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**M.Robert Chandran<sup>1</sup>**

**C. Govindaraj<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Periyar University Centre For Post Graduate and Research Studies, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Periyar University PG and Research Studies, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India.



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M.Robert Chandran<sup>1</sup>, C. Govindaraj<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Periyar University Centre For Post Graduate and Research Studies, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Periyar University Centre for PG Research Studies, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, India.

### **ABSTRACT**

Adichie shows the hardships African immigrants face when it comes to adapting to and acclimatizing in Americanah. People who move into an environment that conditions their lives by their "race" no longer see themselves as black. As a result, Adichie explores the fact that people differ in many ways based on their skin color and birthplace when discussing the topic of "race" in America. The contemporary novel *Americanah* introduces a new generation of African immigrants - Afropolitans in its depth exploration of the struggles of a African immigrants in the United States. Nigerian immigrant Ifemelu lives in the United States, who is seeking academic enrichment at university. While she faces multiple challenges, she develops her self-image as a woman and as a black person. There are two affecting factors: Race and Gender, which cannot be considered separately. Throughout this study, the indissolubility of race and gender is explored as a serious concern to female African immigrants in the U.S. In identifying the most substantial factors contributing to the oppression of African female immigrants, the protagonist's relationships with Curt, Blaine, and Obinze can be used as reflected by stereotypes, racism, and male dominance. In addition to providing insight into the perspectives of immigrant women, In *Americanah*, gender and race are examines the chance to look at the inextricable connection between race and gender, which unfairly relegates black women to the lowest social strata.

**Keywords:** Racism, Gender, Immigrants, Women's Identity

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores the complex realm of "American race relations" in her book *Americanah*. She not only depicts the complex interactions between blacks and whites in many countries, such as Africa, England, and the United States, but also expands her horizons by depicting blacks in many other countries. Immediately, we are struck by the strong and determined character of Ifemelu in *Americanah*, a woman of color with a variety of life prospects and goals. Through a series of romantic encounters and becoming a well-known blogger, she undergoes profound changes in her character. She is impacted by these relationships and American culture, which aids in her development into a self-reliant individual and gives her a different perspective on Nigeria when she returns.

The story spans thirteen years, from the time she returns home from the United States of America to the events that take place in Nigeria. Despite the changes she endures, Ifemelu struggles with finding a sense of identity. She attends school, has a family and a lover, and lives a normal life in Nigeria. Since everyone there is black like her, she does not experience prejudice there. However, as she settles in the United States, she discovers the various ways that white people substitute for black people as a result of their skin tone.

Through analyzing Ifemelu's relationships, we gain insight into the minds and identities of African immigrants who face cultural adaptation and identity creation challenges. Black Americans' identities in the United States are created through American culture and customs, In order to highlight her struggles and the various elements that shape her identity, I approach the novel through Ifemelu's relationships with Obinze, Curt, and Blaine. Ifemelu's search for her true identity will be able to be properly analyzed by the readers as a result of this. The relationship between Ifemelu and Obinze must first be examined in order to understand the relationships that have developed between Africans, particularly Nigerians. Furthermore, when we examine Ifemelu and Curt's relationship, we gain a personal understanding of the complicated and difficult world of black and white relations in America. By taking a closer look at Ifemelu's relationship with Blaine, the reader can gain a better understanding of African American culture and the discrepancies related to racism.

American society is characterized by race and gender which are inextricably linked, and that this union necessarily pushes black women to the lowest social strata. According to Ellen Pence, Thus, it is clear that both men and white women serve as surrogates for black women in society.

Additionally, we must not overlook the crucial role that Ifemelu's blog plays in the book. The novel serves as the protagonists' escape from racial and gender issues after she arrives in the United States as well as a venue for her to share her experiences. As a result, she becomes a role model and a person to look up to for others who may be going through similar experiences. In this essay, demonstrated the examination of several blog entries how the three most significant relationships in her life and the profound influence these three men have on her and the influence of her how she sees herself as a black woman.

### **Experiential Maturity of Ifemelu and Obinze**

They share a passion for one another, love, and respect, which is the foundation of their union. When Ifemelu decides to move to the United States to pursue higher education, their lives will become separated as a result of her decision. Adichie portrays this young man, who is a powerful character, with tenderness and care, he is likeable right away. They had a wonderful relationship until Ifemelu's life took a catastrophic turn and she lost any desire to be romantically involved. Since she has experienced a comparable position and the process of acculturation, Obinze is the one who knows her better and provides her with maturity via life experience. Obinze has also had to deal with a variety of challenges that have been stacked up against him due to his race. Since he is the only one who truly understands how she feels, Ifemelu feels supported and understood by him.

The direct effects of colonialism, as well as imposed white superiority over black people, contribute to this situation. Obinze is the only one who can understand and recognize Ifemelu's difficulties, so their cooperation is evident throughout the entire book. A braiding salon in Trenton, New Jersey is the setting of Ifemelu's hair braiding before she leaves for Nigeria at the beginning of the book. This book definitely shows how racial and gender issues become intertwined with political and personal issues when Adichie explores the hair and braiding industry. The reader would assume that since all of the salon's employees are foreign-born Americans that they might identify with Ifemelu in some way. Their personalities, however, are completely dissimilar, which makes it impossible for them to relate to her at all.

Although both Obinze and Ifemelu are from the same continent and have similar histories, Ifemelu exhibits a strong character, as we have already seen. Unlike many other women, she does not adhere to any norms or follow the advice of others. Instead, she is devoted to herself and pays little attention to what others think. Additionally, Ifemelu's encounter with Aisha, the young woman who is braiding her hair, highlights the complexity and contention in transnational relationships as well as between "Nigerians in America, among Africans in America and, indeed among immigrants in America" (Adichie, 18). When asked by Aisha about her experience in America and how long she had been there, For Ifemelu, lying was a way to feel superior and more culturally integrated.

As the main character is just beginning to establish a life for herself in the United States, she meets a group of African students from her university's African Student Association. Ifemelu conveys his perceptions of Africans in an American neighborhood throughout the passage. As a result, it becomes clear that the African community in the United States has strong ties; However, social class and gender issues also have a direct impact on this interaction. For example, Ifemelu finds it harder to connect with other African students, obviously there are fewer educated women working at the braiding shop.

As soon as Ifemelu arrived in this country, she published Various Observations about American Blacks (Previously Known as Negroes). It is clear from the blog's title that American blacks are less educated than her. This popular blog contains numerous pieces that describe the lives of African immigrants in the United States. Through her work, Ifemelu expresses her views on race in a very direct manner. As long as she is not worried about what others think, she is free to express her feelings. And by sharing her experiences in a bittersweet way; she can also help those who are in a similar situation. Furthermore, Adichie can make some of the most pertinent statements in the book through her blog. Adichie's pointed critique of our present culture is able to be delivered through her blend of observations by Ifemelu on hypocrisy and intolerance with her own immigrant experience.

### **The White Privilege of Ifemelu and Curt: A Myth of Maturity**

During Ifemelu's first introduction to Curt's family and friends, she encounters prejudice that implies white women have a superiority complex. However, she feels free of knots and cares. It illustrates the misconception that black women are undeserving of a white guy when white women have made it impossible to share interests and goals.

Ifemelu wonders whether race must have been one of the causes of her ongoing bewilderment and covert discomfort during her relationship with Curt after their divorce. They are a perfect couple; there is nothing wrong with them individually. However, her racial privilege would constantly make her uncomfortable and

serve as a reminder of their disparities. Their relationship, which involves a black woman and a white man, is a realistic representation of racism and white privilege in America. Numerous characters in the book display attitudes of superiority and dominance in numerous covert racist instances. The lack of knowledge about African nations is another issue that needs to be taken into account because, unintentionally, many individuals form prejudices about them and believe them to be true. The relationship between Ifemelu and Curt can be interpreted as racist. Since white privilege is a privilege that is only available to white men, black women will only date white men. Those who are attracted to exotic cultures date black women, on the other hand. Thus, interracial relationships are often viewed negatively due to stereotypes and prejudice.

Additionally, when Ifemelu needs the assistance of a carpet cleaner at another point in the narrative, the guy is a little taken aback to see a black woman possessing a “beautiful stone house with white pillars.” Ifemelu is not at her modest apartment in this instance; rather, she is at the home of Kimberly and Don, a wealthy couple who have hired Ifemelu to watch over their son Taylor. As a result, the carpet cleaner thinks she is the owner and is shocked to think that a “black woman” could own such a large home.

As a blogger, Ifemelu has the freedom to criticize and attack the numerous ways in which she feels oppressed. Both the book and Ifemelu's life are influenced by her blog, which depicts her experiences as an immigrant to the United States. As our protagonist, you must remember that it is incredibly hard for her to talk about racial issues with friends or university colleagues without appearing to be overly radical. In America, the word race is used in a very ambiguous manner, and it is uncommon to hear black people discuss it in such an open and sincere manner as she does. Because of this, some people may interpret her opinions as being racist.

As a woman and as a black person in the United States, Ifemelu uses her blog to explore all the aspects that shape her identity and shape her daily life. With the creation of her blog, Ifemelu is able to see 'race' for the first time in a society that down plays racism and the covert subjugation of black women.

### **Tutoring Maturity of Ifemelu and Blaine**

The Yale professor who is an expert in the struggle for black people's rights and who wants to transform Ifemelu from a spectator to an activist, Blaine enters her life as a saviour. Despite this, the fact that he is African American distances him from Ifemelu; his excellent intellectual abilities and education are to blame for his assumption that he is an expert on the Third World. Therefore, this behaviour is a covert form of racism; Blaine chastises her for creating a blog about race while doing little to actively combat racial injustice. As a Nigerian immigrant born outside the United States, Ifemelu finally acknowledges that his resentment is a result of the fact that he is not a true African and cannot relate to her.

African Americans perceive African immigrants, including their covert racism, from this connection, just like from her prior ones with men. The cultural and racial backgrounds of Africans and African Americans often make it difficult for them to find close friends at universities.

A significant topic covered in the book that must be viewed historically is the complex relationship between African Americans and Africans. A tragic chapter in history that inevitably changed African's identities to the point that many of them were unable to find their place in the world, must first be taken into account as one of the most significant influences on this modern relationship established between these two groups.

Americanah is still extremely heavily impacted by the remnants and effects. The bond that Ifemelu and Blaine have built shows the various perspectives that both cultures hold about blackness and race. We must not lose sight of the fact that African Americans have historically been treated as second class citizens, a fact that has a significant impact on their identities, their homelessness, the absence of roots and family. But why is there such a complicated relationship between Africans and African Americans? Do they not have a shared history that includes a common source of pain and a shared sense of struggle? Africans frequently see America as the Promised Land, a location where they might find fresh chances that would lead to prosperity and wealth. However, African Americans do not accept them as members of their own race.

African-Americans emphasize Africa as their ancestral homeland, their abducted home, and the lovely paradise they should have never been exiled from. Many people, however, are skeptical about whether this journey back has brought more confusion than revelation and discoveries. Ifemelu chooses to go back home rather than staying a lost but safe child among the strange diaspora population. She is a “hybrid” divided between two different cultures that have formed her identity at various points in her life because she has become a true American while maintaining her expertise in Nigeria. She is consequently cut off from both cultures due to her “hybrid” status. This is because she has not only removed herself from many of the Nigerian traditions and rituals she was accustomed to because she is not entirely American. Finally, we can acknowledge Ifemelu as an Americanah who masterfully captures the complexities, ambivalences, and ambiguities of the melding of the American and African cultures.

Due to the lack of completeness they seek, immigrants often return to their home nations. A failure mindset can lead to the desire to go back to their beginnings in order to feel complete. However Ifemelu's situation is

different. As a well-known blogger, the protagonist has achieved success in the United States. She lives a comfortable lifestyle and has a respectable income.

Kofi Anyidoho suggests in *The Pan African Ideal*, Ifemelu's return is a result of her unfulfilled yearning for completeness, which led to her failure to achieve a sense of wholeness in the first place. As a result, we may state that Ifemelu's friendship with Blaine shows how Ifemelu's reality differs from the experiences and stories of African Americans. The transformation and assimilation of this "Americanness," which we have already presented, are crucial elements in the struggle for existence in the United States, as Adichie makes abundantly obvious in the book. We can therefore state that Adichie's goal is to demonstrate how one's identity is both self-selected and also given to them by the people around them and also by the society.

## CONCLUSION

Adichie's work serves as an amazing illustration of how racial and gender relations are inextricably linked, despite the fact that recent attempts to tackle them concurrently are already apparent. The analysis of *Americanah* has allowed us to recognize a reciprocal relationship between these two groups as essential components that inexorably play a role in the development of black women's identities. The protagonist is subjected to discrimination on a number of occasions throughout the entire book, including instances when it is based on the protagonist's cultural background, gender, race or economic standing. The significance of these various discriminatory layers is that they drag black women to the bottom of the social ladder, which profoundly harmful and unjust to the society. Through Adichie's story, we can see the struggle that female characters face. The study illustrates how racial and gender issues are indissoluble, and how they cause these numerous risks. Therefore, from the perspective of an African woman, her use of a blog is an escape from reality.

We can, therefore, conclude categorically that many African immigrants, as represented by Ifemelu, struggle with a society that restricts their ambitions and their ability to establish personal identities. The negative effects of this relationship on black women are inevitable, since race and gender are inextricably linked. African immigrants like Ifemelu encounter a variety of prejudices due to their race as a result of their immigration. Many African women have difficulty integrating into a new culture due to the difficulties portrayed in *Americanah*.

The pressure that the lead character experiences inside her chest perfectly captures the struggles black women face in a society that never accepts them totally and treats them unfairly. This article has been separated into three sections in accordance with the men who shape Ifemelu's life and at the same time their cultural background in order to emphasize the impact that her three most significant relationships have on the main character. This is due to the crucial roles Obinze, Curt, and Blaine play in her life and how they, together with her gender and race shaped her identity. Then it becomes clear that in order for Ifemelu to develop as a woman and feel confident in her, she appears to have a desire to be close to a male.

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