tsitsi Dangaremdga in her novel handles the issue of the identity and education through the character and the event. this section provides a clear discussion by showing the female identity development through the novel and its relation with the colonizer educational system.

3.2.1 Education as a Major Theme

In the novel of *Nervous Conditions* by the African novelist Tsitsi Dangaremba, the issue of education is highly presented from the very beginning, through the characters Babamukuru, Tambu, Nhamo and Nyasha. At the beginning of the novel, Tambudzia's ambition towards education is due to her vision that the education is only a way to escape her world and plays her major biological roles being a woman and black as well. When the novel starts, she claims that she is not sorry of her brother's death because it enables her to go to the school instead of Nhamo, that is the right of being educated is offered to the boys first. While Tambu sees the education as the only path way to financial success as it is clearly obvious through Babamukuru. Babamukuru together with his wife "Maiguru" received a high education, which enables him to work as a headmaster on the mission school when he returned to Rhodesia. This work gives him a level of financial security and prestige in his family life in which he was considered as a god in the eyes of his family members, ruling and supporting them financially.

As two of the educated examples in the novel are Nyasha and Maiguru. Both characters get the colonial education which makes them isolated from the society that is Shona women see them as a rich and too educated. This situation makes them feel alienated. The colonial education affects those two characters in a way leading to the inferiority of the native culture, but it offers them a kind of respect, for instance the invitation of Maiguru to patriarchal council about local dispute.

Also Dangaremba presents the negative side of colonial education, which leads the native population to be anglicized or to be in an "englishness" statue, as Nyasha states to her cousin Tambu "It is bad enough ... when a country gets colonized, but when the people do as well! That's the end, really, that's the end" (Dangaremba 150).

3.2.2 The Issue of Identity in *Nervous Conditions*

As explained in the previous title how Tsitsi Dangaremba in her novel *Nervous Conditions* presents the issue of education and explores the question of how colonial education system can lead to alienation of the educated natives. In addition to the effects of the colonial educational system on the formation of female identity. In the novel the writer gives examples of different women as presented by Tambu " my story is ... about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion"(Dangaremba 01). This title gives a deep study of the female characters in *Nervous Conditions*, how they are treated and how they reform or lose their identities .

3.2.2.1 Nyasha as Rebellious Identity

Nyasha is Tambu's cousin, the daughter of Maiguru and Babamukuru. Nyasha was raised in England and entered the western school which gave her an experience of engaging with western society. In the novel, she shows the image of how the African's minds are colonized leading her to form a distinct identity different from her parents and the Shona female.

Despite the fact that Nyasha born from Shona parents, she finds herself in an alienation. In addition, she almost loses her origin language, culture and the behavioral code that she has to adopt in order to interact with her family in their gathering. When her family returns, Nyasha arrives wearing mini skirt, it is the first image of her inaptness with her roots. Also when Tambu invites her to the festivities, she cannot relate Nyasha to neither in Shona nor in tribal dance , she does not show any sort of engagement. Her reaction is always a shut off the whole world. This leads Tambu's parents to consider her as a miserable child. According to Fanon's, "being for others", means that relation exists within community, is interchangeable condition which is totally absent in Nyasha.

The English language that she uses to communicate with children in the mission, makes her marginalized by fellow school mates. In such a situation, Nyasha is considered as a stranger in her own homestead and at the mission. Nyasha's isolation is simply linked to the years that she spent in Europe. This makes her lose the contact with her culture and acquires new behavior which is strange to the Shona community; as an example from the story when Nyasha had taken to smoke, Tambu was shocked toward her cousin saying "You smoke cigarettes; I was aghast. Babamukuru was right! His daughter was beyond redemption." (Dangarembga 84). Her unclear's behavior puts her in conflict with her father.

The conflict between Nyasha and her father, her disrespect of Shona community and her sarcastic comment to her community is a result of her lost national identity on the one hand, and it is the only reasons of Nyasha's failed rebellion on the other hand, which is totally opposite to Tambu's escapement. Nyasha suffers from anorexia nervosa and bulimia disorders generally linked to the white middle class women, in which she seeks to have a thin body to be beautiful and here she became in argument with her father who forces her to eat as a way that imposes her control. In the end, Nyasha falls in the situation of being unacceptable by her western world community and her family.

In the light of the analysis provided to understand the reasons of Nyasha's failed rebellion, it may be concluded by that, she loses most of her reference to her Shona culture and her national identity, and as Supulka Bhattacharjee points out "[i]n exile from their past, they also found themselves in exile from their future" (46).

3.2.2.2 Tambu and Lucia as Escaped Identity

Tsitsi Dangarembga in her novel *Nervous Conditions* presents a type of characters who were able to escape their suffering and formed their own identity. Lucia and Tambu are the only

women characters who were able "... to escape, and they do so thanks to education" (Carmela López Giménez 17)

Tambudzira is the novel's narrator and the protagonist; a fourteen years old girl from Shona society and a daughter of Jeremiah and Ma'Shingayi. Through the novel, Tambu shows her desire toward being educated, the bad situation she was suffering in her family makes her think that the only solution to escape such a condition is to educate herself, looking at the situation of Babamukuru's family. At the very beginning of the novel, Tambu's assertion that she is not sad for her brother's death is due to his bad treatment towards her, after he was chosen to be sent to the mission because of his male gender. The narrator says that: "... my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's." (Dangarembga 01). That after the death of Nhamo, Tambu goes to the mission in his place and gradually starts to develop her identity far from her nervous condition.

Different critics were provided to the character Tambu concerning her formation of her identity especially with the existence of Nyasha's loss of identity. The tight relationship between Tambu and her mother culture and society is stated by Phillips: "Tambu's family, though poor, maintains a direct link with traditional subsistence farming and customs, which provides the solid ground on which Tambu makes clear, practical decisions about her feminine rebellion" (99). In addition to her relation with her grandmother who helped her to learn more about her family history and became more in touch with her heritage so as not to lose her national identity. Tambu, in her role of the family's observer "[u]nlike Nyasha who is largely disgusted with the status of the women in the family, Tambu senses their strength in their particular methods of resistance and learns from each one while forming her own distinct identity" (Nair 138). Together with her realization that Nyasha's Englishness is the reason of her loss of identity. Tambu makes a clear decision toward her identity and her ambition of being educated female so she takes the advantages of the colonial education as stated "quietly, unobtrusively and

extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story." (Dangarembga 204).

Lucia , as a second escaped character in the novel, is Tambu's aunt from her mother side. She is the only female character from the old generation who is not married, that gave her the opportunity to act freely in addition to being considered as the only female character who is called by her name and not by her family name. Because of her single status, Lucia has not examined the weight of women's burdens, which makes her "the only character who is not suffering from a nervous condition" (Donadey 31). Lucia has an opinionated nature and she speaks her mind freely. she gets a way to it because she does not have to obey any man; even Babamukuru , who is aware of her strength, says "she is like a man herself" (Dangarembga 174). Lucia's awareness of her culture and how the Shona society works gave her the hand to build her identity that she uses their belief and exactly manipulating the patriarch to get what she wants; for instance in her convincing Babamukuru to get a job at the mission. Lucia's character and action through the novel prove the saying that : "traditional structures of patriarchy nevertheless permit women spaces of resistance" (Andrade 97).

3.2.2.3 MaShingayi and Maiguru as Entrapped Identity

MaShingayi, Tambu's mother, is married to Jeremiah for nineteen years since she was fifteen. She was presented as a hardworking rural woman. At the beginning of the novel, MaShingayi advises her daughter to learn how to take the "burden of womanhood" as she believes that woman should make sacrifices and takes care of her family when sacrifices must be carried. She also appears as much aware of the colonialist effects as she laments the poverty of blackness under white rule because Rhodesians are prevented from any form of prestige, access ,or respect. This suggests that she has an oppressed female identity without an essence of self determination as she cannot guide her daughter to build an independent life outside her house.

MaShingayi sees education as the way to safeguard the family from poverty. She shows a big interest when Babamakuru decided to educate Nhamo. Babamakuru, as an educated man, entusiasts her because he has ability to feed the clan. She yearns for the time when her son can provide food for them as he is afforded education. She does not preserve any effort to get funds for her son's education. When she sells vegetables at bus bank, she keeps the extra money to pay for Nhamo's education and not Tumbu's. Though she did not stop her from work to get the money for her schooling and asked Jeremiah to give Tambu seeds so that she can plant them and sell the products.

MaShingayi has a mindset that is promoted by male domination and believes that the real investment should be put on the son since he will save the family from poverty unlike the daughter who benefits her husband when she gets married.

I am only saying what I think, just like she did. She did tell us, didn't she, what she thinks, and did anyone say anything! No. Why not? Because Maiguru is educated. That's why you all kept quiet. Because she's rich and comes here and flashes her money around, so you listen to her as though you want to eat the words that come out of her mouth. But me, I'm not educated, am I? I'm just poor and ignorant, so you want me to keep quiet, you say I mustn't talk. Ehe! I am poor and ignorant, that's me, but I have a mouth and it will keep on talking, it won't keep quiet. (Dangarembga. 142).

By these words, MaShingayi asserts that poverty and lack of education make her voiceless, and resents Maiguru's wealth and education. In this respect, it is clear that educated women in Shona society get respect and honor while poor housewives stay at the bottom of social hierarchy.

Maigurui is Tambu's aunt and Babamukuru's wife. She is an educated woman and attended school with her husband in South Africa in the 1950s and accompanied him

to England in 1960. Tumbu believes that Maigurui lives the best life since she is educated and married to the great Babamukuru.

Don't you remember, when we went to South Africa everybody was saying that we, the women, were loose. It wasn't a question of associating with this race or that race at the time. People were prejudiced against educated women. Prejudiced. That's why they said we weren't decent. That was in the fifties. Now we are into the seventies. I am disappointed that people still believe the same things. (Dangarembga. 184).

Maigurui here defends Tumbu's right to join convent school after she had been chosen out of her classmates and she defended women's education as a whole. She walks out of her husband for five days because of the depression and she surprises him when she speaks loudly. This indicates that Maigurui's voice is heard in her family because she is educated. At the same time, she pays the highest price to be female partner in household.

When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if - if - if things were - different - But there was Babawa Chido and the children and the family. And does anyone realise, does anyone appreciate, what sacrifices were made? As for me, no one even thinks about the things I gave up. (Dangarembga. 103)

Maigurui shows her sadness because though she is an educated woman with a master's degree, people do not pay any attention to her. Unlike her husband, who has the same amount of education, is highly regarded in society. Dangarembga uses her to illustrate that education is not enough for a woman's liberation. That "education is certainly one means whereby a woman can empower herself and effect social change, although acquiring an education does not necessarily guarantee these gains" (Ahmad 70).

MaShingayi as an uneducated women and Maiguru as an educated one, both experiences double oppression by male domination and colonialist society. It is interesting that, in spite of their visible differences, the two females in *Nervous Conditions* are dominated by their roles as wives and mothers (Andrade 39). This suggests that education may affect on their identities and does not permits them from being entrapped characters.

3.2.3 The Formation of Female Identity and its Relation to Education

The discussion of the issue of education and its deep influence on female identity in *Nervous Conditions* focuses on the comparison between the two protagonist characters: Tambudzia and Nyasha in which the traditional Shona culture and the European educational system put the dual characters in battleground where they struggle to become educated on one hand; and to understand, create, and accept their identities and the forces that shape their views on the other hand.

In *Nervous Conditions*, the dual protagonist Tambu and Nyasha show a controversy result in the formation of their identities. While Nyasha loses her rebellion in forming her female identity, Tambu achieves a mental statue of acceptance toward her African black female identity. Firstly, Nyasha, who suffered from identity confusion, holds a hybride identity; she lost her native identity of Shona culture due to her life in England and her European education. Being in such a situation of hybridity prevents her to form her female identity and leads her to psychological illness. As explained by Phillips " Nyasha, on the other hand, is born into the Europeanized, wealthy, and educated side of the family and suffers, due to childhood years spent in England, from the loss of indigenous language, history and, consequently, personal identity." (99). Nyasha described the forces (the wites

and their educational system) that leads her to such a lost situation in the following statement :

They have done it to me [...]they did it to them (her parents) too [...]to both of them, but especially to him (Babamakuru). They put him through it all [...]why do they do it Tambu [...]to me and to you and to him? Do you see what they have done? They have taken us away [...]they have deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other. We're groveling [...]I won't grovel. Oh no, I won't. I'm not a good girl. (Dangarembga)

Secondly, unlike her cousin Nyasha, Tambudzia wins to form her female identity in the ground of her national one. Though she got a western education, Tambu does not become as a western product. She kept her root that shaped unconsciously by her grandmother's lessons. Phillips in this sense says “Tambu’s family, though poor, maintains a direct link with traditional subsistence farming and customs, which provides the solid ground on which Tambu makes clear, practical decisions about her feminine rebellion.” (99). In addition, Tambu's observation of her cousin's final situation together with her mother's comment that the "Englishness" is what derives Nyasha to such an end (Dangarembga 203). Tambu reached the status of thinking about the norms and shaping her distinct female identity saying :

quietly, unobtrusively and extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story ... the story of four women whom I loved, and our men, this story is how it all began.(Dangarembga 204).

Conclusion

To sum up, Tsitsi Dangarembga portrayed a group of African women; educated and uneducated. Those females including Tambudzai, Nyasha, Maiguru, Ma'shingay, and Lucia represent the depressed women of Southern Rhodesia. They suffered from both colonialism and patriarchy. On the one hand, racial discrimination imposes that women have no right in education, and they ought to stay home. On the other hand white colonizers see them as inferior than others. Eventually, even those who got education had no escape from being entrapped, escaped, or rebellious.

General Conclusion

Through this work, it is fairly clear that identity is a major subject in African postcolonial literature. It involves the colonized people's struggle to confirm their original identity and the consequences of the clash between different nationalities that happened as a result of colonization in creating mixed hybrid identities. Postcolonial identity is affected by factors such as the cultural interaction of the different identities, politics, economy, and history of colonized and colonizing powers.

For African women, the threat did not mean only the European existence, but the male oppression as well. Since African societies were patriarchal, females had to endure the double oppressing practices against them which came from colonialism from one side and patriarchy from the other. This led them to develop a new form of resistance manifested in their literary works to express their own experience in affirming their identity with consideration to culture, race, taboos, and gender. As a result, the feminist movement got a new pursuit in the postcolonial context for its demand of the needs of African females because western feminism failed to present an adequate portrayal of racial discrimination. Thus feminist postcolonial literature is the medium by which African women authors fought racism and sexism to build pure African identity.

This dissertation went through very scrutiny to demonstrate the connection Tsitsi Dangarembga established between education and reformation of female identity in Africa in her novel entitled *Nervous Conditions*. She presents characters who belong to the Shona people in Rhodesia with more focus on the experience of African women and the impact of the colonialist education system on them.

Through the narrator Tumbu, Dangarembga introduces women from the same family with different ages and social ranks living in a patriarchal society. In addition, they share with

the male characters the fact of being blacks in a racist colonized society. Thus, all women in this narrative are double oppressed regardless of their social position .

The reader is provided with the main effects of western education on women's identity. Nyasha and Tambu are presented as controversial characters. The anglicized character Nyasha entered a state of confusion and lost her native identity in favor of a new hybrid identity. Unlike Nyasha, Tambu succeeds to maintain her national female identity .

Finally, we confirm our hypotheses that colonial education has affected African women's identity and Dangarembga aims to build a pure African female identity by affirming the need for women to adhere to their national identity and to not allow western education to negatively effects the fundamentals of African identity. Besides, she invites African women to accept themselves as being black women and stop imitating the Europeans, instead; they ought to face their patriarchal societies and gain their rights.

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ملخص

تتطرق دراستنا هذه إلى قضية التعليم في رواية " الظروف العصبية" 1988 للروائية الزيمبابوية تسيتسي دانجارمبا. ومن أهداف هذه الدراسة تقديم تحليل واضح عن تأثير التعليم الإستعماري على تكوين هوية الأنثى في المجتمع الزيمبابوي المستعمر من خلال تحليل قضية التعليم في الرواية , إضافة إلى دراسة الشخصيات الأنثوية "ماسنجاي" و"ماجورو" و"لوشيا" بالإضافة إلى إيلاء اهتمام أكبر للبطلتين "تامبو" و "نياشا". اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي حيث استندت على النظرية النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار لبيان أوجه تجسيد هوية الأنثى وتأثير التعليم الاستعماري عليها. وما خلصت إليه هذه الدراسة: أن التعليم ليس بالضرورة حاميا للأنثى, كما أن تأثيره على تكوين هويتها قد يكون سلبيا , مما يؤدي إلى فقدان الهوية الوطنية , وهذا ما نلمسه في شخصية "نياشا" التي تعاني من أزمة الهوية. وفي خضم كل ذلك , تدرك "تامبو" أن تكون هويتها يعتمد أساسا على إختياراتها التي تقوم على مقاومة القبول الكامل لفكر المستعمر الذي يمررونه من خلال النظام التعليمي في تلك الحقبة , والذي يستهدف أيضا التشكيك في جذور هويتها الوطنية ومبادئ مجتمعها الذي ترعرعت فيه . كما يوصى بإجراء استنباط لمزيد من البحث في هذه الرواية لإلقاء الضوء على جوانب أخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نسوية ما بعد الإستعمار, التعليم الإستعماري , هوية الأنثى ...