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Repositioning Blackness and Intersectional Identities in Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract

This article scrutinizes Adichie's Americanah to problematize the homogeneous concept of blackness and its related intersectional identities such as race, ethnicity, tribe, nationality, class, gender, language, and its relevant aspects. By employing the perspectives of women of color feminisms, particularly, on the world stage that pays a close attention to the global, postcolonial, and transnational feminisms, this article is able to locate at least two key points in Americanah to challenge the domination of the homogeneity and stereotype of blackness. Among the identified key points are the reflexivitive narrative style and the presence of the blog posts in the novel. The reflexivity enables the fluidity of inward and outward perceptions and assessments to examine and reexamine intersectional issues and experiences. Meanwhile, the blog posts in the form of writing about writing also provide fluid and open spaces for the polyvocality of diverse opinions and arguments regarding the intersectional realities. Accordingly, in such manner, the novel attempts to articulate the heterogeneity, specificity, and multiplicity of the so-called blackness and intersectional identities to challenge the myopic view of blackness and the complexity of entangled identities.

Keywords: *interstitiality; Nigerian woman writer; power relation; women's oppressions and resistances*

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Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (1977) is the new generation of Nigerian writers who follows the steps of the famous Nigerian literary giants such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. Being young (not even yet 40), female, and greatly talented enables her to gain literary success in the patriarchal-dominated profession. She comes from a very well-educated and privileged backgrounds, yet her works are dedicated to articulating the voices of the marginal people in terms of race, class, and gender. She writes diverse literary genres, including poetry, short stories, novels, and other non-fiction works. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) has already been considered for the Booker Prize. Meanwhile, her second

novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) gains a great critical literary reception and establishes her literary reputation as the winner of the 2007 Orange Prize for Fiction (Canton, Cleary, Kramer, 2016, p. 266). Her works are also listed under the notable contemporary literature.

In addition, Adichie also openly views herself as a feminist and invites people, regardless of their gender and sexuality to become feminists to create better social equity for all, as presented in her books *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) and *Dear Ijeawele or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017). Consequently, Adichie's excerpt from *We all Should be Feminist* is included in Dawson's *The Penguin Book of Feminist Writing* (2021) that chronicles the renowned women writers from the early period to the contemporary era from around the world starting with historical names such as Christine de Pizan to other famous names.

Despite the fame of Adichie's first two novels, this article selects her third novel *Americanah* (2013) as the object of the study; this selection has some grounds. First of all, this article's focus is to problematize the concept of blackness and its intersectional identities, and *Americanah* provides a unique space for the articulation of diverse voices in viewing blackness concerning race, class, gender, nationality, language, and its relevant aspects. Secondly, *Americanah* takes settings of place in three different major continents, Africa, America, and Europe, to display the complexity of the intersectional identities with their interplay and power relation. Lastly, *Americanah* displays both aesthetic and ideological narrative strategies that amplify the experience of the minority groups, particularly, those of the women lives.

Adichie's *Americanah* has become the key object of various studies and research with several different foci and approaches from a quite advanced master of philosophy thesis to a very simple basic undergraduate thesis. Similarly, some journals from different parts of the globe study Adichie's *Americanah*.

The first review of related studies is Seiringer-Gaubinger's M.A. thesis from the University of Vienna (2015) that presents a critical and detailed analysis of the intercultural aspects in *Americanah* and refers to it as an intercultural novel and a migrant novel. Seiringer-Gaubinger's thesis lists several different aspects of intercultural elements in *Americanah* to include language and accent, food, education, jobs and money, romantic relationships, race and discrimination, identity, and many more. This present article shares some similarities with Seiringer-Gaubinger's thesis in terms of conveying the complexity of identities; however, this present article emphasizes a more articulation of intersectional relations and not only intercultural aspects of identities. Moreover, this present article also amplifies more feminist voices present in *Americanah*.

The second study is Rosenqvist's undergraduate thesis (2023) that focuses on subalternity and insubordination in *Americanah* from the postcolonial perspective. The thesis analyzes the main female character of the novel, Ifemelu, and refers to her as a feminist protagonist; however, it does not develop the feminist aspects further and it concerns more about the experience of marginality that shapes and reshapes her identity. Similarly, this present article also emphasizes the way minority groups cope with oppression and marginalization in relation to their resistance and complex intersectional identities, particularly, the women's experience and worldviews, but not limited to the postcolonial perspective only.

The third study is from a journal article by F.M. Ndaka's "Rupturing the Genre: Un-Writing Silence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adicichie's *Americanah*" (2017). Ndaka's article is closely related to this present article in the sense that both works underline "salon/hairdresser" and "the blog" in *Americanah* as a key space to articulate female voices and their experiences. Both articles also pay a close attention to the heterogeneity and polyvocality. The difference is in Ndaka's focus on "the silencing and policing of black female migrants; meanwhile, this present article accentuates the intersectionality of identities in *Americanah* by employing the perspectives of women of color feminisms, particularly, on the world stage that pays a close attention to the global, postcolonial, and transnational feminisms.

The fourth study is from a journal article titled "The Waning and Waxing of Ifemelu's Journey of Love in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2021). This journal article briefly analyzes the love and relationship experienced by Ifemelu, the novel's main female character. This present article also discusses Ifemelu's love experience and relationship but more in terms of the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, gender, age group, and other relevant aspects.

The fifth and last study is a journal article titled "Food, Modernity and Identity: Rooted Cosmopolitanism in Adichie's *Americanah*" (2021). The journal article presents examples of the main character's (Ifemelu) food choice and her insistence upon her ethnic cuisine rather than adapting to the American food. It also mentions tempeh in relation to social class and lifestyle identity but does not mention indomie (greatly loved by Ifemelu) that has also become familiarly popular food among the Nigerians although it does not originate from Africa. Similarly, this present article also focuses on identities including cuisine but not exclusively on cuisine only.

To sum up the review of related studies, there are some similarities and differences between those aforementioned studies and this present article in terms of focus and approaches. In its essence, this present article critically examines the intersectional aspects of the heterogeneous identities in Adichie's third novel *Americanah*. By employing the perspectives of women of color feminisms, particularly, on the world stage that pay close attention to global, postcolonial, and transnational feminisms, this present article attempts to unveil how the formal and informal settings of place and the presence of "blog" provide an important space to articulate the polyphonic voices and experiences of women and the minority groups in the novel.

Methodology

Feminist theories and approaches as a methodology have facilitated the articulation of women voices and experiences under the dominant patriarchal rules in social, cultural, and literary systems. Undoubtedly, such feminist perspective has greatly contributed to gender equity and equality. From time to time, the Women's Rights movements in the West have succeeded in fighting for women's rights to education, suffrage, reproductive control, and equal opportunities for public roles. However, the recent contexts have demanded more inclusive feminist views that provide more diversity, interdisciplinarity, and intersectionality that can connect and interlock with other relevant aspects (Tong and Botts, 2018).

To facilitate the diversity and contextuality of feminist theories, Tong and Botts have added more chapters to discuss feminist perspectives outside the middle class, white, and Western worldviews in their *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (2018). Among this addition is the Women of Color Feminisms that shows plurality and diversity not only in the United States but also on the world stage and its transnational contexts. This article employs Woman of Color Feminisms, particularly on the world stage that pay a close attention to the global, postcolonial, and transnational feminisms to analyze Adichie's Americanah critically. This specific theoretical perspective employed in this article critically provides space and opportunity to exercise "the intersectional thinking," a term that was already coined in the 19th century and originated from the Global North and the Global South (Hancock 2016; Bilge and Collins 2016; Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery 2019). This intersectional thinking attempts to challenge the homogenization of complex social categories, particularly women's experiences, and contexts. Such homogenizing worldviews are indeed the key point that *Americanah* tries to challenge by depicting and articulating diverse experiences and contexts of the so-called "black and blackness" in the heart of this novel to emphasize the heterogeneity, pluralicity, and specificity of its characters contexts and social, cultural experiences.

To be more specific in term of *Americanah* contexts. This article provides a brief insight on the feminist perspectives in the African continent that have undergone fluid dynamic from time to time. Kolawole's *Womanism and African Consciousness* (1997) still presents

debates and arguments concerning the African women's reluctance to use the term feminism and feminist. They disapprove of its predominantly Western contexts and worldviews, and even coin the term womanism to replace its Western concepts, yet the new term also brings more challenges in articulating African women's specific experiences and audibility. Kolawole proposes a more dialogic approach to provide more spaces for "the African women's self-definition" (Kolawole).

However, the next generation of African women has become more open to accepting Western feminist perspectives. They even created the African Feminist Forum in 2006 in Ghana with explicit statements to name themselves as feminists:

> *We define and name ourselves publicly as Feminist because we celebrate our feminist identities and politics. We recognize that the work of fighting for women's rights is deeply political, and the process of naming is political too* (Dawson, p. 101).

Adichie also shares this self-proclaimed feminist identity openly in her *Dear Ijeawele or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017) and *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) to invite people to work together for women's rights. Meanwhile, Soetan and Akanji's *Gender and Development in Nigeria* (2018) and *Through the Gender Lens: A Century of Social and Political Development in Nigeria* (2019) exhibit challenges and opportunities faced by women in Adichie's home country, Nigeria, in their struggles for equality and recognition of their key roles in building their societies and Nation. Therefore, the selected feminist methodology and approach employed in this article is indeed relevant and important to amplify the complexity and diversity of the African women's experience at home, abroad, and transnationally, such as evident in the contexts of *Americanah*.

Results and Discussion

Repositioning Blackness and Intersectional Identities in Adichie's Americanah

The opening of the novel *Americanah* already presents distinctive identities of the Blacks and 'Blackness' in the United States. As the novel's female protagonist, Ifemelu, strolls around Princeton area, she observes the black locals of Princeton who look different from her, a Nigerian who lives in the United States and refers to herself as "non-American black." Furthermore, she then elaborates on the so-called American Blacks to name the African American groups or "*Those Formerly Known as Negroes*" (Adichie, p. 3-4). These American Blacks in general, are the descendants of the Africans who were forcefully brought to the American continent in the early 16th century. Eltis and Richardson's *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2010) chronicles the journey of these African from diverse origins in Africa to the Middle Passage and their arrivals in the New World as slaves. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation website (2023) also provides a detailed history of these African American experiences, from their bondage to their next generational struggles to become equal citizens of the United States. The descendants of the Transatlantic Slave Trade are homogeneously known as the "African American" although their ancestors are from diverse places of origins in Africa. Meanwhile, the non-American Blacks refer to themselves and among themselves in relation to their nationality and origins in such as Nigerian, Ghanaian, Senegalese, and many more if they are from the African continent; and Jamaican, Dominican, and so on if they are from the Caribbean Islands. However, in the United States, they are commonly simply known homogenously as African or Black regardless of their diverse origins. Thus, their heterogeneity as the Blacks is not recognized:

> *"Why do you say Africa instead of just saying the country you mean?" Ifemelu asked. Aisha clucked. "You don't know America. You say Senegal and American people, they say, Where is that? My friend from Burkina Faso, they ask her, your country in Latin America?" Aisha resumed*

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> *twisting, a sly smile on her face, and then asked, as if Ifemelu could not possibly understand how things were done here, "How long you in America?"* (Adichie, p. 15).

This conversation with Aisha happens in the salon/hairdresser shop where Ifemelu frequents to do her hair. The interaction in the salon is not exclusively about the hairdo but includes various experiences of these non-American blacks who live in the United States. Ifemelu, then, uses Aisha's experience as the subject in her blog to expose racism, racial relation, and social hierarchy in the United States:

> *To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: In America, You Are Black, Baby*
>
> *Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes. Mine was in a class in undergrad when I was asked to give the black perspective, only I had no idea what that was. So I just made something up. And admit it—you say "I'm not black" only because you know black is at the bottom of America's race ladder. And you want none of that. Don't deny now. What if being black had all the privileges of being white? Would you still say "Don't call me black, I'm from Trinidad"? I didn't think so. So you're black, baby* (Adichie, p. 220).

Therefore, the hair salon and the blog provide a unique space to narrate and share their experiences living in the United States. Regardless of their occasional interactions and occurrences, those two spaces articulate insights and voices of these minority women of color in confronting racial, gender, social class challenges in the predominantly patriarchal and racist system in the society.

The location of the hair salon for these African transnational women also displays a social divide in relation to the minority-majority and the rich-poor side of the towns and cities in the United States. It is located in a very distinctive separate place from the dominant and affluent American societies. This hair salon is located in the narrow alleys where the minority and migrants reside where various immigrant businesses such as Chinese restaurants and tattoo parlors and more:

> *She gave him the address of Mariama African Hair Braiding. It was her first time at this salon—her regular one was closed because the owner had gone back to Côte d'Ivoire to get married—but it would look, she was sure, like all the other African hair braiding salons she had known: they were in the part of the city that had graffiti, dank buildings, and no white people, they displayed bright signboards with names like Aisha and Fatima African Hair Braiding, they had radiators that were too hot in the winter and air conditioners that did not cool in the summer, and they were full of Francophone West African women braiders, one of whom would be the owner and speak the best English and answer the phone and be deferred to by the others* (Adichie, p. 9)

Such location of the hair salon becomes the site to display the heterogeneity of black identities: different nationalities, tribes, religions, languages, social classes and more. The hair salon is in a particular area segregated from the white neighborhood. Moreover, this hair salon also displays the heterogeneity of the African transnational women in the United States. These women are not only from diverse countries and nationalities in Africa but also of different ethnicities and tribes, religious affiliations, and diverse language speakers. Many are Francophone as the result of French colonial rules in Africa in the past, but many also speak in their different tribe's languages also they come from the same country. Although they do not share commonalities of linguistic origins and practices but they share a similar discrimination in receiving negative treatment because of their way and speaking English and American English. Their English pronunciation and "accents" are seen as "inferior, " leading to different treatments and social acceptance in their community. Sadly, in their attempts to

give the younger members of their family a better opportunity and social equality, they no longer teach their ethnic languages and instead force their younger generation to speak American English "properly" for a better future.

In addition to this adoption and adaption of a particular dominant language as one of the transnational identities, physical features such as skin complexion, body size, hair and beauty also become identity politics. Many African transnationals have to conform to the standardized dominant view of what hair should look like in the United States to be more acceptable in occupational opportunities. Ifemelu, for example, has to conceal her "natural" Afro hairstyle for job interviews so potential employers would hire her. She also frequently struggles to accept her "natural hair" because sheis unconsciously influenced by the dominant standard of beauty and hairstyle for women. To look "beautiful and acceptable and trendy," Ifemelu does not mind enduring the pains and discomfort of using chemicals for her hair and face as a woman.

Rosenblum and Travis' *The Meaning of Difference* (2016) also reveal the American constructions of race and ethnicity, sex and gender, social class, sexuality, and disability that put burdens and pressures on the minority groups in terms of these intersectional identities. Ifemelu also has to face this intersectional oppression as a Nigerian woman who lives in the United States. Although well-educated but she comes from a humble family origin in Nigeria. Her family experiences financial problems as a result of their poverty and social class yet they never experience racial discrimination the way Ifemelu has to endure in the United States. Not only being black but also being a black woman brings race and gender oppressions to Ifemelu, even she has to use her body and sexuality as a commodity in order to survive in the United States because of limited options and less opportunities for such a black woman like her.

In Nigeria as a predominantly 'black' society, she does not have to refer to herself as black because race and blackness do not pose as a key issue. Instead of race issues and differences, Nigerians construct their identities and differences in term of religion such as Moslem, Catholic, born-again Christian; and tribes, for example, as Igbos or Yorubas rather than racial identities as the Blacks. However, skin color also becomes a marker of identity but in different concepts from the ones in the United States. For example, light skin in Nigeria is often referred to as "half-caste," a term that is considered offensive in the United States, but in Nigeria, it is just a term to refer to skin complexion and interracial identities.

Adichie's *Americanah* also portrays gender and race struggles experienced by its various male and female black African characters both in the United States and the United Kingdom and also back home in Nigeria. These various characters do not only represent the "African Diaspora" but also what Adam and Mayes (1998) refer to as the 'migrating subjects" who reside in "transformative spaces where "new intersections' are constantly forged.

Obinze, the novel's male protagonist, comes from a well-educated family living in an affluent Nigerian neighborhood. His father passed away when he was young raised by his single mother, a well-respected university professor. His parents were educated abroad in the U.S. and the U.K. His parents had even taken him to live abroad when he was very young. They were among the Nigerian transnational intellectuals who decided to return home to Nigeria to help develop their Nation with their foreign educational degrees. His mother as a researcher has also frequently visited several foreign countries for her professional jobs but choosing to remain in Nigeria for the rest of her life. However, after the political conflicts in Nigeria, she encouraged her son, Obinze to leave the country and start a new life in the U.S. or the U.K. Unfortunately, Obinze could not secure the U.S. visa, and instead, he went to England to start his new life. Compared to his parents' experience as Nigerian transnational intellectuals and researchers, Obinze's unfortunate situation as a low-paid worker can be regarded as intergenerational downward mobility in terms of race, gender, and social class intersectional dynamic.

Obinze's mother experience does not necessarily experience strong gender oppression as a woman in the domestic or private sphere as a wife and single mother and neither as a university professor in the public sphere both at home in Nigeria and abroad. However, other female characters in *Americanah* also face gender oppression both at home and abroad. Ifemelu, for example, not only experienced gender and sexual oppression in the United States but also in Nigeria. She suffered from an allergy and went to the hospital accompanied by Obinze to seek medical health but the hospital staffs in their town have already assumed that they had consummated extramarital sexual relations and planned to have an abortion.

The traditional Nigerian gender construction has put strong pressure, particularly on woman, to remain chaste and faithful to their moral and social values. Meanwhile, Obinze's mother has a different perspective on such gender and moral values by emphasizing Ifemelu's will, choice, and desire rather than on his son. She is even more protective of Ifemelu's physical and psychological well-being rather than on traditional moral values or her own son's desire. As such, her education and life experience has brought about a more "progressive" gender perspective. However, education does not necessarily change the traditional gender perspective, as exemplified in the life experience of Ifemelu's relative, Aunty Uju.

In Nigeria, Aunty Uju is a well-educated, intelligent, and beautiful woman. However, she chose to be the concubine of a Nigerian military political leader to prioritize her duty to her family and clan's financial needs rather than pursue her own dream of being an independent and successful professional. When her Nigerian partner/husband died during the military coup, she moved to the United States to raise their young son. She struggled to overcome all the race, class, and gender discrimination in the United States and succeeded to be a doctor and established health professional.

Despite of her professional success, Aunty Uju still upholds the patriarchal gender construction and traditional social expectations that a woman needs to have a husband for her own social protection and also her son's social security. Her marriage to her new African American husband displays multiple gender oppressions both rooted from her Nigerian upbringing and her newly adopted Nation, the U.S. Her American husband has a lesser income than hers and he sometimes even does not want to work, but he has a total control over their family incomes. Aunty Uju is actually the primary breadwinner in their marriage and family, but it is the husband who controls all their money and spending priorities. Moreover, he also demands Aunty Uju to do all her domestic gender roles although she worked full-time in the hospital. She dutifully follows all those roles and arrangements without any protests and takes this patriarchal rule as her primary duties as a wife and mother.

Marital status and gender relation can also be seen from Obinze's transnational experience in the U.K. To obtain the work permit and residential permit, Obinze spent a great sum of money on another African female transnational who has already become a permanent resident. This woman agreed with this arrangement to support her family's financial needs. Such arrangement is not without a risk, the immigration officers caught Obinze's effort and they deported him to Nigeria. His deportation signifies both shame and liberation. His return to Nigeria is not in the honourable manner, nevertheless, it also paves for a new beginning of his successful enterprise in Nigeria. Through the tribe and clan relation, He finally holds an important position in a business that earns him fame and fortune. He also marries a beautiful and "docile" woman who takes pride in conducting all her domestic roles as his dutiful wife. The wife even often feels uneasy with Obinze's "progressive" gender perspective and treatment. At the end, this marriage fails because of their different views on love and traditional patriarchal expectations, and finally ,Obinze chooses "love" over social respectability.

In contrast to Obinze's experience, Ifemelu's return is more 'honorably and voluntarily' in the sense that she is the one who

decides to return to Nigeria, although she has already had citizenship status in the U.S.

> *It brought with it amorphous longings, shapeless desires, brief imaginary glints of other lives she could be living, that over the months melded into a piercing homesickness. She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a music production business, a fashion label, a magazine, a fast-food franchise. She looked at photographs of these men and women and felt the dull ache of loss, as though they had prised open her hand and taken something of hers. They were living her life. Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil* (Adichie, p.6).

She can no longer conform to the unbearable race, class, and gender discrimination in the U.S. so she finally chooses to come "home" to start her new life, although her family members object to it. For her family, living in the U.S. is a fulfilling dream; meanwhile, for Ifemelu it is a nightmare that she wants to end immediately. Ifemelu's return is depicted quite differently from other African returnees commonly and stereotypically termed as "Americanah," thus, the novel's title.

"Americanah" is actually a mockery to refer to the African transnational diasporas who reside in the U.S. and return to their African nations, bringing particular cultural attitudes of superiority and denigrating their African cultural and social roots. Ifemelu has understood this term well and has been referred by it in both negative and positive aspects in both professional and personal contexts. For her, this is part of forged new intersectional identities of the African transnational experiences, as seen in these following quotations:

> *"She'll come back and be a serious Americanah like Bisi," Ranyinudo said. They roared with laughter, at that word "Americanah," wreathed in glee, the fourth syllable extended, and at the thought of Bisi, a girl in the form below them, who had come back from a short trip to America with odd affectations, pretending she no longer understood Yoruba, adding a slurred r to every English word she spoke* (Adichie, p. 65).

> *"Ifem, you know you'll have any kind of dress you want in America and next time we see you, you will be a serious Americanah" (Adichie, p.100).*

> *"Americanah!" Ranyinudo teased her often. "You are looking at things with American eyes. But the problem is that you are not even a real Americanah. At least if you had an American accent we would tolerate your complaining!" (Adichie, p.385).*

> *"You are a real American! Ready to get to work, a no-nonsense person! Very good. First of all, tell me how you think we compare to Glass?" (Adichie, p. 391).*

> *In the car, Ranyinudo said, "Talking to your new boss like that, ha! If you had not come from America, she would have fired you immediately" (Adichie, p. 393).*

> *Later, Ranyinudo told her, "You are no longer behaving like an Americanah!" and despite herself, Ifemelu felt pleased to hear this (Adichie, p. 395).*

Ifemelu's American education and transnational experience provides her with better opportunities for various high-paid jobs in Nigeria. The Nigerian employers and the new rich love anything foreign to enforce their sophisticated social status and prestige. Ifemelu is aware of this social-cultural dynamic, but she is also deeply conscious that her return is not to bring the American stereotypical "Americanah" attitudes and qualities but to equally embrace both her African social-cultural roots as well as her transnational diasporan experience so that she can have the advantages of both world to create better future not only for herself but also for her Nation and communities at large.

As a Blogger, she frequently articulates these two different worlds with their similarities and differences not only in their binary relation but also in their complexity and heterogeneity. Interestingly, in the Blog, she conveys both worlds: the U.S. and Nigeria in term of tribalism:

> *She read the books on Obinze's list but also, randomly, pulled out book after book, reading a chapter before deciding which she would speed-read in the library and which she would check out. And as she read, America's mythologies began to take on meaning, America's tribalisms—race, ideology, and region—became clear. And she was consoled by her new knowledge (Adichie, p. 138).*
>
> *In America, tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds—class, ideology, region, and race (Adichie, p. 184).*
>
> *Of all their tribalisms, Americans are most uncomfortable with race (Adichie, p. 350).*

For people in general, Nigeria and Africa are often perceived as "primitive' and "backwards" with their tribal traditions and worldviews; therefore, it is critically interesting that Adichie's text also views the United States' race, class, region, and gender power relation as a tribal system with its particular tribalism, tradition, and worldviews. By conducting feminist "intersectional thinking," this article, in some ways, succeeds in unveiling Adichie's text narrative strategies in its poetic and political aspects to provide a space for the minority groups to amplify their voices and transform their invisibility into heterogenous intersectional existences for better future and relations.

Conclusion

By employing the so-called Woman of Color Feminism, particularly on the world stage, that pays a close attention to global, postcolonial, and transnational feminisms, this article is able to interrogate Adichie's third novel Americanah (2013) critically. Through this selected feminist perspective, this article carefully exercises "the intersectional thinking" to investigate the way Adichie's novel displays diverse identities of the Blacks and the complex concept of Blackness concerning race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and other related social cultural categories. is complexity and heterogeneity of intersectional experiences occur in three different nations and continents, namely, Nigeria, the U.S. and the U.K. in the African, America, and Europe.

In the African continent, particularly in Nigeria, the identities of the people are mainly dominated by the construction of ethnicity and religion, and also gender as the focus of this research context. Meanwhile, in the United States and the United Kingdom, the construction of race, class, and gender plays more dominant roles. In such specific contexts, *Americanah* articulates the experiences of the African diaspora as transnational groups who struggle against the race, class, and gender oppressions in the United States and the United Kingdom as exemplified in the lives of its main characters: Ifemelu and Obinze.

Race, class, and gender relation, however, are not all homogenous but contextual in their specificity. For example, Obinze's life experience as a transnational Nigerian in the U.K. demonstrates the complexity of intersectional relations. As a well-educated Nigerian, his educational degree does not open an opportunity of a well-established profession for him; instead, he only manages to become a toilet cleaner in England. On one hand, Obinze's occupational and social class downward mobility can be both related to his "illegal" residency status and his racial identity, which also leads to his encounter to the British racism system. On the other hand, however, he can develop a true and long-lasting friendship with his fellow British white co-workers in the low-paid wage jobs. Thus, in such context, race is not necessarily a focal challenge in forging equal relation; their mutual and close bond as friends is strengthened by their solidarity as fellow working class members regardless of their different racial identities.

Just like Obinze's transnational experience in the United Kingdom, Ifemelu, the female protagonist in *Americanah,* also

experiences race, class, and gender struggles in the United States as a Nigerian transnational woman. Similar to Obinze, Ifemelu's educational qualifications also cannot guarantee a decent, well-paid job for her. She faces frequent difficulties in finding jobs for her everyday survival. She is a well-educated, well-articulated, and intelligent person; yet, she has to experience frequent rejections to be employed in decent occupations. She even has to come to terms with the lowest point in her life because she has to 'sell' her body and provide sexual service for a white man in order to survive. Her experience exhibits not only racial discrimination as a minority group but also gender oppression as a black woman.

Adicie's *Americanah* also articulates different identities of the recent African transnational diaspora and the African Americans who have different historical backgrounds with their African ancestors' experience of slavery in the American continent in the past. In particular context, these two groups share similar race and skin color identities from the dominant perspectives of the American societies. However, *Americanah* presents a very different framework to convey their different complexity and intersectional relation as also portrayed in the relationship between Ifemelu and her African American boyfriend, a talented writer and a university professor. Their "blackness" is not necessarily the same although they share similar skin complexion and African heritage. Their being "black" does not necessarily forge similar worldviews and experiences as their race, social class, and gender identities.

Through *Americanah*, Adichie also highlights the heterogeneity and specificity of complex identities to emphasize the existence of minority groups who are often invisible in societies. Moreover, her novel creates a space for women characters to articulate their different voices and diverse experiences. To facilitate this articulation is the presence of hair salons in *Americanah.* This hair salon is not only a place to meet and provide hairdos for African women in different cities and towns in the United States but also a site to commune and share their diverse life experiences and different perspectives. This hair salon plays a critical role in amplifying women's voices in criticizing various social issues in their transnational footings and grounds. These transnational African women characters in *Americanah* are not voiceless beings; they do have voices but do not yet having the opportunity to articulate them in the public voice. This hair salon, therefore, provides a mediated fluidity of the private-public boundary of their voice articulation.

Another space that also functions as a bridge to maneuver this private-public boundary for women to articulate their voices and worldviews is the presence of the Blog in *Americanah*. Ifemelu owns and creates this Blog to articulate her personal experience, yet through the responses among her as the bloggers and the readers, this personal experience provides an open discussion that also leads to a public interaction in perceiving race, class, gender issues and other related social matters. The Blog then, in such a way, also becomes a transformative site to think and rethink about the way the societies work in relation to their intersectional relation and dynamics by giving opportunities for highlighting the visibility of the minority groups.

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