

**EDUCATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: REFLECTION ON
TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS***

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Ifeoma Cassandra Nebeife (Ph.D)

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
ifeoma@fuwukari.edu.ng, ifycassandra@gmail.com
+2347039837113

Abstract

The problem of human capital development in Africa continues to grapple with a lasting solution. This paper through the lens of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* examines the roles of critical thinking, self-awareness and collective action in achieving true human capital development. Education as a double-edged sword remains a powerful tool for empowerment and liberation, particularly for marginalized groups like women. The primary text in use emphasizes the unequal access to the quality education experienced by characters along lines of gender and class. The paper employs the tools of psychoanalytic theory to analyze the cost of assimilation into the dominant culture while in the pursuit of education. This often leads to internal conflict and a loss of cultural identity. It achieves this using the descriptive qualitative research design as its methodology. Consequently, the paper finds that despite these challenges, education remains a vital tool for individuals and communities to challenge oppressive structures and claim their agency.

Keywords: Education, Human Capital Development, Psychoanalysis, Nervous Conditions, Tsitsi Dangaremba

Introduction

Human capital is often defined as the stock of knowledge, skills, and abilities individuals possess ([Dess & Picken, 2000]). This includes formal education, work experience, and trainable skills. Some scholars argue for a broader view encompassing social capital (relationships) and organizational capital (workplace processes) alongside individual KSAs ([Wright et al., 2001]).

Human Capital Development in Africa remains a catalyst for growth. This is

because Africa has a young and growing population. It is also a potential economic powerhouse. However, to unlock this potential, investing in human capital development (HCD) is crucial. This is in the areas of improving the health, knowledge, skills, and resilience of its people. This is what this paper aims to do. There are however challenges to the realization of HCD in Africa. These include Low scores. For instance, compared to other regions, Sub-Saharan Africa scores lowest on the World Bank's Human Capital

Index ([World Bank Human Capital Project]). This reflects limited access to quality education and healthcare. In addition, there are interlinked issues surrounding factors like child stunting, lack of schooling opportunities, and poor health. These limit future productivity.

Human capital development (HCD) boosts economies through a skilled, healthy workforce that drives innovation and inclusive growth. Initiatives like the World Bank's AHCP (health & education targets) and AfDB's skills-focused strategy exemplify this approach.

Human Capital Development (HCD) and education are intertwined. HCD is essentially the process of improving an individual's or a society's overall skills, knowledge, and abilities to reach their full potential. Education plays a crucial role in achieving this by providing the foundation for acquiring those very skills and knowledge.

HCD works through education to realize the following: Firstly, equipping the workforce. While HCD aims to develop a workforce with the qualifications needed for the modern economy, education provides the training and knowledge base for individuals to fill specific job roles and contribute effectively.

Secondly is economic growth. There is no gainsaying that a skilled workforce is a productive workforce. By investing in education and HCD,

countries can boost their economic growth and innovation. Thirdly is the issue of Individual Earning Potential. Education, a key aspect of HCD, increases an individual's earning potential. People with higher levels of education tend to command higher salaries. In addition is the role of Quality vs. Access. While simply increasing access to education is important, HCD emphasizes the quality of education as well. Quality education ensures individuals acquire relevant and valuable skills. Finally, is the focus on Educators. HCD recognizes that teachers are instrumental. Investing in professional development for educators improves the quality of education they deliver.

Cosmopolitanism and the bougie feeling of living and accomplishing abroad should not erase the connection and need to invest in one's homeland. For Kwame Anthony Appiah, "a citizen of the world can make the world better by making some local place better, even though that place need not be the place of her literal or original citizenship" (241). If this is possible, how much more when the local place is one's place of original citizenship as we see in the journey of the characters in the primary texts under study. This prompts many African writers to be in the words of Simon Gikandi, "Comfortable being both local and global at the same time" (243).

Chinua Achebe in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* avers that, "the writer cannot expect to be excused from the

task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. In fact, he should march right in front” (59).

African writers have continued to speak to societal issues and not merely personal grievances in their writings. This gives credence to Achebe’s assertion, “perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important, but so is education of the kind I have in mind. And I don’t see that the two need be mutually antagonistic” (The Novelist 161-162).

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike go further to aver the importance of commitment in writing, “The function of the artist in Africa, in keeping with our traditions and needs, demands that the writer, as a public voice, assume a responsibility to reflect public concerns in his writings, and not preoccupy himself with his puny ego” (78-79).

Africans abroad, successful or not, are drawn back home. Migration used to be for education, business, or returning to contribute. Now, reasons are broader, including seeking better living conditions and security.

There is a belief that diaspora return has ways of impacting positively on the development of the home country. The narrative on return migration is such that there is a call on our humanity to constantly aim, refine and reclaim ourselves while making ourselves better (*Straight from the Heart* 25).

The focus of this paper using Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* is to portray the desire to improve home conditions having acquired relevant knowledge abroad.

Statement of the Problem

Critics of Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) have studied the work from various perspectives. Some critics view the text as one on the portrayal of male and female gender. Others view it as a work on the interconnectedness between language and culture while others emphasize the benefits of philanthropy in Africa by Africans. Furthermore, it has been read as a text on identity, feminism, oppression, impact of maize cultivation on characters and so on.

While the various readings and interpretations of the texts are illuminating, none has examined the roles of critical thinking, self-awareness and collective action in achieving true human capital development. Education as a double-edged sword remains a powerful tool for empowerment and liberation, particularly for marginalized groups like women. The primary text in use emphasizes the unequal access to the quality education experienced by characters along lines of gender and class.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

The aim of this paper is to examine “Education and Human Capital Development: Reflection on Tsitsi

Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*"

The objective of this paper is to:

- i. Highlight the depiction of education and human capital development and the forms they take in the text under study

Significance of the Study

Considering that the text under study has not been critiqued largely on the basis of Education and human capital development this study aims to contribute to scholarship on the text in the area. . More so, this study will be a source of data to migration study centers, especially as migration relates to literary studies. Policy makers and members of civil society involved in human capital development will also benefit from it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Literature on Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Gilian Gorle examines the function of language and its various intentions in *Nervous Conditions*. The story is told, using the language of Dangarembga to highlight the challenges faced by those who are uprooted from their homeland (deracinated). It suggests that overcoming this experience depends on understanding the ingrained ideologies in languages and confronting them with courage (192).

The article further examines the author's portrayal of the male and female gender in the text. Gorle is of the opinion that personal circumstance of male and female characters especially as from early childhood go

a long way in determining how language and power are intertwined. It suggests that the way we use language can reflect or influence our power in a given situation (192). Gorle's article differs from this study since there is no mention of education and human capital development. While Gorle focuses on language and power, this research focuses on education and the impact of human capital development on the characters in the novel.

Thompson analyzes Nyasha's struggles in "Nervous Conditions" as a metaphor for cultural translation. Raised abroad, Nyasha feels like an outsider in her own culture, creating a difficult situation for her. This analysis is based on how the two cousins, Nyasha and Tambu, relate to each other and their heritage.

This implies a struggle to reconnect with her heritage (60). Tambu on the other hand is allowed transformation, having favour with Babamukuru who on the other hand prohibits Nyasha (61). This brings about a complication of the translation process. This article is not on human capital development and so differs from this study.

Robert Muponde focuses on African philanthropy and its distinct traditional gift-giving practices (387). Muponde achieves the above using the African folklore which demonstrates the patterns and culture of giving and receiving in such a manner that abusive dependency is not created (387). For Muponde, as regards philanthropy, recipient perspective is

crucial. More participatory democracies are needed to ensure aid feels respectful and avoids unintended offense (399). Tambu makes an effort to achieve the phrase “I am well if you are well”. This article focuses on a different light from this study.

Sally McWilliam’s article is written from the view point of feminism and post-colonialism using the character Tambu. Tambu’s character defies existing patriarchal status quo, “to question all issues affecting her personal and political life” (111). McWilliams shows strong approval of Dangarembga’s ability to fail to accept the societal expectation of going beyond the limits of cultural, racial, and sexual, class and political differences defiantly facing the narrator, Tambu. The challenges confronting the native third woman is the focus of the article (111). The article focuses on feminism and post-colonialism using the major female character and her roles. No mention of education as it relates to human capital development which is the crux of this study. This is the gap this study aims to fill.

Rosemary Gray opines of *Nervous Conditions* in her article that the intricate or complicated representation of identity and individuality in the senses of obedience, hard work, self-abnegation, adventurous and obstinate nature in Tambu’s character do not merely relate to feminism or post-colonialism but also to postmodernism (120). Tambu emerges as a new African woman, aware of her socially

constructed female identity. Publication year (1988) suggests *Nervous Conditions* as a postmodernist (115).

F. Fiona Moolla’s article uses Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* and Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* to trace the bildungsroman story of two young women with the development of nationalism. Moolla achieve this through the pathway of food. Its’ life cycle (221).

The article states that in *Nervous Conditions*, the cultivation of mealies or maize transcends to be major in its ability to ‘burden’ and/or ‘liberate’ the major character, Tambu. Mealies are able to burden and further liberate her through giving her access to colonial education and colonial modernity.

Stephanie M. Selvick’s, article employs queer and postcolonial theories to interpret Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*. Tambudzai and her cousin Nyasha’s intimate relationship is according to Selvick non-binary sexuality (278).

Pauline Ada Uwakweh in her article avers how Dangarembga uses the tool of voicing to self-define, liberate and provide psychological relief for herself and other women in a Zimbabwean, male-dominated literary arena. Dangarembga is able to achieve this using the novel’s narrator Tambudzai who acquires new insights especially as a female in a male-dominated and colonial society (75).

David Aberbach views *The Mare* and *Nervous Conditions* as texts which represent colonial trauma (identity) (229). The two texts, *Nervous Conditions*, in particular, thrive because despite their seeming conditions of oppressions represented in the novel, the major character is driven to seek for change following her hatred for injustice and poverty (229). The Western culture and its accompanying religion (Judeo-Christian) do not remain a mere tool of oppression but also a tool of emancipation as wielded by Tambu in *Nervous Conditions*.

Critical attention has been drawn to Tistsi Dangerembga's *Nervous Conditions*, but none has studied "Education and Human Capital Development: Reflection on Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*". This is what this study aims to do. Although the articles used in the literature review relate to the work under study, they are merely inspirations and do not fill the gap this study intends to fill.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Psychoanalytical Theory

Psychoanalysis is a set of psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic theories and associated techniques, created by an Austrian physician, Sigmund Freud. It however, stems partly from the clinical work of Joseph Breuer and others. Psychoanalysis has over time been revised and developed in different

directions. Some of Freud's colleagues and students such as Alfred Adler, Eric Erickson, Karen Horney and Carl Jung, went on to develop their own ideas independently. This study employ Freudian theory in understanding the actual reasons why people migrate, eventually return and the implications of these on their identities, fulfilment and the entire psyche. According to Ann Dobie, "Efforts to explain the growth, development and structure of the human personality are psychological" (54).

Early ideas about the mind lacked a strong foundation. Then, Freud's theories on the psyche's workings, development, and issues emerged. Others like Adler, Rank, and Jung built on these ideas to explore human behavior. Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, focused on unconscious drives motivating behavior. He believed the mind, both conscious and unconscious, is driven by desires that influence decisions, including migration. He viewed people as driven by desires and childhood experiences, with the unconscious mind influencing choices even if unaware.

In relation to this, Terry Eagleton avers that the turmoil of the relationship between developments in modern literary theory, political and ideological turmoil of the twentieth century does not end with wars, economic slumps and revolutions. For him, it is also experienced by those caught up in it in personal ways, "it is a crisis of human relationships and of

the human personality, as well as a social convulsion” (130). He believes that in this period, such experiences have become constituted in new ways as a systematic field of knowledge which is now known as psychoanalysis, developed by Sigmund Freud in late nineteenth century Vienna.

According to Freud, in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, ‘the motive of human society is in the last resort an economic one’. This is the quest for greener pastures and a better life. The need to work and labour has dominated human history and for Freud, that harsh necessity means that we must repress some of our tendencies to pleasure and gratification.

Every human being has to undergo this repression of what Freud named the ‘pleasure principle’ by the ‘reality principle’, but in this study, and arguably for whole societies, the repression may become excessive and might lead to culture shock, disillusionment, loneliness, oppression, alienation, exploitation and others. These are the senses in which psychological implication of education and human capital development will be interrogated in this work. Again, Eagleton is of the opinion that most times as humans, “We are prepared to put up with repression as long as we see that there is something in it for us; if too much is demanded of us, however, we are likely to fall sick” (132). This form of sickness is known as neurosis.

Neurosis is a class of functional mental disorders involving distress but neither delusions nor hallucinations. This kind of neurosis has to do with the causes of our unhappiness, even if we direct them towards a more socially valued end.

Karl Marx looks at the consequences of the need to labour in terms of the social tensions, social classes and forms of politics which it entailed. Freud on the other hand looks at its implications for the psychological life. Humans are not conscious of this fact because, they relegate the desires which they are unable to fulfill to a place where Freud calls the unconscious. To Eagleton, “The aim of psychoanalysis is to uncover the hidden causes of the neurosis in order to relieve the patient of his or her conflicts, so dissolving the distressing symptoms” (138).

Chinua Achebe aver that readers should respect their lives in their countries of origin even with all the imperfections. We should not throw away our cultural heritage or identity in favour of that of the West whether we are in the West or even in our home countries. He opines that postcolonial corruptions makes leaders to rather than build the nation and create better opportunities for the people, plan only for themselves and their families. (Achebe *Straight from the Heart*, 6).

According to Eagleton, psychoanalysis is among other things the fact that, “Its bristling intellectual armoury is bent on the exploration of such fundamental

matters as what people find gratifying and what they do not, how they can be relieved and made more happy” (166).

Nevertheless, the basic tenets of psychoanalysis include the fact that, a person’s development is often determined by often forgotten events in early childhood rather than by inherited traits alone. Also, human attitude, mannerism, experience and thought are largely influenced by irrational drives that are rooted in the unconscious. The unconscious mind (or the unconscious) consists of the processes in the minds which occurs automatically and are not available to introspection and include thought processes, memories, interests and motivations.

According to Gregory Castle, “Psychoanalysis offers a systematic accounting of the psychic apparatus (especially the unconscious) and a theory of the mind and the human psychic development” (163). Psychoanalysis studies the unconscious mind and its link to how we function. Freud created a theory connecting the ego (conscious self) and the unconscious (hidden drives). The ego interacts with the world, while the unconscious holds primal urges and defense mechanisms.

Psychoanalysis focuses on Neurosis which is a psychological disorder and include hysteria, obsessive and compulsive disorders, depression, phobias and others (Castle, 163). Those disorders can be treated. Furthermore, for Freud, dreams are of

two levels – the manifest and the latent. The manifest level is the dream which is the object of interpretation while the latent level is that thought which has been repressed and so cannot be known or expressed on a conscious level. According to Freud, “A dream is not an intention repressed as having been carried out, but a wish represented as having been fulfilled” (SE 7:85)

Disorientation, trauma and the state of being demented are concepts in psychoanalytic theory. Nyasha is unable to fully re-integrate into the community she was once used to, upon their return from England. This is in tandem with Edward Said’s postulation on exile, “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealing rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (173).

Dangerembga’s *Nervous Conditions*

Dangerembga’s *Nervous Conditions* is a text which mirrors the experience and impact of human capital development on returnees and their family members. It begins with 14-year-old Tambudzai’s search for education as she battles with poverty in her Rhodesian village and homestead. She tells the story herself, as her paternal uncle, Babamukuru who has benefited from the missionary school’s education scholarships returns from England after five years of further studies over there with his family.

Babamukuru takes up the task of educating and shouldering the challenges of extended family living as a means of helping them get out of poverty in which they are immersed. Tambu's brother Nhamo, who initially had the education slot for their family, dies untimely and Tambu is chosen to replace him. On return from England having spent five years, there is a remarkable change in Babamukuru's household, more so is the fact that his two children, Nyasha and Chido no longer speak their native language, Shona. Eventually, Tambu goes to live in the mission with Babamukuru and his family like his brother did. This privilege exposes her to a good life and offers her opportunity to bond with her cousin Nyasha whom she thinks is lost to the Western life.

While at the mission, a lot happens that affects the psychology of Tambu and more seriously that of Nyasha. Babamukuru in the spirit of patriarchy like every other Rhodesian man, is at war with his daughter who vows neither to submit to the dictate of her father nor allow him trample on her rights, holding firm her Western upbringing. Nyasha is nevertheless broken following Tambu's absence as Tambu has gained admission into the Covent. She is admitted into a Psychiatrist hospital and while she recovers, Tambu advises herself to balance her quest for Western knowledge with the home knowledge so as not to end up like Nyasha.

Human Capital Development

Babamukuru in *Nervous Conditions*,

returns home from England where he went for higher studies (5). He comes back with his entire family; wife and two children with whom he migrated to England. It takes him five years to acquire the degree he got on the missionary scholarship. Upon return, Babamukuru's extended family finds it financially tasking to give him a befitting welcome as the head of his homestead who is returning from overseas. After much thoughts and efforts, "ultimately the money was acquired, Babamukuru was to be welcomed at the airport" (32). Few delegates were sent to welcome him from the airport and when his entourage of vehicles drives into the compound, the family members who were not privileged to go, join the others to welcome him with singing and dancing as they proceed to the homestead.

Tambu's father who is Babamukuru's immediate younger brother feels so much delight on his brother's return and sings his praise. His sister, Tete Gladys also joins him and declares with pride, "Truly our prince has returned today! Full of knowledge. Knowledge that will benefit us all! (36). Babamukuru on his part feels so happy to return home. He has a lot to do for his extended family so as to draw them out of the grips of poverty. He does not waste time to begin the task. He engages in a long discussion into the night with members of the family that same night he returns home. Apart from the fact that he is to retain his old job of being the school headmaster, he has an additional

responsibility of being the Academic Director of the Church's Mainland Region having now a Master's Degree. Fortunately, Babamukuru has given his immediate nuclear family a good start by exposing them to education especially as obtained in Europe.

However, this cannot be said about the other extended family members. He therefore lets the others know that, "it was time for the members to put their heads together to think of means of ensuring the prosperity of each branch of the family" (44).

He further proffers a way forward by suggesting to his siblings, "We need to ensure that at least one member from each family is educated, at least to Form Four standard, because after that he will be in a position to take a course" (44). There is also room to sponsor one chosen person even to university level if things run smoothly and the resources remain available. This is how Tambu is chosen after her brother, Nhamo dies of Mumps.

Babamukuru's desire to upgrade the academic and economic status of his extended family using the knowledge and exposure he gets from studying abroad can be likened to his own contribution towards education and his family's human capital development.

For *Nervous Conditions*, we see the gains of education in the standard of living and exposure to civilization which Babamukuru's education received from England impacts on his extended family members (61).

Nhamo, by virtue of living in Babamukuru's house while he attends school at the mission is well taken care of and tells his sister same, "Nhamo had had a refrain with which he had punctuated his enthusiastic and reverent descriptions of the luxury and comfort of Babamukuru's house" (61). Babamukuru continues to assist the members of his extended family especially in the area of sponsoring their children to school. When Nhamo, Tambu's brother who is representing their family under Babamukuru's charity dies, Tambu is nominated to replace him. As Babamukuru and his wife Maiguru address Tambu, "He pointed out that the blessing I had received was not an individual blessing but one that extended to all members of my less fortunate family, who would be able to depend on me in the future as they were now depending on him" (89).

It is generally expected that African immigrants having achieved success in the West should return to improve the home condition. According to Sera, the protagonist in Pa Landing Manneh's *The Rainbow Pupil* speaking at Oxford on behalf of African Students says:

No matter how long a log stays under water, it will never change into a crocodile ... Don't think that all of us (African students) will not go back to where we belong. She could not comprehend why Africans would give everything to relocate to Europe just to escape the implications of living in Africa. To her, home offered the best of comfort and she would not swap it for

anywhere (46).

Sera eventually completes her Ph.D degree and returns to Sitta, her home land so as to contribute her quota to the development of Sitta and thereby fulfil her own dream.

Also, Lucia, Tambu's aunt who for a long time does not have a source of livelihood is given a job by Babamukuru as a way of developing his homestead and reducing poverty. Lucia had been living in misery. Everyone is happy and grateful to Babamukuru who does not forget his family. In Lucia's outpour of gratitude, she commends Babamukuru thus: "Truly, we could not survive without you. Those foreign places, those places you went, did not make you forget us. No! They enabled you to come back and perform miracles!"(161)

These efforts put in by Babamukuru to make his extended family better using the opportunities and positions which he occupies as a result of his education makes him to be loved and well respected by every member of his extended family. The women adore him while singing his praise. Tambu thinks in her heart, "I was so impressed with Babamukuru I could not stop admiring him...because of all this, he deserved all our love and loyalty and respect" (161).

Babamukuru can be compared to the protagonist in Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* who despite the rush to escape to the comfort in the West by other Nigerians chooses to return after three

decades of living in America. The returnee becomes immersed in the tragedies of oil politics, ethnic marginalization and environmental degradation as seen in Nigeria. Also the conflicts and politics of power as displayed by the exploitative multinational companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Activist as the protagonist of the novel, encounters challenges in his home country and town and engages various forces and machineries to combat the challenges for the good of his land. This relates to the effort of Babamukuru towards uplifting the educational and financial condition of his homestead.

Nyasha's mother, Maiguru who also returns from Europe with a Master's Degree has been suffering suppression and bullying in the hands of her husband, Babamukuru and his family members. Nevertheless, on return from Europe this time, she makes up her mind not to accept any more insult or suppression from her husband and his family members. She tells her husband that she is only being used (her salary inclusive) to salvage the deteriorating situation of his family members. She laments that it is unfortunate that when it comes to making tangible decisions about the same family, they side line her. Having bared her mind to her husband who is a chauvinist, she packs her bag and leaves his house. This surprises everyone including her husband because Maiguru never stood up for herself in the past. When she does not return after some days, Babamukuru who misses her at home

goes in search of her and succeeds in bringing her home with him. Upon return, there is a visible change in Maiguru's new disposition, "Maiguru had been away for only five days, but the change had done her good. She smiled more often and less mechanically, fussed over us less and was more willing or able to talk about sensible things" (178). This means that her migration and eventual return home has helped her achieve audacity and self-confidence which now helps her gain her confidence and decides which attitudes to accommodate from her people at home.

Furthermore, as Tambu progresses in her studies, she secures scholarship to study at the Covent. This is a rare privilege for someone of her background. Nevertheless, after many deliberations on whether her exposure to further British training through the Covent school would be beneficial to her or not, it is agreed that she should go. This is an opportunity for Tambu to receive the best education there is in Rhodesia. She says,

This is how it was settled. I was to take another step upwards in the direction of my freedom. Another step away from the flies, the smells, the fields and the rags; from stomachs which were seldom full, from dirt and disease, from my father's abject obeisance to Babamukuru and my mother's chronic lethargy (186).

Education, Human Capital Development and Challenges in Nervous Conditions

In the first few pages of the novel, Babamukuru and his family who travelled to England for further studies are being welcomed back home by his extended family members. Tambudzai, the protagonist of the novel and further a niece to Babamukuru discovers sadly that she is not able to get Nyasha and his brother to dance and speak Shona language in the heat of the ceremony. Nyasha and Chido who are Tambu's cousins understood and spoke Shona language when they were at home before the emigration. Upon return, Tambu is sad to learn from their mother, Maiguru that, "They don't understand Shona very well anymore" (42). Maiguru attributes this loss of the native language and Shona culture to a period of long exposure to English language. It is essential that Nyasha and Chido are reintegrated back into the society they once belonged to. They stand watching others dance to the beat of the drums but cannot sing along nor dance. Tambu feels so sorry for them.

When Tambu's brother Nhamo, dies, she takes over the scholarship slot for her family given by Babamukuru as his own contribution to the growth and development of the homestead. She therefore moves to the mission to live with Babamukuru and his family. Although she misses the crowded room in her own father's house which she is already used to, she nevertheless is consoled when she sees that she is to share Nyasha's room with her. Nevertheless, Tambu notices that Nyasha has not been her usual jovial self since their return from England.

Tambu is amazed that someone who has the privilege of being Babamukuru's biological daughter and who has access to the best things of life would be so sad. Tambu is therefore worried about sharing a room with Nyasha because she no longer feels comfortable with Nyasha, she is afraid, "...because something had extinguished the sparkle in her eyes" (60).

While the rest of Babamukuru's extended family are happy that Babamukuru has the rare privilege of living amid other white occupants at the mission quarters, Nyasha is already damaged by, "the lessons about oppression and discrimination that she had learnt first-hand in England"(64). Following the exposure and freedom of speech which Nyasha gets from England, she is unable to readapt to the cultural expectation of home and of being home. She frequently flouts her parents' orders and speaks to them in manners forbidden of a well brought up African. Tambu is surprised and disappointed in her and does not mince words in telling her so. In a bid to express her displeasure over Nyasha's attitude, despite her admiration of her, Tambu chides her, "Even if you have been to England, you should respect your mother" (79).

Nevertheless, Nyasha continues to transfer her aggression and displeasure over being uprooted from England after she finally got used to it. She is finding it a hard time adjusting and reintegrating herself back into the African cultural space especially when

her father lords it over her. She is totally against patriarchy and the authoritarianism that comes with it. She continues to defy her father and mother who seem to enforce obedience on her as they make efforts to groom her into a decent young girl. Nyasha feels that she has the right to do anything or go to wherever she chooses, following the freedom she had in Europe. Unfortunately, it is not happening under her father's watch. Nyasha becomes rebellious even without her knowledge. This acquired attitude gets her parents worried. Babamukuru laments his concerns to his wife, "But there's something wrong with her, something very wrong. A good child does not behave like that" (85). This current attitude gives Babamukuru sleepless nights. He wonders at what point in raising his children he had gone wrong.

In Pede Hollist's *So the Path Does Not Die*, Fina having conquered the physical and psychological trauma of escape from Talaba to Freetown and from major ethnic biases and discriminations meted against her by her own people, achieves American success through hard work. Nevertheless, she feels empty and decides to return to her homeland, Sierra Leone despite its imperfections. Fina's friend, Aman wonders, "I can't figure out you Africans. I don't know of anyone of you who has ever returned...I wonder why you want to go back, especially now" (160).

Fina's fiance, Cammy does not believe that Fina wants to return to the

“insanity in Sierra Leone” (181). Fina is of the opinion that America with its mansions, exotic restaurants, new cars and so on, does not bring her fulfillment. This is because her success leaves her ‘unsatisfied and unfulfilled’. This is unlike the ‘wholeness’ fullness and completeness which she believes that her return to Sierra Leone will bring her (90).

Fina’s investment into the rehabilitation of orphans, runaways and traumatized youths displaced by war signals her contribution towards rebuilding the future of Sierra Leone. The role of Fina is likened to the role of Babamukuru (*Nervous Conditions*) in human capital development through education which he acquired from the West.

Tambu is shocked when she discovers that Nyasha smokes. Smoking is generally viewed as a sign of irresponsibility in Africa, how much more when the smoker is a girl. Tambu, upon being asked by Nyasha to escort her to smoke, exclaims, “You smoke cigarettes!...Babamukuru was right! His daughter was beyond redemption” (85). Nyasha feels left out because nobody in the house including her cousin Tambu, supports her way of life; eating light, chewing gum, attending parties, smoking and so on. She is expected to align with specific gender roles laid out by her African society which opposes that of the liberal Western culture.

Furthermore, three years after Babamukuru and his family returns

from England, the girls in Nyasha’s school take it upon themselves to mimic her English speaking accent. They refuse to get used to the returnee’s accent nor even allow her be. They deliberately pitch themselves against Nyasha because she is a been-to. This speaks of jealousy, stigmatization, inferiority complex and outright hatred on the part of the young students. This is not far from the attitude of some Africans who criticize returnees rather than help them settle back into the society they once belonged to. This stigmatization and hatred from Nyasha’s school mates further make her feel removed from the African culture of which language is one. It makes her clinch more to her foreign accent since the local speakers do not show understanding and support towards her as a returnee especially as she battles with the challenge of dislocation.

On further interaction with the school girls when Tambu begins studies with them, she discovers that it is not actually Nyasha’s accent that the girls’ despise but Nyasha herself, “‘She thinks that she is white,’ they used to sneer, and that was as bad as a curse. ‘She is proud,’ pronounced others. ‘She is loose’, the most vicious condemned her” (95). They further envy her because Babamukuru, the headmaster is her father. This hostile attitude from her schoolmates makes Nyasha to further withdraw into herself. This is in addition to the strained relationship between herself and her father who tries to force her to align with the African culture of

female subjugation and of being submissive especially towards the male gender.

In addition, Tambu sees that following his return from England, Babamukuru is no more the playful and exciting personality which he used to be. The responsibility laid upon him by the mission unit on whose scholarship he studied abroad takes a toll on his social life and immediate family. He is further burdened with the task of shouldering the responsibility of being the breadwinner in his extended family. He desires to see his extended family come out of the pit of poverty. Unfortunately, boredom permeates the house because in Tambu's words, "We hardly ever laughed when Babamukuru was within earshot, because, Maiguru said, his nerves were bad. His nerves were bad because he was so busy" (104).

The strain between Babamukuru and Nyasha's relationship continues to grow bad. Babamukuru in trying to get Nyasha to align with the African expectation of a young girl, pushes Nyasha to the wall. For instance, he forbids Nyasha from keeping male relationships however he had taught Nyasha how to live her life without minding what people thought of her. This is especially during their stay in England. Now, being back in Africa, he tries to unteach his teachings and force Nyasha to unlearn all she picked up from England. This causes much friction between father and daughter especially when Nyasha knows that the driving force of her father's changed

behavior especially towards her is for the sake of the villagers who have a high expectation from her family being a returnee.

Nyasha therefore, vehemently opposes this push to join the status quo. Maiguru, on her part tries to intervene by letting Babamukuru know that Nyasha is merely a child. Babamukuru in trying to assert his masculinity and hold on the family as a male makes the mistake of beating Nyasha. Unfortunately, Nyasha hits him back in self-defense. This is a taboo in the African world-view, a child does not hit his or her parents. It is the father or mother that has the right to beat the child as a means of correcting such child. At this point, Babamukuru is broken and his wife Maiguru and Tambu who witness this altercation feel embarrassed. This altercation between Babamukuru and his daughter Nyasha can be compared with Enitan's struggle in *Everything Good Will Come* to come to terms with the societal expectations of gender roles which most often than not, do not favour women. She consistently fights with her father who tries to wield the patriarchal cane over her. She notes that although her father cares for her, "The power had always been in my father's hands" (Atta "*Everything Good*" 152). She, like Nyasha desires some level of independence which they do not get from their homes and the societies at large.

Having been humiliated by Nyasha's unexpected reaction, "Babamukuru insisted he would kill Nyasha and then

hang himself. ‘She has dared...to raise her fist against me’ (117). Patriarchy and the need to constantly assert male superiority as against female weakness remains the bone of contention in the feud between Babamukuru and his daughter, Nyasha on the soils of their African home. This is because this feud cannot hold on this same level had it been they were still living in England where equality of rights holds sway. Tambu experienced hers in her days at the homestead growing maize when her brother, Nhamo is solely chosen to get education which she herself also desires but cannot get simply because she is a girl. Patriarchy feels that investing education in her will merely be a waste.

This is why she is not sorry when her brother dies. The decision for her to replace her late brother when he dies is only because there is no other male child in her father’s house. She goes further also to work hard on the farm to sponsor herself financially and at school to make good grades. Her father’s eventual consent is not because he believes in her but because her insistence wearies him. It is just unfortunate that Nyasha lacks the discretion which Tambu engages to navigate her way from her own father’s house.

Nyasha on her part is saddened that her father calls her a whore and resents further their return to Africa her homeland. She expresses her regrets while discussing with Tambu, “I was comfortable in England but now I’m a whore with dirty habits” (119). Nyasha

is not able to adjust to life at home because she has also experienced life in England and has made her choice of a better place putting in view the experiences in the different environments. She feels she is being manipulated into being controlled and so she fights it. She feels that if she allows her father to always have his way especially in opinions that concern her, it might be her end. Maiguru tries to help her daughter by being on her side because she knows that she herself is also a victim. Unfortunately, Nyasha does not believe in her because she thinks that her mother needs to stand up for herself first.

This kind of atmosphere in Babamukuru’s house slowly gets at Nyasha’s mind unconsciously. Tambu realizes that, “Not only had she stopped talking to us, but she was growing vague and detaching herself from us...Sometimes, when I talked to her, quite apart from preferring not to answer, she simply did not hear me” (120). Tambu though worried about the situation at home, tries to contribute towards resolving it by listening to Nyasha pour out her mind about how her father wants to stripe her of her rights and which she will not condone. Tambu keeps her company by talking with and in return listening to her. It appears to help Nyasha feel better psychologically.

Maiguru also suffers envy and jealousy from her husband’s family. The education she gets from England and the money she earns working with her

Master's Degree distinguishes her from the other women in Babamukuru's house who are illiterates upon her return. These women of Babamukuru's extended family do not hesitate to belittle and accuse her falsely given any opportunity. For instance, on one occasion when Babamukuru and her family including Tambu returns to the homestead as they usually do, Tambu's mother attacks Maiguru, "And why does she think differently from the rest of us? She thinks she is different. She thinks she's perfect so she can do what she likes. First she kills my son-"(142). Tambu's mother calls Maiguru a witch because she has only two children, Nyasha and Chido. Also, rather than appreciate Maiguru for taking her daughter, Tambu into her home to train her in education, Tambu's mother rather accuses Maiguru of further taking away and turning Tambu against her with money and civilisation after killing Nhamo. It is only coincidentally that Nhamo dies in the mission (Babamukuru's house) where he was having his education. The opportunity given to Tambu to live in Babamukuru's house, with of course the consent and motherly care of Maiguru is a privilege which should be appreciated by Tambu's mother. Instead, illiteracy and poverty causes her to return the kindness shown to her by Maiguru with hatred and jealousy. Tambudzai who understands everything is amazed at the extent to which illiteracy and poverty can drive one. She cautions her mother and further determines in her heart never to return to the homestead without

becoming a better person through education. So she holds on to Babamukuru and Maiguru's kindness while working extra hard at her studies.

Babamukuru is further being saddled with his extended family problems; providing money for farm implements, unwanted pregnancies from nieces, young nephews being indolent, troubled marriages, demand for sacrifices to gods as solution to the problems in the homestead and even indirect accusation of being tightfisted since his return despite all he does for the family. Nevertheless, Babamukuru is not deterred, he lets them understand that the issues at home do not have anything to do with spiritual attack, rather, he tells them, "I have been thinking they are the result of something that we are doing that we should not be doing, or the result of something that we are not doing that we should be doing" (149).

Furthermore, Babamukuru is daily faced with the challenge of compelling his returnee daughter, Nyasha to align with the cultural expectations of their people. This fight constantly brews misunderstanding between the two of them as Nyasha is bent towards asserting her individuality and fundamental human rights. Babamukuru is disillusioned and so is discouraged from further assisting Tambu to high school when she concludes his elementary studies. In his words,"...I have observed from my own daughter's behavior that it is not a good thing for a young girl to associate

too much with these white people, to have too much freedom. I have seen that girls who do that do not develop into decent women” (183).

Nyasha goes psycho in her struggle to be understood, reintergrated by her father and her school mates. Nyasha’s loss of her psyche following the events at home tend to collaborate the idea of Mrinalini Greedharry that there is indeed a connection between psychoanalysis and psychiatry (Greedharry 15). According to Julia Udofia, return migrants are likely to become disoriented, alienated and even rejected by their own people (13). This is similar to psychoanalytic interpretation of what Christopher Ouma refers to as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) (188).

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In *Nervous Conditions*, the gains and disillusionment of return migration are placed side by side. Babamukuru, following his western education, training and employment is able to gradually lift his extended family out of the shackles of illiteracy and poverty. Tambudzai, the major female character is a beneficiary of the gains of Babamukuru’s return migration, being his niece. Her parents’ overdue wedding is sponsored too by Babamukuru and her idle aunty is offered a job at the mission. This is apart from other expenses of running the homestead which is shouldered solely by Babamukuru. Furthermore, Maiguru’s timid nature receives

emancipation upon their arrival from England. She now refuses to allow her husband and his family members walk over her despite her financial contribution and hospitality.

Unfortunately, the relationship between Babamukuru and his daughter Nyasha goes bad upon their return home. Also, her school mates become envious of her British accent and demeanor and constantly abuse her. All these culminate in psychosis for Nyasha and eventually land her in a psychiatrist hospital. Nyasha exhibits Freud’s idea of the uncanny which refers to that which is strange or unsettling within the familiar and ordinary (Freud. “Das Unheimliche” 138). In the words of Ato Quayson, a feeling of the uncanny can be produced when, “persistent physical or social violence” transforms into “an internalization of these perceived disorders in terms either of guilt, an inexplicable terror, or a general sense of disquiet which does not seem to have a clear source” (729-730).

Conclusion, Recommendation and Findings

This paper suggests that in order to drive education and human capital development in Africa, there is need to strengthen the education systems. This is by providing quality education with relevant skills training. There is furthermore the need to improve healthcare delivery. This is by ensuring access to basic healthcare and reducing child stunting. In addition, empowering women is a necessity. This can be achieved by investing in

girls' education and removing barriers to women's participation in the workforce.

By prioritizing human capital development, African nations can unlock the potential of their people and set the stage for a brighter future. In essence, education is a major tool for human capital development. By focusing on quality education and strategic skill development, individuals and societies can thrive. Unequal access to education and training opportunities can create disparities in human capital development. Gender gaps and disparities between rural and urban areas are crucial consideration. Also,

the rapid pace of technological change necessitates a focus on lifelong learning to maintain a skilled workforce.

This paper recommends that the role of technology in delivering education and training as well as the impact of automation on skill requirements, are emerging themes in human capital development research which should be brought to the front burner in the area of research. In addition, understanding how human capital development strategies can address the challenges and opportunities of a globalized economy is becoming increasingly important.

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