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## Postcolonial Feminism, Racial Identity, and Feminist Voice in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار، والهوية العرقية، والصوت النسوي في رواية *Americanah* لتشيماماندا نغوزي أديتشي

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to read *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as a postcolonial feminist situation in which racial identity and feminist voice co-construct each other within transnational situations. The aim is to explain how the novel transforms "voice" into a method that renders racialised experiences legible and contestable. The problem addressed is the absence of an integrated account that treats embodiment, identity positioning, and discourse as one process rather than separate themes. Methodologically, this paper employs a qualitative, interpretive close reading as part of a triadic approach that combines a lens of postcolonial feminism, racial identification, and the text of feminist voice, utilising reflexive coding and memoing to maintain the transparency of any analysis decisions made. Using the tenets of theory-guided sampling, four sites of narrative data were selected: salon and hair politics, blog discourse, workplace and intimacy scenes, and the homecoming to Lagos. These sites were subsequently analysed through iterative annotation, thematic coding, and textual evidence triangulation, guided by the relevant theories. The findings indicate that hair/salon episodes stage embodied identity as domination and put up resistance; the blog serves as a counter-discourse, whereby observation is converted into a narrative authority; work and intimacy scenes represent mimicry and hybridity as conflicting paths to recognition. Comparative experiments with the model between African and diasporic texts are recommended, as is the extension of digital-voice analysis to larger bodies of texts, and pedagogical compositions that juxtapose embodied voice (hair politics) with digital voice (blog writing).

**Keywords:** postcolonial feminism; racial identity; feminist voice; hybridity; African diaspora.

### الملخص

يحاول هذا البحث قراءة رواية *Americanah* لتشيماماندا نغوزي أديتشي بوصفها حالة نسوية ما بعد الاستعمارية تقاطع فيها الهوية العرقية والصوت النسوي لتشكيل أحدهما الآخر ضمن سياقات عابرة للحدود. يهدف البحث إلى توضيح كيفية تحويل الرواية لـ "الصوت" إلى منهج يجعل التجارب المُمَيَّزة عِرقياً قابلة للفهم والنقاش. تكمن المشكلة التي يعالجها البحث في غياب طرح متكامل يتناول التجسد، وتموضع الهوية، والخطاب بوصفها عملية واحدة مترابطة، لا كموضوعات منفصلة. منهجياً، يعتمد البحث على قراءة تحليلية نوعية تفسيرية دقيقة، ضمن مقارنة ثلاثية تجمع بين منظور النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار، والهوية العرقية، ونص الصوت النسوي، مستخدماً الترميز الانعكاسي وتدوين الملاحظات (Memoing) لضمان شفافية جميع القرارات التحليلية المتخذة. وباستخدام مبادئ "المعاينة الموجهة نظرياً" (Theory-Guided Sampling)، جرى اختيار أربعة مواقع للسرد لتحليلها: سياسات الصالون والشعر، خطاب المدونة، مشاهد العمل والعلاقات الحميمة، وعودة البطلة إلى لاغوس. وقد تم تحليل هذه المواقع لاحقاً من خلال التعليق التكراري، والترميز الموضوعي، وتثليث الأدلة النصية، موجهةً بالنظريات ذات الصلة. تشير النتائج إلى أن مشاهد الشعر/الصالون تعرض الهوية المجسدة بوصفها ساحة للهيمنة والمقاومة في آن واحد؛ وتعمل المدونة كخطاب مضاد، حيث تتحول الملاحظة إلى سلطة سردية؛ فيما تمثل مشاهد العمل والعلاقات الحميمة التقليد (Mimicry) والهجنة (Hybridity) كمسارين متعارضين نحو الاعتراف. ويوصي البحث بإجراء مقارنات تجريبية للنموذج بين النصوص الإفريقية ونصوص الشتات، فضلاً عن توسيع تحليل

"الصوت الرقمي" ليشمل أجساماً نصية أكبر، وإعداد مقاربات تعليمية تجمع بين الصوت المتجسد (سياسات الشعر) والصوت الرقمي (الكتابة في المدونة). الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار؛ الهوية العرقية؛ الصوت النسوي؛ الهجنة؛ الشتات الإفريقي

## Introduction

In an era marked by globalization, increased migration, and a ubiquitous system of racial and gender inequity, the literature emerges as a significant means of investigating how identities are built, negotiated, and challenged. *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most detailed representation of these dynamics as it focuses on the life of a Nigerian woman named Ifemelu, whose story of transnational existence as she moves between Nigeria, the United States, and back to home shows the multidimensionality of racial identity dynamics, gender politics, and cultural affiliation. Its intimate narrative voice and biting social commentary enable the novel to be critically examined, questioning the frameworks that define and, in most cases, limit the experiences of African women in both local and diasporic settings.

Adichie became one of the most powerful writers in modern African literature, presenting acute political sensitivity coupled with a powerful narrative. *Americanah* has been a significant topic of academic study, as it has been analysed in terms of migration and hybridity (Baig, 2024), the failure of the American Dream (Mustafa, 2025), and the social and political constructs of female beauty and female agency (Subzal & Rasheed, 2025). Nevertheless, although these contributions are beneficial in terms of the information value regarding topical insight, they remain somewhat detached in their approach to matters of racial identity and the discussion of feminism as a specific aspect. It is rare to read the novel through a framework that embraces the arguments of postcolonial feminism, racial identity theory and feminist voice theory without isolating them into disparate theoretical elements. The gap is especially pronounced considering that *Americanah* is much interested in how race and gender interact in the development of diasporic subjectivities.

Recent studies illustrate the fragmented nature of existing scholarship: Rosenqvist (2023) discusses colonial legacies and mimicry in the novel; Ponnudurai and A. (2025) concentrate on displacement and identity crisis in terms of comparison with *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith; and Mirmotahari (2025) addresses the issue of whiteness and grey norms representation. Although these sources contribute to our knowledge, they do not make the coupling between the analysis of racial identity and a feminist critique based on postcolonial situations. This paper addresses that gap.

This study aims to examine how *Americanah* negotiates racial identity and feminist voice through the lens of postcolonial feminism. The central research question is: *How does Adichie's Americanah articulate and negotiate racial identity and feminist voice within a postcolonial feminist framework?* Academically, this study contributes to postcolonial and feminist theory and criticism by providing a combined interpretation that connects two analytical fields that tend to be kept apart. Socially, it will help to extend the social construct of African women as discursive spaces of interrogating the dominant racial and gendered discourses within a globally oriented context.

In this study, a textual analysis approach will be employed, which entails the close reading of selected passages from *Americanah*. The theoretical framework of the analysis is triangulated, consisting of a postcolonial feminist critique and anthology, a racial identity theory, and a feminist voice theory. This practice will help read the creation of identity of the protagonist by Adichie in cultural, racial, and gendered landscapes in a subtle manner.

The interpretive framework for this study rests on the integration of three interconnected theoretical strands: postcolonial feminism, racial identity theory, and feminist voice theory. Postcolonial feminism offers a general platform through which the legacies of colonialism and patriarchy can be interrogated and through which the lives of women, especially in African and diasporic scenarios, are shaped. As Spivak (1988) writes in her seminal text, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", she discusses the silencing of the voices of marginalised women in colonial and postcolonial discourse. Similarly, Mohanty (1988) criticises Western feminist scholarship for homogenising the experiences of Third World women. The *Invention of Women* by Oyewumi (1997/2020) critiques the imposition of Western gender norms on African societies and offers a locally grounded alternative for examining gender in Nigerian contexts. When applied to *Americanah*, the given framework emphasises how the experience of Ifemelu in both Nigeria and the United States unveils the bilateral marginalisation of Black women in the intersecting racial and gender hierarchies.

The Racial Identity Theory draws upon the work of Frantz Fanon, as outlined in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2023), a study on the psychological impact of racial subordination on the individual and the definition of

identity as a process with constantly shifting forms, as elaborated upon by Stuart Hall (1990). The concepts of Homi Bhabha (1994), namely hybridity and the so-called Third Space, also help in explaining the liminal position of a migrant, such as Ifemelu, who must negotiate between two or more cultural regimes. The racial identity theory enables the exploration of the representation of self-understanding versus racial classification dissonance in this study, particularly in transnational situations, as portrayed by Adichie.

The theory of Feminist Voice is employed to explore how individuals express the concept of agency, how women are oppressed, and how they assert narrative authority. The intersectionality proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) emphasises how multiple systems of race, gender, and class overlap, and bell hooks (2000) considers the power of speaking as a marginalised person. According to African feminist schools of thought, such as the negofeminist approach of Nnaemeka (2004), negotiation and compromise are culturally appropriate responses to resistance. This framework can be applied especially within the context of *Americanah*, to the blog posts of Kanye West, which are places of unhinged expression as well as counter-discourses to the main racial and gender forces.

The integration of these three strands of theory enables the study to develop a triangulated analytical model that focuses on the contentious and negotiated representation of identity in the novel. This combined reading transcends this kind of thematic description and considers it through the structural, psychic, and discursive aspects of racialised female subjectivity. It enables one to read *Americanah*, where the journey of Ifemelu is not only a personal narrative but also a significant contribution to the international discourse around topics such as race, gender, and postcoloniality.

### Literature Review

This is a critical review of the existing literature on academic research studies on *Americanah*, analysing the studies published between 2020 and 2025 to identify current analytical trends and highlight the research gap in the study. It has the three thematic pillars of postcolonial feminism, racial identity, and feminist voice, which represent essential elements of your theoretical framework. Even though so many studies have been able to focus on separate dimensions of the subject, like colonially-induced female experiences or racial alienation, they do not raise a more straightforward integration of all three components in a single construct that could more wholesomely discuss the intricate narrative of *Americanah*.

#### 1) Postcolonial Feminism in *Americanah*

Since 2020, scholarship on *Americanah* has been deployed more and more often through the lens of postcolonial feminist analysis that emphasises the contemporariness of colonialism and gendered oppression. Mustafa (2025) asserts that the novel also challenges the mythology of the American Dream for Black immigrant women, as it demonstrates how race and patriarchy intersect to define the limits of mobility and belonging. Along this vein, Adeyelu and Roux (2023) turn to the female body to identify it as a transgressive location of social inscription and resistance, interpreting the corporeality and spatial movements of Ifemelu as challenging racialised and gendered borders. Kmita (2023) resorts to a register of power on hair, most particularly connected to a politics of the subject as a tactile and manoeuvred field of political action, where space in the salon exemplifies a field of female action and postcolonial refutation.

Feminist critiques have been generalised by other studies beyond their descriptive themes. Rosenqvist (2023) highlights mimicry and adaptation as gender survival patterns that illustrate the doubled marginality of the black migrant women; the diagnosis demonstrates how romantic liaisons and professional relationships are involved with transcending gender across transnational landscapes. Aor (2022) is interested in the textures of communication in various forms, including texts, blogs, emails, and conversational routines, claiming that internet-mediated discourse reveals a distinctly feminine expression of dissidence and self-making. Overall, these studies draw a significant conclusion: *Americanah* both dramatises how coloniality and patriarchy combine to shape the structure of everyday life and rehearses an anti-hegemonic repertoire of voice, style, and movement (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Mustafa, 2025). A more detailed description of how this feminist protest is intertwined with racial identity formation at the level of narrative voice, where Ifemelu's interventions are most pertinent, remains underdeveloped.

#### 2) Racial Identity and Diasporic Subjectivity

A second body of new scholarship focuses on race as an identity-in-process that transcends national boundaries. The novel can be read by Mirmotahari (2025) as a critique of the concept of white progressivism, having established how *Americanah* not only reveals the racialised norms of liberal whiteness that pose as all-inclusive, but also disciplines the Black Other. The analysis of the novel distinctly explains why Ifemelu's

notes are disturbing. Rosenqvist (2023) emphasises that mimicry and hybridity reciprocally inform diasporic identity, and under these conditions, the adopted strategies of Ifemelu correspond to the ambiguous accents of acknowledgement in U.S. social arenas. Kmita (2023) supplements this discussion by focusing on Black hair as a racialising assemblage in which identity is negotiated. Straightening, natural hair returns, and salon talk represent the changes in self-perceptions and the social readability.

In addition to these, other studies focus on fluidity and plurality of Blackness. Mulyani and Putri (2024) suggest that *Americanah* challenges the homogeneous idea of Blackness by providing a staging of the convergence of race, gender, class, Language, and nationality; identity is a moving target that is re-formed throughout scenes of border crossing. With Fanon, Rashad (2025) follows the patterns of relational dynamics between white masks and black skins through the characters of Ifemelu and Obinze, as well as the clash between outer racial definitions and self-identification in distinct cultures. In the study by Suárez-Rodriguez (2024), the concept of homecoming also introduces the notion of homecoming, which is viewed as a form of opening rather than closing down the question of recognition and belonging. Such literature goes a long way towards explaining why *Americanah* theorises race in the interior of lived experience. However, numerous descriptions of identity as racial, analytically distinct from gender voice, offer poor explanations of how the speech acts of the naturalised category of the character, Ifemelu, and, specifically, her blogging, represent a feminist intervention (Mirmotahari, 2024; Rashad, 2025).

### 3) Feminist Voice, Narrative Authority, and the Digital

The third corpus reads *Americanah* as a feminist voice novel, in which an authoritative narrative is asserted through the influences of style, genre, and media convention. In a narrative presented through female intimate spaces, according to Kmita (2023), one of the elements of hair-related choices is an insistence on defining oneself that constitutes speech-action in doubling terms. Adeyélure and Roux (2023) connect bodily transgression with voice, stating that the space crossings (salons, cities, continents) are reflected in the discursive crossings, allowing Ifemelu to be authoritative at the periphery. This assertion is defined by scholarship on the digital poetics of the novel: Aor (2022) demonstrates how blogs, emails, and posts form an internet-mediated style that reframes story telling and point-of-view, whereas Huc-Hepher (2021) chapter on online construction of linguistic and identity situates such a blog as a performative space in which the diasporic selfhood is repeatedly performed multiple times.

Research devoted to the particular theme of protest voice and gendered resistance also concludes that *Americanah* theatricizes the act of speaking, voice as action that challenges racist and Patriarchal ideologies (Ere-Bestman, 2024). Mirmotahari (2024) likewise highlights the blog, as the critic identifies how the textual persona, Non-American Black, performs a recoding operation on racial common sense through the rejection of liberal scripts of inclusion. Combined, these studies suggest that the voice of Ifemelu is not merely expressive but a determination of the subjectivity; however, few texts connect such an assertion with the process of racial identity formation developed in the scholarship on diaspora, or with the postcolonial feminist demand that voices are formed against a postcolonial background of coloniality. The given research appropriates this project by interpreting the reading of voice as the juncture that sutures race and gender in a postcolonial feminist problematic.

### Synthesis and Identified Gap

These three clusters are well-represented in the literature, although in a fragmented state. Structural criticism and physical opposition are at the focal point of postcolonial feminist readings (Adeyélure & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Mustafa, 2025). The study of racial identity follows the rope of ambivalence, hybridity, going back, and disciplining energies of liberal racial orders (Mirmotahari, 2024; Rosenqvist, 2023; Rashad, 2025; Suarez-Rodriguez, 2024; Mulyani & Putri, 2024). Feminist voice work helps clarify the blog's ability to provide counter-discourse and narrative control in other media (Aor, 2022; Ere-Bestman, 2024; Huc-Hepher, 2024). What remains to be articulated is a unified explanation of how *Americanah* is a co-production of feminist vocalisation and racial identity, both of which are under the pressure of coloniality, and does so on the levels of Language, genre (the blog), and constructing scenes. The present article argues that through such triangulation, the voice of Ifemelu is constituted both within and against anthropologically racialised gender regimes, articulating voice as a postcolonial feminist practice of world-making, rather than a thematic issue.

### Methodology



This research employs an interpretive qualitative research design, which is well-suited for investigating literary contexts where meaning is created through a continued focus on the text and voice. The concept of close reading has been a key component in literary practice today, as it enables an investigation of the micro-level of diction, focalization, and discourse, and relates these elements to the macro-level of race, gender, and power (Byron, 2021). To achieve methodological transparency, the analysis incorporates a close reading and a reflexive analytic process that is researcher-focused, ensuring that claims are warranted and traceable (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nicmanis, 2024).

### Research Design and Rationale

This research design will consist of qualitative textual analysis supported by postcolonial feminist criticism. The qualitative textual analysis is suitable since the intentions of the article under consideration are not predictive but rather interpretive ones: it aims not at testing hypotheses but at explaining how and using what narrative strategies *Americanah* constructs racial identity and feminist voice. Close reading offers a finer grain mechanism of following meaning at the sentence and scene level (Byron, 2021) whilst a reflexive thematic/content approach formalized the process between annotating passages and the development of thematic patterns such that researcher positionality remains in the view at all levels (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2023; Nicmanis, 2024). Approaching intersectionality as an analytic position, rather than just a subject, will mean that interpretations will be inclusive of how a myriad of constructs can compound issues related to voice and subjectivity (Women, 2022).

### Case Selection: Why *Americanah*?

The choice of *Americanah* as the purposeful case is based on the fact that it perpetually informs present academic discussions surrounding the topics of whiteness, white liberalism, diasporic identity, and female resistance. Recent peer-reviewed work interprets the novel as a direct response to white progressivism and liberal discourse on race, rendering the process of disciplining attributable to inclusive racial norms visible in Adichie (Mirmotahari, 2025). The works on embodied motifs, including those of Black hair and the transgressive female body, demonstrate how the text asserts power and agency in their most demanded forms during postcolonial feminist reading (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023). In addition to the works of postcolonial theory, the concepts of mimicry, adaptation, and ambivalence are employed in diasporic identity construction, signalling that the novel is a powerful site for theorising the co-creation of racial identity and feminist voice (Rosenqvist, 2023). Collectively, these new publications provide grounds for choosing *Americanah* as a case, which is rich in terms of timely analysis.

### Data and Sampling

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (2013), is considered the main reading. Based on theory-led sampling, the research will focus on scenes of intersection of discourse, embodiment, and social positioning: (i) salon and hair politics, (ii) blog posts and comment threads on the reviews of the character, Ifemelu, (iii) immigration and work-related situations, and (iv) chapters of the revisit in Lagos. The strategy ensures coverage of episodes that highlight the focus on postcolonial feminist issues, racialised subjectivity, and the formation of voice (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Mirmotahari, 2025).

### Analytic Procedure

- 1. Passage identification and annotation:** the three nodes, postcolonial feminism, racial identity, and feminist voice, are highlighted through iterative close readings.
- 2. Coding and memoing:** Reading and writing memos form a reflective codebook that documents interpretative moves (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nicmanis, 2024). Memos such as "embodied agency," "mimicry," and "third-space voice" are examples of such codes.
- 3. Patterning and triangulation:** Thematic patterns emerge through the triangulation of textual evidence, theoretical frameworks (Spivak/Mohanty; Fanon/Hall/Bhabha; Crenshaw/hooks), and perspectives from contemporary scholarship on *Americanah* (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Mirmotahari, 2025; Rosenqvist, 2023).
- 4. Rival readings and robustness:** Alternative interpretations are rigorously evaluated against identical passages; assertions are modified when a competing reading provides superior explanatory power (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

### Rigour, Reflexivity, and Ethical Stance

Rigor is sought by first, utilizing triangulation of theories (postcolonial feminism, racial identity theory, feminist voice) as theory combined; second, an explicit audit trail manner (annotated excerpts, codebook versions, analytic memos); and third, thick description to connect micro-details of the actual content with macro-structures (coloniality, racial governance, gender regimes). Reflexivity is ensured through the possession of views and the recording of how positionality is used to inform reading decisions (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The approach of intersectionality can be perceived as having methodological and ethical roots that render the analysis focused on compounded marginalisations (Women, 2022).

### Limitations

The study is instrumental in that its generalizability is analytic, rather than statistical, as it employs an interpretive and single-text research approach. The novel favours a postcolonial feminist reading; other vocabularies (Marxism, political economics, digital narratology) can also be of interest. Such constraints have been offset by reflexive action and the emergence of new scholarship that situates the reading within a broader field of academic discourse (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Mirmotahari, 2025).

### Analysis

This section presents a close reading that is determined by the theories and follows the processes of co-constructions of racial identity and feminist voice throughout some of the most essential narrative sites *Americanah* encounters postcolonial feminism, theory of racial identity, and intersectionality (Spivak, 1988; Fanon, 1952; Bhabha, 1994; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 2000). The page references are only to the mass-market paperback.

#### 1) Embodied Identity: Hair, the Salon, and the Politics of Respectability

The novel frequently illustrates that Black hair is subject to racial control and gender expectations, which are imposed on the body, rendering the salon a microcosm of social policing and rebellion (Kmita, 2023; Adeyelu & Roux, 2023). One of the most essential moments reflects the coercive attraction to Eurocentric beauty standards and the mental burden that it creates. This is evident when Wambui encourages Ifemelu to go natural, particularly when the text explicitly references straightening as a form of captivity: "*Relaxing your hair is like being in prison. You're caged in. Your hair rules you.*" (Adichie, 2014, p. 208). Read through Fanon's account of racialised embodiment; the body here is not a neutral surface, but rather the point where the racial gaze and norm take hold (Calhoun, 2020).

As counter-pedagogies, something can be learned from salon talk and hair labour from a postcolonial feminist perspective, women rehearse scripts of refusal and self-definition (hooks, 2000; Spivak, 1988). Intersectionality explains the mechanics: it's not the hair, but hair as mediated by race, gender, class, and workplace norms that sets the price and possibility of speech and belonging (Crenshaw, 1989). So, embodied revision and probable rejection foster the woman's voice; the novel stresses this elsewhere. Hair politics make visible the everyday technologies through which racialised femininity is governed and contested; embodiment is already a mode of speaking back.

#### 2) The Blog as Counter-Discourse: Stance, Address, and Narrative Authority

The blog maintained by Ifemelu transforms individual observations into societal oppositional discourse, which reinforces common sense about race in the United States. The first reception speech to migrants is symbolic: "*Dear Non-American Black, when you choose to come to America, you become black.*" (Adichie, 2014, p. 273). The second-person address and accretive examples stage race as a learned social code, one policed by micro-rituals of civility and inclusion.

The blog aligns with the theory by hooks, who insists on speaking from the margins as a form of political praxis (hooks, 2000). The intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw is evident in the inexorable charting of the intersection of race, gender, class, and immigration status, as seen in the blog (Crenshaw, 1989). At the same time, the blog inhabits the third space of Bhabha, blending confession, reportage, and satire to create a discourse that belongs neither to the inside nor outside the dominant ideology (Bhabha, 1994). Here in this zone of hybridity, Ifemelu calls out the unarticulated contracts of daily contact and offers new coordinates of identification. The blog transforms observational acuity into narrative authority, demonstrating feminist voice as the active reconfiguration of racial knowledge rather than mere denunciation.

#### 3) Mimicry, Hybridity, and the Ambivalence of Recognition (Work & Intimacy)

In the scenes at the workplace and the bedroom affairs, the novel unfolds mimicry, appropriating the codes of dominance to seek conditional recognition and the ambivalence that this type breeds (Bhabha, 1994). Professional environments compensate for what has been euphemistically termed as 'fit,' a conceit for

racialised stylistic and behavioural conformity. Accents, clothing, and the rhythm of speech chart the work involved in anticipating legibility in institutions that promise meritocracy and perpetually racialise competency (Rosenqvist, 2023). In the terms used by Hall, identity is not introduced as a substance, but as a process of positioning; the novel *Americanah* follows the changes in positionality as the characters cross national and institutional borders and adjust their performances (Hall, 1990).

The novel repeatedly links "professionalism" to aesthetic codes (e.g., hair norms) that are already racialised and gendered, pressure that the earlier salon scene literalizes (Adichie, 2014, p. 208). Mimicry yields **ambivalent recognition**: one is "the same-but-not-quite," validated provisionally yet reminded of boundaries. Feminist contributions demonstrate how this administration is gendered; women face a specific script of desirability and docility that shapes their work experiences as well as their intimate relationships (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023). Hybrid performances secure access while heightening the felt limits of belonging, conditions that animate Ifemelu's critical voice and its refusal of tidy assimilation.

#### 4) Return, Re-rooting, and the Reconfiguration of Voice (Lagos)

Return rejects the fictionality of easy resolution. The Lagos chapter's figure-return is a rearrangement of identity and voice, shifting the blame of critique from external racial governance to local interests, class, gender expectations, and professional hierarchies. The position shifts into expatriate diagnosis, transitioning into locality-tuned comparison and consideration of speech ethics. This voice, as Nnaemeka calls it, represents "nego-feminism," a context-specific negotiation where the agency of negotiating is managed on a scale of calibrated accommodation and opposition (Nnaemeka, 2004). An African understandable rejoinder to the Western universalism of gender is brought to the fore by Oyewumi in the criticism of importing categories without scrutiny, a warning that the story takes after in its fresh concern with the textures of Nigerian life (Oyewumi, 1997/2020).

The narrator's reflections on changed dispositions after return, shifts in tone, audience, and risk, signal that voice must be continually recalibrated across fields of power (Adichie, 2014, *passim*). Return asks whether the voice perfected over one field of racial-political struggle can speak with (not over) others. The process of negotiation proves to be a feminist approach that maintains critiques while opposing epistemic Imperialism.

#### Synthesis

In embodied scenes, digital discourse, and institutional negotiations, the novel demonstrates that feminist voice and racial identity are not two separate tracks, but one, an intertwined process. Embodiment provides the ground on which racialities designate and regulate the subject; the blog offers counter knowledges of renaming and revision; mimicry and hybridity disclose the wobbly alliances of identification; and revisit stresses that voice is situation-specific and morally responsible. Incorporating postcolonial feminism, embodiment in the Fanonian vein, hybridity as exemplified by Bhabha, and intersectionality, *Americanah* performs racial identity through a feminist voice that is embodied, discursive, and yet conscious of history, not only as critique, negotiation, and care.

#### Discussion

##### Positioning the Findings within Recent Scholarship.

The most recent studies provide useful but incomplete information about *Americanah*. In the process of revealing the co-implication of colonial legacies with gendered oppression, postcolonial feminist readings of the novel demonstrate how it displaces the myth of meritocratic mobility (Mustafa, 2025; Adeyelu & Roux, 2023). Hair politics and the female body's embodiment resist depicting how power is embodied through the materialisation of a body to the extent of everyday practice and how those practices can be redefined to act as agency (Kmita, 2023; Adeyelu & Roux, 2023). A second cluster revolves around the concept of racial identity, where interpretations of mimicry, hybridity, and white progressivism identify and track the ambivalent requisitions that govern institutional and intimate lives, and criticise the liberal regime of managing difference (Mirmotahari, 2025; Rosenqvist, 2023; Ponnudurai & A., 2025). A third line puts a voice in the forefront, such as the blog established by Ifemelu as the ground for counter-discourse, protest speech, and identity capitalisation of a type that is both digital/analogous (Aor, 2022; Ere-Bestman, 2024). Complementary contributions offer more intersectional insights into Blackness, highlighting the complex interplay between race, gender, class, and Language in diasporic settings (Mulyani and Putri, 2024). They refocus on return as not a feminist resolution, but as an experimental field of belonging and responsibility (Suarez-Rodriguez, 2024).

### **What These Studies Establish, and Where They Stop.**

Collectively, the literature affirms that *Americanah* represents a rich field of embodiment theorising, identity brooding, and resistance. But they tend to file along quite distinct lines: feminist theory concentrates on body/agency with little incorporation of racial identity theories; identity-driven analyses theorize mimicry and hybridity without considerable consideration of feminist voice; and blog-based studies light on counter-discourse but tend to Bank the constitutive role of coloniality and intersectional power (Mustafa, 2025; Mirmotahari, 2025; Aor, 2022; Ere-Bestman, 2024). These differences are, in short, summarised as the tripartite strengths of feminism: postcolonial, racial identity, and feminist voice, which were previously handled mostly as isolated forces.

### **The Gap This Article Targets.**

Through the interplay of voice, address, embodiment as in the hair and body work, and the scene construction of workplaces, intimacy, and the homecoming, the literature fails to present a cohesive, expandable account of how *Americanah* co-produces the racial identity and the feminist voice under the postcolonial conditions, at the level of form. To be precise, the existing literature rarely demonstrates the textual and contextual construction of voice as an outcome of multiple networks of racial and gendered governance, or how this voice, once created, recodes racial knowledge and rearranges dominance in spaces (Rosenqvist, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Mirmotahari, 2025).

### **What This Study Found (Answering the Research Question).**

By conducting theory-driven close readings, it becomes apparent that *Americanah* formulates and mediates racial identity through a feminist voice that is both embodied and discursive simultaneously. To begin with, embodied identity as a speaking practice can be observed in salon and hair scenes, as bodily accommodations and rejections become counter-pedagogies that write agency into the everyday governance regime (Kmita, 2023). Second, the blog acts as counter-discourse, whereby it turns observation into narrative authority and creates a hybridisation of genres, including confession, reportage, and satire, to occupy a third space of critique (Bhabha, 1994; hooks, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989). Third, the replication of workplace and intimate scenes in performance indicates the uncanny miracle of identification applicable to both belief and difference, such that the racial management of capability and civility is unsurprisingly revealed (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990; Rosenqvist, 2023). Lastly, the chapters on Lagos revisit the reconfiguration of voice, which is locally situated (hence analogical) and ethically comparative, following the nego-feminist avenues of negotiation and the critiques of Western gender universals by Africans (Nnaemeka, 2004; Oyewumi, 1997/2020; Suarez-Rodriguez, 2024). To conclude, the novel twists identity and voice: the feminist voice is not only an expression but an analytic practice that delivers knowledge on the topics of race and power.

### **What This Study Adds to Knowledge.**

The article presents three key advances. Theoretically, it suggests a tripartite model that combines postcolonial feminism, racial identity theory, and feminist voice to conceptualise how identity is defined through discourse and embodiment in a single act. Methodologically, it chooses to operationalise this integration within the activity of close reading, examining the operation of voice as a method in its mobilisation of lexis, address, stance, and scene selection as avenues of intersectional power. This approach provides a transferable protocol of analysis within voice. Textually, it presents a synthesised version of four critical narrative locations (hair/salon, blog, work/intimacy, and return), which are interdependent rather than autonomous themes (Adeyelu & Roux, 2023; Kmita, 2023; Rosenqvist, 2023; Suarez Rodriguez, 2024).

### **How This Study Differs from Prior Work.**

In contrast to isolated dimension studies (i.e., hair politics or blog voice), all three dimensions (i.e., embodiment, discourse, and identity positioning) are maintained throughout this explanatory article within a single explanatory framework. It re-contextualises the blog as not merely an expression, but also as a form of knowledge production, recoding the racial common sense, associating hair politics with institutional pressures around respectability, and seeing return as a re-tuning of a voice, as opposed to a plot resolution. It has therefore integrated postcolonial feminist sensibility (Mustafa, 2025; Adeyelu and Roux, 2023), studies on racial identity (Mirmotahari, 2025; Rosenqvist, 2023), and diverse voices into a single narration.

### **Did We Fill the Gap and Answer the Research Question?**

Yes. This work offers a combined explanation that earlier work does not provide by demonstrating, through a series of scenes, how feminist voice is produced within, rather than outside, intersecting regimes of race and gender, and how, once formed, the voice reconfigures recognition and belonging. It responds to the



research question because it reveals that *Americanah* negotiates racial identity through a feminist voice that is simultaneously embodied, discursive, and context-sensitive.

### Implications.

In the context of postcolonial feminist criticism, the results confirm the necessity of conceiving voice as a method or practice that produces knowledge through speaking from the margins and recoding norms in the third space (hooks, 2000; Bhabha, 1994). In the context of diaspora studies, the findings suggest that the term 'returning' is not a fixed destination, but rather a process of periodic realignment (Suarez-Rodriguez, 2024). In pedagogical terms, the analysis inspires modules in the classroom, where hair politics (embodied voice) counter the politics of the blog (counter-discourse) to educate students on the Language and practice of identity construction.

### Limitations and Next Steps.

The idea of generalizability- as is the case with a single-text, interpretive study- is analytic, not statistical. Potential applicants include the triadic model over a comparative collection (e.g., *White Teeth*, *Homegoing*), where they could potentially implement the digital-voice study to multi-text blogs and archives and further test the transportability of feminist voice across platforms and contexts (Ponnudurai & A., 2025; Mulyani & Putri, 2024).

### Results, Contributions, Recommendations

As indicated in the close reading of this study, *Americanah* employs a feminist language that articulates and negotiates a discursively embodied, contextual, and sensitive racial identity through the continuous use of a feminist voice. To begin with, the hair sequences and the salon show that the identity is lived as a material and policed socially: the decision concerning the style of the head hair, with a choice between natural and relaxed hair, inscribes access to employment, sexuality, and respectability, making the body a place of racialized governance and gender norms intersections (Kmita, 2023; Adeyelu & Roux, 2023). Second, the blog written by Ifemelu is a sort of counter-discourse: addressing the readers as non-American Blacks, the blog in question disrupts racial common sense by hybridising confession, reportage, and satire to occupy a space somewhere between criticism and reportage (Bhabha, 1994; hooks, 2000). Third, the workplace and sex scenes, as acts of mimicry and hybridity, are contracts of conditional recognition, the same-not-quite as depicted by mirror play, in which they express how institutions institutionalise difference in a liberal guise (Rosenqvist, 2023; Hall, 1990). Finally, the Lagosification of the voice is an open ending, rather than a narrative closure, and it reflects the erasure of gender texts by Westernised universalism, as well as the nego-feminist bargaining and African feminist criticism (Nnaemeka, 2004; Oyewumi, 1997/2020). Altogether, the findings substantiate that voice is not merely a form of expression of identity, where it is too late; instead, voice itself is the process through which identity becomes recognisable, arguable, and ethically responsible across sites.

The article contributes to knowledge in three overlapping ways. Theoretically, it presents a triumvirate concept that integrates postcolonial feminism (subalternity, gendered coloniality), racial identity theory (embodiment, hybridity), and feminist voice (intersectionality, speaking from the margins) on the same platform, forming an explanatory parabola. The way embodiment, discourse, and positioning can work together in co-constructing subjectivity within the same textual moments allows the model to avoid parallel-theme readings and reveals why identity and voice cannot be separated analytically (Spivak, 1988; Fanon, 1952; Crenshaw, 1989). The research methodology develops this bundling methodologically by following an explicit procedure: theory-guided sampling of scenes, circular coding and memoing, and triangulation of textual data, hypotheses, and recent analysis, so that conclusions are detectable and competing interpretations are directly challenged. This renders voice as a method transportable to other diasporic texts and the classrooms. Interpretively, the study brings together four narrative sites, hair/salon, blog, work/intimacy, and return, to a coherent account of how *Americanah* manufactures authority through male performance as a counter-pedagogy, blog as a knowledge production mimicry, a diagnosis of liberal racial governance, and return as an ethical re-tuning. By doing so, this addresses the research problem and fills the identified gap in recent literature, which has considered postcolonial feminism, racial identity, and feminist voice as concepts that mostly run in parallel (Mirmotahari, 2025; Rosenqvist, 2023; Aor, 2022; Ere-Bestman, 2024).

Based on such contributions, research, pedagogical, and scope recommendations can be given. In terms of research, the triadic construct should be tested comparatively between modern African and diaspora novels (e.g., *Americanah* with *White Teeth* or *Homegoing* and vice versa), the question here being: how voice moves

across genres and media but remains locally tuned. Researchers may also take the study of digital discourse further by comparing the serial forms of blog/essay collections in fiction with the actual forms being aped by blogging Afro-diasporas in the real world to chart points of continuity and discontinuity in tone, address, and audience reception. When practical, mixed-methods improvements of the sort provided by light-touch stylistic profiling of stance markers or addressivity are compatible with interpretive assertions, without usurping them. In pedagogy, assignments can be modeled with a combination of what Arndt and Cormack term an embodied voice (hair politics) and a digital voice (blog posts) to show how identity is deployed through practice and action rather than a description of it; reflective questions could draw on how such a passage functions to perform or challenge racialized norm through diction, modality, and focalization (Hall, 1990; hooks, 2000). Lastly, in terms of scope, the scholars need to remain sensitive to both edition variation as well as to the moral implications of importing categories: nego-feminist negotiation and African gender epistemologies remind us that what we count as a voice and as agency is context-sensitive at all times (Nnaemeka, 2004; Oyewumi, 1997/2020). Overall, the findings of the research developed within a holistic approach of voice and identity provide a transferable teaching and analysis pattern as well as the affirmation of the fact that *Americanah* not only criticises the circumstances in which racialised women engage in speech but also recreates the ambience by which racialised women talk and get listened to.

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