



Social Sciences & Humanity Research Review



Transnational Feminism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013): Race, Beauty Standards, and Global Mobility

Dr. Saba Hassan^{1*}, Muhammad Jamil², Inam Ullah Khan Tajik³

¹Ph.D in English.

²Associate Professor of English, Government Superior Science College, Peshawar.

³Lecturer in English, Department of English, Edwardes College Peshawar, Pakistan.

<https://doi.org/10.63468/sshrr.327>

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Transnational feminism, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*, racialized standards of beauty, global mobility, Black hair politics, diaspora

Corresponding Author*:
Dr. Saba Hassan

Ph.D in English.

Email:
Sabahassan1011@gmail.com

Article History

Received: 12-01-2026

Revised: 28-01-2026

Accepted: 10-02-2026

Published: 20-02-2026

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the manifestation of transnational feminism in *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It focuses on the impact of race, standards of beauty, and moving around the world on the story. Using the ideas of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, the research focuses on the main character, Ifemelu, dealing with beauty politics that are associated with race as she experiences gender in Nigeria, America and Britain. The analysis demonstrates that *Americanah* pushes back against the Western feminist stories by placing the specific stories of African migrant women front and center. The study pays close attention to issues such as hair, work discrimination, relationships, and Ifemelu's blog to demonstrate how the book contributes to the transnational feminist discussion by highlighting the "scattered hegemonies" that exist throughout countries. The findings suggest that shifting around the globe does not always result in freedom; it can lead to new forms of racial and gender oppression, but new forms of resistance and building solidarity across borders. This research addresses one of the gaps to study modern African women writers employing transnational feminism ideas to critique both Western imperialism and national patriarchy. The study concludes by stating that *Americanah* calls for a deeper understanding of feminism that takes into account how gender, race, class and nation shape women's lives worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, people migrate from one nation to another more than ever. Because of this, the lives of people that cross borders are very important in modern literature and feminist talk. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's third novel, *Americanah* (2013) is an essential novel for asking questions of race, gender, and going to places in the 21st century (Rezk, 2024). The story looks at a young Nigerian woman named Ifemelu as she travels to the United States for college and returns to Nigeria thirteen years later after the United States. Through Ifemelu's life, Adichie examines the ways in which migration affects identity,



consciousness and political engagement, and particularly for African women living across more than one culture (Namiyango, 2025).

Transnational feminism, developed by scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, provides one means for the study of the various oppressions faced by women across borders (Makapela, 2024). It is distinct from the approach of older global feminism that dealt with all women as equal and from national perspectives that continue to link women's rights to nation building. Transnational feminism emphasizes that gender oppression is always connected with particular histories and it is intertwined with race, class, nation, and sexuality. This view serves as a challenge to the belief that "Third World women" are merely victims and also is a fight against national politics that disregard women's rights (Amireh & Majaj, 2014).

Americanah adds much to the transnational feminist books in that it focuses on an educated, middle class African woman who re-thinks her sense of identity, power and belonging when she encounters race in America. The main character, Ifemelu, learns that in Nigeria "race" was not a big part of her world, but in America it became inevitable (Anasiudu, 2024). This change reveals what Tetteh-Batsa terms "Afropolitan feminism": it is the result of specific experiences by African migrants moving across borders (Bianchi, Stephenson, & Hannam, 2020).

Research Problem

Even though there are now many scholars who study Adichie's work, we still don't know much about how exactly *Americanah* uses transnational feminist ideas in practice. Some research has looked at race, migration or identity in the book, but few studies have broken down the text to see how it talks about a clear transnational feminist politics that fights both Western Imperialism and African Patriarchy. In particular, the book's talk of beauty - especially black hair - are not deeply explored using the ideas of scattered hegemonies and global capitalism.

The ways Black women's hair has been treated is an important thing to look at for transnational feminism. Scholars have documented the ways that Black hair has been made out to be the marker of racial difference, in a way that European standards judge natural African hair to be unprofessional or messy. In *Americanah*, Adichie places hair at the heart of the way race, gender, money, and colonialism intersect, exposing the power dynamics of beauty rules, which govern people on both sides of the border.

Finally, the novel's discussion of global movement makes the simple picture of migration as a path to freedom somewhat complicated. Ifemelu's life in America demonstrates that relocating to the North can open up new forms of racism, poverty, and cultural isolation to African women, even as Ifemelu makes possible to educate and work in ways that are unavailable to her home countries. This paradox begs important questions about the relationship of physical travel to social, economic and political power for women who live across borders.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does *Americanah* represent transnational feminist consciousness through the protagonist's encounters with racialized beauty standards in Nigerian, American, and British contexts?
2. What role does Ifemelu's blog play in articulating a transnational feminist politics that connects personal experience to broader structural critiques of racism and sexism?
3. How does *Americanah* challenge both Western liberal feminist and African nationalist discourses while advocating for transnational feminist solidarity?

Significance of the Study

This research assists research regarding the literature, feminism and diaspora by providing a lucid, global feminist perspective on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* using the ideas of Chandra Talpade Mohanty. It fills a gap about how beauty politics are studied by looking at Black hair as a global feminist critique. It shows how African migrant women negotiate with racial beauty rules in various

countries, and that these rules belong to systems of racial capitalism and colonial history. The study also examines the connection between the globalization of travel and the power of feminism, and challenges happy narratives about being cosmopolitan. It outlines the gender and race boundaries that African women encounter in the Global North. It's also illustrative of the educational value of African women's literature, and connects the themes of the novel to current actions surrounding natural hair, racial justice and Black feminist support worldwide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transnational feminism began in the 1990s to critique the notion of Western feminism as able to apply everywhere and draw attention to the limits of national feminism groups. Scholars like Tensuan (2002) said power works in many overlapping places -global economics, patriarchal nationalism and local domination - so we can't understand it with just one view. Their work countered the notion that non-Western cultures are so different and less modern than the West.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's essay "Under Western Eyes" (2003) criticized the way that Western scholars had constructed a single, victim group of "Third World women". This, she said, helped to place Western women as modern and free and kept colonial power strong. In her book *Feminism Without Borders* (2005), Mohanty developed a strategy for global feminism assistance that honors local differences, while simultaneously examining overlapping struggle against multiple oppressions. She said that transnational feminism must study how gender oppression is made by race, class, nation and sexuality in different countries (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

Conway (2017) advanced transnational feminist methods to demonstrate the importance of moving away from the national and imperial power. An analysis has to look at contradictions, complications, and power at many levels - from everyday life to global structures. This view says women's experiences can't be only local or only global, both influence the other and vice versa in very complex ways.

Recent scholars have said it's important to see how global capitalism changes gender and feminism (Pal & Nieto-Fernandez, 2024). They document how today's capitalism employs global pathways exploiting women through gendered and racial wage labour from factory areas to domestic labour in the North. Women also form global networks of struggle and solidarity, through digital organizing and cross border organizing to confront oppression.

***Americanah*: A Transnational Feminist Scholarship**

Americanah has attracted lots of scholars who study how it talks about transnationalism and race and gender. Some works look at how the book exhibits unclear ideas of "home" and "diaspora" and how people continue to have complex, even mixed feelings about many places (Gola, 2025).

Victória, Dias, and Pinto (2019) analysis provides the largest view of *Americanah* via a transnational feminist lens and invents "Afropolitan feminism" to describe the feminist idea within the book. She says Adichie depicts Ifemelu's view that belie the Western ideas of African women are oppressed, and African country's views that ignore the gender. She shows the book promotes a "transnational African sisterhood," a solidarity that respect differences between African women, but also fights many oppressions together. Studies on race in the book are particularly rich. They take a look at how it reveals the racial experiences of African migrants in the U.S. and U.K. (McMann, 2018). These works demonstrate that Adichie challenges both U.S. racial categories that see all Black people as the same as well as "colorblind" talks that mask the true importance of race. McMann argues *Americanah* demonstrates how race classifies people differently depending on the country, with Ifemelu feeling race invisible in Nigeria, but hyper-visible in America.

Fewer works have examined the book's perspective of beauty and the politics of hair and even fewer have made the connections to big ideas such as scattered hegemonies and global capitalism. Shaukat (2025) looks at how the book shows pressure on Black women to follow Eurocentric beauty rules, especially hair straightening. The hair salon as a political space, where Black migrant women share experiences, build

community and increase political awareness. Still, these studies don't fully explore the global side of beauty politics or connect them to big frameworks.

Research on gender and intersectionality in the book looks at the specific problems African migrant women face at the mix of race, gender, class, and nation (Pucherova, 2022). These studies represent Ifemelu's experience of gendered racism that is very different from Black American women or African men. But the linking of these ideas to the transnational feminist theory is still rare.

Black Hair Politics and Transnational Beauty Standard

History has demonstrated Black women's hair has been used to discriminate. During slavery, the Africans were slaves and were forced to cover their hair and had little attention and care toward the hair so that natural textures were devalued from their hair (Mendola, 2023). After slavery, straight hair became associated with respectability and jobs, so many Black people participated in straightening hair with hot combs and chemicals.

The Black Power movement in the 60s and the 70s made natural hair (and as a result, the Afro) an icon of pride and a form of resistance to white dominance (Henderson, 2022). "Black is Beautiful" broke Eurocentric beauty rules that deemed Black features ugly. The beauty industry's iteration of 'Black is Beautiful' only lasted for a few years, with standards returning to Eurocentric norms for the most part by the late 70s.

Today, scholars consider ongoing discrimination towards Black women for their hair, such as in the workplace, at schools for dress codes, and overall messages that natural hair is unprofessional. Mabugu (2024) states that beauty standards continues to favor the Eurocentric looks, with lighter skin and straight hair being more beautiful and placing the natural features of Black women below value.

Global Mobility and Transnational Identities

Migration studies examine the extent to which people maintain a connection to their home country and adapt to their new country (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2007). This research complicates old notions that migrants would abandon their hometowns and integrate themselves into their new host society completely. Instead, studies show many migrant actions - sending money, staying politically involved, keeping culture and visiting home - that indicate that migrants live in many national worlds at once.

Gender and migration research illustrates that migratory experiences of women and men are different. Women are often subject to specific exploitation and constraints in the new country. African women who migrate to the North often take jobs in the domestic, care, and service industries that pay little, have poor working conditions, and are at risk for abuse. Yet migration can provide women with greater independence, opportunities to learn new gender norms, and opportunities for power (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

New scholarship examines "mobility capital" and how factors of race, class, gender, and nationality influence mobility to travel (Laoire, 2023). Studies find that mobility isn't equal for all; it's determined by global inequalities that provide some bodies more opportunities and others less. For migrants from Africa, it is much more difficult to obtain visas, work permits, or permanent status than those from the North, thus revealing continued colonial and racial hierarchy in migration.

Studies of younger migrants show how second-generational migrants and their children are negotiating many different cultures and developing mixed identities (Li-Gottwald, 2025; Binaisa, 2011). This research shows that mixed experiences provide young people with useful skills, but also wider networks, and with challenges of belonging and identity.

Research Gap

Although some scholars have more to say about *Americanah*, there are still gaps in the research on the mixing of transnational feminism, Black hair politics, and global movement. Little attention is paid to how the novel conveys global feminist ideas to criticize the linked racism, sexism, and capitalism throughout countries. The novel's interrogation of beauty politics as a source of big control, particularly Eurocentric rules that control the bodies of Black women both in Africa and in the diaspora, needs to be studied more.

Also, there is a lack of research linking global travel to feminist awareness, particularly the ways that Ifemelu's travels around the world affect her critique of Western feminism and Nigerian patriarchy. Her digital blog as activism also stands in need of study as global feminist practice. This study addresses those gaps by using an integrated approach.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses the main method of qualitative text study, looking at *Americanah* (2013) with transnational feminist theory. Qualitative text study refers to close reading on a text to find meanings, ideas and social criticism within the story, characters, language and themes (Eagleton, 2010). This method is suitable for literary study that seeks to understand the representation and action of novels in social, political, and cultural debate.

The research is based on an interpretive view of literature as a means of learning about social reality and critiquing prevalent ideas. Rather than considering *Americanah* as an individual story, the study collects the text as a cultural text that discusses global feminist ideas and provides insight into the way African migrant women deal with racial and gender systems across borders.

Data Collection

The primary data is the entire text of *Americanah*, published by the Alfred A. Knopf in 2013. The book has 588 pages for the American version and 55 chapters that are distributed in seven parts that follow Ifemelu's journey from Nigeria to America and back.

Theoretical Framework: Transnational Feminism by Chandra Talpade Mohanty

Mohanty (2003) calls for a grand, worldwide feminist practice based on solidarity, rather than identity, because women do not all share the same experiences but are able to connect with one another through common battles against many oppressions. She says solidarity is created through "comparative feminist studies" that examine differences as well as similarities across borders. For this project, Mohanty's ideas allow us to see how *Americanah* exhibits opportunities for global connection while acknowledging actual difference in the ways racism, sexism, and capitalism function in Nigeria, America, and Britain.

Mohanty's framework is particularly helpful to the study of *Americanah* because the novel itself functions as an example of a transnational feminist politics. Ifemelu's travels expose her to various types of patriarchy and racism, which she then uses to develop a critical mind that rejects the universality of Western feminism as well as narrow nationalism. The book reflects Mohanty's concept of "pivoting the center"-in becoming visible the views of African migrant women, who are usually pushed aside by both Western feminist theory and African nationalist narratives.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Discovering Race: From Nigeria to America

One of the most important ideas about feminism that crosses borders in *Americanah* comes from Ifemelu's realization that race, something that she has not thought about much in Nigeria, suddenly becomes a big part of her life in America. This change indicates what Mohanty (2003) means by the way oppression depends on history how the same person can be in very different positions in power systems depending on where they are.

In Nigeria, Ifemelu sees her ethnic group, her social class, her religion but not race. Being an educated, middle class Igbo woman from Lagos gives her some advantages. These markers of identity are lost in America, where she is largely perceived to be "Black" and put in America's racial hierarchy that come from slavery. This process of her being seen as a race begins even before her arrival when her Auntie Uju tells her how to deal with American society.

Ifemelu's first job interview in America makes this process of seeing things by race clear. She wants to be a receptionist, and someone tells her that she has to change her look in order to be hired: they tell her that

she needs to straighten her hair because "no American will hire you with your hair like that" (Adichie, 2013, p. 203). This moment illustrates what Grewal and Kaplan (1994) term a "scattered hegemony" - Eurocentric beauty standards which are dispersed across borders and appear different in each location. In Nigeria, Ifemelu could wear braids without problem, but in America her natural black hair is considered unprofessional and she cannot get jobs.

The scene goes on with details of pain. Ifemelu is sitting in a beauty salon chair and has her hair chemically straightened. The physical pain of the relaxer signifies the mental pain of having to change her body so she can pass white norms that will allow her to survive financially. Adichie writes: "The hairdresser had begun to pull her comb through Ifemelu's hair, tugging hard at the roots, yanking and snapping" (Adichie, 2013, p. 204). This is how beauty standards is not just about looks but is a tool of racial social control that controls Black women's access to work, respect and belonging.

Importantly, Ifemelu does get the job of the receptionist, after straightening her hair. This proves that when one follows Eurocentric rules of beauty, there are real material benefits in America's racialized labor market. But Adichie doesn't say that this is about just fitting in or about self-hate. The novel examines how Black women must negotiate and survive in systems that seek to keep them out - what Patricia Hill Collins (2000) would describe as the "politics of survival" in white-led institutions.

Hair as a Place of Transnational Feminist Resistance

After working in a reception job for some time, Ifemelu reaches her breaking point and she cuts all her relaxed hair and goes back to her natural texture. This decision demonstrates a large moment of transnational feminist awareness - a rejection of Eurocentric standards of beauty and a reclamation of her body. Adichie describes it: "She felt like a vigilante, smiling to herself, looking in the mirror, running her fingers through her hair, her close cropped, kinky, dense, beautiful hair that she could not believe had been hidden under the relaxed hair" (Adichie, 2013, p. 255). Ifemelu's use of beautiful and vigilante support that her decision goes beyond a look; it is a deep reclaiming of how she defines herself. She does not allow white America to determine what she should look like.

The natural hair movement that Ifemelu joins to is part of a broader transnational Black feminist network of hair and beauty. Adichie places Ifemelu in the same group as other Black women who pass on news and support each other and discuss politics through hair salons and online chat. The novel continues to depict scenes set in African hair braiding salons describes as "intimate and politicized narrative spaces" in which migrant Black women tell stories, critique racism and forge transnational relationships (p. 103). One scene, for example, takes place at a braiding salon in Trenton, where Ifemelu goes. She hears women speaking in various African languages and talking about their life in America. Adichie writes: "She recognized Igbo words, Yoruba words, Twi words." The women "talked to each other, about their children's schools, and about the train from Trenton, and about the price of food" (Adichie, 2013, p. 13). These salon spaces are places where people of different backgrounds get together, despite uneven power, and can also come together and share knowledge. The braiding salon becomes a place for African women in the diaspora to develop community, speak African languages, and discuss common experiences of migration and racism. However, Adichie doesn't make these places a place of perfect freedom. She demonstrates tensions and hierarchies within groups of the African diaspora, including colorism, ethnic prejudice, and class differences. When Ifemelu listens in the salon she sees competition and judging among the women, which reminds Mohanty (2003) that we need to see differences and conflicts within marginalized groups, not assume that they automatically support each other.

Gender, Race and Romantic Relationships

Adichie depicts Ifemelu's love affairs to explain the fundamental of gender and race mixture in intimate relationships, which uncovers dynamics of power in transnational relationships. Her relationship with Curt, who is a rich white American man, reveals the racial and gender dynamics of interracial love in America.

Curt gives her white male privilege in the most silent but most powerful form. He really cares for Ifemelu and uses his contacts to help her get work and other chances. But his privilege is also evident in his inability to really grasp Ifemelu's racism. When she tries to explain it, Adichie shows the gap: "He would not understand." This was "not about being likable, this was not about personality" (Adichie, 2013, p. 306).

This point is an important insight of transnational feminism: Even well-meaning privileged people will not be able to adequately understand the experiences of those who suffer oppression, because their privilege prevents them from seeing these realities. Curt's whiteness means he can get by in America without constant reminders of his race; For Ifemelu, race is an inevitability.

Curt's relationship also illustrates how the white man's fascination with Negro women is a kind of sexual racism. When Curt's friends see that he is dating a Black woman or when strangers stare at them, Ifemelu sees her relationship read through racial ideas about black women's sex and desirability that she can't control. As Patricia Hill Collins (2006) says, Black women are oversexualized and less worth committing to as compared to white women in white power patriarchy.

Ifemelu's relationship with Blaine, an African-American professor and activist, illustrates different issues. Blaine sees racism in ways that Curt doesn't, but conflicts are at hand from the different histories they have had with Blackness. Blaine, whose ancestors were enslaved, has a historic relationship to American Blackness that Ifemelu does not have. When Ifemelu misses a protest led by Blaine's sister, he is hurt, believing that she does not show solidarity with African-American political struggle. He says: "This matters to me. It's about race" (Adichie, 2013, p. 399).

This fight demonstrates what Mohanty (2003) says on caring for both connection and difference in building transnational feminist solidarity. Being Black is not enough to ensure that you will support each other, real solidarity needs to have dialogue, mutual understanding and recognition that different stories lead to different political commitments.

Finally, Ifemelu's most long-lasting relationship is with Obinze, a Nigerian teenage love who moves also (to England) before returning. Their reunion in Lagos at the end of the novel suggests that transnational experiences have the potential to change people but they do not erase ties to home. This story rejects the usual immigrant success story where America is the only good place and the fact of staying abroad is the only indicator of success.

Obinze's Trajectory: Gender and Global Movement

While Ifemelu is the main character, Adichie also follows the attempt of Obinze to go to England and his deportation. This provides an insight into how world travel is gendered. Obinze's experience illustrates that migration does not impact men and women equally; it is mixed with gender to provide different risks and opportunities.

In England, Obinze lives as an undocumented immigrant, doing low level jobs far below his education level. Adichie describes him: "he was cleaning toilets and living in fear" (Adichie, 2013, p. 341). Being an undocumented immigrant, he is vulnerable to being exploited by bosses who pay less than minimum wage as well as to exploitation by those who sell fake documents. When immigration officers finally arrest him and deport him, Obinze is overcome with the shame and humiliation which many migrants are subjected to when their immigration in the global world is unsuccessful.

A comparison of Obinze's path and Ifemelu's reveals the role of gender in the transnational experience. Both have problems, but Ifemelu is able to obtain a student visa and has legal status that Obinze does not. Also, Ifemelu's femininity is advantageous to her in some cases in America - she can work as a babysitter, something that men cannot do. But that femininity also makes her vulnerable to sexual exploitation, as we see this in scenes where she nearly turns to sex work because she needs the money.

The novel does not advocate that migration is always "better" for women or men, rather demonstrating that gender intersects with race, class, nationality and legal status to make for very different journeys. This

complexity is in accord with Mohanty's appeal to consider the way different oppressions function in particular historic scenarios, not to make sweeping generalizations about all women.

Beauty Standards in Lagos: Scattered Hegemonies at Home

Ifemelu's re-entry into Nigeria allows Adichie to demonstrate that Eurocentric standards of beauty operate not only in the West but also in post-colonial African locations - just like Grewal and Kaplan (1994) describe as 'scattered hegemonies'. The novel demonstrates in various ways how colorism, hair texture bias and European notions of beauty are used to rank individuals in Lagos.

In one scene, Ifemelu visits a hair salon in Lagos and listens to the women talking about lightening creams and relaxers. Adichie writes this: "A woman asked the hairdresser about a cream to make her skin lighter." "This Cleopatra cream works," another woman said" (Adichie, 2013, p. 429). This illustrates how the global cosmetics industry is making a profit based on the global application of white beauty standards by making Black women everywhere feel that having lighter skin and European features is more beautiful and valuable. That these talks are taking place in Lagos, a city that is predominantly Black, reveals the persistence of colonial legacies in the post- independence period.

Adichie also demonstrates the role of Nigerian media in perpetuating these standards through the portrayal of light skinned women or women with some European features in advertisement and entertainment. This is seen in Ifemelu's conversation with her friend Ranyinudo. Ranyinudo comments on a music video: "Look at this music video." All the girls are light-skinned" (Adichie, 2013, p. 435).

These observations tie the politics of Nigerian beauty to global capitalism and neo-colonialism. Mohanty (2003) reminds us that an understanding of gender oppression in one place needs to look at how the flows of global economics and culture tie into local domination. The skin lightening industry, the relaxing industry and the larger cosmetics industry travel to all other parts of the world and push Eurocentric standards and make Black women feel unsafe with their natural features. However, Adichie also displays resistance to these standards in Lagos. Ifemelu meets young Nigerian women who are lovers of natural hair and deniers of colorism, demonstrating that Black beauty politics are transnational, informed by the circulation of ideas, images, and political movements across borders. The natural hair movement that had its roots in America has influence on Lagos women, as much as Nigerian beauty practices have influence on diaspora communities.

CONCLUSION

This transnational feminist study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* demonstrates that *Americanah* is a novel that is a powerful means for discussing race, beauty, gender, and global travel. Through Ifemelu, Adichie demonstrates the power of moving so that African women are exposed to new racial and gender oppression while also me the ways to think critically and act in transnational feminist ways.

The novel's take on Black hair politics demonstrates what Grewal and Kaplan (1994) describe as "scattered hegemonies" - powers that move across borders but appear in different ways at each location. Eurocentric beauty rules are tools of social control in Nigeria as well as America, they just have different histories. In Nigeria, they resonate colonial and neo-colonial influence; in America, they are of slavery and white supremacy. By illustrating the way Ifemelu manages beauty politics in both of these places, Adichie is showing us the ways that Black women are exploited by global capitalism while also demonstrating how women resist both through natural hair and the creation of community.

Another important transnational feminist practice is Ifemelu's blog. Through her posts she considers the race and migration phenomena from an outside-inside perspective as an African immigrant in America. The blog is a space for dialogue across race, country, and tribe and also a means of earning money, which gives Ifemelu economic freedom. But the novel does not make the blog a perfect success; it reveals limits and contradictions such as how personal success through writing about oppression is not fundamentally changing oppressive structures.

The novel takes a pessimistic stance regarding global movement, which does not conform to the notion that migration is merely freedom or upward mobility. Ifemelu receives opportunities in America for study and work, but she experiences racism, economic exploitation, and pressure to assimilate to white standards of appearance. Her relationship with Curt demonstrates white privilege in intimate life, and her relationship with Blaine demonstrates tension in the black diaspora because they have different histories of racism. These detailed scenes line up with Mohanty's (2003) call to look at oppression in specific histories, not make sweeping claims about all women.

Ifemelu's return to Nigeria at the end is contrary to the linear migration story that goes to the North is here to stay and excellent. Instead, Adichie says transnational people can maintain complex ties to a number of locations, and can draw from experiences on either side, even viewing "home" as one that is not just for taking away, but one that is not totally lost. The story sure says, Africa is a place with actual futures not just a place to escape from despite challenges like inequality, corruption, and social problems.

The parallel story of Obinze illustrates the gendering of global movement, the different risks and chances faced by men and women. Obinze's risk and eventual deportation without proper documentation contrasts to Ifemelu's legal status and freedom to remain in America. This analysis reemphasizes the need for intersectional study that looks at how many systems of oppression overlap, not taking gender separate from other powers.

Across *Americanah*, Adichie demonstrates what Mohanty (2003) calls "decolonizing feminist practice" - challenging western narratives, foregrounding the voices of the Global South, insisting on the agency and the complexity of African women. The novel does not position black African women as passive victims of patriarchy or imperialism, but portrays Ifemelu as a person who has contradictions, who resists and at times complies, and awakens in transnational experiences.

Americanah is important not just as literature, but to transnational feminist scholarship and action. By depicting the specific life of an African migrant woman, the novel exposes the contribution of perspectives that are usually marginalized to the Western feminism and African nationalism. It demonstrates that feminism needs to monitor historically established intersections of gender, race, class and nation, and not assume that all women share the same needs and stories.

The novel also discusses Black hair politics that are aligned with current activism, such as the natural hair movement, and laws such as the CROWN Act banning hairstyle discrimination. By narrating the journey of Ifemelu from hair relaxed to natural hair, Adichie understands that a personal look is a component of larger systems of racial oppression and feminist resistance.

Whereas future research could go in many ways. Studies with African migrant women could find out how they relate to *Americanah*'s stories and what their own stories tell us about transnational feminist practice. Comparisons with other writers of the contemporary African diaspora - such as NoViolet Bulawayo, Taiye Selasi or Yaa Gyasi - might see larger patterns in the way diaspora literature engages with feminism. Studying reader responses to *Americanah* in other cultures may reveal how the meanings of the novel change according to the position of the reader.

In short, *Americanah* is a significant contribution to the transnational feminist literature and theory. With detailed portrayals of race, beauty, mobility, and belonging, Adichie gives a literary space to explore the complicated lives of African women in a global world. The novel demonstrates that transnational feminism is not a theory but reality for millions of women traversing many cultures negotiating for the intersection of oppressions and forging connections across borders. It challenges readers to take a viewpoint to recognize at variance feminist awareness and produce knowledge that raise those whose experiences are typically concealed or erased. The novel ultimately argues that real feminist unity requires more than erasing differences; it requires being able to see how gender oppression operates differently in each place and be connected through shared powers in the world. Only this way will women form the coalitions necessary to confront the scattered hegemonies that restrict their lives everywhere.

REFERENCES

- Adichie, C. N. (2013). *Americanah*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Amireh, A., & Majaj, L. S. (2014). *Going global: The transnational reception of third world women writers*. Routledge.
- Anasiudu, O. (2024). Re-thinking Afropolitanism: the kinship and differences. *African Identities*, 22(3), 489-505.
- Bianchi, R. V., Stephenson, M. L., & Hannam, K. (2020). The contradictory politics of the right to travel: mobilities, borders & tourism. *Mobilities*, 15(2), 290-306.
- Binaisa, N. (2011). Negotiating 'belonging' to the ancestral 'homeland': Ugandan refugee descendents 'return'. *Mobilities*, 6(4), 519-534.
- Collins, P. H. (2006). 5 A Telling Difference: Dominance, Strength, and Black Masculinities. In *Progressive black masculinities?* (pp. 73-97). Routledge.
- Conway, J. M. (2017). Troubling transnational feminism (s): Theorising activist praxis. *Feminist Theory*, 18(2), 205-227.
- Eagleton, M. (Ed.). (2010). *Feminist literary theory: A reader*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gola, N. R. (2025). Striving in the Globalized World: A Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. *International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies*, 4(1), 592980.
- Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (Eds.). (1994). *Scattered hegemonies: Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Henderson, R. (2022). *The New Negro Woman: African-American Womanhood, Respectability, and Power in the Early Twentieth Century* (Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, University of Kansas).
- Laoire, C. N. (2023). Young people, intergenerationality and the familial reproduction of transnational migrations and immobilities. In *Handbook on Migration and the Family* (pp. 118-134). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Levitt, P., & Schiller, N. G. (2007). CONCEPTUALIZING SIMULTANEITY¹. *Rethinking migration: New theoretical and empirical perspectives*, 181.
- Li-Gottwald, J. (2025). 'Guangchangwu', 'Schlagermusik' and 'The Red Sun in the Sky' A transnational digital exploration and the trans-positioning of culture among youths—three teens with mixed Chinese and German backgrounds in transnational families. *Diskurs Kindheits-und Jugendforschung/Discourse. Journal of Childhood and Adolescence Research*, 20(2), 139-152.
- Mabugu, L. (2024). *Black subversions: the making of black identity in African American autobiography* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Essex).
- Makapela, L. (2024). *History and its remnants (HAIR): South African and Nigerian women negotiating professional and physical identities* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).
- McMann, M. (2018). "You're black": Transnational perceptions of race in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 59(2), 200-212.
- Mendola, A. (2023). Otherness and the diasporic subject in *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Ghana Must Go* by Taiye Selasi.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). "Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in culture and Society*, 28(2), 499-535.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2005). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Zubaan.
- Namiyingo, J. (2025). African Migrant Women's Agency in the Diaspora: The Agency of being a Black African Migrant Woman in America in Adichie's *Americanah*. *RiCOGNIZIONI. Rivista di Lingue e Letterature straniere e Culture moderne*, 12(23), 301-317.

- Pal, M., & Nieto-Fernandez, B. (2024). Politics of transnational feminism to decolonize feminist organizational communication: A call to action. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 38(1), 60-85.
- Pessar, P. R., & Mahler, S. J. (2003). Transnational migration: Bringing gender in. *International migration review*, 37(3), 812-846.
- Pucherová, D. (2022). *Feminism and modernity in anglophone African women's writing: A 21st-century global context*. Routledge.
- Rezk, W. A. (2024). Dreams of mirage in Khawla Hamdi's expatriation of the *Jasmin* (2015) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 9, 100770.
- Shaukat, U. (2025). Ethnocentrism and Cultural Assimilation: Language and Accent as the Marker of Identity. *INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE (IBLL)*, 8(1 (March)), 97-110.
- Tensuan, T. M. (2002). *Redefining* difference: Idioms of identity and the writing of women of color*. University of California, Berkeley.
- Victória, M., Dias, S., & Pinto, J. D. F. (2019). Racism and identity: a critical discourse analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. *REVELL: Revista de Estudos Literários da UEMS*, 3(23), 226-254.