

Racism through Ifemelu and Trevor in *Americanah* (2013) and *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (2016)



Dr. Fabrice Lié IKAPI

Cheikh Anta Diop University, Postcolonial and African Studies Laboratory, English Department, Dakar, Senegal, BP : 5005

ABSTRACT: This research paper examines the issue of racism through a comparative analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime* (2016). Supporting the analysis on Critical Race Theory as a reference framework, the paper investigates how the protagonists, Ifemelu and Trevor, confront, face and resist racial discrimination within their respective socio-political contexts meaning the United States and South Africa. Thus, this analysis lays emphasis on the personal stories of these two characters, the historical and social contexts of racism and the formation of their racial identities. Also, by discussing the unique and shared experiences of these characters, the article aims at contributing in the analysis of the intricacies of racism and the various means to challenge and resist it.

KEY WORDS : Racism, Resistance, Identity, Experiences, Cultural Context, Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

The key point about racism is it is a varied problem that has a serious impact on the experiences of individuals across different socio-political and economic settings. For this reason, this study examines how racism is depicted through the novels by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Trevor Noah's memoir *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (2016). Thus, exploring these two texts, which portray distinct cultural and socio-political environments, seeks to highlight how experiences and resistance to racism are examined. In this respect, as critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw points, when dealing with 'The Analytics and Assumptions Of Integrationism' that "in the integrationist ideology, racism achieves social form when the distortion of prejudice in consciousness subsequently translates into practice. Here racism manifests itself in the practice of 'discrimination,' the disparate treatment of whites and blacks, which the irrational attribution of difference is supposed to justify." (Kimberlé Crenshaw 1995, p. 129)

Indeed, in *Americanah*, Adichie explicates the complexities of racial identity and belonging as experienced by an immigration who is being assimilated. As a matter of fact, the protagonist, Ifemelu, navigates her racial identity in the United States, revealing how systemic racism shapes her experiences. In this respect, critical race theory emphasizes the importance of personal narratives in understanding systemic oppression, as Patricia Hill Collins argues, "Instead, social theories reflect women's efforts to come to terms with lived experiences within intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and religion (see, e.g., Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Mirza 1997)." (Collins 2002, p. 129) Consequently, through Ifemelu's blog and inner personal reflections, Adichie's novel showcases a powerful means for understanding the link between race, culture, and identity.

In the same vein, Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime* illustrates the impact of apartheid-era racism in South Africa. It is evident that Noah's experiences growing up as a mixed-race child in a racially divided society exemplifies a unique perspective on resistance and the desire to survive. As Derrick Bell, a foundational figure in critical race theory, asserts, "Racism is hardly based on logic. We need to fight racism the way a forest ranger fights fire with fire." (Bell, p. 62) In other words, Noah's memoir stands as a powerful tool or device to exemplify how humor and resilience serve means of resistance against racial injustices.

Statement of the problem

It is a plausible argument to say that the issue of racism is still noticeable in every part of the world, revealing its wrath in various forms depending on the historical and socio-political context of each region. To support point of view, Nitha Priya P and M. Preevina write: "In the society, people are identified by their name, culture, gender, class, country and religion but when an individual is unable to survive within the country or culture and faces struggles in the domestic life, racism and the issue of self-identity emerges." (Praveena, p. 5221). However, while many writers and thinkers have deeply analyzed the systemic and structural aspects of racism, there is a need for more nuanced investigations that uncover the personal experiences of individuals who negotiate these oppressive structures on a daily basis.

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Indeed, this is the reason why this study aims at examining the experiences of Ifemelu and Trevor, protagonists in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*, respectively. Both characters, though placed in different geographical and socio-political and cultural contexts, come to grips with the reality of racism and its impact on their identities. In other words, the problem this research seeks to reflect on how these characters oppose and cope with racial discrimination, and what their experiences reveal about the broader complicatedness of racism in the United States and South Africa. Thus, analyzing these two descriptions, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of how racism works in distinct cultural settings and how individuals can resist and challenge these racial injustices.

Objective of the study

The study ambitions to conduct a comparative analysis of the materialization and effects of racism as pictured through the lives of Ifemelu in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Trevor in Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. These two characters' personal experiences with racial discrimination allow grasp how Ifemelu and Trevor's racial identities are fashioned and molded by the systemic racism they face-off in their everyday lives. Understandingly, this, then, involves a thorough consideration of the historical and social contexts that influence their experiences, as well as the strategies they utilize to counter attack and fight back the racist edifice that seek to determine and label them. It is for this reason that Nitha Priya P and M. Preevina add: "Adichie has experienced a different African reality than the one existing in the Western imagination." (Preevina, p. 5221)

Interestingly, this comparative analysis attempts to contribute to the broader discourse on racism and identity in African literature. Overall, it aims to provide understanding of the hardship of racial identity formation and the various ways in which individuals oppose, reject or respond to racism in different cultural settings. At long last, this research aims to advance the conversation around racism.

Hypothesis

This analysis makes the assumption that despite the differences in the sociopolitical environments of South Africa and the United States, Trevor in *Born a Crime* and Ifemelu in *Americanah* both display comparable patterns of resistance to racial discrimination. Indeed, though it is expected that their diverse historical contexts and cultural origins will influence how they experience racism, in the end, both characters come to have a strong sense of who they really are as people of color and use similar strategies to confront and reject systematic racism. Furthermore, the study also postulates that although racism's outward forms vary across the two settings, the fundamental oppressive systems are incredibly similar, resulting in the two main characters experiencing marginalization and resistance at the same time.

Scope of the study

This study is limited to a comparative literary analysis of Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* as it resort to examining how racism is portrayed in the unique sociopolitical contexts of South Africa and the United States via the experiences of the two major protagonists, Ifemelu and Trevor. As a matter of fact, laying emphasis on these particular components hopes to advance the conversation on race and identity in modern African literature by offering an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of how racism is depicted and challenged in the two books at study.

None of the existing literature has ever compared Adichie's *Americanah* and Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. This gap in the literature presents a break for the present research to make a considerable contribution to the scientific discourse on racism by examining how these two works picture racism in the respective socio-political contexts of the United States and South Africa.

Theoretical framework

To conduct and validate the core of this paper, Critical Race Theory is the cornerstone for this analysis, enabling a profound understanding of the ways in which race, power, and identity are traversed in these two texts. For this reason, the study does not explore, however, the full body of work by both Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Trevor Noah or the broader range of their themes outside identity and racism. Also, although the study compares the two books, it does not examine Adichie and Noah's writing techniques, literary styles or the use of narrative devices, giving priority to the themes enfolding racism.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative research approach to assess the themes of racism and identity in both Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. This examination centers on a meticulous textual analysis of the two primary texts. Thus, by delving into close reading, the research seeks to reveal and comprehend key instances of racial discrimination that Ifemelu and Trevor confront and overcome. Consequently, the study highlights how these characters confront and walk through the challenges posed by systemic racism in their respective environments meaning the United States for Ifemelu and apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa for Trevor.

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Literature Review

Dr. Gökçe KARA's article, titled '*Racism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah*,' offers a thorough analysis of race as a social fact in the United States, centering on how racism institutes majority and minority classes, with white people preserving dominant roles through ethnic segregation. In this respect, KARA showcases Adichie's examination of white privilege and the responses of both majority and minority communities to systemic racism. The significance of KARA's work lies in its detailed investigation of the intersection between race and social power, successfully painting how *Americanah* divulges the phenomenon of racial inequality and the perpetuation of these inequalities by white Americans. However, the analysis mainly focuses on the United States and does not enter deeply into the broader implications of racism beyond American frontier, which could limit its pertinence to a global context.

In a similar vein, Bamigbola Esther Olayinka and Ihejirika Mary Ijeoma's article, '*Racism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah: A Critical Discourse Analysis*,' analyzes the power dynamics and class relations forged by racism. Indeed, utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis, the authors investigate how Adichie's choice of words reveals the stigmatization attributed to individuals based on their race. Forcibly, this study's strength resides in its methodological rigor as it skillfully employs Critical Discourse Analysis to unpack the subtle ways in which racism is planted in societal structures such as education, justice, and media. Accordingly, this article also tackles the phenomenon of out-group discrimination, presenting the reader with how even marginalized groups can eternalize racism, especially in the context of migration. Nevertheless, the study's focus on linguistic analysis may disregard the broader psychological and emotional impacts of racism, particularly in terms of identity formation.

On the other hand, Aicha Bettayeb's dissertation, '*Racial Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah: A Psychoanalytic Approach*,' relocates the attention to the psychological effects of racism on the protagonist, Ifemelu. Undoubtedly, Bettayeb inspects the internal and external factors conducting to Ifemelu's racial identity development, using Cross and Fhagen-Smith's racial identity theory. Her argument raises valuable insights into the renewal of Ifemelu's character as she becomes incrementally conscious of race and racism after moving to the United States. For these reasons, Bettayeb's work meaningfully binds the emotional struggles of the protagonist to broader societal issues, providing a more inclusive understanding of the connection between identity and race. However, the psychoanalytic approach may not entirely grasp the socio-political scale of racism, particularly how these external forces form identity beyond individual psychological experiences.

Likewise, extending the discussion to South Africa, Adam Levin's article, '*If I speak like you, I am you': Racial Passing in Trevor Noah's Born a Crime and Other Stories*,' studies the concept of racial passing within the context of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Levin's analysis is exceptionally strong in its analysis of how Noah's experiences of racial passing challenge traditional conceptions of racial identity, situating race as a site of creative expression rather than a fixed classification. Therefore, by differing Noah's storytelling with the tragic mulatto figure widely found in South African racial passing memoirs, Levin's work offers a fresh viewpoint on the flowability of racial identity. However, the article focuses for the most part on the theme of passing, potentially omitting other pivotal aspects of Noah's experiences with systemic racism and its impingement on his identity.

Finally, Nithya Priya P. and Mrs. M. Praveena's article, '*Racism in Adichie's Americanah*,' examines the broader consequences of racism as a motive of issues namely migration, identity crises, and psychological strife. Their examination underlines how racism promotes a racial hierarchy and validates colonialist ideologies, impacting the relationships between whites and blacks on a global scale. Thereby the article's strength lies in its global perspective, linking the experiences in *Americanah* to larger global issues of racism, unevenness, disparity or inequality. Yet, the study could profit from a more directed analysis of specific characters and events within the novel to support its utmost claims.

I. Racism and Identity Formation

1.1. Racial Identity Development in Ifemelu

Ifemelu's move from Nigeria to the United States marks a critical change in her racial identity, as she runs-in a new world where race plays a central role in outlining social interrelations and personal backgrounds. In point of fact, in Nigeria, Ifemelu never truly weighted herself in terms of race, as racial dynamics were not a predominant feature of her identity. Even so, when coming to America, she is out of the blue faced up to the harsh reality of being classified as Black, which constraints her to cross a challenging racial terrain. Indeed, according to Puzzo, "*From a historical perspective, racism is based on two basic assumptions, namely that a relationship exists between physical features and moral qualities, and that mankind can be classified into superior and inferior stocks.*" (Puzzo, 1964)

In *Americanah*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie describes this shift through Ifemelu's thinking on her new identity. Indeed, Ifemelu finds out a discrepancy in racial notion when she states, "*The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it's a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue ; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America.*" (Adichie, 2013, p. 288) Obviously, this statement epitomizes the commencement of Ifemelu's identity alteration as she becomes deeply conscious of the racial dynamics that infiltrate American

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society. The image of being Black in the United States is something she did not have to look at in Nigeria, but it becomes a determining attribute of her presence in the U.S.

As she lives her life in America, Ifemelu's identity continues to mature. She begins to perceive the refinement of racism and how they condition the existence of Black people in America. Among other things, she says :

"We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes. Mine was in a class in undergrad when I was asked to give the black perspective, only I had no idea what that was. So I just made something up. And admit it — you say "I'm not black" only because you know black is at the bottom of America's race ladder. And you want none of that. Don't deny now. What if being black had all the privileges of being white? Would you still say "Don't call me black, I'm from Trinidad?" I didn't think so. So you're black, baby." (Adichie, 2013, p. 221)

At this point, Ifemelu meditates on the discursive characteristic of race, recognizing that her racial identity is an item thrust upon her by society, instead of an innate peculiarity.

In addition, Ifemelu's blog, *"The Non-American Black,"* serves as a crucial way to summon and formulate her adventure with race in America. Actually, through her blog, she manifests the resentment and denial she comes across with, and in doing so, she elaborates an intense interpretation of the racial practices in America. For that matter, in one of her blog posts, she notes :

"There's a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on top, especially White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP, and American Black is always on the bottom, and what's in the middle depends on time and place. (Or as that marvelous rhyme goes: if you're white, you're all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back!)." (Adichie, 2013, p.187)

Here, the character of Ifemelu reveals how migration forces a new racial identity on newcomers, one that prevails over their national or ethnic identities and categorizes them within the larger class of Blackness as delineated by American society.

Further, Ifemelu obfuscates her perception of self, as she now transports with her the experiences and perspectives she received in America. Without doubt, her comprehension of race, formerly nonexistent in her Nigerian context, now drives her interactions and paradigm. Interestingly, this fact is apparent when she fights to get back in touch with her old friends and familiar environments, feeling like a stranger in the place she once used to call home. Most certainly, her self has been irretrievably acculturated by her journey abroad, epitomizing the lasting impact of migration on her sense of who she really is.

1.2. Racial Identity Development in Trevor

Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime* offers a touching investigation of racial identity through the prism of his unique background as a mixed-race child in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. The stiff racial classifications of apartheid put Trevor in a fragile position, as his very life was an infringement of the laws that petitioned to segregate races. As a matter of fact, Trevor, born to a Black Xhosa mother and a White Swiss father, was filed as 'Coloured,' a rank that identified him as dissimilar and divorced from both the Black and White populace.

Furthermore, Trevor's encounters with racial passing are a central topic in his memoir. Indeed, racial passing alludes to his talent to move in and out different racial groups, usually exploiting his puzzling look to assimilate in or be admitted by different communities. As an example, Trevor remembers how his mother would counter the system. About it she writes :*"My mom as she'd done with her flat and with her maid's uniforms, found the cracks in the system. It was illegal to be mixed (to have a black parent and a white parent), but it was not illegal to be colored (to have two parents who were both colored). So my mom moved me around the world as a colored child."* (Noah, 2016, p. 28) Through this, Trevor's mother apprehends the day-to-day phenomenon of enduring apartheid, where the simple act of being found out with his mother could have led to legal repercussions due to their different racial categorizations.

In addition, in the post-apartheid period, Trevor's life continued to be formed by the persisting effects of the racial ranking established under apartheid. Thus, while the legal frames of racial segregation were taken down, the social and psychological scars continued. As such, Trevor's identity was continuously bargained in a backdrop where race still performed an important role in locating one's place in society. Consequently, his reflections on these events reveal the difficulties of living in a society that was shifting from a deeply entrenched system of racial differentiation to one that was seemingly clear of such divisions.

Not least, Trevor refers to the moment when he was born when his mom had to face the challenges of the apartheid system right after his mom checked into hospital. About this he says:

"When the doctors pulled me out there was an awkward moment where they said, 'huh. That's a very light-skinned baby.' A quick scan of the delivery room revealed no man standing around to take credit.

'Who is the father?' they asked.

'His father is from Swaziland,' my mother said, referring to the tiny, landlocked kingdom in the west of South Africa... Under Apartheid, the government labeled everything on your birth certificate : race, tribe, nationality. Everything had to be categorized." (Noah, 2016, p. 26).

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Obviously, this humorous remark places emphasis on the ridiculousness of the racial laws, which developed a fractured society based on unreasonable distinctness. As a result, Trevor's use of humor enables him to unveil these acute issues in a way that is approachable and attaching, albeit also focusing attention on the fundamental paradox in the establishment.

II. Analysis of Racism in the United States and South Africa

2.1 Structural Racism and White Privilege in *Americanah*

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie offers an intense depiction of structural racism and white privilege in present day American society. As a matter of fact, through the medium of Ifemelu's characterization, the novel unmasks the extremely embedded and rampant nature of systemic racism, which functions not just at a person-to-person level but is encrusted inside institutions, policies, and social practices that sustain mismatch. In this respect, Dr. Gökçen KARA writes : "*In American society, white supremacy persists.*" (KARA, p. 316)

As a matter of fact, Adichie examines the ingenious and blatant expressions of systemic racism, clarifying how it strikes almost every factor of life for Black individuals in America. For example, Ifemelu discovers systemic racism when she faces difficulties to freely write and express what she thinks of the America society even though she is very well qualified, a fact that points out the overall problem of racial distinctness. It is in this respect, Ifemelu Adichie writes,

"You know why Ifemelu can write that blog, by the way?" Shan said. "Because she's African. She's writing from the outside. She doesn't really feel all the stuff she's writing about. It's all quaint and curious to her. So she can write it and get all these accolades and get invited to give talks. If she were African American, she'd just be labeled angry and shunned." (C. N. Adichie , p. 418)

Here, Adichie uncovers the idea that the expectation that Black individuals who express themselves do it in a way that is not required of their white counterparts, unveiling the double criterion anchored in systemic racism.

Moreover, *Americanah* outlines the continuity of white privilege—an undeserved worth that favours white people in detriment of non-white people. Therefore, this prerogative is apparent in the way white characters experience the world with an unstated sense of eligibility, generally ignorant of the racial superiority they have. And this to expose this, Adichie writes : "*Race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier: Black folks don't have that choice*" (Adichie, 2013, p. 346).

Additionally, Adichie also analyzes how white privilege is sustained through habitual interrelationships and social standards that consolidate racial ranks. As example, Ifemelu, in her blog, notes the difference between true deep love and shallow fake love. She says:

"The simplest solution to the problem of race in America? Romantic love. Not friendship. Not the kind of safe, shallow love where the objective is that both people remain comfortable. But real deep romantic love, the kind that twists you and wrings you out and makes you breathe through the nostrils of your beloved. And because that real deep romantic love is so rare, and because American society is set up to make it even rarer between American Black and American White, the problem of race in America will never be solved." (Adichie, 2014, pp. 336-3367).

Clearly, this comment accentuate the way white prerogative works in subtle ways, privileging Curt while diminishing Ifemelu to a depersonalized else. At length, Ifemelu's journey in America attests how race and class intermingle to strengthen social disparities. Unquestionably, despite her petty bourgeois background and educative accomplishments, Ifemelu is often deemed mostly by her race, which restricts her possibilities and impacts how others judge her. Understandingly, Ifemelu's race becomes an obstacle, irrespective of her class, revealing how gravely embedded racial bias are in defining people's social status.

2.2 Apartheid, Post-Apartheid, and the Legacy of Racism in *Born a Crime*

Apartheid, the system of institutionalized racial segregation, discrimination and oppression implemented by the South African authorities from 1948 to 1994, developed a thoroughgoing and lasting effects on the racial identification of South Africans. Undoubtedly, into apartheid, racial distinctiveness were scrupulously constrained, with white South Africans at height of the social power structure, followed by Indians, Coloreds (mixed race), and Black Africans at the lower side. This scheme not only pronounced the social and economic facilities available to each racial category but also deeply conditioned personal selves and interethnic interaction.

Without doubt, in *Born a Crime*, Trevor Noah highlights a profound examination of how apartheid defined his own racial self. Indeed, as the son of a Black Xhosa mother and a white Swiss father, Trevor's very life was a sin, an offense and a violation under apartheid regime, which prohibited interracial liaison. For this reason, Noah depicts his childhood as being '*born a crime,*' shedding light on the inherent offense appointed to his livelihood by the apartheid regime. In this respect Trevor says, "*So my birth certificate doesn't say that I'm Xhosa, which technically I am. And it doesn't say I am Swiss, which the government wouldn't allow. It just says I am from another country*" (Noah, 2016, p. 27). In this passage, there is the illustration of the manner racial segregation rules imposed his mother to cover up his very being, an action that draws attention on the oppressive dehumanizing consequence of apartheid on racial inequalities.

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By way of contrast, the United States' system of generalized racism has been less openly ciphered but is correspondingly omnipresent. In point of fact, despite the fact that the Civil Rights Movement provoked the eradication of legitimate partitioning, systemic racism lingers through means such as mass imprisonment, prejudicial housing practices, and educative injustices. For that matter, in *Americanah*, Ifemelu's adventures as a Nigerian immigrant in America disclose the method through which racism functions gently but vigorously inside institutions and social habits. In connection to this, Ifemelu observes how being black in America is often equivalent to a number of negative clichés, irrespective of people's experience or accomplishments. Indeed, about this, Adichie points that :

“When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it. We don't even tell our white partners the small things that piss us off and the things we wish they understood better, because we're worried they will say we're overreacting, or we're being too sensitive. And we don't want them to say, Look how far we've come, just forty years ago it would have been illegal for us to even be a couple blah blah blah. (Adichie, 2013, pp.299-289)

Saying this allows her to grasp the inflexibility of racial classifications in the U.S., where systemic racism compels the characters and opportunities of people of color.

Thereby, when apartheid was delineated by straightforward racial categorization and legal differentiation, systemic racism in the U.S. is often more tricky, inbuilt inside the structure of society in modes that are less apparent but no less detrimental. Therefore, both *Born a Crime* and *Americanah* point out how these different systems of racial oppression configure the identities of individuals living within them. In South Africa, racial or ethnic identity is acutely contingent upon the heritage of apartheid, with people like Trevor Noah facing the complexities of being mixed-race in a society still separated along racial lines.

III. Strategies of Resistance and Survival

3.1 Ifemelu's Resistance through Blogging and Social Commentary

Ifemelu's blog, *The Non-American Black*, is a powerful tool of fight against racial stereotypes and segregation. Actually, by means of her blog, Ifemelu formulates her remarks and critiques of American society, notably its ideology on race and the challenges of Black people. In this line, the blog becomes a room where she can speak out her thoughts openly, thought-provoking the main perspectives and uncovering the ingenious and blatant forms of racism she confronts to.

Indeed, Ifemelu's posts often confront the embarrassing facts of race in America, making trenchant critiques on the lives of Black immigrants and African Americans. As an example, she writes in one of her blog posts :

“This is for the Zipped-Up Negroes, the upwardly mobile American and Non American Blacks who don't talk about Life Experiences That Have to Do Exclusively with Being Black. Because they want to keep everyone comfortable. Tell your story here. Unzip yourself. This is a safe space.” (Adichie, 2013, p.303)

Saying this, she definitely focuses attention on the way racial identity is dictated and framed by societal projections in America, and how Ifemelu's blog develops into a means for investigating and refusing these burdens.

Clearly, through the medium her writing, Ifemelu not only reproaches the racism innate in American society but also enlightens and empowers her readers by voicing out her ideas about the issue of racial identity. Hence, her blog posts often dismantles stereotype or clichés, showcasing the duplicity and ignorance supporting them. In particular, Ifemelu discusses the sexualization of Blackness and the facile praise of Black figures like Obama, who are distinguished for their vicinity to whiteness rather than their genuine Black identity. Ifemelu stands as a resistant who counteracts the mere and often prejudiced perceptions of Black people, prodding her readers to identify and oppose these stereotypes.

Interestingly, digital spaces also introduces a way to detour guardians who might in another way ward off excluded voices from being heard. Indeed, in Ifemelu's instance, her blog is extensively read and becomes an influential platform, attracting attention from conventional media and unleashing debates beyond the digital spheres. For sure, this exemplifies how digital means can help as tools for ideas that attempt to overcome dominant power structures where marginalized individuals can ask for their stories to be heard in order to assert their real identities.

3.2 Trevor's Resistance through Humor and Storytelling

In *Born a Crime : Stories from a South African Childhood*, Trevor Noah cleverly uses humor and storytelling as avenue of fustigating the composite racial boundaries enforced by apartheid and its persistent effects in post-apartheid South Africa. Obviously, Noah's mixed-race legacy, being the son of a Black South African mother and a white Swiss father, positioned him in an insecure situation into the stringent racial segregation of apartheid. Certainly, his day-to-day existence was a malfeasance under the apartheid regime, which banned mixed liaison. Thereby, his comedic prism, Noah not only chronicles his personal journey growing up in this setting but also delivers an in-depth criticism of the folly and viciousness of racial rating.

In actual fact, Noah's use of humor becomes a coping instrument and a form of fight against the oppressive and repressive structures of apartheid. In this regard, he often recounts stories from his childhood where humor stands as a tool for existence and

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contempt. Indeed, in one notable example, he explain how he would use his skill to speak several languages get in with disparate racial groups, habitually changing his accent and speech to avoid inconvenience. He says: “*The Black kids were fascinated. In South Africa back then, it wasn’t common to find a white person or a colored person who spoke African Inaguages ; during Apartheid white people were always taught that those languages were beneath them. So the fact that I did speak African languages immediatly endeared me to the black kids*” (Noah, 2016, p. 56). Then, resilience, made possible by humor, helped him to face the ruptured social scenery of South Africa, where language was often viewed as a milestone of identity and acceptance.

Subsequently, Humor in Noah’s experience also appears as a sort of sabotage, twisting the foolishness of apartheid into a source of mockery. Indeed, by scoffing at the unreasonableness of racial legislation and social standards, Noah threatens their agency and reveals their intrinsic inadequacies. In this vein, he jokingly tells how the apartheid government segregated people upon random physical traits, including hair texture or skin color, leading toridiculous moments where people of the same kindred could be identified as distinct races or ethnic groups. In this respect, he mentions, “*Nearly one million people lived in Soweto. Ninety-nine point nine percent were black---and then was me. I was famous in my neighbourhood just because of the colour of my skin.*” (Noah, 2016, p. 53). Undeniably, Noah requests readers to capture the folly of these racial divisions, urging them to dispute and refuse the logic that corroborate them.

Furthermore, Noah’s narrative, imbued with humor, permits him to handle the trauma of apartheid without being outstripped by its obscurity. Indeed, his dexterity to laugh in distressing situations showcases strength and the aptitude to recapture power over his story. Thus, by recounting his story with wit and joking mood, Noah fights being described exclusively by the vilification enforced by apartheid. In lieu, he positions his firm humanity, demonstrating that even in the environment of systemic oppressive policies, there is still hope to stand, live, fight back and counter attack.

Interestingly, Noah’s satirical impulse is also powerful in targeting the utmost social aftermaths of apartheid. Without doubt, the use of humor to display the absurdity of the social stratification policies, Noah is critical of the whole systematic of racial differentiation, depicting how it was constructed on inconcistent and biased distinctions that had tremendous disastrous consequences on people’s day-to-day lives. As a supportive evidence, he criticizes the apartheid-era policy that aimed at designating every person according to race. Indeed, by means of such satire, Noah not only unveils the very policies of apartheid but also the hegemonic mindset or frame of mind that sollicits to separate people based on race or ethnic background.

CONCLUSION

The comparative examination of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* and Trevor Noah’s *Born a Crime* exposes both different and interlocking themes in their discussion of racism and identity. Indeed, Ifemelu’s experiences in *Americanah* and Trevor’s jouney in *Born a Crime* dive way to in-depth perspectives into how racial identity is portrayed, framed and even phrased by socio-political bacgrounds, personal narratives, and systemic organizations.

In this respect, in *Americanah*, Ifemelu’s dynamic development from a Nigerian woman with little sentience of race to a fully self-aware critique on American racial dynamics shows the impactful effect of migration and racial encounters. As a matter of feat, Ifemelu’s blog develops into a crucial stage or podieum for resistance, enabling her to challenge conventions and explai the intricacies of racial identity in accordance with a hegemonic white society. Thus, Ifemelu’s counter attacking arguments via digital criticism places emphasis on the power of personal experience in fighting back and tearing down racial discrimination.

Conversely, Trevor Noah’s *Born a Crime* uses humor and storytelling to exexpress and critique the tough racial limitations instituted by apartheid South Africa. In this vein, Noah’s touch with racial passing and his utilization of satire to unmask the folly of racial segregation highlights a unique perspective by which the repressive character of apartheid and its long lasting effects can be comprehended.

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