

IDENTITY IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

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**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by Ayebaitari Nichole Elkanah-Simon (Miss) with matriculation number: ART1900448, in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

PROF. H. O. OKOLOCHA

(Project Supervisor)

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God for His grace that has sustained me through the course of my educational journey; and to my late father, Mr Simon E. Oruama for being a pacesetter and an amazing father.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the factors that contribute to the formation of identities in the diaspora. It explored the identity of characters, and how they evolve to suit their environment, which in turn affects their personality as seen in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. By examining the identity of the characters in the novel, it focused on the migration of Africans to America in quest for a better life.

The study adopted Frantz Fanon's migration theory and post colonialism in analyzing relevant excerpts that reflected the formation of new identities in diaspora.

The study found that the characters of Ifemelu and Obinze exemplify the quest for a better life by Africans who migrate to America. The selection of characters depicts the difficulties faced by Africans in America, and how their identities are altered in order to fit into the new country, they find themselves. The study concluded that African migrants often experience negative stereotypes and racial profiling which subject them to change their identity to fit in.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

This study examines the factors that contribute to the formation of new identities in the diaspora. It seeks to investigate self-perception, identity crisis and intersectionality, and individualism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* in order to demonstrate the obstacles of racial discrimination which discriminate Blacks in America.

1.2 Scope of Study

The study focuses on the presentation of racial discrimination in America as represented in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. It concentrates on self-perception, identity crisis, and intersectionality, and individualism in this novel.

1.3 Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research method. It involves a critical analysis of Adichie's *Americanah* which is the primary data for the study. Other sources of data include relevant journals, articles and textbooks from the library and the internet for further explanations. The study also adopts migration theory in the interpretation of excerpts that reflect the formation of new identities in the diaspora.

1.4 Theoretical Background

This essay adopts postcolonial theory and employs the migration strand of this theory. Thus, post-colonialism, in its most recent definition, shows a deep concern for the perspective of persons from regions and groups "outside the hegemonic power structure" (Legun 329). That is, its interest is in the oppressed minority groups whose presence is not only crucial to the self-definition of the majority group, but also critical in "placing the subaltern group in a position to subvert the authority of those who have hegemonic power". (ibid)

The migration theory is the foundation of the study. Homi Bhabha and Edward argues that human identity, and the way migrant characters cope with their new life places the uncertainties and insecurities they suffer from (6). Also the communication problems are regarded as the major themes of migration theory (3). The crucial point to note here is that the migrant characters have positive recollections of their departed homeland and the nostalgia they feel for their former lives. These feelings are however given little attention in migration literature. The character in any migrant literature constantly reinvents itself. Its identity grows beyond its recollections of the past as a result of its contacts with cultural intricacies and the discriminating experience of being a minority.

African public spaces are dominated by inter-tribal war, and unstable governments enacted through coups and countercoups, poverty, and migrants. The twenty-first century has seen a large number of migrations among the continents,

which may have been prompted by wars and the search for greener pastures. Many people see Europe, America, and even Asia as places where they can improve their lives.

Migration theory is mostly linked with post colonialism as it reveals the dominant migration story for migrants of African descent who are seeking greener pastures. Since literature represents society's ordeals, postcolonial theory has its roots in the colonized's anger and the tensions and confrontations between their culture and that of the ruling group. It also addresses the oppressed fears, hopes, and desires for their future and identities. By viewing them as individuals worthy of discussion, it grants them the authority, political and cultural freedom to achieve independence by overcoming political and cultural dominance. The African literature, in post colonialism, pertains to migration and demonstrates that the prevailing migration tale for migrants of African heritage is one of leaving violence or poverty. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* is rich with examples that illustrate this post-colonial migration idea.

Frantz Fanon argues that the literature of migration, in a thematic way, portrays characters who try to cope with migration in different ways. This reaction varies from the experience of the uncertainty of the displaced characters as "destructive, agonizing, and painful" to the experience of migration as "productive,

fascinating, and appealing", both of which work towards the same end of "rewriting identities in order to evoke their impure and heterogeneous character (18-19).

Homi Bhabha explains that a further thematic approach of migration, as seen in *Americanah*, concerns the detailed description of the migrant character's excitement to leave their home country and the notion of return, which portrays the migrant character's feeling aroused by a visit to the former home. This feature mainly focuses with narrating the many experiences of migrants' escape, and the dread and humiliation that refugees (in particular) face when seeking asylum. The "pressing flood of emotional upheaval confronted with the decision that takes a moment to make but has immeasurable consequences", is frequently highlighted (13). Reasons behind the manifestation of this theme in the migrant literature is the increasingly interconnected world that has made the choice of returning or staying more tangible than in previous periods.

According to Dutschmann and Weiss, "for a migration to occur, benefits must initially be greater than costs" (245). Migrations can take many different shapes. Dutschmann and Weiss identify two major categories, which involve "economic motives and natural disaster or persecution" (237). Migrants may be motivated by economic reasons, and they may take several forms.

Dutschmann and Weiss split temporary migration further into circulatory and transitory migration. Circulatory migration is mostly triggered by sporadic labor

demand in the immigrant's intended nation that cannot be satisfied at affordable costs by the local workforce. They define transitory migration as "a situation in which the migrant moves across different host countries before possibly arriving at a final destination" (238). This manifests in an increasing number of immigrants of African and Asian origin entering Europe, mostly illegal, through Italy, Spain or Portugal for onward movement to Northern European Countries like Germany, the UK or Sweden.

There exists another form of migration which Dustmann and Weiss refer to as "contract migration". In this case, it is a temporary migration in which the migrant resides in the host nation for a limited amount of time, usually a few years, and the duration of the movement is decided externally by factors such as an employment contract or a residency visa. They cite labor migration to Switzerland as an illustration of this. Contract migrations were primarily envisioned for these sorts of migrations. Similarly, many of the migrations into Middle Eastern oil-producing nations from Asia, Europe, and other Middle Eastern countries are contract migrations (238).

In addition to the migrant strands designated by Dustmann and Weiss, they also identify another type of migration termed "return migration." When migration is discussed as being temporary, return migration is always kept in mind as well. In the words of Dustmann and Weiss, "return migration refers to the situation in

which migrants return voluntarily to their countries of origin after a significant period of time (238). They note that numerous migrations to Europe in recent decades align with this pattern. To put it differently, return migration can be explained as returning to their place of origin or citizenship. In this scenario, migrants go back to their homeland as it enhances their overall lifetime wealth. Additionally, consuming goods and services abroad is less enjoyable compared to doing so in their home country. In order for a migration to be feasible, benefits must outweigh costs. In spite of a large wage difference, preferences for consumption may prevail.

Return migration is attributed to “locational preferences”. In addition, there are other reasons migrants may return, despite continuously more favorable economic conditions in their home countries. A particular reason that necessitates a return migration is higher purchasing power of the host country's currency in the home country. "Migration is temporary because it allows the migrant to take advantage of high wages abroad and low prices at home" (246).

They also cite another rationale for return migration, primarily rooted in the evaluation of human capital. They argue that if the potential returns on the skills and knowledge acquired in the host country are greater in one's home country, this factor alone can instigate a decision to return (246). An important illustration of

this return motivation is evident in student migrations, and it's also relevant in the context of migration from countries undergoing industrialization.

It was noted earlier that for a migration to be possible, benefits must outweigh costs. Following this notion, if, in spite of a large difference in wage, preferences for consumption in the country home, relative to the host country, are high, migration will not take place. In view of this, permanent migration arises if at the end of the migrant's lifetime, benefits still outweigh cost. It is noteworthy to point out that this may hinge on the immigrant's preference for home country consumption. Dustmann and Weiss note that "they occur when, over an immigrant's lifetime, the benefits of migration (here induced by higher wages) are always higher than the costs (here induced by differences in preferences for consumption).

Also, commenting on return migration, Bimbola Oluwatunlele Idowu Faith posits that since willingness to return is crucial in accounting for return migration, theories of return migration stress the link between the motivating reason for both the migration and the return.

According to Jean-Christophe Dumont and Gills Spielvogel, "the bulk of the return migration flows is voluntary" (170). Idowu, on the other hand, maintains that some examples of return migration in Adichie's *Americanah* are "forced."

"...some of those returning home have been forced out by a removal order, for having broken the laws on immigration or residency" (5).

Jean-Pierre Cassarino finds, after studying return migration theories, that mobilization of resources and readiness are two critical components that influence return migration. According to Cassarino:

"preparedness pertains not only to the willingness of migrants to return home, but also to their readiness to return. In other words, the returnee's preparedness refers to a voluntary act that must be supported by the gathering of sufficient resources and information about post-return conditions at home". (271)

The existing literature suggests that migration, as a theory, is too vast and intricate to be encapsulated within a single framework. Consequently, some scholars, including Joaquin Arango, have asserted that "migration lacks strong theoretical grounding" (20). Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, postcolonial migration literature informs us that the commonly recognized narrative for African-origin migrants revolves around economic factors, escaping violence, or poverty. In light of this, this study aligns with Dustmann and Weiss' viewpoint.

1.5 Review of Related Scholarship

Adichie's *Americanah* is a noteworthy piece of literature that did not go ignored as it was critiqued on several topics like racial discrimination, feminism, biculturalism, immigration, transnationalism, love, and so on. Racism-based reviews will be highlighted.

Okparanozie Amonyeze noted that "*Americanah* can be seen as a fiction of reputation management, renegotiating image rights of immigrants and minorities on a humanistic template, and engendering a social compact of respect and mutual understanding" (11). Amonyeze focuses on Adichie's endeavor to bridge the gap in terms of respect and equality between immigrants and the already dwelling race, noting that there is no difference apart from skin color between victims and discriminators.

Beatrice Begum argues that Adichie "examines the racial inequalities that plague the collective consciousness of Blacks in her novel *Americanah* using Postcolonial reading of the text, which brings to the fore the fluidity of identity (92). This critique focuses on Adichie's usage of the characters in her novel *Americanah* to demonstrate the fluidity of an individual's identity as a result of racial disparities. Ifemelu and Emenike are two characters Adichie used to demonstrate how fluid a person's identity can become in trying to fit in and feel liked in society, regardless of one's genuine happiness.

Henrik Oosterink comments on Adichie's *Americanah*, he says that the novel is also discussed from a transnational perspective(13). He maintains that "in the liminal spaces between cultures and nations, transnational individuals undergo a unique identity transformation and are uniquely positioned to interpret and explain the important and complex interactions between people,"(3). Oosterink analyzes the novel sociologically, highlighting the crises that immigrants, particularly those from other countries face when they arrive in America, where they must adapt and, at times, forget their own cultural and national identities in order to fit in.

In Adichie's *Americanah*, the concept of the trans-cultural is linked with post-colonial issues of economic mismanagement, power disjunction, and feelings of trauma and helplessness among Nigerian and African emigrants in search of opportunities (Nwanyanwu 11). Lilian Nwanyanwu is a Nigerian critic who examines the novel from a political and economic standpoint, concluding that the notion of transculturalism is associated with immigrants' yearning for better pastures in America and England.

This critic believes that the post-colonial issues that African countries continue to face, such as economic mismanagement and political disjunction, are what drive Africans to emigrate from their homeland to search for better living conditions abroad. However, these migrants are faced with the issue of transculturalism, which requires them to change their cultural identities in order to earn income and blend into society (11).

Annette Amonyeze states that "Adichie's redemptive narrative stresses the bicultural fix of economic exiles, affirming vision of a new cultural space for Africans at home and in the Diaspora" (9). Amonyeze feels that *Americanah* serves to clearly illustrate Africans at home the problems of individuals in the Diaspora, demonstrating that it is not all that different and that if one desires to go to another region, there are obstacles everywhere (9).

According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Adichie's novel illustrates multiple identities of the Black people who have gradually transformed themselves into other identities. This is to ensure they (Blacks) receive welcome welcome and comfortable in the colonizer's countries due to the mistreatment of white people (9).

1.6. Justification of Study

This study examines the quest for identity through the lens of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. It is crucial to note that, based on the assessments of Adichie's works by various scholars, some of these critics have different perspectives to the novel. Although these perspectives appear to have some parallels with this study, they differ in some respects since very few of these opponents appear to have analyzed it from the standpoint of identity.

1.7. Thesis Statement

The study demonstrates that certain factors such as self-perception, identity crisis, intersectionality, personal growth and individualism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, play important roles in the formation of new identities in the diaspora.

CHAPTER TWO

SELF-PERCEPTION IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S

AMERICANAH

2.1. Introduction

The chapter discusses self-perception in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah*. Perception is merely the ability to see, hear, or become aware of anything through one's senses. It is also the way something is seen, comprehended, or interpreted. In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, we find occasions when familial upbringing becomes an issue, and personal crises, and we also witness certain characters that did not have racial privileges and there is a difference between native and second language, as demonstrated by Ifeoma's character.

2.2. Family Upbringing

Adichie provides the picture of an intricate relationship that occurs between a mother and her kid via family upbringing in the novel *Americanah*. *Although* this narrative depicted two distinct persons who are similar in many aspects, their journeys through life proved difficult as they are confronted with various problems. The style of parenting a child receives at home has a big impact on how that youngster behaves outside of his or her community or family. Depending on how a youngster is raised, he or she is likely to behave well and adapt to any trend. Most

African parents have a special link with their children, which influences that child's capacity to establish his or her identity and retain a strong sense of self and belonging.

Furthermore, the author depicts diverse mother-child ties and upbringing, particularly between Ifemelu and her mother on the one hand, and Obinze and his mother on the other hand. Obinze's mother constantly loves and supports her son, pushing him to achieve goals while also encouraging him to stay strong, uncompromising, nonconforming, and comfortable with his identity.

The main character Ifemelu's mother, on the other hand, was the opposite. She was less enthusiastic about Ifemelu, less active, and didn't care about developing her confidence and identity, therefore her methods of identifying or identity changed as she progressed through different stages of her life.

The protagonist Ifemelu had an unstable existence throughout her youth due to a lack of engagement from her family, namely her mother. In her situation, Ifemelu was raised by a mother who, unlike Obinze's mother, was unsupportive and only somewhat involved in her life, yet she still cares for her mother. Ifemelu's mother is a religious fanatic and a bigot. Her obsessive fixation with religion drove her to engage in excessive fasting to distract herself from the problems of life. Ifemelu was lucky to have other women in her life who served as mother figures, notably Aunty Uju and Obinze's mother.

The book depicts Ifemelu's mother as unconcerned about her daughter Ifemelu:

Mama rushed home with a confused, unfocused look in her eye and asked Ifemelu “Where are the big scissors?” and “raised it to her head and handful by handful chopped off all of her hair” (49).

The text above demonstrates that Ifemelu's mother is more concerned about her relationship with God rather than with her children. She demonstrates love and desirability for God's work while losing sight of her relationship with her daughter. Ifemelu's mother's action demonstrates that she is unwilling to give up her love for the church; rather, she prefers her daughter falling behind in terms of family upbringing.

Also, the mother chopping off Ifemelu's hair reflects her giving up a part of herself for the sake of religion and, as a result, focusing more on God rather than being active in her daughter's life.

That same day, her mother began collecting all Catholic objects in the house, put them in a bag and burned the objects in their backyard to ashes. “Ifemelu began to cry because she sensed that something had happened, and the woman standing by the fire... was not her mother, and could not be her mother” (50).

The excerpt above demonstrates that Ifemelu and her mother are from separate worlds. The mother is a devout Christian, and Ifemelu is a young woman who craves her mother's attention but is unable to obtain it. Ifemelu and her mother split up as a result of her mother's lack of support, guidance, and general involvement in her daughter's life. Her mother was transforming into someone strange, which would endure the rest of her life.

Furthermore, her parents only visited Ifemelu once throughout her fifteen years in America. The visit was just for three weeks. Thus, Ifemelu says, "They seemed like strangers. They looked the same, but the dignity she remembered was gone.." (372).

The excerpt above makes it plain that she wants more of her family, but the fact that her mother has been away from her for so long has strained their connection. Apparently, she wanted her parents to see her, but it didn't feel the same because of their lack of connection and the length of time they had been separated.

The lack of care and commitment from her parents most importantly her mother shaped her view about life in America. It made Ifemelu see life in America as a place where no one cares for you or wants to do anything meaningful with you

if you are not dancing to their tune. Ifemelu is left to struggle in order for her to find herself.

In America, she states, “She was not sure she would be able to be their daughter, the person they remembered” (372). Ifemelu was moulded by America into someone altogether different, someone who was not her actual self. She became someone who wants everything at once since her family environment was not ideal, and her parents were not supportive. Furthermore, Jack Taylor’s work “Language, Race, and Identity in Adichie’s *Americanah*,” addresses the tension between individual and collective identity vis-à-vis blackness in the United States (16). The American culture has the capacity to modify an individual to fit society’s standards since it has an identity that can readily adapt and assimilate to its environment. Ifemelu first travelled from Nigeria to America and later returned to Nigeria. On her return, she established new schools, and began new relationships with numerous men. During these periods, her parents are unaware of what is going on in her life. Her mother’s aloof and unsupportive upbringing majorly contributed to her unstable and immature personality depicted throughout the narrative.

2.3. Identity Crisis

Adichie’s *Americanah* delves into the difficulties that two characters, Ifemelu and Obinze, experience in the United States of America and the United Kingdom respectively. As immigrants attempting to establish themselves in their new homes,

they both endured difficult times and suffering. The story follows the heroine, Ifemelu, through many chapters as she overcomes a number of challenges as an immigrant in order to establish a life for herself. She experiences various difficulties as she attempts to adjust to her new life.

Ifemelu faces hardship and identity crises as an immigrant. She strives to adjust to change while simultaneously asserting herself via her individuality.

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. And, of course, there was also Obinze. Her first love, her first lover, the only person with whom she had never felt the need to explain herself. He was now a husband.... And they had not been in touch in years, yet she could not pretend that he was not a part of her homesickness (8)

The excerpt above depicts her predicament, which drives her to wish she could return to her origin country, hunt for a better career and settle down instead of being in a discriminatory society. Another issue discovered is the part of her race. Her skin color becomes an issue in America and she faces difficulties in trying to adapt to her new environment. She finds it difficult settling in America, as the

environment is different from the one she is used. However, she managed to get herself a life that is manageable.

Ifemelu fanned herself with a magazine. "its so hot," she said. At least , these women would not say to her " you're hot? But you're from Africa!".. (23)

According to Kristeva Kristeva, Ifemelu, like other characters in the work, throws attention to the obstacles faced by immigrants in the receiving nation, where he is severely hated owing to his position as a foreigner and is branded an inferior citizen (4). Ifemelu, like the other story's character-immigrants, is continuously confronted with socio-cultural realities that appear to be created to provide no other choice except disdain, rejection, and negation of the foreigner's new notion of happiness.

In the excerpt above, Ifemelu confronts racism at Princeton and travels to Philadelphia to plate her hair in an African salon maintained by a Guinean braider. Despite the fact that she becomes irritated when a figure named "Mariama" says the words "come now," she finds it difficult to function in America due to the high prevalence of racism in the neighborhood where she lives.

Obinze's self-perception undergoes a significant transformation throughout the novel as he grapples with his identity as a Nigerian immigrant in the United States. Initially, Obinze sees himself as a confident and ambitious individual. He

comes from a privileged background in Nigeria and believes that success and happiness are within his reach. However, when he arrives in the United States and faces the harsh realities of being an immigrant, his self-perception begins to shift. As Obinze navigates the challenges of finding a job, dealing with racism, and feeling like an outsider, his self-perception starts to erode. He experiences a sense of displacement and struggles to find his place in American society. He begins to question his own worth and abilities, feeling diminished by the barriers he encounters. Obinze's self-perception is further influenced by the way others perceive him. He is often subjected to stereotypes and prejudice due to his Nigerian heritage and the color of his skin. These external judgments chip away at his confidence and they contribute to a negative self-image.

However, as the story progresses, Obinze begins to reclaim his self-perception. He starts to challenge societal expectations and stereotypes, embracing his own unique identity. Through his relationship with Ifemelu, he finds solace and support, which help him regain his sense of self.

Also, Obinze, the male protagonist in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, experiences a complex journey of identity as he navigates his life in Nigeria and later in the United States. Obinze's identity crisis stems from his experiences as an immigrant and the challenges he faces in adapting to a new culture. In Nigeria, he is part of the privileged class, but when he moves to the United States, he finds

himself marginalized and stripped off his previous status. This abrupt change forces him to confront questions of belonging, cultural assimilation, and the impact of race on his identity. As Obinze tries to fit into British society, he grapples with the pressure to conform to certain stereotypes and expectations associated with being a Black immigrant. He faces discrimination, encounters racial biases, and struggles to find his place in a society that often reduces him to preconceived notions of what it means to be African.

Furthermore, Obinze's identity crisis is also shaped by his longing for his homeland. Despite the challenges he faces in Nigeria, he feels a strong connection to his roots and a sense of displacement in the United States. This longing for home and the tension between his Nigerian identity and his experiences in America contribute to his internal struggle. Throughout the novel, Obinze's identity crisis is depicted through his relationships, particularly his romantic connection with Ifemelu, the novel's female protagonist. Their relationship serves as a mirror, reflecting the complexities of their individual identities and the ways in which their experiences shape their sense of self.

As the story unfolds, Obinze's journey towards self-discovery involves reconciling his Nigerian heritage with his experiences as an immigrant. He begins to embrace his own unique identity, challenging societal expectations and finding strength in his own voice.

2.4. Racial Privilege

Racial privilege is something that Blacks desire but never have. In a culture where race is a primary source of social stratification, the black identity is burdened by the perceived negatives associated with its skin color. This reality stands out in terms of racial supremacy and lack of privilege. Adichie's racial issues are more significant in the novel *Americanah*. This novel reflects the perception and strong implications of racial identity for African migrants and Blacks in the West.

The Whites in America have racial privilege, while the Blacks do not. Because of their birth circumstances and lack of options for a better future or employment, they are obliged to choose immigration to the nations that their colonizers envisioned for them, as Ifemelu describes in her blog.

"The only reason you say race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it's a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue, I only became black when I came to America (212)."

According to Andrea Mathews, children will take on a position and develop it into an identity in their homes for a variety of reasons (3). There must be some motivation for them to consent to the creation of a new self, such as survival, pleasing, or feeling accepted (3). This is depicted in the novel *Americanah* between

the Whites and the Blacks. The whites benefit in every way and have full confidence from the government, which puts them in a better position to nourish and control their minds in such a way that they (Blacks) see themselves as an inferior race, always dependent on the Whites because they never enjoy racial privilege.

2.5. Native Language and Second Language

Language serves as a primary instrument for developing identity and preserving cultural identity. Language is the instrument that brings individuals together in a community, people who share a common identity. Although colonized countries are compelled to adopt their colonizer's language as their primary language, it will always be a second language, and they will always strive to maintain their own language. The Eastern people speak Igbo. This Igbo is one of the languages Adichie uses as the mother tongue of the key characters in her novel, but only a few times. Adichie, like other authors, has appropriated the vocabulary of her colonizer. It is worth noting that English is frequently the second language of many African writers. The choice of English is so deliberate.

Even when African writers employ English, they frequently allow the rhythms and idioms of their native language to be heard. That being said, Adichie has created some perfect images in which Ifemelu, Obinze, Auntie Uju, or other characters such as Vincent would return to their roots in times of excitement

(Adichie 103-164), anger (128-183), or when Obinze and Ifemelu compete to know more Igbo idioms (48-49). She also highlights the hardships of black authors through Shan-Blaine's sister, when she gathers with some of their friends and they discuss how the white editor wants to change the racist deeds that have been published. She notes "*You can't write an honest novel about race in this country. If you write about how many people are really affected by race, it'll be too obvious. Black writers.... Have two choices: they can do precious or they can do pretentious* (224)."

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter examines the issue of identity of African immigrants through self perception and identity crisis in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. It shows how Ifemelu faces challenges as a result of her upbringing and this lack of commitment from her mother contradicts her life, identity and perception outside Nigeria where she finds it difficult to survive. Obinze who comes from a rich home in Nigeria also experiences discrimination in America. His family's financial status in Nigeria does not make life any easier for him in America and this is seen in his experiences of discrimination because he is a black man.

CHAPTER THREE

IDENTITY CRISIS AND INTERSECTIONALITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines some black characters in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* whose identity is being altered and made to behave like another because of some factors or pressure from the country they now live. The characters are exposed to identity manipulation which is common among Africans in America. Their experiences and challenges are mainly due to racial discrimination and other forms of identity manipulations such as identity crisis and intersectionality.

The term, identity manipulation, implies the false manifestation of self that can happen consciously or unconsciously. It is a psychological condition in which a person tries to make another identity for him or herself in order to present others. Consequently, manipulating others involves showing some other features of self which can be fake.

According to Halperin Melvin, identity manipulation of blacks is also known as neo-colonialism (3). Melvin asserts that identity manipulation is an act of exploitation from the part of the colonizers (17). Also, it is a form of indirect control and influence. In the context of identity, manipulation refers to the intentional distortion or manipulation of someone's sense of self, often for the benefit of those in power. Identity manipulation causes discrimination, and makes

the subject to feel inferior as seen in the characters of the blacks in America who do not want to be called blacks or be associated with Blacks.

3.2 Identity Manipulation

Owing to the misperception that America as a dreamland with the best education system, magnificent landmarks, so many job offers, etc., Ifemelu applies for America's visa. Upon her arrival, she realizes that she is different in terms of her skin tone, her language (accent) and her hair. Some Africans even suggest she to changes her style, and attempt to become more American.

She is at the verge of losing her identity as a Nigerian girl with a rich (the word rich has irony when it is used by White people) culture, while she is in the struggle of becoming more American and accepted in the Western society, in order for her to get a job. Adapting to her new environment becomes challenging as the neighbouring Whites distrust her. This is because she is Black. The White people think of themselves as superior. Also, some Black Americans could not accord Ifemelu, they perceive themselves as African-Americans. The African-Americans are rooted in American history. As a result, Ifemelu is not awarded the respect as a Nigerian.

According to Rosenblum Travis, American means White, those who are not White are presumed to be recent arrivals and are regularly told to go "back to where

they came from" (16)," This assertion is portrayed in Adichie's novel through Aunt Uju's experiences:

One patient, a useless layabout with tattoos all over his body told me to go back where I come from. All because I knew he was lying about being in pain and refused to give him more pain medicine. (161)

The excerpt above depicts that, Aunt Uju, although living and working in America, is not seen as equal to people of White supremacy. Characters such as Obinze and Aunt Uju also have to go through some transformation to cope with the new environment. Adichie tells the story of Nigerian immigrants with idealized notions of America and the United Kingdom and those who struggle diligently to realize their dreams but return to their home country largely disillusioned. Most of the Blacks in America and other parts of Europe, like Ifemelu, Aunt Uju and Obinze, are all dissatisfied because the definition of success they got from the beginning is different from what they encounter during their stay overseas. The Blacks are forced to accept the Western culture, and they will want to do everything possible to fit into the new world. This process is manipulating. However, when they cannot cope, they go back to their own country. The likes of Obinze, Uju, and Ifemelu in Adichie's *Americanah* eventually retreats and find their way to their home country for a better life.

Amonyeye Omoneye asserts that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* humanizes the story of the undocumented immigrant, and emphasize economic frustration which breeds criminality such as identity theft. Adichie's redemptive narrative of Obinze's failure overseas and feat of success in the backwaters of Nigeria highlights the possibility that marginalized persons can defy the racist master narrative and write their own success story (2).

One of the key differences that made these Blacks from inferior to citizens in America is that they (the Blacks) left a corrupt and poor country from Africa to a more developed and advanced countries like America and the United Kingdom. This is because they know these developed countries are stable economically and have standard educational system which is an aspect of post-colonial migration.

Fanon Frantz, in his theoretical contentions, ascribes a more noteworthy aim in the outcomes of migration, colonialism and the change framed by the experience of immigration. He analyzes, as Ryan states, the experience of wearing "white masks" to cope with the West, or turning from one's own particular identity to appear to the colonizer in an image that prevents all debased attributes that show the colonized as "primitive" (80)." Blaine explains Adichie's notion through the excerpt below:

He said, "Ever write about adoption? Nobody wants black babies in this country, and I don't mean biracial, I mean black. Even the black

families don't want them." He told her that he and his wife had adopted a black child and their neighbours looked at them as though they had chosen to become martyrs for dubious cause. (10)

The excerpt above explains why Black families overseas that do not want to be associated with Blacks. The manipulation is so strong that every Black does not want to be referred to as African. The Blacks get scared of their identity and wants to be addressed as Americans by changing their hair, way of talking and their life style. However those who can not meet these conditions are made to suffer severely for it through pressure and sometimes their Sheriff.

Neocolonialism is the newest version of colonization in which media, education, economics, globalization, conditional aid, and new technologies have been used to prepare their targets for finalizing their schemes in a developing country instead of the previous methods of direct military control (imperialism) or indirect political control (hegemony). Part of the ways through which the colonialist entices the Blacks to leave their country is through advertising false belief and controlling of the minds. These means will later force many Blacks to want to leave (migration) their country and travel to the developed country without knowing that they will face a lot of challenge.

Ifemelu packs her bags and is happy because she thinks life in America is juicy, the father was quick to pray for her saying she

will be successful in the nearest time and she will start sending dollars and making the family proud by building house, buying exotic cars and making Mama travel to America all the time and so Mama is seen singing and preparing for Ifemelu to go to America the dreamland where there is plenty of money. (221)

The impression the media, and other platforms give to those in Africa is that America is a good country far from racism, discrimination and once you step in you will be made in a short while. However, these platforms forget to establish that America is another area different from the ones the migrants are coming from and there are some challenges that such individuals will face. One of such challenges is the crisis of identifying who you really are in this new world; otherwise, such individuals will be manipulated as seen in the likes of Ifemelu, Obinze as well as Aunty Uju and that is the idea behind neo-colonialism that causes international migration.

As explained throughout the novel, *Americanah* is a postmodern novel that is divided into seven parts examining and questioning the lives of immigrants and their lives as returnees. Like Mavrinac Glorija rightly says:

On one level the narrative world is determined by questioning the position of the non-Western Other in American society and on the other level, by positioning the returnee in Nigerian reality. Ifemelu

the protagonist goes to college in the U.S and decides to return to her country after thirteen years. Adichie plays with the narrative present dealing with Ifemelu's last days abroad and a narrative past told in flashback. In these recollections, the narrator gives a portrait of the transformation to Ifemelu's self, that is, describes the path of her westernization. (5)

In the novel, the author also depicts African's challenge and situation in imperialist countries, aside the harsh relationship between Blacks and Whites. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel is a perfect example of black people's identity crisis due to the wrong treatments or misconceptions of white people or black Americans. Ifemelu, the main character in Adichie's novel, is a Nigerian girl who has immigrated to America in search of better opportunities for education, jobs, and the future as her father states:

America is an organized place, and job opportunities are rife there (Adichie, 149) or "America creates opportunities for people to thrive. Nigeria can indeed learn a lot from them ". (152)

America is a country that is strict with laws, especially when it concerns the blacks in America. America offers unhealthy job opportunities more to the blacks because they see the blacks as inferior. The whites in America does everything to make the blacks find it difficult to survive. In view of this, Africans try to impress the

American government by changing their real identity, they on the long run face other identity crisis which manipulation is part of because, out of pressure, they have come to a term that they have to alter their identity in order to fit or adapt to the current trend and culture.

Another instance of identity manipulation with black characters and some confrontations in Adichie's *Americanah* is the time that Dike would spend with his friends

"With them, Dike changed; he took on a swagger in his voice and his gait, his shoulders squared, as though in a high-gear performance, and sprinkled his speech with 'ain't' and 'y'all'". (242)

Or the time that Ifemelu was out with a guy named Fred

"She wondered what he was like beneath that practiced layer (294)".

These characters are presented in a way that is different from their realness. They are presented as fake because they do not want to behave like Africans rather, they want to practice the western culture. They both behave like Americans rather than being Africans in order to fit into the American society. Adichie makes use of Dike and Ifemelu to reveal the way blacks try to adapt to the new trend so as not to be look down on.

Identity manipulation in *Americanah* is evident in the character of Ifemelu. Although, migrating internationally is one's choice, Ifemelu becomes acutely aware of the societal expectations and stereotypes associated with being a Black woman. She observes how her natural hair is viewed as unprofessional, leading her to undergo a process of identity transformation by chemically straightening her hair. This decision reflects the pressure to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards in order to be accepted in American society. Ifemelu's experience highlights the ways in which identity can be manipulated and distorted to fit within the dominant cultural norms.

Another instance of identity manipulation can be seen in the character of Obinze. After facing challenges in the United Kingdom, Obinze is forced to return to Nigeria. However, he finds himself adopting a different persona in order to fit into the corrupt Nigerian society. He becomes involved in fraudulent activities, assuming a false identity to navigate the socio-economic landscape. This manipulation of his identity showcases the lengths to which individuals may go to survive and succeed within oppressive systems.

Furthermore, Adichie explores the concept of identity manipulation through the lens of race and ethnicity. Ifemelu, as an African immigrant in America, grapples with the pressure to conform to racial stereotypes and expectations. She experiences the erasure of her Nigerian identity, as others attempt to categorize her

solely based on her race. Adichie highlights how these manipulations of identity can lead to a loss of cultural heritage and a sense of displacement.

In addition to race, Adichie also delves into the manipulation of gender identity. She shed more light on the manipulation of gender identity.

“Why should a woman’s success be a threat? Why must women pretend to be something they are not?” (63).

The excerpt above highlights the pressure women face to conform to societal norms. Ifemelu confronts the societal expectations placed upon women, particularly in relation to relationships and marriage. She navigates the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, but ultimately rejects these expectations in favour of her own independence and self-determination. Adichie’s portrayal of gender identity manipulation emphasizes the importance of challenging societal norms and embracing individual agency.

Another instance of identity manipulation and post-colonial migration in *Americanah* is the exploration of cultural hybridity. Ifemelu navigates between her Nigerian identity and the new American culture she encounters, highlighting the challenges and adjustments that come with migration. Adichie delves into the tension between assimilation and maintaining one’s cultural roots, shedding light on the complexities of identity formation in a post-colonial context.

Through Ifemelu's experiences, *Americanah* also touches on the concept of "double consciousness". Ifemelu as the protagonist, grapples with the pressure to conform to American standards while simultaneously holding onto her Nigeria heritage. This duality reflects the ongoing negotiation of identity manipulation that many post-colonial migrants face, as they navigate between multiple cultural frameworks.

There are instances of post-colonial migration and neocolonialism's education that are portrayed in Adichie's novel *Americanah* through which we can trace the colonizer's attempts of identity manipulation of the colonized through media or their curriculum. An instance is when Obinze and his wife attend a party, Mrs. Akin Cole advises them about their daughter's education

"You must send her to the French school....Of course, they teach in French but it can only be good for the child to learn another civilized language since she already learns English at home". (25)

The extract above shows the lack of trust Blacks in America have towards their educational system. They have this belief that anything that comes from the whites is always superior and so they continue to promote other culture.

Another instance of identity manipulation in the novel is seen when Obinze, his wife and another couple pay a visit to a school, with an English woman as the

headmistress, to watch a play during Christmas. Suddenly, one of the teachers started a fan to fly some fake snows:

“Why do they have snow falling? Are they teaching children that a Christmas is not a real Christmas unless snow falls like it does abroad”. (274)

Even on Christmas period, the Whites make the Blacks believe that Christmas can only be celebrated in America and other big countries, not in places like Africa. They believe that nothing good can come out of Africa and so they try to manipulate the Africans to have that same ideology about themselves and they end up having the same mentality that for Christmas to be called a Christmas, the snow must fall like it does abroad.

In the novel, there are instances where Ifemelu watch movies and discovered through the movies that America is actually a dream land. As such, she does everything possible to be in the country. These movies present America with the best of facilities, roads, affordable houses, jobs with good salaries and these movies will never reveal to Africans what they need to know as to make up their mind not to run overseas.

There are numerous scenes in which Ifemelu is enchanted by reality shows in which America is portrayed as a dreamland with the best facilities and beautiful scenery; additionally, it can be seen that in almost every household, the channels on

television are from colonizers' countries such as BBC or CNN, as on the radio of Obinze's car (30). Though what they all encountered, like Ifemelu, was not what they had expected and watched in *The Cosby Show* (80). They market what the developing world lacks and craves, a happy family with everything in its place and immaculate identities. She yearned for the lifestyles they depicted, full of pleasure, where all problems had dazzling answers in shampoos, vehicles, and packaged foods, and in her mind, they were the real America, the America she would only see when she started school in the fall. (85)

To add to it, the things they show about Africa and her people in the news are always dirty, dark and evil and that according to them, is what depicts the black race in the television, in the words of Zemaye in *Americanah*

Why is it just black people who are criminals over there? I adore cops. I have DSTV because of that show.... And all the culprits are black folks. (291)

3.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations, such as race, gender, and class; and how they overlap and intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. It recognizes that individuals can face multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. It is an important concept in understanding and addressing various forms of inequality.

However, intersectionality is a powerful concept that helps us understand the complexity of social inequality and how different forms of oppression intersect and interact with each other. It recognizes that individuals hold multiple social identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, and that these identities cannot be separated or understood in isolation. Imagine a person who identifies as a woman and belongs to a racial minority group or from Africa and reside in America. This person's experiences are shaped by both their gender and race, and they may face unique challenges and forms of discrimination that are different from those faced by someone who only shares one of these identities. For example, they may encounter sexism as a woman and racism as a member of a racial minority group or from Africa like Ifemelu. However, the impact of these forms of oppression is not simply additive; instead, they intersect and compound, creating a distinct experience that cannot be fully understood by examining each identity separately.

Adding to that, intersectionality also highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the experiences and perspectives of individuals who hold multiple marginalized identities. It challenges us to move beyond a single-axis framework and consider how systems of power and privilege operate in complex ways. For instance, a white woman may experience sexism, but she also benefits from white privilege. On the other hand, a black woman may face both racism and sexism simultaneously, which creates a unique set of challenges.

By understanding intersectionality, we can better analyze and address systemic inequalities and social strata. It encourages us to consider the ways in which different forms of discrimination intersect and compound, leading to unique and often overlooked experiences of oppression. It also reminds us to be mindful of our own privileges and to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

3.4 Social Stratum

Social stratum refers to the hierarchical divisions that exist within a society based on factors such as wealth, occupation, education, and social status. It presents different layers or levels within a society, where individuals are grouped based on their position and access to resources and opportunities. In a social stratum, individuals who hold higher positions or have more wealth and power are considered to be in the upper stratum, while those with lower positions and fewer resources are in the lower stratum. This division can impact various aspects of people's lives, including their access to education, healthcare, job opportunities, and social privileges.

However, the concept of social stratum helps us understand the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities in society. It highlights the disparities and inequalities that exist between different groups and can influence individuals' life chances and social mobility. It is important to note that social stratum is not

fixed or static, and individuals can move up or down the social ladder based on various factors such as education, career success, and social connections. However, social stratum can also be influenced by factors beyond an individual's control, such as their family background or systemic barriers or race.

Understanding social stratum can help us recognize and address social inequalities, advocate for social justice, and work towards creating a more equitable society where everyone has equal opportunities and access to resources, regardless of their social position.

In the novel *Americanah* by Adichie, social stratum plays a significant role in depicting the experiences of the characters, and in exploring the themes of race, identity, and privilege. The novel follows the journey of Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman, as she navigates different social strata in Nigeria and the United States. A statement that highlights the impact of social stratum in the novel is when Ifemelu reflects on her experience in Nigeria:

In Lagos, a person's worth is often measured by the size of their car, the neighborhood they live in, the schools their children attend. (98)

The extract above demonstrates how material possessions and social markers can influence one's perceived value and social standing within Nigerian society. The Nigeria society is highly hierarchical, the rich stays far from the poor.

Also, the novel explores the complexities of race and social stratum in the United States. Ifemelu's boyfriend, Curt, comes from a privileged background, and she observes the differences in their experiences when she states, "He'd grown up in privilege, in a world where there was no need to think of the color of his skin. (104)" This quote highlights how social stratum and race intersect, as Curt's privilege shields him from the daily realities of racism that Ifemelu faces.

Furthermore, Ifemelu's observations on the concept of race in America shed light on social stratum. She remarks, thus, "In America, racism exists but racists are all gone. Racists belong to the past. Racists are the thin-lipped mean white people in the movies about the civil rights era"(99). This exposes the complexities of social stratum and how racism can manifest in subtle, systemic ways that impact individuals' opportunities and experiences.

Overall, *Americanah* delves into the intricacies of social stratum, particularly in relation to race and identity. Through thought-provoking quotes and nuanced storytelling, Adichie explores how social stratum shapes the lives of the characters and the broader societal dynamics they navigate.

3.5 Multiple Identities

The multiple identities of Black individuals in America are complex and diverse, and they are shaped by various factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, and personal experiences. These identities can include being African American, Afro-Caribbean,

African immigrant, or belonging to other Black diaspora communities. While these identities can be a source of pride and resilience, they also come with negative effects due to systemic racism and discrimination.

One negative effect is the persistent racial inequality that Black individuals face in such areas as education, employment, housing, and criminal justice. Despite advancements made over time, disparities still exist. For example, Black students often face lower graduation rates, limited access to quality schools, and higher rates of disciplinary actions compared to their white counterparts. This perpetuates a cycle of limited opportunities and economic disadvantages. In the workforce, Black individuals often encounter barriers to employment and experience wage gaps. They may face discrimination during hiring processes, limited advancement opportunities, and unequal pay for the same work. These factors contribute to economic disparities and hinder the accumulation of wealth, which affects not only individuals but also generations to come.

Housing discrimination is another negative effect. Historically, Black individuals have faced redlining, a discriminatory practice that limited their access to desirable neighborhoods and homeownership opportunities. This has had long-lasting effects, as homeownership is often a pathway to wealth accumulation and financial stability. Additionally, racial segregation in housing perpetuates unequal access to quality schools, healthcare, and other resources. The criminal justice

system disproportionately affects Black individuals. They are more likely to be stopped, arrested, and incarcerated compared to their White counterparts. This racial bias is evident in sentencing disparities, harsher punishments, and the overrepresentation of Black individuals in the prison population. The negative effects extend beyond individuals to their families and communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limited opportunities.

Negative stereotypes and biases also impact the mental and emotional well-being of Black individuals. Constant exposure to racism and discrimination can lead to stress, anxiety, and feelings of marginalization. The constant need to navigate and negotiate their identities in predominantly white spaces can be emotionally draining. Moreover, the lack of representation and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes in media and popular culture further contribute to the negative effects on Black individuals' self-esteem and mental health.

In Adichie's novel *Americanah*, the concept of multiple identities is explored through the experiences of the main character, Ifemelu. As a Nigerian woman living in America, Ifemelu grapples with the complexities of her racial, cultural, and national identities. One aspect of Ifemelu's multiple identities is her Nigerian heritage. Throughout the novel, she maintains a strong connection to her Nigerian roots, despite living in America for many years. Her Nigerian identity is shaped by her language, customs, and cultural traditions. However, as Ifemelu

navigates American society, she also develops a hybrid identity that incorporates elements of both Nigerian and American culture.

Another dimension of Ifemelu's multiple identities is her racial identity as a Black woman. In America, Ifemelu confronts the realities of racism and discrimination, which she had not experienced to the same extent in Nigeria. She becomes aware of the different ways in which her race shapes her experiences and interactions with others. Ifemelu's exploration of her racial identity leads her to start a blog where she discusses race and its impact on her life, sparking important conversations about identity and privilege.

Furthermore, Ifemelu's multiple identities are also influenced by her social class. In Nigeria, she belonged to the middle class, but upon moving to America, she experiences economic challenges and finds herself navigating the complexities of social mobility. Her financial circumstances shape her interactions with others and influence her sense of self. Throughout the novel, Ifemelu's multiple identities intersect and interact with one another, shaping her experiences and perspectives. Adichie's portrayal of these identities highlights the complexities and nuances of being a Nigerian woman living in America. It explores the challenges and opportunities that arise from navigating multiple cultural, racial, and national identities. By delving into Ifemelu's journey, *Americanah* sheds light on the broader issues of identity, belonging, and the ways in which societal structures can shape

and impact individuals. Adichie's exploration of multiple identities invites readers to reflect on their own identities and consider the ways in which different aspects of their lives intersect and influence their experiences in the world.

3.6 Language Restrictions

In America, the language restrictions faced by Black individuals have a deep-rooted history tied to the legacy of slavery and systemic racism. During slavery, African slaves were forcibly brought to America and were often stripped of their native languages and cultures. This linguistic oppression aimed to control and dehumanize them, as language plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and facilitating communication. Enslaved individuals were forbidden from speaking their native languages, as slave owners sought to suppress their cultural heritage and prevent them from organizing rebellions or communicating without the knowledge of their captors. This linguistic erasure created a significant barrier for enslaved individuals to express themselves and maintain connections with their African roots. Even after slavery was abolished, language restrictions persisted through segregation and discriminatory practices. Black individuals were often denied access to quality education, which limited their opportunities to develop strong language skills. This educational disadvantage perpetuated a cycle of limited access to resources and opportunities, further marginalizing the Black community.

Additionally, Black Vernacular English (BVE), also known as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Ebonics, has been stigmatized and subject to discrimination. Black Vernacular English is a distinct dialect with its own grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns. Stressing a bit on it, these languages are termed as "inferior" English, leading to negative stereotypes and biases against Black individuals who speak it. The linguistic restrictions faced by Black individuals in America have had significant consequences on various aspects of their lives. Limited access to quality education and employment opportunities has perpetuated socioeconomic disparities, making it more challenging for Black individuals to break free from the cycle of poverty as seen with the main character in *Americanah*.

In Adichie's *Americanah*, language restrictions are depicted through the experiences of the main character, Ifemelu. Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman living in America, faces various challenges related to language and communication. One example of language restriction in the novel is when Ifemelu struggles to adapt her Nigerian accent to fit into American society. She faces discrimination and prejudice due to her accent, which leads to her feeling self-conscious and marginalized. This highlights how language restrictions can affect one's sense of belonging and acceptance in a new cultural environment.

Another instance is the pressure Ifemelu feels to code-switch, altering her speech and mannerisms depending on the social context. She learns to navigate different linguistic norms to be perceived as more "acceptable" or "professional" in certain settings. This showcases the linguistic challenges that individuals from diverse backgrounds often face in order to conform to societal expectations. Ifemelu's experiences with language restrictions are also depicted through her blog, where she discusses issues of race and identity. Through her writing, she challenges societal norms and sheds light on the complexities of language and its impact on social dynamics. This demonstrates how language restrictions can be subverted and used as a tool for empowerment and self-expression.

Overall, *Americanah* explores the multifaceted nature of language restrictions and their effects on individuals navigating different cultural spaces. It highlights the struggles faced by those who do not conform to linguistic norms and emphasizes the importance of embracing linguistic diversity and inclusivity in society.

3.7 Personality

In Adichie's *Americanah*, the portrayal of black characters encompasses a range of personalities, both positive and negative aspects. While it is important to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of Black characters in the novel, it is equally important to avoid generalizations or perpetuating stereotypes. Adichie's

characters are multifaceted individuals who exhibit a variety of traits and behaviors, reflecting the richness of human experiences.

In the novel *Americanah*, Adichie presents characters like Ifemelu, the protagonist, who is intelligent, strong-willed, and determined. Ifemelu's character challenges societal norms and expectations, questioning the status quo and advocating for social justice. Her resilience and determination are admirable qualities that contribute to her growth and development throughout the story.

Adichie humanizes her characters, and provides a nuanced representation of their experiences, rather than reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating negative narratives. We can explore the challenges and complexities faced by Black characters in the novel, such as navigating racial discrimination, cultural identity, and the impact of societal expectations. By examining these features, we gain a deeper understanding of the characters' struggles and triumphs, highlighting their resilience and strength in the face of adversity.

It is important to approach the discussion of character personalities with sensitivity and avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes. Adichie's novel offers a rich tapestry of black characters who defy monolithic representations and instead showcase the diversity and complexity of human experiences.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter reveals how the Blacks often struggle to achieve relevance because the American system discriminates the Blacks. The media promotes the Western culture, and makes the Africans look like they are doing everything wrong. Thus, the Africans work towards identity manipulation in order for them to adapt to their trend and culture. It further kicks against intersectionality of blacks which include complexity of social inequality.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the intricate dynamics of self perception, identity crisis and intersectionality. It explores how individuals navigate their sense of self as migrants. The study sheds light on the challenges of self perception and identity crisis individual's face in understanding and presenting themselves as migrants in a new country where racial profiling is predominant.

Identity manipulation and all it comes with is existent in all its vigour going about in confidence as it destroys any positivity and growth in the lives of any party it comes in contact with. This destruction comes in any and all forms; it could be economically, emotionally, mentally, academically and any other means that affects the lives of Blacks. These have been proven in this essay using the stated novel as concerned.

Drawing from the analysis done in the previous chapters, it is safe to declare that self perception as well as well as identity manipulation is not a figment of the Black race's imagination. Identity manipulation affects Blacks in the western society more negatively than positively. Every Black human suffers the impact, the innocent, the ignorant, even the rich Blacks. The last may be surprising to read but indeed the rich Blacks do suffer psychologically without even knowing they are suffering. To briefly explain this, the Whites, believing they are already the superior

race, do not strive as much as the Blacks to be better because they practically get the good things of life without much effort due to “White Privilege”.

Standard of living is low and Cost of living is relatively high for the members of the Black community as a result of no good-earning jobs. Robbery and gang wars happen recurrently which makes for a dangerous way of living for every member of the Black community either African-American or Black immigrants.

Relationships are affected negatively due to oppression of the Black race so the Blacks never feel comfortable and confident enough to partner with the Whites so as to avoid feeling inferior or not worthy. The language of the white is seen as superior and racism puts a gap in a biracial relationship whether formal or informal. The Blacks will always be sensitive towards racists comments and actions and will end up wondering if they are worth it and the Non-racist Whites might have to deal with worrying about where and when is more conducive and acceptable for them both to be seen together. If they finally overcome such situations and doubts, and they birth a child (that is for a romantic relationship), the child being biracial also goes through such self doubts and becomes a victim of racism and the cycle goes on and on until the individual does not look Black physically.

The issue of identity crisis is a situation indeed that goes on till this very day among Blacks. The Blacks have to devise a means to blend in according to the

environment they find themselves or else they are tagged for being dangerous and scary when being their true selves.

Another issue affecting the Blacks is the aspect of intersectionality; this affects them because of the height of oppression the Blacks face in the White system. The Blacks constantly face discrimination because the American governmental system does not support them in any way and so they continue to face challenges. There is also social stratum among people in America and with instances where the Blacks in America are placed in divisions in the society.

In accordance with proffering solutions to all forms of racial discrimination and its negative effect on one's identity, hate against Blacks should be incriminating and due punishment be meted out and followed to the letter. Members of racist organizations should be duly punished regardless of positions the culprit holds in the society.

Legislations against racial discrimination should be made to foster equality and unity amongst individuals in the society be it white or blacks. Job opportunities should not be limited to race or restrict one's race or ethnicity during job applications.

Educational sectors should prioritize every race and ethnicity without making one inferior to the other. Students of different races and groups should be given the freedom of true expression that is really practiced and not just something

stated. They should be allowed to study and practice whatever they decide to without consideration of their races.

Social stratum, restrictions done amongst whites against blacks should be thoroughly frowned upon by members of the public, giving no room for acceptable racist remarks and behaviours.

The government in the developing countries should improve their poor leadership skills and make leadership an enjoyable task that involves development and creating conducive environment for the Blacks to stay back in their own country so they will not travel to other countries for survival.

There should be institutions put in place for Blacks to be acceptable the way they are rather than enforcing the western culture on the blacks at the same time restricting their freedom.

Finally, loving one's neighbor as one's self goes a long way and is the ultimate solution to the issue of identity manipulation. When there is love, people tend to treat a person deservingly, give them a chance to show who they really are and not judge them based on stereotype of race.

In conclusion, the study proves that identity manipulation is as a result of racial discrimination and it exist in our society till date, it creates differences between

race, parties and has its effects on every Black race. It leads to inequality and injustice thriving in the said society and should be kicked against.

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