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## Exploring Hybridity Causing Identity Crisis in Adichie's *Americanah*: A Postcolonial Study

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the intricate dynamics of transcultural identity crises, with a focus on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel "Americanah." The transcultural identity crisis, a global issue, is mostly caused by the rise of globalization, migration, and the existence of numerous cultural groups. Many people experience confusion and alienation when they contact with persons from different cultural origins; they struggle to balance the influences of the foreign culture with their own conventional cultural identity to achieve this goal, this study employs postcolonial concepts to examine the complex identities that give birth to severe identity crises, particularly Erik Erikson's study of role versus identity confusion and Bhabha's concept of hybridization. The current study addresses the challenges faced by immigrants in other nations, revealing their experiences and sufferings, through the use of an interpretative qualitative methodology. It also purports to highlights the issues with identification, cultural adaptation, and assimilation. Moreover, this research explores how the main characters trace back to their roots to resist marginalization in the United States of America, indicating a route of resistance and introspection. The results show that hybridity causes transcultural identity crises when people attempt to reconcile a variety of cultural backgrounds, identities, and values.

**Keywords:** Hybridity, Identity crisis, Marginalization, Resistance, Self-discovery

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## 1. Introduction:

The idea of identity has grown more fluid, dynamic, and complex in a society that is becoming more and more interconnected. This complex environment is explored in depth in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's critically acclaimed book *Americanah*, which follows characters Ifemelu, Obinze, and Dike as they navigate the interconnections of ethnicity, culture, and identity. This book offers a rich tapestry for exploring identity and cultural hybridity, showing how people make sense of their contradictory histories in various social settings.

Professionals and entrepreneurs from Nigeria migrated in large numbers to the stable and prosperous West during the 1980s and 1990s, especially to America and England. Though the subject has been widely covered in the media and in society, there aren't many literary accounts of those contemporary emigrants' experiences. In 2013, the topic of contemporary migration made a significant literary debut in Nigerian literature with the publication of *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a book notable for its cross-cultural themes. The protagonist, Ifemelu, and other young Nigerians are escaping their country's society in the 1990s because there aren't many opportunities for them, and Adichie takes us inside their makeshift houses in her third novel. This study presents the goal of the novel by concentrating on the disastrous effects of exile and emigration on the daily lives and personal identities of the emigrants, as well as by discussing hybridity, and mimicry and how these concepts might be understood in relation to transcultural problems of identity. Transcultural author Chimamanda Adichie seems to advance the main concept of cross-border multicultural encounters in *Americanah*. In their

writing, transcultural authors explore and fuse several contexts of culture, frequently crossing disparate customs, tongues, and views on the world. By providing distinct viewpoints influenced by their varied experiences, their creative techniques frequently question and enhance literary environments. Owing to the conversational style of their writing, it is preferable to view it as a dialogue that attempts to foster connection and advance peace and stability across country borders and cultural divides. The connections between Nigerian and Western perspectives are frequently explored in Adichie's works. She offers a nuanced view on the African diaspora in "Americanah," where she explores ethnicity, cultural identity, and the immigrant journey via a Nigerian lens.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian author, was born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria. Her second book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), was much praised for its portrayal of the destruction brought on by the Nigerian Civil War. She won the Orange Prize for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for *Purple Hibiscus*, her second book. One of *The New York Times'* Top Ten Best Books of 2013 was her 2013 book *Americanah*, which also received the US National Book Critics Circle Award. The main characters of Adichie's 2013 sociopolitical novel *Americanah*, who was born in Nigeria, battle issues of deprivation, imitation, invisible status, and conformity, but they also have a tremendous desire for learning and leading an honest life towards others and themselves.

Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman, moves to the US to study *Americanah* at a university. The story of Ifemelu's romance with her high school friend Obinze is told through the lens of the

novel, which chronicles her life in both nations. Prejudice and how people of colour are portrayed in popular media have received a lot of criticism in *Americanah*. Adichie aims to end the double colonization of Black women by showcasing the experiences of these women as immigrants in the United States. Obinze does not take into account the sufferings he went through as a consequence of the deception he had to do to obtain a phony identification document and a bogus green card wedding. Obinze grew up in a thoroughly middle-class household and has the wherewithal to live honorably in Nigeria. In part, he abandons Kosi at the very end of the novel to prevent Buchi from seeing her parents' deceit; once more, he prefers the horrible reality over the entertaining illusion. The African historical and cultural setting, together with its importance in global racial politics, served as Adichie's impetus for *Americanah*. Adichie's journey of self-discovery, influenced by her colonial background and awareness of the disdain of Black men's ancestry, demonstrates patriotic qualities that share satisfaction in heritage of culture. Her work demonstrates how Black immigrants are prevented from fully assimilating into American society by white racist systems, which maintain them in a condition of constant flux. Adichie explains how pessimism and humiliation can serve as the catalyst for immigrants' desire for their home country.

This study mainly focuses on the hybridity and Transcultural identity crisis to better understand how people see themselves as foreigners from a postcolonial approach. The goal of this study is to examine how Adichie's treatment of the underlying concepts of cultural hybridity and identity quest in *Americanah* contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of

being an immigrant. This study aims to shed light on the intricacies of identity development in a society where cultural distinctions are becoming more complicated by analyzing the characters' travels, the novel's narrative tactics, and its socio-cultural background.

## 1.1 Statement of the problem

Foreigners, mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Niger, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Argentina, etc., were denigrated and degraded by Americans. Everywhere outside of Europe is seen as less valuable, dangerous, and inferior. They considered them to be untamed, innocent, mysterious, primitive, and uncivilized. Any kind of differentiation, be it racial, religious, or educational, has the potential to result in discrimination. Even if foreigners from America attempt to integrate into their society and accept its language, customs, and way of life, they are still viewed as outsiders and marginalized. In America, it is extremely difficult for Black people to survive. In the novel *Americanah*, Adichie depicts the protagonists' horrific experiences with racial prejudice, marginalisation, generalisation, and isolation.

## 1.2 Significance of the Research

This research aims to shed insight on the identity dilemma that migrants in America experience in relation to the concept of hybridity (mimicry, assimilation, adaptability). Its goal is to examine the primary characters, Ifemelu Obinze and Dike, from several angles, including as their experiences as foreigners in America and the tensions that arise between two distinct cultures.

The purpose of this research is to examine how identity and alienation concerns damage social order and encourage hatred and aggression. Anxiety and identity conflicts lead to discrimination, prejudice, and conflict, which in turn cause depression. It is imperative that academics address this crucial issue. Its goal is to look into how Adichie, via her healing story that emphasizes the complexity of identity, advances the idea of a new cultural environment for Africans both domestically and internationally.

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

In order to achieve the objectives, this research seeks to answer the following questions.

- 1) In what ways does Adichie represent the various forms of hybridity and transcultural identity crisis through the protagonists?
- 2) What are the reasons behind Ifemelu's return to Nigeria, if she measures her African identity according to American culture?

### **1.4 Delimitations of the study**

The study is delimited to the postcolonial novel *Americanah* by Adichie. Furthermore, Bhabha's postcolonial theory (1994) and Erikson's psychosocial theory (1950) has been employed as the primary interpretative frameworks to analyze the data.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

To question or undermine the monolithic and Eurocentric vision of East vs. West, post-colonialism has recently emerged as a varied field of study. The binary conceptions of colonizer/colonized, West/Third World, are somewhat questioned when Ashcroft et al. (1989) critique the word postcolonial to express different facets of colonial experiences. He argues that in the Postcolonial setting, location is crucial since it shapes the different aspects of the "colonial encounter" (Ashcroft et al., 2006). This means that to identify the artificial patterns of power relations at work in the Postcolonial discourse, Postcolonialism can be viewed through the lenses of "cultural diversity".

In 1994, the book "The Location of Culture" by Indian-British postcolonial philosopher Homi K. Bhabha was published. This masterwork investigates the complex connections between culture, identity, and power within the theoretical framework of postcolonial societies. Bhabha is well-known for his unique methods of exposing the processes of colonialism and the emergence of hybrid identities. Among other things, Bhabha's literature is renowned for its thorough examination of transcultural contrasts. Bhabha covers a wide range of topics and theories related to cultural diversity and hybridity in the book.

Famous social psychologist Erik H. Erikson's research has often been linked to transcultural identity crises. He discussed this concept in "Identity: Youth and Crisis," a 1968 publication. Erikson examines the various challenges and crises that people encounter while investigating

how cultural and societal contexts might affect how an individual forms their sense of self. A transcultural identity crisis occurs when an individual finds it difficult to integrate a variety of cultural origins in order to develop a true sense of self in a multicultural and diverse society.

Identity versus role confusion, as defined by Erik Erikson, is the fifth developmental stage that is marked by self-reflection and a deeper understanding of one's own objectives, principles, and worldview. If a young adult's search for identification fails, he or she will probably feel insecure about themselves. Additionally, they could indulge in detrimental, imbalanced activities or pastimes. Two groups of people that consistently display ego dispersal and personal uncertainty are those with serious psychological disorders and persistent offenders.

### **3. Related Researches**

Mwangi, E. (2014) examines the practical effects of this hybridity in Ifemelu's life. Ifemelu's dual identity, according to Mwangi, is an ongoing process of assimilation and negotiation rather than just a mash-up of cultures. Her capacity to travel between cultures and take on a bicultural viewpoint enhances her awareness of herself and other societies.

Johnson, A. (2015) investigates how Ifemelu's perception of herself is impacted by these cultural factors. Johnson contends that Ifemelu's sense of isolation and being different is exacerbated by the micro-aggressions that she experiences. She is forced by these encounters to reevaluate and face her identity in a society that is sensitive to racial issues.



To elaborate on this, Smith, R. (2016) looks at Ifemelu's use of posting blogs as a tool for identity. development and self-expression. Ifemelu uses her blog to discuss what she has experienced and offer criticism of American culture, which aids in her understanding of who she is as a foreigner in her own country. According to Smith, Ifemelu uses blogging as a means of treatment to help her work through her identity issue since it gives her a place to reflect and define herself.

In Americanah, Nguyen, T. (2017) investigates the idea of "otherness." According to Nguyen, Ifemelu is in an unusual situation since she is a Black who is not wholly appreciated by White Americans and is not completely embraced by African Americans. Her identity dilemma is exacerbated by this twofold sensation of exclusion since she has to deal with intricate ethnic and social relations.

According to Adeyemi (2018), Ifemelu experienced inverse culture shock and finds it difficult to reconcile her experiences as a United States citizen with her Nigerian background. According to Adeyemi, Ifemelu feels alienated from her native Nigeria since she is not compatible with the societal and cultural standards of her new country.

Ogunyemi, S. (2019) delves into the subject of being at home and identity in America. According to Ogunyemi, Ifemelu's voyage is an attempt to find an environment where she may reconcile her two identities. As she tries to integrate her American encounters with her Nigerian heritage, her return to Nigeria represents the healing of her fractured identity.

Asma, S. L.(2020) uses postcolonial theory and ecocriticism to explore the protagonist's struggles, especially those related to the new American society and how the environment impacts her. Our investigation reveals that the primary character, Ifemelu, struggles to reconcile her immigrant status in a foreign country. This research further shows that Ifemelu eventually decides to return to Nigeria, where she experiences homecoming and romantic fulfilment.

Juan Martínez, N. (2020) focuses on the different types of discrimination Ifemelu experiences to investigate the emergence of her global identity. Finally, he seeks to bring attention to the ways the novel portrays the majority of black immigrant women's present circumstances in the developing world by denouncing the mistreatment of this excluded population. Ramzan and Khan (2019) have said that identity is a power issue. Ramzan et al. (2023) have expressed that motivation for identical is a trigger. Ramzan et al (2023) confirm that the style of the author is a core element in literary writing. Chen and Ramzan (2024) have expressed that motivation is found in learning for identical use. Ramzan and Alahmadi (2024) have elucidated the use of Ramzan, & Alahmadi, (2024) have confirmed cultural relevancy in identity.

It is clear from the discussion above that there are various viewpoints on identity crises. This identity-related topic has been studied from several perspectives by various researchers. But this study employs critical postcolonial techniques, such as Erikson's role versus confusion regarding identity and Bhabha's theory of hybridity, to investigate the way hybridity triggers transcultural dilemmas of identity in an innovative manner.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1 Hybridity and Transcultural identity crises through the main characters

The idea of hybridity, as defined by Homi K. Bhabha (1994), is problematic and constructive at the same time since it subverts power structures, questions established wisdom, and suggests that the coloniser is never really in control of the spoken language of colonial rule. To better integrate into their host society, the migrants are required to work within and adjust to their new way of life. As a result, they must combine elements of their home culture with the cultures of their new nation in order to develop a hybridized identity. Because they do not conform to the standards of either social structure, they are excluded in both their ancestral and host societies and go through an identity crisis as the outcome of their fusion. Bhabha explains the concept of hybridity in his book *The Location of Culture* as,

“Hybridization is a sign of colonial power, productivity, changing power, and immutability; it is the name of the procedure of reversing dominance through negative strategies. Hybridity is the treatment of colonial identity assumptions through repeated unfair identity effects. It shows the necessary distortion and dislocation of all places of prejudice and domination”

(Bhabha, 1994, p. 112).

#### **4.1.1 Identity crisis in Ifemelu's character:**

As identity is constantly changing along with unforeseen turns, Bhabha describes it as 'hybrid'.

He rejects the idea that immigrants' native cultures create their lifelong identities.

In Adichie's novel "Americanah," Ifemelu, the protagonist, embodies a complex concept that involves hybridity. In the present circumstance, hybridity refers to Ifemelu manoeuvring her existence between Nigeria and America by combining her unique identities with many cultures and experiences. Novel depicts that the protagonist, Ifemelu, manages her life as a cultural integration in the United States of America. The concept of "cultural hybridity" refers to the way in which different cultural elements may come together to develop a complex, multifaceted identity. The natural, inherent identities that highlight the amalgamation, negotiating, and absorbing of numerous cultural characteristics are opposed by the idea of hybridity. People's battles to create and maintain their identities in a society often imposes rigid categories based on variables like cultural background, nationality or various other variables may be represented by the "decided labour." Even still, the ongoing existence of these societal structures may make it feel "inhumane," highlighting the discomfort and sense of injustice that can arise when someone's freedom of choice has been restricted by external circumstances. As mentioned in the following lines,

“Twelve years of decided labour,

It is unconscionable” (Adichie, 2013, p. 46).

The blending of various cultural elements to produce new identities that subvert preconceived notions of identity and belonging is known as hybridity, as defined by Bhabha. This hybridity is demonstrated by the main character's challenges with her Nigerian identity while studying in the US. The partial scholarship, which represents her engagement with the US educational system while representing her Nigerian origins, draws attention to the mixed nature of her experience. She initially finds it difficult to fit in, but eventually she gets accepted as a citizen, wins a Princeton unity, and starts a popular blog discussing race. She constantly feels alone and experiences brief but severe bouts of depression. Finding a job in America to support Ifemelu's ongoing bills is proving to be challenging. In the words of Bhabha, an inconsistency between one's inner convictions and exterior beliefs which is often exacerbated by cultural dislocation causes an identity crisis.

The protagonist of the novel finds herself in a precarious circumstance between two divergent cultures, which is further complicated by her inability to pay for her scholastic ambitions entirely. This leads to emotions of alienation and identity confusion. In this perspective, Bhabha's concept of the "third space" is equally relevant. As hybrid identities emerge and challenge dominant narratives, this "third space" becomes a forum for resistance and cultural discussion. Thirdly, the protagonist grapples with her sense of self and her sense of identity as a result of her attempt to balance her Nigerian background with American educational norms.

The novel's protagonist's unstable situation between two distinct cultures is highlighted by her. As described in the following lines,

“But the scholarship is partial. Where will I find  
the money to pay the balance? I can’t work with  
student visa”(Adichie, 2013, p. 105).

She laid a rug on the floor and fell asleep at Aunt Uju's residence. This is not what she expected to happen in America. Adichie illustrates that this contempt for American wickedness permeates immigrant identity. Ifemelu is thrown into the harsh realities of being an immigrant right away; despite having a meagre scholarship, her student visa keeps her from being able to work, therefore her sole source of cash is illegally making use of a social security card. Aunt Uju talks about Okonkwo, her partner. Identity crisis stems from inflexible identification categories, and Bhabha discusses this concept as well. The speaker pleads Ngozi to use her insurance card, giving the impression that she is in need or desperate possibly due to a lack of money or an established identity. The use of someone else's identity card is a manifestation of an identity crisis, where individuals resort to dubious tactics to navigate formal processes or avoid possibilities. Taking on another person's identity illustrates how identity is fluid and unclear in the face of immigration and cultural disruption. As highlighted in the following lines,

“I don’t know if you remember Ngozi Okonkwo? She’s now  
an American citizen and she has gone back to Nigeria for a while  
to start a business. I begged her and she agreed to let you work  
her social security card”(Adichie, 2013, p. 106).

According to Erik Erikson's concept, people undergo many phases of mental and social growth, each of which is distinguished by a primary conflict or barrier that needs to be overcome in order

for their personality growth to proceed effectively. Although the protagonist's hairstyle, braids is an integral element of her own identity, she feels under pressure to change it in order to comply with prevailing ideals of professionalism. Erikson's identification versus role uncertainty stage corresponds to this struggle between one's own sense of self as well as societal demands. Since Europeans consider braids to be inappropriate, instantly declares that she must eliminate them and straighten her hair for her job interviews. Ifemelu is baffled by this. In response to Ifemelu's inquiry about if any doctors in America had braided hair, she answered. Kemi's advice highlights the external elements that can impact an individual's self-perception. Most likely, it is based on cultural norms or individual experiences. It suggests that some aspects of a person's identity, such as their hairstyle, may be seen as improper in specific contexts, which may lead to identity confusion or a sense of conflict between a person's actual self and the roles they are expected to play. This situation raises questions about power dynamics, prevalent cultural beliefs, and the ways that societal norms may marginalize particular identities or representations. As mentioned in the given lines,

“I have to take my braids out for my interviews and relax my hair. Kemi told me that i shouldn't wear braids to the interview If you have braids, they will think you are unprofessional”(Adichie, 2013, p. 119).

People battle with their perceptions of self and social identity in their adolescence and early adulthood, as described by Erikson's theory of role versus identity confusion. Inadequate management of identity uncertainty may lead to an unanticipated desire for conformity to particular roles or ideals as a result of the success incentive. Erikson emphasizes how important it is to explore and discover to form a solid sense of self, particularly in light of outside pressures. As mentioned in the following lines,

“I have told you what they told me. You are in a country that  
is not your country You do what you have to do if you want  
to succeed”(Adichie, 2013, p. 119).

Ifemelu is under pressure to live up to social norms in both Nigerian and American culture. She has struggled to strike a balance between traditional Nigerian traditions and modern Western ideals, which has caused her feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Ifemelu has a difficult time deciding whether to fit in with the American culture or maintain her cultural identity. She struggles to be true to herself while she gets used to her new environment.

### **4.1.2 Identity crisis in Obinze’s character**

The second main character is a young Nigerian man who seemed calm, perceptive, and clever. Raised by his mother, a university professor, he is extremely well-read and has a strong fascination with America. In comparison to Ifemelu's achievements in America, Obinze's journey



in London is almost entirely unsuccessful. Since Obinze is an undocumented immigrant and feels invisible in London, Adichie was able to explore and criticize the culture of England, which made for a very challenging time for him. Obinze's desire to follow social norms and regulations can be assessed using Erik Erikson's phases of psychological growth, as demonstrated by his eventual readiness to pay two hundred pounds after meeting the girl.

According to Erikson, early in life, people grapple with the psychosocial conundrum of intimacy against isolation. They want to establish meaningful connections as they shape their identities in the community. Obinze clearly yearns for intimacy and connection based on his willingness to spend a substantial sum of money to prove his sincerity. However, his decision to wait to give her the larger sum until after they had met suggests a cautious strategy that strikes a balance between the need for closeness and a sense of confidence and sovereignty. As highlighted in the following lines,

“Obinze handed over two hundred pounds, all in twenty-pound

notes that he had taken out of the cash machine over two days.

It was a deposit, to prove he was serious. Later, after he met the

girl, he would pay two thousand pounds”(Adichie, 2013, p. 228).

Specifically, Bhabha's concept of hybridity draws attention to how dominant and subordinate cultures interact, with a focus on how the dominant civilization shapes the "other." This

demonstrates the way that Americans' fear of terrorism has made them perceive foreigners as the "other," as outsiders who could endanger the country. This viewpoint creates a power dynamic by associating foreignness with threat, which diminishes and evaluates other civilizations in light of American society. Americans' fear of terrorist acts leads to ambiguity towards foreignness, which makes people fearful while also demanding cultural diversity for societies. This ambivalence makes immigrant young men seem exotic and hazardous which pushes them away from mainstream American culture and devalues them. As mentioned in the following lines,

“It is the terrorism fears,” his mother said. “The Americans

are now averse to foreign young men.”(Adichie, 2013, p. 233).

The idea of going to London opens up a "third space" for the person—a hybrid area where fresh perspectives and opportunities may arise. This third zone is not the person's home nation or destination (America in this case), but rather a space of transition and transformation. Bhabha emphasizes in Adichie's novel the complexities of immigration, identity development, and intercultural experiences. It focuses on how individuals in a world growing more interconnected by the day maintain their own identities, negotiate multicultural settings, and search for opportunities to move about and become more self-aware. Oftentimes, immigrants provide a more positive picture of their lives to their families back home. Due to the extreme idealization of Western countries, immigrants are reluctant to disappoint their families when they come

across the grim realities of their new homeland. This is the novel's third extended period of quiet and seclusion. As highlighted in the following lines,

“That should get you a six month visa. You can stay with  
nicholas in Landon. See what you can do with your life.  
May be you can get to America from there. I know that  
your mind is no longer here”(Adichie, 2013, p. 234).

Because of the difficulties in managing numerous identities and the intricate interaction of various cultural influences, hybrid migrants those who traverse borders and blend cultures frequently suffer from an identity crisis.

### **4.1.3 Identity crisis in Dike’s character**

As stated by the psycho-historian Erik Erikson in his Construct of Ego Identity, "Identity is a process located in the core of the individual; and yet also in the core of his or her communal culture, hence making a connection between community and individual" (156) .Identity versus role confusion, as defined by Erik Erikson, is the fifth developmental stage that is marked by self-reflection and a deeper understanding of one's own objectives, principles, and worldview. Uncertainty about oneself is likely to plague a young adult who fails in their quest for identity. Additionally, they could indulge in detrimental, imbalanced activities or pastimes. Two groups of people that consistently display ego dispersal and personal confusion are those with severe

psychological disorders and persistent offenders. The medical demonstration of identity dispersal can lead to suicidal thoughts or actions in its most severe form. The past few decades have seen an increase in the spread of identities among teenagers, a phenomenon that has been extensively researched and appears to be connected to the rise in adolescent suicide attempts.

Dike is a wonderful example of how important it is to embrace one's history. Due to Auntie Uju, his mother, Dike lacks roots during his adolescence and is unable to discover his father's genuine origins or develop a Nigerian identity. This estrangement leads to disorientation because of various identities that those around him force upon him. Since White Americans still hold the same discriminatory presumptions about Black people, Dike still has to bear all of his baggage despite Auntie Uju's frequent assurances that he is not Black due to the misconceptions connected with African heritage in America. Dike made one attempt at suicide when he was going through identity turmoil. Auntie Uju receives advice from Ifemelu that Dike should be allowed to return to Nigeria with her. Dike was able to fully recover himself and return to Nigeria after knowing who he really was with Ifemelu's assistance. According to the major characters, this study has looked at how cultural integration and embracing western society's values (hybridity) are the reasons of transcultural identity crises and identity uncertainty.

People frequently find it difficult to describe who they are during adolescence as they try to understand their identity, values, and social standing. Erikson described this stage as the conflict between developing a sense of self and being unsure of one's role. People may become confused about their roles when they struggle to develop a clear and consistent sense of who they are,

leaving them unclear about their goals, values, and worldview. Dike's inquiry on the sharing of his uncle's name prompts a more thorough examination of the identity-creation process. In this case, Dike's uncertainties seem to point to concerns about his identity and the potential impact of his family ties on it. As explained in the following lines,

“This time he didn’t ask why he has my name, he asked  
if he has my name because his father did not love  
him” (Adichie, 2013, p.171).

Since Dike has physical restrictions, his mother is concerned about how others would see him. This relates to the search for identity development since Dike may be struggling to strike a balance between how he sees himself and how other people see him. Dike struggles to define his identity in the face of societal norms and expectations, and his mother is offended by the principal's assertion that he is not seen as unique. The principal's response, which seems to highlight Dike's unique hardships and limitations, further adds to this misunderstanding. As highlighted in the following lines,

“Look at him, just because he looks different, when he does  
what other little boys do, it becomes aggression. Then the  
principal told me, ‘Dike is just like one of us, we don’t see  
him as different at all.’ What kind of pretending is that? I

told him to look at my son. There are only two of them in the  
  
whole school”(Adichie, 2013, p. 172).

The group leader Haley's refusal to wear sunscreen raises potential questions about Dike's sovereignty and sense of self. As sunblock is typically associated with protection from injury, Haley's refusal of it from him while distributing it to others is a subtle way of hinting to the dike's perceived shortcomings and needs in relation to their friends. Because of this situation, Dike could start to mistrust their own assessments and self-image and get confused and anxious about his identity. As indicated in the following lines,

“so how was camp?” “Good.” A pause. “My group leader,  
  
Haley? She gave sunscreen to everyone but she wouldn't  
  
Give me any. She said I didn't need it.”(Adichie, 2013, p. 183).

His uncertainty about his true identity and his difficulty identifying his own name are clear indicators of the character's confusion over his identity. This demonstrates the challenge of developing an identity in a setting where individuals may simultaneously reside in multiple cultural contexts, which can lead to conflict or a lack of confidence in one's own identity. The dike's uncertainty regarding his identification reflects Bhabha's notion of the "third space." By engaging with people who are close to him or who might be able to shed light on his past, Dike is presumably on a self-discovery journey, hoping to learn more about who he really is. The

confusion and unease might be related to by those who are struggling with their identities. Teens commonly experience self-doubt, particularly when they are exposed to novel circumstances and points of view. Erikson's concept of role vs identity confusion is most appropriately exemplified by the protagonist's seeming internal identity conflicts. As shows in the following lines,

“How can he say he does not know what he is? Since

When is he conflicted? And even his name is difficult?”

“You should talk to him, Aunty. If that is how he feels,

then that is how he feels”(Adichie, 2013, p. 217).

Dike's identity struggle is made worse by his loneliness and sense of alienation in America. Even though he was brought up overseas, he feels cut off from both American society and his Nigerian ancestry. This lonely existence causes him to feel depressed and despondent, which ultimately leads him to attempt suicide. As mentioned in the following lines,

“He took an overdose of pills and went down to the

basement and lay down on the couch there” Aunty

Uju said, her voice cracked with her own disbelief”(Adichie, 2013, p. 365).

Because being an immigrant in the US carries judgement and prejudice, Aunty Uju keeps Dike's true identity a secret from him. After learning of the challenges and discrimination her kid would

face due to his origins and cultural heritage, Auntie Uju makes the decision to pretend to be someone else in order to protect him. Because of his identity issue brought on by this act of adaption, he tried suicide. As mention in the following lines when ifemelu told auntie uju that,

“You told him what he wasn’t but you didn’t

tell him what he was”(Adichie, 2013, p. 380).

The theme of going back to one's roots and examining questions of self-identity and belonging recurs frequently in the book. After residing in the US for a while, Ifemelu decided to return to Nigeria in order to strengthen her ties to her own country. Dike's return trip could be interpreted as an attempt to understand this problem, since he is also reaching out to his family and Nigerian heritage. As described in the following lines,

“Back to Nigeria, like you were planning to.

I’m going to be okay. I promise.”(Adichie, 2013, p. 381).

In conclusion, hybridity can lead to identity crises for individuals such as Dike, particularly when they are trying to reconcile the various aspects of their personalities and navigate the complex web of multiple cultural identities.

#### **4.2 Ifemelu embracing her African identity by returning back to Nigeria:**



Returning to Nigeria symbolises Ifemelu's will to preserve her Nigerian heritage and her disapproval of certain aspects of the Western lifestyle. Ifemelu's experiences in America have increased her awareness of the complex problems related to the immigrant experience and the fight for identity. Ifemelu is returning to Lagos to learn more about herself since she felt marginalized or found it challenging to be herself in Western society. Her decision represents her fight against the homogenising effects of Western society as well as her wish to reclaim her cultural heritage. Being overtaken by doubts is mentioned, which implies that the character is having difficulty overcoming ingrained colonial conventions or cultural limitations that have moulded her sense of herself and who she is in this situation. Bhabha claims that in an attempt to adapt or survive, colonised people usually imitate the culture of their colonizer. It is called mimicking when it occurs. But by going back to Nigeria, the character confirms her independence to create her own identity and fights the need to conform to Western norms. As mentioned in the following lines,

“Her decision to move back was similar, whenever  
  
she felt besieged by doubts, she would think of herself  
  
as standing valiantly alone, as almost heroic. So, as to  
  
sequester uncertainty”(Adichie, 2013, p. 08).

Bhabha's concept of mimicry states that a common way for marginalized groups to adapt or assimilate is by copying the customs and actions of the majority group. The story's protagonist is said to be in a "affluent ease," which suggests that the surroundings are dominated by the traditions and values of affluent Americans. But rather than fully adopting or adhering to these norms, she chooses to "act like to be someone else," indicating that her identity is essentially a show. It is possible to understand her act as a form of mimicry because she enjoys the benefits of privilege without wholeheartedly accepting them. As mentioned in the following lines,

“She liked, most of all, that in this place of affluent  
ease, she should pretend to be someone else, some  
one specially admitted into a hallowood American  
club, someone adorned with certainty”(Adichie, 2013, p. 03).

Bhabha draws attention to the dual viewpoints that pervade colonial discourse, in which colonized people simultaneously reject and embrace the dominant society. The next words illustrate the duality by portraying Lagos as both colourful and chaotic. While the city's power and energy are acknowledged, images of destruction and poverty are also displayed, suggesting a tension between progress and stagnation. As mentioned in the following lines,

“At first, Lagos assaulted her; the sun-dazed haste,

yellow buses full of squashed limbs, the sweating  
hawkers racing after cars, the advertisements on  
halking billboards and the heaps of rubbish that  
and the heaps of the rubbish that rose on the road  
sides like a taunt”(Adichie, 2023, p. 385).

Ranyinudo's claim that the main character isn't a "real Americanah" as she lacks a stereotypically American accent highlights the significance of mimicry in Bhabha's theory. The subtext of Ranyinudo's comment is that by mimicking an American accent, the protagonist might better maintain their integrity inside American culture. This suggests that imitation is a very easy way to maintain identity in imperial or postcolonial settings. Ifemelu, a successful American woman who had made a name for herself as a Nigerian, has since abandoned her search to reclaim her identity. As shown in the following lines,

“Americanah” Ranyinudo teased her often. “you are  
Looking at things with American eyes. But the problem  
is that you are not even a real Americanah. At least  
if you had an American accent we would tolerate

your complaining”(Adichie, 2013, p. 385).

To begin with, Ifemelu's remark encapsulates the core of Bhabha's idea of hybridity, a sense of displacement and identity negotiation. Ifemelu returns home after spending some time abroad and appears uneasy, as seen by her remark about the ball gown. According to Bhabha's theory, which holds that hybrid identities are produced when a variety of cultural elements come together, her sense of being divided between two cultures and her own and the place where she has lived abroad is consistent. Ifemelu's answer to the query demonstrates her independence and unconventionality. She demonstrates her self-reliance and her refusal to follow social norms or expectations that she may find constricting or superficial by refusing the necessity for a ball gown. As mentioned in the following lines,

“Ranyi” Ifemelu said. “I know my coming back is  
A big deal but I didn’t know it was big enough for  
a ball gown”(Adichie, 2023, p. 386).

The word choice used by the driver serves as more evidence for these concepts, suggesting that Ifemelu's physical comeback is important in addition to her rediscovery of her true identity, place of origin, and sense of belonging. As mentioned in the following lines,

“Welcome back, Aunty,” he said to Ifemelu. He had  
not merely said “welcome” but “welcome back”. As

though he someone knew that she was truly back”(Adichie, 2013, p. 388).

Bhabha asserts that via participating and reclaiming, marginalized people can challenge preconceived notions about culture. Culture-specific resistance is the term for this. Ifemelu's actions, such as enjoying her mother's stew meals can be interpreted as a form of cultural resistance. As mentioned in the following lines,

“She spent weekends with her parents, in the old flat,  
  
happy simply to sit and look at the walls that had  
  
witnessed her childhood, only when she began to eat  
  
her mother’s stew, an oil layer floating on top of the  
  
pureed tomatoes”(Adichie, 2013, p. 397).

By returning to Nigeria, Ifemelu is able to reconnect with her cultural roots and recover aspects of her identity that she may have felt disconnected from while living abroad. Rather than being solely shaped by her experiences in America, it illustrates a path towards self-discovery and reclaiming control over her own narrative. All things considered, Bhabha contends that hybridity weakens fixed notions of identity by introducing uncertainty, disorientation, and adaptability within cultural institutions. This alteration may lead to identity crises because people in postcolonial nations find it difficult to cope with the multifaceted nature of hybrid experiences that are subjective.

### 5. Findings and Conclusions

Ifemelu, Dike Obinze the main characters of Adichie's *Americanah*, experiences crossover cultures and struggles with their identity as they moves from Nigeria and American society. As they struggle with many social factors and cultural standards in the US that contradict their perceptions of self and hybridity shows itself as a sense of relocation and loneliness. For example ifemelu's battle to embrace her Nigerian background and adhere to American ideals of beauty is reflected in her locks of natural hair, which becomes a powerful symbol of her conflict.

The research comes to the conclusion that *Americanah*'s primary protagonists fight ceaselessly to be accepted in America. In an attempt to fit in, they frequently masquerade as someone they are not, alter their identification documents or other facets of their identities, or alter their appearance. They must even physically fit according to American standards in order to be accepted as professionals, which can sometimes erase their roots and cause emotional pain. The book is a good example of the authors' attempts to capture the identity dilemma that many migrants experience because migration is a necessary byproduct of imperialism and colonized nations. America's culture makes it difficult to blend in, but the protagonists Obinze, Ifemelue, and Dike fight assimilation by embracing good traits from other people without sacrificing who they are. By employing hairstyles as a political statement, they disseminate information to challenge social standards of beauty. As she learns about her cultural origins via her hairstyles, Ifemelue's protest increases awareness and challenges readers to reconsider integration and self-evaluation. The literary work of Adichie dives profoundly into the diverse aspects of relocation

and emigration, portraying these subjects as intrinsically intricate and frequently stressful. Adichie illustrates migration through her sophisticated storytelling as a significant transformation that impacts all facets of a person's life, rather than just a physical move. Her story's characters struggle with the unsettling loss of self that comes with leaving known cultural contexts. This loss is portrayed as a social and personal experience, emphasizing the difficulty of redefining oneself in a foreign setting and the alienation from one's origins. Adichie skillfully demonstrates that the interaction of many diverse cultures forms the distinct characteristics of her characters that are used highlighting the tensions and opportunities that arise from their cross-cultural encounters. Adichie's work offers a significant reflection on the larger problems of migration, identity, and cross-cultural interaction in today's world by tackling these subjects. The book highlights the distressing elements of these encounters while yet embracing people's ability to bounce back and adjust to new circumstances in an increasingly interconnected world. Adichie urges readers to consider the continued dynamics of cultural interchange and the consequences of living in a postcolonial society where identities are always being redefined and altered through her enthralling story.

### **5.1 Future Implications and Recommendations**

The following are the future implications of this study;

- (1) Sociologists, cultural analysts, and writers will find this research useful as it sheds light on identity formation, cultural assimilation, adaptability, and transcultural identity crises in a globalized society.
- (2) For scholars, educators, and legislators interested in addressing identity concerns in an increasingly globalized society, this study offers valuable new insights.

It is recommended that comparative analysis conducted across various groups, historical periods, and geographic locations may shed light on the challenges that underpin the creation of diverse identities as well as their broad range and adaptability. By conducting a comparative investigation of hybridity in different contexts, researchers can pinpoint common and unique factors influencing the struggle for transcultural identities. Such comparative studies may prove useful in developing more intricate theoretical representations of hybridity.



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