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Blogging as a Tool of Feminist Empowerment in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract

Today's feminism's claims of intersectionality are questionable. Although more women are starting to raise their voice against sexist and racist oppressions and injustices, non-white women are certainly less acknowledged within mainstream feminism. This paper studies how blogging has contributed to the rise of a more intersectional feminism by scrutinizing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's third novel, *Americanah* (2013), with the objective to examine the protagonist's blog posts. These posts trace her evolution from assimilation to hybridity as a tool of resistance and social critique. The analysis considers the works of renowned feminist activists and writers to explore the reality of non-white women's oppressions and disregard in Western feminism.

Keywords

Blogging, intersectional feminism, *bildung* process, mimicry, rebellion.

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Introduction

Blogging has become, since the beginning of the Internet era, an ICT tool used to disseminate knowledge by means of the written word. A blog enables the user to write more serious content than in other ICT platforms for its formal style. The also called weblogs started a revolution for the people that wanted to share their voice with the world. Blogging and the Internet in general have marked the beginning of a new era of free thought that can reach a world-wide audience within seconds. Women started to use weblogs to share experiences and criticize the oppressions they were undergoing. Consequently, blogging contributed to the start of intersectional feminism.

This paper understands feminism as essential to the success of all movements of social justice. However, today there is a tendency to label everything as “feminist,” such as personal products, companies, or ad campaigns. True feminism is “a practice, a tool, a weapon, an insight” (Shane 2018, 14) that appears as a result of the reality of women as exploited and disadvantaged because of gender. Feminism should thus be considered as a mode of being that systematically rejects racism, sexism and all types of injustice.

However, black women have been less acknowledged than white voices in the Western cultures, voices that had generally only focused their fight on the oppressions of the patriarchal system, setting aside other oppressive forces like capitalism, colonialism, xenophobia and racism. Many black feminist activists and writers have denounced the disregard of their situation, from Sojourner Truth¹ in the nineteenth century until Rafia Zakaria² in 2021. Studies denounce that today’s feminism is failing (Shane 2018, 1), that black women have different issues from the rest of society (Lorde 2007, 32), that white women’s fight has no concern regarding the status of more oppressed women (hooks 2015, 254), that intersectional feminism is still necessary but not yet a reality (Ahmed 2017, 5), and that mainstream feminism solely portrays whiteness (Zakaria 2021, x). Taken together, all these studies suggest that feminism as inherently intersectional does not yet exist.

This paper focuses on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s third novel, *Americanah* (2013), a diasporic narrative in which her Nigerian protagonist, Ifemelu, starts a new life in the United States where she must endure the hardships of a racist and sexist society. By means of blogging,

¹ “Sojourner Truth was born and grew up a slave in New York State. [...] In the period before and after the Civil War, she became a national figure in the struggle for the liberation of both blacks and women.” She is attributed famous quotations such as “Ar’n’t I a woman?” (Mabee 1993, IX).

² Rafia Zakaria is a Pakistani activist and writer, author of *Against White Feminism*, a treatise that hopes to decentre white feminism (Zakaria 2021).

she encapsulates her experience as a non-American black, giving an opportunity to other women to speak of their experiences. Therefore, this paper aims to show how blogging has contributed to raise awareness of all forms of oppression and to the beginning of a new era of feminism by analysing some of Ifemelu's blog entries. This study is divided into two sections. The first one is devoted to explaining the real situation of black women within feminism by using the works of several feminist activists. The second section deals with the explanation of Ifemelu's *bildung* process of assimilation, rebellion and hybridity by analysing her blog entries.

Blogs, being in nature more academic than other social platforms, offer "exposure and anonymity at the same time" (Ighile and Oseghale 2019, 4). For that reason, Ifemelu finds comfort in writing her thoughts anonymously. Eventually, her blog becomes famous and Ifemelu earns a fellowship at Princeton that leads her to make conferences all abroad the U.S. These conferences allow her to buy an apartment in a good neighbourhood of Baltimore. She then realises she can earn money out of blogging and out of the support she has received from her posts. She succeeds in her professional career because of her observations and criticism of the same society she at first venerated. This change in her thoughts only shows the immense growth she undergoes throughout the novel, thus concluding that Adichie's third novel is the perfect example of a *bildungsroman*.

Ifemelu had always been urged to leave Nigeria. She had been born in an age where everyone "mired in dissatisfaction, conditioned from birth to look towards somewhere else, eternally convinced that real lives happened in that somewhere else" (Adichie 2013, 341). Ifemelu leaves Nigeria during the frequent strikes against the military dictatorship of the 1980s and 1990s. A few years later, she discovers blogging, a brand-new tool of expression, which allows her to create an online community of sisterhood. Many of her posts are based on experiences and conversations dedicated to black women, like tips for hair care. Therefore, Ifemelu is part of a feminism that has in its core the borderless connection between minorities, empowering people all over the world to share their experiences and to speak their minds.

Intersectional Feminism and Blogging

Feminism has long been defined and redefined, shaped and classified into waves. The first wave began in the nineteenth century and fought for women's suffrage; then, the second wave started in the 1960s during the civil rights movements when, after an article published in the New York Times by Martha Weinman Lear, a connection was established between both women's

movements, and the wave metaphor was set (Grady 2018). Third wave and fourth wave feminism are “diffuse” (Grady 2018) movements, with no clear beginning nor end. The third wave appeared in part as a response to the “anti-feminist backlash of the 1980s,” and involved the work of theorists such as Kimberlé Crenshaw and Judith Butler (Grady 2018). The fourth wave, on the other hand, begins online, where it is “conceived and propagated” (#MeToo, Time’s Up) but is mainly present on the streets (the Women’s March) (Grady 2018). The third and fourth wave have additionally been described as intersectional, i.e., embracing all types of discrimination, contrary to the first and second waves that were solely addressed to white upper and middle-class women (Grady 2018).

Despite today’s claims of feminism’s intersectionality, there is still much of the population that does not feel identified with it, and who claim that the definition of feminism by means of wave metaphors is not proper because of its white and western appropriation. Since the beginning of feminism as a movement, black women have been placed in a difficult position, for they had to choose between “a black movement that primarily served the interests of black male patriachs and a women’s movement which primarily served the interests of racist white women” (hooks 2015, 24). Suffragettes were mainly white upper and middle-class women who “fomented anti-Black sentiment” (Shane 2018, 8), and the purpose of second wavers of working outside the home was also unique to the white upper and middle-class women. During the 50s and 60s, when black men and women fought for an end to racial inequality, black male activists claimed they expected black women to comply with “a sexist role pattern” and “a subservient position” (hooks 2015, 18-19). Thus, the liberation movement from racist oppression for all black people ended up as a movement for the establishment of a black male patriarchy. Today, most feminists still assume that the problems from which black women suffer are due to racism, not sexism, and that both are separate issues. However, the two issues are inseparable, and at the moment of birth two factors determine black women’s destiny: being black and being female (hooks 2018, 28). That is why black women do not feel identified within the mainstream feminist idea and shape an intersectional movement that has in its core the “liberation of all people” (hooks 2018, 29).

A separate black feminism had to be built as “white women ignore their built-in privilege [...] and define *woman* in terms of their own experience alone” (Lorde 2007, 117). That is why black and brown women became “outsiders,” because their experiences were completely extrinsic to white women’s. This differentiation is reflected in the absence of women of colour’s literature in literature courses or women’s studies. Thus, the courses that should be considered feminist are, in fact, racist. Talking about racism within feminism “is to

get in the way of feminist happiness” (Ahmed 2017, 177) and therefore, dismantling this feminist happiness is a necessity. Furthermore, white feminism has become mainstream, a tool for private enterprises to sell products with “hollow phrases like ‘female empowerment’ and ‘strong women’ and ‘girl power’” (Shane 2018, 5). Mainstream feminism fails women for sticking to the status quo and exploiting workers in other countries, thus perpetuating capitalism, imperialism, racism and ableism while pretending to fight for progress (Shane 2018, 7).

White feminism only perpetuates white superiority or whiteness. It must be noted that “a white feminist is someone who refuses to consider the role that whiteness and the racial privilege attached to it have played and continue to play in universalizing white feminist concerns, agendas, and beliefs as being those of all of feminism and all of feminists” (Zakaria 2021, IX). Therefore, a distinction must be made between whiteness and being a feminist who is white. The former refers to the choice of refusing to recognize white privilege, and the latter refers to one’s racial heritage, something impossible to change (Zakaria 2021, 200). This whiteness has also been denounced by Angela Davis, who criticized the need of white women to always aid their “poor Black sisters” as if they need a “Great White Sister Saviour” (Davis 1984, 29), making in the end their activism more prejudicial to BIPOC’s³ cause than beneficial. It is this “white innocence”⁴ (Wekker 2016, 16) that makes white society incapable of admitting its past colonial atrocities (Hamad 2020, 241). Therefore, white people’s activism and will to protect minorities is nothing but pure narcissism, a need to overcompensate the external world filled with racism to selfishly fill in the interior hole (Hamad 2020, 240-241).

Feminist cultural studies scholars have theorized on contemporary neoliberal feminism. Simultaneously, online media production, which includes blogging, has been an example of “participatory culture,”⁵ enabling women bloggers to reframe feminism, adding further community and public space issues (Keller 2012, 430). Blogs are comprised of entries or posts made by bloggers, generally amateurs who have opinions or stories to share. These blogs, then, provide forums for discussion, the opportunity to openly dissent and debate, which can later be translated into knowledge and provide empowerment for social transformation (Somolu 2007,

³ *BIPOC*: noun [plural]. Abbreviation for Black, Indigenous, and people of colour: used especially in the U.S. to mean Black people, Indigenous American people, and other people who do not consider themselves to be White (Cambridge Dictionary).

⁴ “White innocence” is a term coined by Gloria Wekker in her book *White Innocence*, which refers to the willing of white people to remain ignorant of the racist world they live in due to their situation of privilege (Wekker 2016, 17).

⁵ “Participatory culture” is a term coined by Henry Jenkins, and refers to “a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement” (Jenkins 2006, 3)

478). The knowledge obtained through blog forums leads to education, and education to empowerment, as women would “increase their understanding of their rights in society as well as their confidence to defend those rights” (Kurnia and Saktiningrum 2021, 34).

Education and writing are central in Nigerian author and feminist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s works. *Americanah* (2013) narrates the story of Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman that first moves to the United States seeking for a better education due to the constant strikes in the educational system happening in her home country. In the U.S., she starts a blog called *Raceteenth or Various Observations about American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*, where she talks about the struggle of adapting herself to the American life. Ifemelu first undergoes a process of mimicry to the Western culture; followingly, she rebels against this assimilation and acknowledges her own Nigerian identity. However, when she goes back to Nigeria after thirteen years, she feels detached from her Nigerian identity, only partly related to it, and she becomes Americanah, a hybrid character. In the following section, Ifemelu’s *bildung* process is further analysed.

Assimilation, Rebellion and Hybridity in Ifemelu’s Blogs

In her blog, Ifemelu captures her experience and observations of race relations as an immigrant in America. Interestingly, she soon realises that her status as a non-American black is of no relevance to the dominant white society as all blacks are categorized in a single group “based solely on phenotypical likenesses” (Begum 2019, 620). Regardless of this homogenisation, she is perceived as the “other” in this new society, and consequently she first seeks assimilation by mimicking an American accent and straightening her hair.

Ifemelu realizes from the beginning of her life in the U.S. that she is not Nigerian anymore – she became simply black in the eyes of the dominant white society. She therefore decides to start a blog to write about racial inequality in America. Her voice is always satirical, and her language is never “judgemental or accusative” (Ighile and Oseghale 2019, 4), but rather functions as social commentaries on life in the West for non-Whites. In “Understanding America for the Non-American Blacks,” Ifemelu describes present-day forms of racism and black’s first experiences in the U.S. as “moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes” (Adichie 2013, 273). Sarcastically, she points to the fact that, despite general belief,

slavery remnants do exist in present-day America, claiming that Jim Crow⁶ is a big and recent debt (Adichie 2013, 404). Jim Crow is not a problem from the 1860s, but the 1960s, merely 60 years ago. The perpetuation of racism after the abolishment of the “Separate But Equal”⁷ doctrine and Jim Crow laws results from the indoctrination, or as described by bell hooks “brainwash[ing],” of American society to embrace and perpetuate the very system that oppresses BIPOC, a system that makes them “accept a version of American history that was created to uphold and maintain racial imperialism in the form of white supremacy and sexual imperialism in the form of patriarchy” (hooks 2015, 164). Black people have been unknowingly taught to admire a government that segregates them, reflecting thus the extent of their victimization. However, white people think slavery legacy does no longer exist, that racism is over because “slavery was so long ago” (Adichie 2013, 405).

This problem extends to present-day feminism. The group of women that fight against women’s oppression and for women’s rights but only refer to white problems reveal to be racist in its nature. They are not deconstructing the indoctrination that has taught them to regard black women as “others.” They keep perpetuating the myth that all women in American society have the same status, and they keep generalising American women’s experience when they solely refer to white women’s experience (hooks 2015, 165-166). Ironically, they are the same white feminists that acknowledge black women as victims of an oppressive system while at the same time regard them as strong, implying that although “black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong” (hooks 2015, 20). As a result, there is a tendency to romanticise black female experience, creating stereotypical images of the “strong” black woman that has an “innate” ability to bear burdens (hooks 2015, 21). They are admired, nevertheless they are also feared, for when black women speak their mind, they become scary (Adichie 2013, 274). A dichotomy of two opposing myths of black womanhood is established, both still highly affecting black women today: the “black mammy” and “the Sapphire” (hooks 2015, 119). The “black mammy” is a passive figure, the embodiment of submission to white patriarchy, a figure that gives all and expects nothing in return. Colonial discourse created the myth of the black woman that acknowledges her inferiority and, at the same time, praises her white exploiters. Opposed to the black mammy is the Sapphire, “the

⁶ Jim Crow Laws are a set of laws that separated Americans by race in 26 states from 1881 to 1964. They created a *de jure* segregation that aimed at forbidding freedom and equality for former slaves, African Americans, and ensured the supremacy of whites. These laws imposed penalties on those who broke the mandating segregation (Tischauer 2012, XI).

⁷ “Separate But Equal” is a decision taken by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case (1896) that allowed the implementation of segregational laws by states and local governments (Legal Information Institute 2022).

image of the female as inherently evil” (hooks 2015, 119) that was used by white women to assert their innocence and purity in contrast. Today, black women repress their feelings or omit their thoughts “for fear of being regarded as shrewish Sapphires” (hooks 2015, 121). Ifemelu’s identity is nullified precisely for fear of being pictured as sullen, and therefore adopts a character that is not her own.

Ifemelu’s assimilation is both physical and mental. Her Nigerian accent is first mocked when she needs assistance from fellow white student Cristina Tomas. This student’s arrogant behaviour symbolises white America for Ifemelu (Begum 2019, 621) as Ifemelu is immediately placed in a subordinate position. She “cowered and shrank” (Adichie 2013, 164) and ultimately decides to adopt an American accent. However, one day she realises she has taken “a pitch of voice and a way of being that was not hers” (Adichie 2013, 216) when she receives a telemarketer’s call and he comments that she sounded “totally American,” to which she replies, “thank you” (Adichie 2013, 215). She starts wondering how it can be a compliment, an accomplishment, to sound American, to have consented for too long to be shaped by the dominant group. She realises Cristina Tomas had won and that she would speak normally to her now. That morning, she decides to rebel against and challenge Western assumptions. She is determined to abandon all assimilations and take back her Nigerian accent, despite having mastered an American articulation with “the blurring of the *t*, the creamy roll of the *r*, the sentences starting with ‘so,’ and the sliding response of ‘oh really’” (Adichie 2013, 213).

Ifemelu straightens her hair once she decides to apply for a job and both her aunt, Auntie Uju, and her friends, recommend her to look as white as possible to have a better chance to get the job. In her blog post, “Hair as Race Metaphor” (Adichie 2013, 367), she reflects on racially discriminatory American beauty standards based on whiteness. Black women’s impossibility to achieve these beauty standards leads to a lowering of their self-esteem, provoking a hindrance in their social stability (Ali 2021, 79). Ifemelu asserts that “some black women, AB and NAB, would rather run naked in the street than come out in public with their natural hair” (Adichie 2013, 367). They loathe their blackness, which results in a severe crisis of their “triple consciousness,” i.e., their discrimination in terms of race, class and gender. “Triple consciousness” is a concept coined by black feminists Sara Lomax-Reese and Nahum Welang (Pelt-Willis 2021, 5) as a response to W. E. B. Du Bois’s “double consciousness”⁸ that only considered discrimination in terms of race and class. Hair is described as a metaphor of the

⁸ Du Bois coined the “double consciousness” concept in his acclaimed *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) in which he wrote that blacks are seen behind a “veil,” and that their skin and race will determine their relationship with white Americans (Du Bois 2007, 8).

“various forms of oppression” (Waleed 2021, 84) on Ifemelu. Nevertheless, Ifemelu is at first reluctant to cutting her straightened hair – she only does it due to hair loss. At first, she finds herself “ugly” and looking “at best, [...] like a boy; at worst, like an insect” (Adichie 2013, 258). She even decides not to go to work, ashamed. To restore her blackness, she decides to join an online group called HappilyKinkyNappy.com, a “natural hair community” (Adichie 2013, 259). In that website, she finds the necessary confidence to embrace her new look and starts loving her natural hair. This blog helps Ifemelu develop her self-appreciation and, one day, she falls in love with her hair: “she looked in the mirror, sank her fingers into her hair, dense and spongy and glorious, and could not imagine it any other way” (Adichie 2013, 264). She later advises on hair care in her blog to help other black women take care of and accept it, just as blogging helped her embrace hers. The acceptance of her blackness is seen as a type of resistance to white beauty standards, thus making hair a metaphor for and a symbol of resistance.

Mentally, Ifemelu undergoes a hard process of assimilation. She has no job and must pay the rent, and she feels as the “other” even with her flatmates. She ends up depressed and cutting all contact with her relatives and friends back home after applying for a job as a prostitute, the only opportunity she saw feasible after having enrolled in many different jobs but not getting any of them. She starts rejecting her roots for fear of social exclusion and assimilates white American culture instead. She longs for acceptance and hungers to “understand everything about America, to wear a new, knowing skin right away” (Adichie 2013, 166). She eventually realises that she has completely changed her identity, shaping it to gain society’s acceptance. Therefore, if she, as well as everybody, longs to be WASP⁹, “What do WASPs Aspire To?” (Adichie 2013, 253). Through her blog post, Ifemelu pictures minority groups’ veneration for white Anglo-Saxon people and culture. These American minorities all think their community always suffers more from white people. Despite this constant oppression, they yearn for whiteness or, “more accurately, for the privileges of WASP whiteness” (Adichie 2013, 254). Therefore, whiteness is more than a skin colour, it is a set of privileges of certain religious, cultural and racial identities that strongly resemble characteristics related to light-skinned Western Europeans (Hamad 2020, XVI). Very often, people of colour accept and even will to assimilate whiteness, as is the case of Ifemelu. She sees that whiteness has become so attached to the symbols of privilege, wealth and status that she perpetuates this racialization, showing that whiteness works even at the level of the subconscious and no longer needs

⁹ *WASP*: noun. Abbreviation for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant: a white American whose family originally came from Northern Europe and is therefore part of a group often considered as having the most influence and the most money in American society (Cambridge Dictionary).

European-derived white people to preserve it (Hamad 2020, 206). Consequently, Ifemelu tries to “pass” for white, she falsely tries to pretend what she is not to benefit from the privileges of being white, until she acknowledges her racial heritage and abandons all falsifications after she had realised that whiteness is merely a façade, a pretension from which white society is constructed (Hamad 2020, 237).

White innocence, or the willingness of white people to remain ignorant of present-day forms of racism, hides behind assertions such as “the only race is the human race,” or “I’m colour-blind” (Adichie 2013, 404). Her post “A Few Explanations of What Things Really Mean” (Adichie 2013, 435) denounces the problem of silence and marginalisation, the ultimate nullification, the last but brutal attempt to protect whiteness and its façade (Hamad 2020, 236). In present-day feminism, when white authority is challenged, white women accuse black women of “attacking them, of dividing sisterhood, of doing the work of patriarchy” (Hamad 2020, 236), sometimes incriminating them of racists towards whites and therefore provoking a disempowerment of black women’s resolve. However, whiteness has never experienced racism. White people regard racism in nothing else but words, being only “what is said that counts” (Hamad 2020, 237), and accusing black people of being racist when they feel insulted or threatened. Everything else that racism implies, like “power imbalance, dispossession, physical and sexual abuse, incarceration, enslavement, discrimination, and so on” is irrelevant to them (Hamad 2020, 237).

After a few years of blogging, Ifemelu acknowledges the truth about American culture and the American Dream, the perception of a dream that, at a young age, pushed her to migrate to a venerated land in her home country. She later realizes about the impossibility of the American Dream, covered by its idealistic perception abroad but that is in truth an illusion defined by four kinds of tribalism: class, ideology, region and, most importantly, race (Adichie 2013, 227). Nigerian’s perception of America shown throughout the novel as the land of opportunity and meritocracy is nothing but a lie. Ifemelu sees this after writing her blogs and making conferences in different parts of the U.S., and therefore decides to leave America, go back to Nigeria and develop there her professional career. Nevertheless, when she arrives back in Lagos, Ifemelu sees everything as different and even scary:

At first, Lagos assaulted her; [...] she had the dizzying sensation of falling, falling into the new person she had become, falling into the strange familiar. Had it always been like this or had it changed so much in her absence? [...] Had buildings in Lagos always had this patina of decay? And when did it become a city of people quick to beg and too

enamoured of free things? “Americanah!” Ranyinudo teased her often. “You are looking at things with American eyes.” (Adichie 2013, 475-476)

Ifemelu acknowledges her hybrid character as soon as she goes back to Lagos, where she is described as “Americanah.” The term hybridity is coined for the first time by Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). He defines hybridity as “the sign of the productivity of colonial power” (Bhabha 1994, 112), “a tool through which the hybrid reevaluates colonial assumptions through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects” (Ighile and Oseghile 2019, 3). Ifemelu does not feel as a fully hybrid character until she realizes she left the U.S. because she did not feel American but arrives in Nigeria and feels she does not belong there either. Despite her later rebellion against her first mimicry of American culture, she feels detached from her born identity as a Nigerian. In other words, her assimilation in America has become part of her identity.

Her new blog *The Small Redemptions of Lagos* reflects on her condition as an Americanah. In a blog post she complains about her condition as hybrid, she criticizes all “Americanahs” that arrive back in Nigeria and all they do is compare both countries. She knows she is one of them, which provokes in her a sense of frustration. She constantly complains about Nigeria but, at the same time, she wills to make money there and change the country. Ironically, this frustration leads her to conclude that Nigeria is incomparable because it is assorted and beautiful (Adichie 2013, 520). This new blog is thus representative of her new identity as an Americanah not as negative and alienated from her roots, but as a celebration of the bridging of the different aspects of her own self. She eventually finds herself “at peace: to be home, to be writing her blog, to have discovered Lagos again. She had, finally, spun herself into being” (Adichie 2013, 586).

Conclusion

After having analysed Ifemelu’s blog entries in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013), it can be stated that blogging has contributed to the start of intersectional feminism. Blogs are a symbol of acquiring one’s own voice and, in the novel, of her *bildung* process as well. Writing helps Ifemelu restore her cultural roots. Consequently, she decides to move back home after recognising that “Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil” (Adichie 2013, 7). Due to her writings, she acquires a critical consciousness that allows her to reject

white norms, restore her identity and fulfil her integration within the Nigerian community when she settles back in Lagos. Ifemelu's resolution to go back home supposes the deconstruction of the American Dream, a promise of success for everyone in the United States regardless of where or under what circumstances they are born. Therefore, the banners of brotherhood, equality and freedom are mere façades that hide a racist society that still has in its core the remnants of slavery (Ali 2021, 89), from which black women are highly oppressed.

In conclusion, *Americanah* is an evocation “of a global mobility and cultural exchange at the heart of the Afropolitan ethos” (Crowley 2018, 134) as Ifemelu finally embraces and integrates into her being the multiplicity of her experiences both as a migrant and a returnee. Blogging serves Ifemelu to construct her identity by means of shaping her thoughts and writing them down. She analyses her life as a non-American black immigrant and receives support from other people going through similar experiences. Blogging, in a way, makes her life more bearable in an alien territory, and helps other non-American blacks feel identified with her words and find solace in her funny and witty commentaries on life in the U.S.

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