

The Black Woman in America: The Search for Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract

Postcolonial literature refers to the grouping of literature that attempts to subvert and undo the stereotypical tag of the colonized as barbaric and primitive and as someone whom the colonizers had brought the light of civilization to them. The main motif of many postcolonial writers has always been to help their people in regaining their lost confidence and validate their past glory. The colonial impact was so strong that it creates damage to the psyche of the colonised and the colonised were often left with losing themselves in the process. Search for Identity and Identity crisis have always been the major issues and themes in most of the postcolonial works and the eminent Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) deals with such issues. Colonialism releases a kind of negative energy, much more than an acceleration of change: it is as Ngugi, the Kenyan writer rightly states: Colonialism as a "cultural bomb" that annihilates the very being of an individual which paves the way for a hybrid man, a very confused and hurt psyche. The present paper is an attempt in this direction to understand the effects of the colonial constructs and struggles of the Africans who migrate to the U.S. in hopes of better lives and futures. The novel explores various issues including the problems of believing in a single-story, racial and gender issues; and also the struggles for identity. Adichie attempts to focus on the lives of her fellow Nigerians who migrate to America by believing that it would change their lives for the better. The reality of America was revealed to be far more different than how it was made to believe in the world.

Keywords: Gender; Identity; Race; Single-story.

Postcolonial literature has become a fast-expanding field of literary studies in this contemporary world. Many have started acknowledging various postcolonial works in order to understand the situation of the so-

called “Commonwealth” nations. The word “Commonwealth” signifies a grouping of those nations that were once British colonies. However post-colonial literature is different from commonwealth literature as the former focuses more on the anti-colonial resistance while the latter involves a nostalgic glorification of the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial literature becomes something more than just the grouping of literature that has emerged out of the colonies. It is a grouping of literature that attempts to subvert and undo the effects of colonial violence and to break the stereotypical images of the once-colonized countries as barbaric and primitive by the West.

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* contributed to the idea of the binary opposition of the West to the East and other non-Western cultures and people. It shows how the colonised people have been constructed as bestial, barbaric, and inferior to the superior West. In order to establish itself as superior, rational, industrious, and open-minded, the West had to find a binary that would stand in opposition to it. But this has made the colonised devalue themselves and their cultures. Therefore, such mentality is still preserved presently even after the end of colonisation and the Western legacy still prevails in many of the once-colonised countries. To prove that this mentality is only a Eurocentric construct and that the colonised had their own culture and traditions before the coming of the colonisers to their land, many postcolonial writers started their writing in the form of protest writers. The emergence of postcolonial writers has helped people all over the world in realizing what the reality was during the period of colonisation. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha describes all cultures as hybrid cultures. It thus means that the culture of the coloniser and that of the colonised in their moment of interaction, travel through the third space known as the space of enunciation to create an altogether new culture that is neither that of the coloniser nor that of the colonised.

...the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*...it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the ‘people’. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.” (56)

It is this third space that creates hybridity. And the effect of this hybridity can be quite damaging as it incapacitates the colonised man from belonging either to the two worlds of East and West. Very often, the predicament of the hybrid man is that they become totally detribalised and imperfectly westernized. Achebe's character of Obi in *A Man of the People* is a glaring example of a hybrid man.

Women of the Third World nations suffer the most concerning identity. In her prominent essay "Can The Subaltern Speak", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak raises the question of whether "people in subordinate, colonized positions are able to achieve a voice" (Habib 748). She argues that if the subaltern is oppressed or unheard in the postcolonial discourse due to homogenization, then the subaltern as a woman is doubly oppressed. "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak 82). Many black feminist critics have also shared their experiences of being a postcolonial woman through their works. In her autobiography, Ida B. Wells-Barnett shares the impact on her life due to the lynching of her friends. She was so overwhelmed with emotions that she devoted her continuing life to the anti-lynching cause (Collins 41). In her text, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Alice Walker has helped women to recognise the creative minds of their female precursors and showed the importance of recovering the works of previous generations of black women writers. She later coined the term 'womanism' to differentiate the ideas of black feminism and white feminism (Plain and Sellers 169). Maria Stewart was the first American woman to give a lecture to the public regarding political issues. She "challenged the African-American women to reject the negative images of Black womanhood so prominent in her times, pointing out that race, gender, and class oppression were the fundamental causes of Black women's poverty" (Collins 18). Collins further mentioned that "Stewart was not content to point out the source of Black women's oppression. She urged Black women to forge self-definitions of self-reliance and independence" (18)

Another eminent work that brings light to the challenges faced by African Americans is Barbara Christian's *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition*. Christian "traces the history of American literary and cultural stereotypes of black women and demonstrates the ways in which nineteenth-century African American writers responded to these stereotypes" (Plain and Sellers 171).

Black feminism was not limited to only intellectuals. This is exemplified by

Sojourner Truth, a former slave who never learned how to read or write, as she was able to express her thoughts in her own way. She later became a Black feminist activist and in one of her speeches, "Ain't I a Woman?", Sojourner Truth, by using the contradictions between her life as an African American woman and the qualities ascribed to woman, she "exposes the concept of woman as being culturally constructed. By deconstructing the concept *woman*, Truth proved herself to be a formidable intellectual" (Collins 32). In Black feminist thought, "the overarching theme of finding a voice to express a collective, self-defined Black women's standpoint remains a core theme" (Collins 116). The female protagonist in Adichie's *Americanah* later managed to overcome her fears and insecurities and find herself through all the hurdles of her life. Through her novel, Adichie shows the intersection of race, class, and gender in the everyday lives of the African Americans.

Americanah is a story about a smart and strong-willed Nigerian woman named Ifemelu who leaves for America in search of better educational and career opportunities. But America became a horrible nightmare for her as she started experiencing racial discrimination over there. The story shows her struggle as she tries to survive in the harsh realities in America as well as in Nigeria when she returns. It also tells the love story of Ifemelu and Obinze along with Ifemelu's romantic relationships with several other men in the novel. Although the novel seems like a romance story, it articulates the lives of Africans in the postcolonial world. The novel explores the African characters' dilemma in surviving in a place like America. Identity becomes a major issue once Ifemelu reaches America. She even talks about how she never thought about her skin colour when she was in Nigeria while she was branded as a black as soon as she reached America. The America she had in her mind before has completely changed after coming there. She imagined America to be a place of paradise with no worries but full of happiness and wealth. But since she came there she had been witnessing only poverty and the dirty streets of Auntie Uju's neighborhood. The America she had in her mind appeared to be only a mirage and was very different in reality. Back when she was in Nigeria, people used to talk about how great American society was and was described as a land full of opportunities. This in reality became just a construct and glorification of America by its people. Adichie may be directing this to the African parents who used to portray America as a land of dreams and opportunities while devaluing their own homeland which can be seen when Ifemelu's father tells her: "America creates opportunities for people to thrive. Nigeria can indeed learn from them" (438). Ifemelu's scholarship wasn't enough to pay her full tuition fees so she had to

earn money. But her student visa wouldn't allow her for any job she even had to illegally work by using another person's identity.

As a female, Ifemelu faces some experiences in the course of living in the community that are peculiar to her gender which cannot be shared by male postcolonial migrants. There are also experiences that she goes through that speak of her position as a black woman from Nigeria. Such experiences include her sexual exploitation by the Tennis coach when she goes job hunting, and her immediate understanding, and attraction to Wambui her Kenyan coursemate, and Boubacar the visiting Professor from Senegal, both of which happen because she is a black immigrant woman. These relationships cannot be appreciated by Blaine who, unlike Ifemelu, is an African American male, just as Ifemelu does not fully understand or appreciate the nuances that exist between him and his African American and white American friends. An instance is when she confronts him after attending one of his friend's surprise birthday parties: "The fried chicken you eat is not the fried chicken I eat, but it's the fried chicken that Paula eats" (330). In this regard, what Ifemelu means here is that she cannot relate fully to all of Blaine's situations because of her cultural and geographical background in the same way he cannot relate to hers.

The postcolonial woman is an individual who struggles with the basic postcolonial issues and the constructs placed upon her by this new society as a woman,

The Indian post-colonial critic Chandra Talpade Mohanty argued that, just as men reduced women to the other, so the white woman had constructed the Third World woman as the other to her self. Consequently, there existed an image of the 'average Third World woman' as uneducated, poor, religious, and victimized. (Waugh 606)

Gayatri Spivak in contemplating the subaltern posits that the postcolonial woman is doubly oppressed as first, "a postcolonial subject and secondly, as a woman" (Habib 2005). Racial discrimination in America had a huge impact on the characters of the novel. In this text, western beauty standards have been imposed on the African American woman. "African-American women experience the pain of never being able to live up to prevailing standards of beauty - standards used by White men, White women, Black men, and, most painfully, one another" (Collins 106). The issues related to skin colour, hair, and body size make up to be the notion of beauty and femininity and these elements of beauty are perceived

from the Western or Eurocentric perspective. The postcolonial woman who is not born with such features suffers massively while trying to conform to such notions. This involves a preference for non-kinky hair which might be either straight or wavy, a slim physique, and a fair complexion as opposed to bigger, fuller physiques and darker complexions. Ama Ata Aidoo's "Everything Counts" can be mentioned here. In Aidoo's story, the female protagonist witnessed the girl students coming to classes wearing wigs and lightening their skin colours. She was shocked at the extent to which the wig has almost completely eroded the cultural identity of the women as she saw the exact situation while working in an office as well, "...from the air-stewardesses to the grade-three typists in the offices, every girl simply wore a wig." (Aidoo 3)

In this novel, almost all the female characters are at one time or the other, dissatisfied with their sexuality. This is not based on any 'body' deformity but rather social constructs that affect these women's view of themselves and they no longer like how they appear, having lost confidence in the beauty and or acceptability of their looks. A case like Ginika, Ifemelu's childhood friend who resides in America is one such example. On arrival to America and enrolment in a high school, she loses weight to fit into the beauty standard of her new community where she was termed as overweight. Ginika starves to the point of being almost anorexic in order to gain the thin physique which is favoured in her new society.

Racial discrimination was prevalent in America in terms of people's appearances. When Ifemelu tries to find a job, she is forced to straighten her hair to seem professional and it has been said that most companies do not hire black women with curly hair. She was denied getting her eyebrows waxed at a salon and managed to get it done only with the intervention of her white boyfriend. Here, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eyes* can be referred to where the eleven-year-old black girl, Pecola Breedlove, "internalizes the negative images of African-American women and believes that the absence of blue eyes is central to her "ugliness". Pecola cannot value her Blackness – she longs to be White so that she can escape the pain of being Black, female, poor, and a child" (Collins 110). Skin complexion as it relates to the perception of beauty is another question raised in *Americanah* which is a common issue of the postcolonial woman. The Western media's hype of fair skin as the most beautiful skin accelerates the racist overtone among the people in the West. This is very clearly shown by Adichie in this part of the novel: Auntie Uju does skin lightening to appear more sophisticated and groomed for the General who keeps her. Not only women but a man like Bartholomew who moves in with Auntie Uju also bleaches

his skin, "he uses bleaching creams...Couldn't you see? His face is a funny colour. He must be using the cheap ones with no sunscreen. What kind of man bleaches his skin, biko"(117). Even the African-American writer, Maya Angelou wrote in her autobiography that "the only way she could become truly beautiful was to become white" (Collins 107).

The gestures of discrimination based on skin fix the subject's identity on the surface. The fact that Ifemelu is a black girl is therefore enough for Curt's mother to reject her. Ifemelu herself notes this when she comments on the stares of passersby and people who they met at bars, restaurants, and other public places "They looked at her with surprise...the look of a people confronting a great tribal loss...and it did not help that although she might be a pretty black girl, she was not the kind of black that they could, with an effort, imagine him with: she was not light-skinned, she as not biracial"(293) Not only Ifemelu suffers from such discrimination but also Auntie Uju and Dike face racism in America. Auntie Uju, like Ifemelu had to take out her braids whenever she goes for interviews: "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" (119). Even when Auntie Uju became qualified and got her job, her patients weren't able to believe that she was a physician and some even refused to be treated by her. Her son, Dike, is also discriminated against at school. Once the students were staying in a camp, and their group leader gave them sunscreen but denied giving it to Dike as he didn't seem to need it. And Dike had also been suspected of hacking the computer network of his school. Dike wasn't even good with computers but everyone at the school suspected him because he was black. The Eurocentric construction of everything good to be of the whites and everything bad to be of the 'others' can be seen from such behaviours.

The most painful effect of Colonialism is the loss of cultural identity and individual roots which ultimately leads to making race a marker of social hierarchy in America. Racist ideology tends to classify the levels of tasks or labours one needs to conform to. The blacks are considered to always be categorised under the working class. It is as if everything has been arranged for them naturally from the beginning. It is not expected for a black to be wealthy or work at any high-ranking jobs or businesses. This can be seen when the carpet cleaner is shocked at seeing Ifemelu at Kimberly and Don's place and mistakes her to be the homeowner and he begins to show hostility towards her. Later when he found out the truth his face turned into what seemed to be a grin, it was as if "The universe was once again arranged as it should be" (166). Ifemelu noticed this be-

haviour of the man and so she got to know that in America the Blacks are at the same level as the Poor Whites:

It didn't matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked. In America's public discourse, "Blacks" as a whole are often lumped with "Poor Whites". Not Poor Blacks and Poor Whites. A curious thing indeed. (166)

This shows how the carpet cleaner thought about the blacks. The blacks as a whole had been looked down upon by the whites and this racial segregation didn't even spare the blacks with money. Race in this matter becomes a social construct and not biological and "In America, you don't get to decide what race you are. It is decided for you" (337-338).

The African woman's hair plays a significant role in the novel. It acts as a metaphor for the race as Adichie puts it. The significance attached to hair results in the woman who is not of Western descent, feeling self-conscious and defensive until she gives in to relaxing her hair or wearing wigs which results in the placement of Western standards at the top in the aspect of hair. The Americans considered curly hair and braids as unprofessional but these are the natural traits and traditions of an African woman, a unique identity of being a black. In order to get a job in America black women had to relax their braids and straighten their hair otherwise they wouldn't be able to get hired for any jobs. Straightening their hair has not just become a way of life, but it has much deeper implications- the loss and severing of their cultural and traditional ties. Both Aunty Uju and Ifemelu had to succumb to this American tradition to survive. But the irony is that even after doing all such things in the hope of getting recognition, the blacks are still alienated by the whites and failed to be accepted by them as their companions. While trying hard to straighten her hair every day, Ifemelu's hair begins to fall out from all the chemicals being used. Her friend Wambui suggested she wear her natural hair but Ifemelu couldn't even think about what would happen if she did that and went to work. So she decided to take leave from work out of embarrassment. This situation where one tends to feel ashamed of their own culture and considers themselves to be inferior is the very product of colonialism that is still prevalent; the after-effect of Colonialism, so to say. Ifemelu also patterns her speech to conform to the American speech or accent. This leads to the idea of 'double-consciousness' W.E.B. DuBois posited about the psyche of African Americans who were cast as the 'other' within the racially segregated society of America.

DuBois argued that the black could never see himself as himself: He saw himself through the eyes of the white. That is, the African American perpetually saw himself as the white man saw him. This 'double-consciousness' meant that the black man was always 'two' – a black man and an American. (Nayar 219)

Ifemelu begins to speak with an American accent in the quest to be relevant, fit in, and make life easier for herself in her new community. Fanon, in his text *Black Skin White Masks*, provides a reason for such behaviour:

Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle (9)

It was only after Ifemelu joined a website where a community of women with hair like her share their stories and chat with one another that she began to embrace her natural hair. Also, in one of her blogs, Ifemelu writes about Michelle Obama's hair. There, she writes about one of her white friends who didn't know that Michelle's hair is curly by nature. People thought her hair was straight as they never saw her with her natural hair. She also writes about the makeover shows on TV where the curly, kinky hair has been shown as the ugly 'before' picture and the straight hair as the pretty 'after' picture. The beauty pageant in Aidoo's story can act as an instance in this case. In "Everything Counts", the protagonist recalled how the winner of a beauty pageant was the most light-skinned of them all and that "all the contestants had worn wigs except one. The winner... her hair, a mulatto's, quite simply, quite naturally, fell in a luxuriant mane on her shoulders..." (Aidoo 7). This explains how a pure black woman can never fit into the beauty standard of the West. In the novel, Adichie further mentions whether Barack Obama would have won the election if Michelle Obama ever thought about stopping her hair to relax and showed her natural hair to the public: "Imagine if Michelle Obama got tired of all the heat and decided to go natural and appeared on TV...Obama would certainly lose the independent vote, even the undecided Democrat vote" (297). Therefore, the 'hair' serves as a racial object that segregates black women from white women. This notion of curly and kinky hair as unprofessional and undesirable is just a construct of the whites to show the

supremacy of the white women over the black women.

Unlike Ifemelu who accepted her hair and accent, there are characters in the novel who try to assimilate into America by fully negating their own cultures and adopting the American culture. Aunty Uju can be seen speaking with an American accent when she talks with white Americans. She is not able to accept her curly hair and so she straightens it all the time. She considers herself to be beautiful if she has straight hair and ugly when she doesn't. This shows how her perceptions have changed totally to the living standards of America. Uju's migration to America makes her feel vulnerable and alienated because she cannot fully fit in. It is Uju's awareness of how she is viewed as different and 'other' by the white Americans, her double consciousness, that makes her mimic the majority culture and manner of speech while trying to be as cordial as possible. She even bleaches her skin to make it fair. Even the man she was dating, Bartholomew uses bleaching cream to make his skin lighter. Aisha, the girl in the salon tries to improve her American accent and she has also adopted the American ignorance regarding Africa which can be seen when she mentions only the continent and doesn't even bother to name the specific countries. Aisha also disapproves when Ifemelu wants a more natural hair colour. This shows how colonialism had inflicted unimaginable violence on the people of the colonised land that they started thinking of themselves and their own cultures to be inferior and not valuable. It made them think to be not worthy of themselves and can only become one by putting on a mask. They need to pretend to be someone they are not. But what they don't realize is that they can never become fully white as they cannot change their skin colour and would only become what Fanon referred to as the black skin under the white mask. Thus, they remain as nothing but just a mimic man whom the whites couldn't accept as their equals and just someone who copies them. Mimicry for Bhabha involves the imitation of the coloniser by the colonised, having been socialized to aspire to the more powerful, 'better', and 'superior' culture of the West. Bhabha argues in his essay "Of Mimicry and Man",

...the colonial system required that the colonized aspire to re-make themselves in the image of the European, to become at once secondary to the colonizer, and also (necessarily) other to what they were before. Yet, as they were not in fact European, or indeed white, there was always a slippage or hybridization, however subtle, in the meanings that they thus worked to reiterate. (Waugh 648)

This act of mimicry is desired by the West to establish their authority: "the black man stops being an actional personal for only the white man can represent his self-esteem." (*Bhabha* 126)

Adichie also shows the hypocrisy of the white people in how they negate the fact about the existence of racism in America. Once when Ifemelu was helping Ginika to shop for a dress, the cashier asked Ginika which sales-girls had helped her to which Ginika replied that she couldn't remember. But this was confusing for Ifemelu since there were only two sales-girls and it was very easy to differentiate between the two since one was black and the other was white. Ginika and the cashier both acted as if they didn't notice the colour difference. Later when Ifemelu asks Ginika she replies: "Because this is America. You're supposed to pretend you didn't notice certain things" (127). At their party, Kimberly and Don display artwork from minority cultures in their home, and Kimberly used to say how people of colour possess rich heritages. Even the guests talked about their charity works in Africa and were very happy and proud while praising their selfless contributions. While in fact, they were all taking pleasure in playing the role of the white saviours. They acted as if they were kind and wanted to help the poor people of other races but in reality, they are the ones who created this binary and continue to do so even when the blacks came to their land.

According to Collins, the ultimate responsibility for self-definitions and self-valuations lies within the individual woman herself:

An individual woman may use multiple strategies in her quest for the constructed knowledge of an independent voice. Like Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, some women write themselves free. Sexually, physically, and emotionally abused, Celie writes letters to God when no one else will listen. The act of acquiring a voice through writing, of breaking silence with language, eventually moves her to the action of talking with others (Collins 136).

Likewise, Ifemelu gained her confidence through sharing her experiences with other black women in her online community. In the later parts of the novel, Ifemelu accepts her own culture which can be seen when she begins to embrace her natural hair and stops speaking with the American accent. She had earlier migrated to America for educational purposes which in turn improved her social and economic status in society. However, after a while, these achievements are no longer enough for her. She wants to stop feeling self-conscious, always on guard, thinking of what she says, what others think of her, and how she ought to present herself. "She had

ignored, too, the cement in her soul...Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil." (6) In America, Ifemelu couldn't become fully American as the people there didn't accept her as one of them and she decided to follow her Nigerian tradition even though the whites expected her to follow them. When she returns to Nigeria, her friends tease her by calling her "Americanah" which is a term used to represent those Africans who used to stay in America, adopt the American culture while staying there, and act like Americans when they visit their homeland. Even though Ifemelu doesn't act like them the people around her aren't able to see her as the same person she used to be before she went to America. They saw something that had changed in her and wasn't able to accept her as fully Nigerian.

A postcolonial subject's identity is most of the time described as conflicted. This is because they try to fit in both cultures where there is no meeting point at all- their indigenous culture and the culture handed down by the colonisers. So, to balance between both cultures becomes a problem, and to blend in both societies they somewhat stay in the in-between state, this is the sad predicament of the 'been-to's'. Thus, Ifemelu's identity becomes a hybrid which in the words of Bhabha is 'cultural hybridity'. For Bhabha, hybridity is not a negative outcome of colonization but rather a subversion of colonial authority. As colonial identities are always marked by flux and transition, there raises a question surrounding the authenticity of colonial discourse:

Hybridity is therefore the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its coherent grip on meaning and opens itself outward to the trace of the language of the other...Domination within the colonial situation is, in short, subverted through the hybridity of colonial discourse. This is because hybridity undermines the single voice of cultural authority and foregrounds a double-voicing process that includes the trace of the other. (Edwards 141)

And if this is to be accepted, then it immediately breaks down the binary of a superior culture of the coloniser and an inferior culture of the colonised. However, the colonisers cannot admit this fact because they need to create the others and the binary to construct themselves as the centre. Therefore, Adichie, by making her character Ifemelu embrace her hybrid identity is challenging and questioning the Western ideology and discourse of the East. Adichie indeed proves the idea that a hybrid identity can exist and as a novelist, she makes her readers aware of what the truth is all along.

Also, Adichie has successfully crafted the danger of the single story of both Africa and America. In one of her TED Talks titled, "The Danger of a Single Story" (2009), Adichie describes the powerful impression the multitude of British stories made on her as a young girl growing up in Nigeria. She explains that if we only hear about people, places, or situations from one point of view, we risk accepting one experience as the whole truth. This is how Adichie puts it: "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." (Adichie, 2009) The single story of Africa as a place where there is no educational institutes or proper hospitals or houses, no educated people but with full of diseases and poverty that many people outside of Africa have been imagining has been proven as wrong by Adichie through her novel. And the America that was always used to be a dream place for everyone full of good opportunities has turned out to be just a fantasy. Only those who have been to America would get to know what kind of a place it was and how different it was from what they had ever imagined. The main reason for the misconception seems to be the hidden truth of the people who have already been there. They left out all the bad things that happened and are there in America, maybe out of embarrassment or to maintain their self-esteem. Because they all went there thinking about all the good things that were about to happen to them and to say that they were suffering in such a place would be unbearable.

This shows that the reason for this construction of America is to be blamed on both the white Americans and also the Africans who already know about the truth but still choose to build a fake world of the West. The African's dream of coming to the West to prosper and become successful becomes nothing but remains an empty dream. This further affects the psyche of the people. And above all the social, political, and economic impacts that had been laid down upon by the colonisers, have also affected the colonised psychologically. And this has led to the loss of their self-confidence. The main motif of many of the postcolonial African writers has always been to help their people regain their lost self-confidence. And with no doubt, Adichie is one of them. She speaks to her people through the voice of her characters and makes them see the reality and helps them regain what they have lost. Through her novel, Adichie shows how believing in a single side of a story of something can lead to an unimaginable devastating situation and one should always try to perceive the stories from both sides. Hence, Adichie becomes a storyteller who has succeeded in making her readers change their views about how they should see the world.

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