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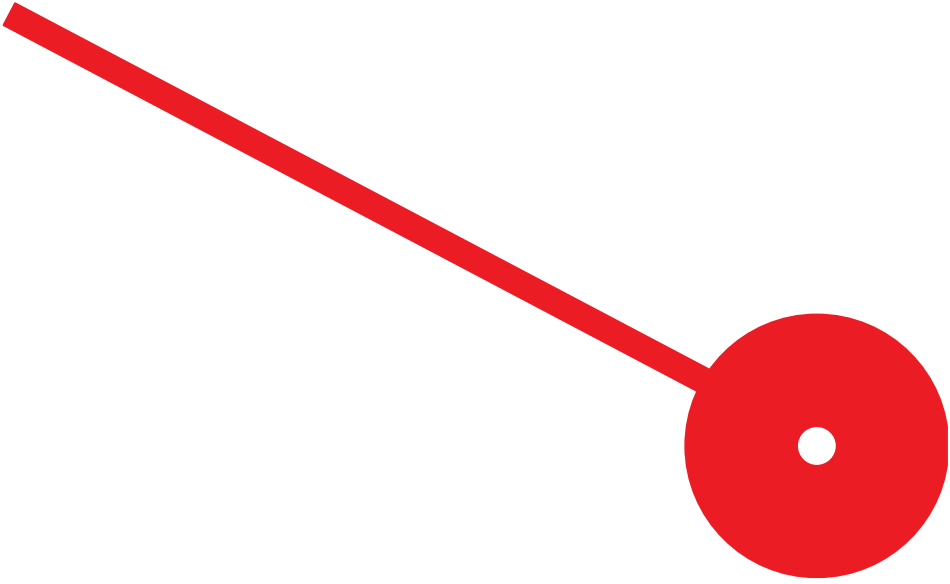
Master's Degree
Intercultural Studies for Business

The African identity and
the danger of a single
story- A study through
literature: *Americanah*
and *Um Preto Muito*
Português

Ana Beatriz dos Santos Carvalho

09/2024

Ana Beatriz dos Santos Carvalho. The African
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Preto Muito Português
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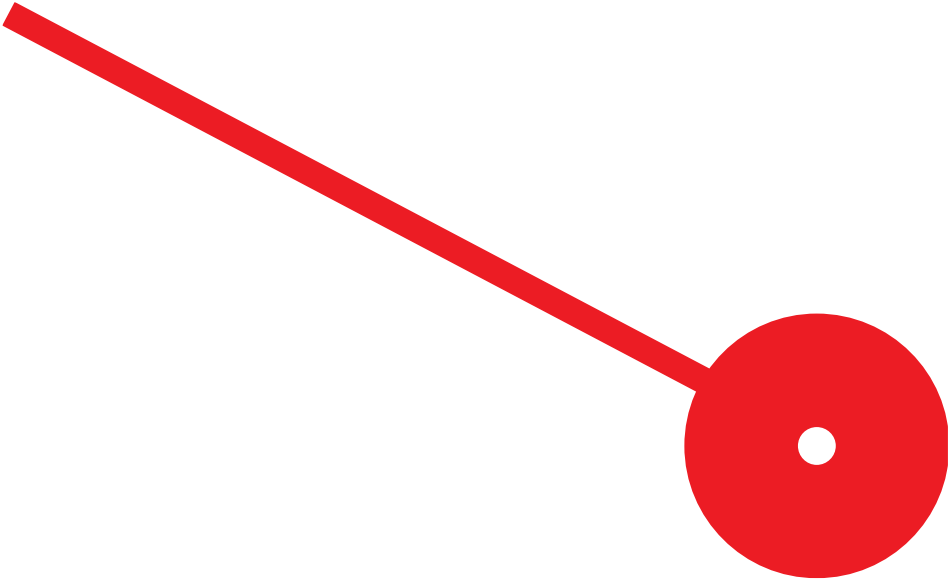
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**Master's Dissertation to Instituto Superior de
Contabilidade e Administração do Porto to
obtain the Master's Degree in Intercultural
Studies for Business, under the supervision of
Professor Sara Maria Cerqueira Silva Pascoal.**

Ana Beatriz dos Santos Carvalho. The African
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Last, but not least, I would like to finish my acknowledgments, by expressing my sincere gratitude to writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Telma Tvon for writing magnificent works exploring so important, but, unfortunately, sometimes forgotten topics. Without their points of view, this dissertation would not have happened, so my sincere gratitude to them and their unbelievable talent.

Epigraph

[...] when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi, *The Danger Of A Single Story*.

Resumo:

Em julho de 2009, a escritora nigeriana Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie deu uma TED TALK intitulada *The Danger Of A Single Story*, na qual mencionava os perigos que uma só narrativa tem na construção de ideias. Dando exemplos, tais como o facto de a literatura que tinha lido em pequena ter influenciado a sua escrita, pois todas as histórias que lia eram sobre meninos de pele clara, que brincavam na neve e bebiam cidra de maçã; ou até mesmo a ideologia que a colega de quarto tinha em relação aos nigerianos assim que se conhecerem.

É neste sentido que acabou por lançar o seu romance *Americanah* (2013) onde descreve o que é ser uma mulher imigrante, mas acima de tudo uma mulher negra nos Estados Unidos da América.

Anos mais tardes, em 2017, a escritora portuguesa Telma Tvon lançou o livro *Um Preto Muito Português* onde explora a realidade dos que nasceram em terras lusitanas, mas que continuam a ser tratados como estrangeiros no seu próprio país.

Assim sendo, esta dissertação tem como principal objetivo a partir da análise literária comparada das obras *Americanah* (2013) e *Um Preto Muito Português* (2017), demonstrar a complexidade e desafios que uma só narrativa tem, abordando temas como o afrocentrismo, diáspora e identidade. Procura-se explorar a forma como a identidade cultural no seio da diáspora africana é retratada em ambos os romances, tendo como foco a identidade pós-colonial e a luta contínua pela autodefinição na sociedade contemporânea. Além disso, pretende-se ilustrar por que razão estas obras são classificadas como literatura pós-colonial e como essa literatura pode servir como uma forma de ativismo ao enfatizar as experiências da diáspora e da alteridade.

Palavras-Chave: Afrocentrismo, Diáspora, Identidade, Narrativa Única, Literatura Pós-colonial

Abstract:

In July 2009, the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave a TED Talk entitled *The Danger Of A Single Story*, where she revealed the dangers that one single story can have in the creation of ideas. Giving examples, such as how the literature she read as a child influenced her writings, since in all the stories the children had fair skin, played in the snow, and drank apple ciders; or even the stereotype that her roommate had of Nigerian people when they met.

In this sense, she ended up publishing her novel *Americanah* (2013) where she describes what it is like to be an immigrant woman, but above all a black woman in the United States of America.

Years later, in 2017, the Portuguese author Telma Tvon published *Um Preto Muito Português* where she explores the reality of those who were in Lusitanian lands but are still treated as an outcast in their own country.

Therefore, this dissertation has as its main objective the comparative analysis of *Americanah* (2013) and *Um Preto Muito Português* (2017) to demonstrate the complexity and challenges of a single story, approaching themes such as Afrocentrism, diaspora, and identity. It seeks to explore how cultural identity within the African diaspora is depicted in both novels, focusing on post-colonial identity and the ongoing struggle for self-definition in contemporary society. Additionally, it aims to illustrate why these works are classified as postcolonial literature and how such literature can serve as a form of activism by emphasizing experiences of diaspora and otherness.

Key Words: Afrocentrism, Diaspora, Identity, Single Story Narrative, Postcolonial Literature

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Abbreviations List

AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ASA African Students Association

BBC British Broadcasting Corporation

DJ Disc Jockey

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ISCAP Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto

MC Master of Ceremony

SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies

TED Technology, Education, Design

USA United States of America

VISA Visa International Service Association

WASP White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

INTRODUCTION

In July 2009, the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie told the audience at the conference *The Danger of a Single Story*, provided by TED Global, how she found her true voice in terms of culture and literature. But most importantly, she exemplified how cultures are composed of intersections of stories, by telling how Africa was badly portrayed in the eyes of the others.

She starts to recall the reaction of her roommate at an American University to having someone as Chimamanda as roommate. As she recalled, her roommate was struck to learn that she knew how to speak English (“My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language.”), to see that she could also use a stove (“She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.”) and that she did not have what she described as “tribal music” that she could present to her (“She asked if she could listen to what she called my “tribal music,” and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.”).

But it was not those primitive ideas from African people that shocked Chimamanda the most, because as she mentions she is used to that image being portrayed by the Western. What shocked her was that her roommate felt a sense of pity for her even before they met because she was African.

While in the United States of America, she decided to start her writing career, and feeling inspired by her path she decided to publish her novel *Americanah* (2013) which highlighted the path of an African migrant after moving abroad.

In the novel, the reader will not only follow Ifemelu’s new life in the USA, her path to becoming a true Americanah, but also the life of two more characters, Obinze and Auntie Uju, whose route was slightly different than hers. However, in this dissertation to facilitate, those two other characters will only be mentioned briefly, since the focus will be put on Ifemelu.

Years later, after this TED Talk had been broadcasted worldwide, and after Chimamanda’s novel started to give a new perspective on African heritage, a Portuguese author, Telma Tvon, who had previously used the music industry as her platform, published a novel *Um Preto Muito Português* (2017). A story that is different from the previous one, because the main character did not migrate to another country, in fact he was born there, although full acceptance of his citizenship has never been granted to him by his counterparts.

This dissertation's main goal is to offer a comprehensive understanding of how cultural identity in the context of the African diaspora is portrayed in both novels. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the post-colonial identity, and the ongoing quest for self-definition in the modern society they are inserted in.

Moreover, this dissertation aims to demonstrate why the novels are considered postcolonial literature and how can this type of literature be a part of literature that is used as an activism movement, by highlighting the diaspora and otherness experiences.

The methodology will consist of an exposition of the novels *Americanah* (2023) and *Um Preto Muito Português* (2024), highlighting the path of their main characters, Ifemelu and João. Furthermore, the works will be framed within the theoretical concepts that will be presented in the first chapter of the dissertation.

In addition, to better understand the main goal of this work, there will be a comparative analysis that hopes to provide insight into the protagonists' experiences and elucidate how their diaspora experiences have shaped their cultural identity.

To achieve that, the work will be divided into five chapters.

The first chapter will outline the theoretical framework. Presenting the following key concepts: Edward Said's Orientalism theory, Stuart Hall's definition of cultural identity, the Négritude movement, and Afrocentrism. These were the concepts chosen since they have collectively influenced the construction of the African identity in postcolonial literature.

The second chapter will be focused on the novels chosen and will be divided into two parts. The first part will be dedicated to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, it will begin to introduce the author, and then move to her work. The second part will present Telma Tvon's work and will follow the same structure as the previous one, introducing the author and then the novel.

After having presented both the authors and novels, there will be a literary review, in which the novels will fit into the theories that were presented in the theoretical framework.

Moreover, this chapter will explain how and why these novels can be inserted into the category of works that fit into Afrocentrism and Négritude novels.

The fourth part will be a comparative analysis of the two works, starting with a comparison of how each novel explores the themes of identity and diaspora, then an analysis of how the "other" is portrayed, and finally examine how hybridity is shown in the novels and how it has shaped the character's, Ifemelu and João, identities.

The last chapter will discuss how literature has been used as an activism manifesto for the diaspora experience, presenting both situations, the American and the Portuguese.

Following the five chapters, there will be a conclusion, where the key findings will be presented and resumed, and suggestions for further research on the topic.

**CHAPTER ONE- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POST-
COLONIAL THEMES**

The comparative analysis of *Americanah* and *Um Preto Muito Português* can be anchored within the theoretical paradigms of Edward Said's Orientalism, Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity and diaspora, to contextualize later the diasporic experiences in both novels. Besides these two terms, the framework will also include Negritude and Afrocentrism, so that the exploration of cultural identities and historical narratives can be understood.

1 Edward Said's Orientalism

One important topic of this dissertation is to contextualize the sense of superiority that exists between the former colonies and the former colonisers. One thing that will become clear with the analysis of the books is that the characters due to their African relations, are viewed as inferior to the others as if there was an invisible string separating the colonisers from the colonised, and this behaviour can be explained by the Orientalism theory defended by Edward W. Said.



Figure 1 Edward W. Said

Retrieved From: *Edward W. said / Barenboim-Said Foundation (USA)*. (n.d.). <https://barenboimsaidusa.org/edward-w-said/> [Access Date: June 29th, 2024]

Born on November 1st, 1935, Edward W. Said was a University Professor at Columbia University, where he taught English and Comparative Literature. Besides being a professor, he also pursued a political career, having been a member of the Council of Foreign Relations in New York, and a member of associations such as, for example, the Royal Society of Literature.

In 1978, he published a study that would forever change the view on Orientalism. Before his book, this concept was viewed as an academic field that combined the studies of arts, history, language, laws, literature, philosophy, and religion of Asian countries.

Still, the view that was being provided was one influenced by the European countries' economic, social, and political backgrounds.

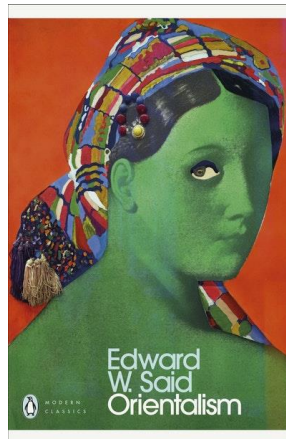


Figure 2 Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (2003 Edition)

Retrieved From: *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said. (n.d.). Penguin Books Australia.

<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/orientalism-9780141187426> [Access Date: June 29th, 2024]

In his work, *Orientalism* (2003) - originally published in 1978, but reprinted in 1995 with a new Afterword, and again in 2003 with a new Preface -, Said states that Orientalism is “a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p.3) by creating an image of the East as a “European invention, and [...] a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience” (p.2); defending his main thesis with arguments from literary, philological, political, religious, and travel studies from Disraeli, Flaubert, Homer, Kipling, and Nerval.

With his work, he demonstrated that Orientalism was indeed an imperialist and racist image of the East and its societies, i.e. Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, created by the West, as he explained in the following quote “[...] the Orientalist sees himself as accomplishing the union of the Orient and the Occident, but mainly by reasserting the technological, political and cultural supremacy of the West” (p.246).

Thus, this feeling of superiority is not only demonstrated when moving from one culture to another, especially when moving from a former colonised to the coloniser but also when describing one foreign country, because this thought has been deeply rooted in society.

While both countries, the USA and Portugal have engaged in Orientalism practices, the USA's presence in this movement is more recent, while Portugal's Orientalism is tied with its early colonial history, Luso tropicalism, and maritime exploration. The USA

connection is intertwined with its modern geopolitical strategies, overpassing, thereby, the previous European-dominated countries. (2023:4)

With Orientalism, Said challenges the assumptions that were once made upon the Orientals, highlights the power relationship between the two hemispheres, and exposes the biases that led to the creation of the image that the Eastern have of the West.

Although this theory has received high claims ever since it was first published, it received some critiques, being one of them from the British American historian with a specialisation in Oriental studies, Bernard Lewis.

In the essay *The Question of Orientalism* published in 1982, Lewis argued that Said's theory had "factual errors in his criticism of academic Orientalists" (Teo, 2013), and that Said had selected "works of French and British Orientalists which supported his argument while ignoring the works of German and Russian Orientalists which did not" (Teo, 2013), concluding his accusations by saying that Said's main thesis was unfounded (Lewis, 1982).

Following this critique Zachary Lockman, a Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and historian, came to Said's defense and said the following about Lewis' arguments in his 2004 book *Contending Vision of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, where the historian argued the following:

Lewis was apparently never able to grasp (or cogently address) Said's treatment of Orientalism's defects as the product of its character as a systematic (and power-laden) discourse, rather than as a problem stemming from error, bias, stereotyping, racism, evil-mindedness or imperialist inclinations on the part of individual scholars. Nor could Lewis accept Said's premise that, like all human endeavours, Orientalist scholarship was at the very least partially shaped by the contexts within which it was conducted and this that it was not hermetically sealed off from wider cultural attitudes about, and political engagements with, Islam and the Muslim world, for centuries Europe's (often threatening) 'other' and an ongoing 'problem' for the United States. (2004:192)

Another critique of the Orientalism ideology was Ibn Warranq in his essay *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (2012), the author clarifies that Westerns act upon their rationalism, and by doing so they are open to other cultures, and that the examples that Said had used in his discourse are exceptions and do not represent the Western society fairly. (Croydon, 2012)

Nevertheless, Said ideology of Orientalism remains highly proclaimed and within it, he helped pave the way to postcolonial literature by offering a new perspective of examining the cultural interactions and the power dynamics between the colonies and the colonisers (Hamadi, 2014).

2 Stuart Hall's Cultural Identity and Diaspora

Another topic that is important to understand is the sense of identity, especially because both authors, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Telma Tvon, describe the African identity in their works while living overseas. This can make one defend that they do not describe the African identity as perfectly as one living in Africa might do.

To contradict this statement, we need to have in mind Stuart Hall's seminal work *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996).



Figure 2 Stuart Hall

Retrieved From: Institute of Race Relations. (2014, February 13). *Stuart Hall: 1932 - 2014 - Institute of Race Relations*.

<https://irr.org.uk/article/stuart-hall-1932-2014/> [Access Date: July 3rd, 2024]

Stuart Hall was a cultural theorist who helped create the academic field of Cultural Studies, whose work is highly influenced by the understanding of identity.

Having lived, as he describes in his work “in the shadow of the black diaspora” (p.1) since he was born in Jamaica and lived there until he moved to England, where he spent his adulthood, he experienced firsthand how the interaction between two cultures could shape one’s identity.

Speaking of diaspora, in his seminal work *Negotiating Caribbean Identities* (1995), Hall defines diaspora as the experience of living “in a place where the centre is always somewhere else” (p.6). This uprooting can provoke different feelings among the society (Hall, 1995), but it can also improve in the shape of the culture identity, as argued by Stuart Hall in the work *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996) there are at least two definitions of the term “cultural identity”; the first one defines it as a “shared culture [...] which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (p.1); in the second perspective, the author acknowledges that it is impossible to “speak for very long, with any exactness about ‘one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side-

the ruptures and discontinuities” (p.3), in other words, we need to bear in mind that changes will happen to that culture throughout history due to several factors and those changes will shape their identity.

Summing up, Hall argues that identities are not singular, they are influenced by the constant interactions within societies, and the environment that the individuals inserted in, constantly reshaping it, creating therefore a fluid and multiple identities.

Even though Hall is focusing on the representation of the Caribbeans who have inhabited the West in his work, that does not discredit the impact that this new term of cultural identity has had in the discovery of the black identity, because as he states it is only possible to “properly understand the traumatic character of the ‘colonial experience’” (p.3) by having those two thoughts about identity.

Bearing this mind, it is undeniable that likewise Edward Said, Stuart Hall theories had deeply influenced postcolonial literature by influencing how identity is perceived. In fact, in the seminal work, he wrote that this new concept of a fluid identity had influenced the work of the poets who were at the centre of the creation of the Négritude movement and continues to influence the new representations of the “marginalised” (p.2).

3 Négritude

As it was mentioned earlier the new concept of identity helped the creation of the Négritude movement. And what was this movement?

This movement was founded in 1934, after three students, Aimé Césaire (Appendix I), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Appendix II), and Léon-Gontran Damas (Appendix III), published while studying in Paris, a journal dedicated to the cause called the *L'Étudiant Noir* (1935).

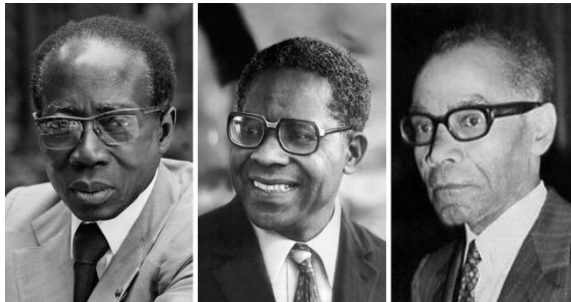


Figure 3 Founders of the Négritude Movement: Leopold Senghor, Aime Cesar, and Léon Damas (L-R)

Retrieved From: *Négritude is omnipresent in African writing: on its birth, rebellion, & perceived disappearance* | D. S. Battistoli. (2019, November 21). Brittle Paper. <https://brittlepaper.com/2019/08/negritude-is-omnipresent-in-african-writing-on-its-birth-rebellion-perceived-disappearance-d-s-battistoli/> [Access Date: June 30th, 2024]

L'Étudiant noir

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Martiniquais en France

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ETRANGER 15 fr.

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QUESTIONS CORPORATIVES

La Question des Bourses

Communiqué

La pétition que nous avons soumise à l'Administration, par l'intermédiaire de nos représentants, a été étudiée l'attention des services autorisés sur la question des bourses.

A vrai dire, si la réaction a été cordiale, de telles idées n'ont pas été accueillies ; nous n'avons point manqué d'appeler et nous remercions bien sincèrement ceux qui ne nous ont point ménagé leurs conseils.

Dès le 8 février 1935, M. Léonary nous donna communication d'une lettre qu'il a adressée au Ministre des Colonies, le gouverneur de la Martinique y protestant contre le report de la question des bourses, en termes énergiques.

« Un état d'un an consistant en présence rationnelle et un avancement solennel accordé dès lors donné à tous les étudiants pour observer rigoureusement les dispositions de l'article du 10 juillet 1934 sur les bourses, à compter de juillet 1935. »

M. Lagrèze, de son côté, n'était pas moins pressant :

« Je vous prie instamment de me solliciter le Président du Conseil général de la Martinique, d'écrire le chef de la Colonie, à propos de votre pétition et de la réaction de tous les docteurs des étudiants. »

Ainsi les représentants de la Martinique ont leur surprise que le décret du juillet 1934 n'aurait pas été appliqué ; l'assimilation de notre pays et de nos représentants efforts pour faire obtenir nos justes revendications. D'après tout de même que nos efforts n'ont pas été vain.

Dès le 15 février 1935, M. Tolosan nous écrivait :

« M. Allaux vient de écrire au Ministre, pour lui faire connaître qu'il peut solliciter jusqu'en mai, les bourses de tous les étudiants au cours d'études. L'ordonnement des mandats a été immédiatement commencé. Les paiements seront faits dans le courant de cette semaine. »

M. Lagrèze, de son côté, nous écrivait : « Un tel état, un grand pas a été fait à tous les sacrifices nécessairement une réparation, tout en évitant l'oubli et l'exercice d'un droit d'appel des décisions prises trop hâtivement à leur endroit. »

Bref, ce n'est pas et ce nous réjouissons que le sort des étudiants est provisoirement réglé. Nos espoirs ont été tout de fois déçus, que nous ne pouvons nous défendre d'un certain scepticisme.

Tous ceux qui connaissent le fonctionnement, la surveillance même des bourses administratives nous comprennent. Ce n'est pas, en tous cas, au Ministère des Colonies, que les mandats ne seraient délivrés aux boursiers que si le gouverneur Allaux n'avait pas de contrevenir dans les quatre jours.

Il y a pire : ne seront payés que ceux qui pourront présenter un certificat de scolarité.

Comment exiger que des étudiants sans ressources, voyant tous les jours le salaire face à face, respectent sans telle formalité ?

M. Perjes, secrétaire politique de l'Association de la Martinique s'est tenu de cette situation, et en a informé M. Léonary.

M. Léonary est intervenu une fois de plus près de M. Tolosan.

« Arrivez-vous à l'école ? »

D'ailleurs, que l'on réhabilite un tant toutes les bourses, on ne doit pas se cacher le caractère de demi-mesure du nouvel arrêté ; on réhabilite les bourses jusqu'en mai, c'est-à-dire jusqu'en mai commencent les vacances.

Ne réhabilite pas de voir les étudiants à Paris, de jeunes martiniquais, mousses de fait, victimes d'un affreux système d'abus sociaux, incompréhensibles.

Arlinda NARDAL.

Dans sa lettre du 19 février 1935, le député de la Martinique, J. Lagrèze nous écrit :

« Je vous serais reconnaissant de demander à tous les représentants de rédiger des lettres individuelles au Ministre des Colonies, où leurs cas seront exposés en détail, et de solliciter des mandats, afin que je les recommande et que le Ministre les recommande, à son tour, au Gouverneur. »

Nous attirons l'attention des étudiants sur la nécessité de remplir vite ces formalités.

Puisse-t-on nous entendre !..

Il est évident que le jour ne fera, car le pétit est grand. Nos camarades du lycée Saint-Louis et moi, sommes sans le moindre ressourcement depuis deux mois. Nous avions espéré, au mieux, en nous avoir donné de l'emploi, mais nous attendons encore des réalisations.

Rien que ! Il est évident que nous autres, internes, devons toucher 150 francs par mois. Heureusement nous avons qui ont pu toucher cette somme ; pour nous, depuis décembre, nous n'avons rien reçu. Par ailleurs, les arrêtés ne prévoient pas les vacances de Noël et de Pâques, soit un mois pendant lequel nous devons vivre « en ville », car le lycée nous ferme ses portes. Bientôt le vent souffle et les nuits d'hiver qui assaillent le soleil à nos Concours ? Car n'oublions pas que la sanction nécessaire pour que la bourse soit maintenue est que nous, il y ait.

Ainsi avons-nous adressé au Gouverneur et au Conseil général de la Martinique une lettre de réclamation dont nous attendons vainement le réponse.

Figure 4 L'Étudiant Noir

This movement was more than a literary change; it was an ideological movement that rejected European colonisation and how it affected the African diaspora. It was the way that French-speaking black writers and intellectuals from the French colonies found to expose their pride in being black, where they could expose the cultural and traditional African values that were once oppressed, and they could share their collective experience on discrimination.

The movement had its inspiration from the New Negro Renaissance, which was a movement that advocated and promoted pride in being black, created by some African American artists, who after the downfall of this movement moved to France to escape racism and segregation. The artists involved in this movement and the movement itself would later impact Léopold Sédar Senghor on the creation of the Négritude Movement. (Academy of American Poets, 2004b)

The term Négritude gained popularity after the publishing of Césaire's book *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939), and as the author explains, the novel aims to acknowledge that the acceptance that one has of their blackness, will further lead to the acknowledgment of the culture and history.

This poem tells the story of a narrator who after returning to his homeland is astonished to witness that its people have fully accepted being colonised. Witnessing how weak his counterparts were, the narrator wants to be the voice for change, the one who brings back the glorious path of his country and its people.

Although this book is considered essential to the understanding of the movement, the work that is considered the manifesto is the poetry collection *Pigments* (1937) published by one of the other leaders of the movement, Damas. In his poetry, Damas argues about racial and cultural identity suppression, slavery, segregation, and colonial assimilation. (Academy of American Poets, 2004b)

The third leader, Senghor, contrary to his associates, defended a term of assimilation where the coexisting between black and white people is possible, in an environment where they reach mutual understanding not forgetting their different cultural backgrounds.

This new movement was well-received, especially by the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jacques Roumain, the founder of the Haitian Communist Party. Nevertheless, some critics dictated that this movement only served to promote blackness as an exotic product that could later be fetishised leading to the creation and promotion of a new type of racism. Among its critiques, the Nigerian poet and playwright Wole

Soyinka stood out by defending that the exposition of the pride that one had in their blackness would only place black people in a defensive position, adding that “a tiger doesn’t proclaim its tigerness; it jumps on its prey” (1986).

Despite its critiques, this movement kept its influence and even influenced future authors in their writings for example, Chinua Achebe, who wrote the acclaimed novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), who later became one of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s inspirations in writing.

The Négritude movement soon would influence the emerging of the new term, Afropolitan.

This new term was first introduced by the British, but with Nigerian-Ghanaian descendant, author Taiye Selasi in her essay *Bye-Bye, Babar* (Full Essay in Annex I) published in 2005 in the LIP Magazine.

In her essay she described this movement as the voice of “the newest generation of African emigrants” who were separated into this new group because as she said had “a willingness to complicate Africa”, they wanted to raise awareness and “celebrate the parts of Africa” (2005).

As she continued in the essay:

[...] what most typifies the Afropolitan consciousness is the refusal to oversimplify; the effort to understand what is ailing in Africa alongside the desire to honor what is wonderful, unique. Rather than essentialising the geographical entity, we seek to comprehend the cultural complexity, to honor the intellectual and spiritual legacy; and to sustain our parents’ cultures.

Afropolitanism started, therefore, to be developed. The movement consisted in the creation of an intersectional point between the different diasporas that have occurred and created a new sense of home for them; a place where they could all embrace their unique roots and history.

Most of their work came from African emigrants in American and European countries, who were advocating to eliminate the Western primary narratives and address the injustices they have suffered; most of the voices of this movement were women.

Some of the criticism of this movement is the fact that some people consider it a reuse of the Pan-Africanism ideology that emerged in the 20th century. Although Pan-Africanism had Négritude as its roots there are some differences between these two ideologies.

Achille Mbembe an intellectual who defended the Afropolitan movement, asserted the following:

Afropolitanism is not the same as Pan-Africanism [...] is an aesthetic and a particular poetic of the world. It is a way of being in the world, refusing on principle any form of victim identity- which does not mean that it is not aware of the injustice and violence inflicted on the continent and its people by the law of the world. It is also a political and cultural stance in relation to the nation, to race, and to the issue of difference in general. (28-29)

This is still a work in process, the true description of African societies is still to be fully discovered but with the upbringing of new authors, not only from the diasporas but also the ones that have grown and still live in African countries, the vision of primitive human beings is turning into a more distant perspective.

4 Afrocentrism

The last term that will be studied is Afrocentrism, which likewise the previous terms that have been explored Orientalism, Stuart Hall's identity definition, and the Négritude movement, provides a critique of the Eastern idealised vision of Africa, and provides a broader representation of the marginalised.

The term Afrocentrism first appeared in the 1980s and was created by Molefi Asante, an African American activist and scholar. (Anderson, 2012b)

This movement was influenced by Black nationalist movements, such as Ethiopianism, a religious movement that flourished in the sub-Saharan regions and is known for being one of the first actions to achieve freedom, when it came to religious and political ideologies in the modern colonial period; and the Pan-Africanism, the cultural and political movement that determined that African descents ought to be unified. (Early, 2002c)

This new term defended that not only just Africans but also non-whites, for example, the Caribbean, have suffered domination through colonisation and slavery by Europe, and within that, the culture of the colonisers has negatively impacted the non-European cultures and minimised their efforts to proclaim their culture as their own. (Anderson, 2012b)

This way, Afrocentrism presented itself as an opposition to Eurocentrism, highlighting that not only did Eurocentrism claim to be a universal model for humanity, but it also increased a sense of inferiority in non-European cultures and societies. Thereby, Afrocentricity has as its purpose to outline the flaws in the Eurocentrism model by broadcasting how this model only consisted of myths that generated racial, economic, intellectual, and political inequalities (Reis & Fernandes, 2018, p.105).

Although this movement was well-intended, it still received some critics, the most notorious from the American classicist Mary Leftwotiz in her book *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (1996), where she refuted the ideas made by the Afrocentrists and defended that their thesis was inaccurate, furthermore, other critics defended that this new way of thinking was only focused on the African values and could endure the creation of new stereotypes. (Early, 2002c)

Nevertheless, this new movement remains valuable, and one area that has been deeply influenced by the Afrocentric view is the arts field, where literature is rooted.

Within the ideology defended by this movement, the authors not only have the power, but also the duty to promote work that must reflect most truthfully the reality of Africa, and its culture. (Dlamini, 2018)

Thereby, Afrocentrism remains valuable, and it is used in literature, especially when it comes to the use of books as an activism movement by African American authors.

CHAPTER TWO—*AMERICANA* AND *UM PRETO MUITO PORTUGUÊS*: MAIN THEMES

5 Introducing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller, we say to girls, “You can have ambition, but not too much.” “You should aim to be successful, but not too successful, otherwise you would threaten the man.” [...] Because I’m female I’m expected to aspire to marriage; I’m expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. A marriage [...] can be a source of joy and love and mutual support. But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don’t teach boys the same? [...] We raise girls to see each other as competitors - not for jobs or for accomplishments, which I think can be a good thing, but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way that boys are. [...] “Feminist: a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.”

The excerpt that opens this chapter is a part of the TED Talk *We should all be feminist*, provided in December of 2012, by the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi, but it is immortalised in the novelist book that goes by the same name as the TED Talk, and in the introduction of the music ****Flawless* by the American singer Beyoncé.

But who is this author, whose words are so inspiring and powerful?



Figure 5 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Retrieved from: Safronova, V. (2016, November 28). *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks beauty, femininity and feminism*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/28/fashion/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-boots-no7-makeup.html> [Access date: July, 4th 2024]

Born on September 15th, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian author and feminist. (*About - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, 2024b)

She comes from, as she describes “a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family”. Her father was a professor in Nsukka, a campus of the University of Nigeria, and her mother was an administrator. (Adichie, 2009)

She studied for a year at Nsukka University, but at the age of nineteen, she decided to move to the United States of America and studied at Eastern Connecticut State University, where she graduated with a degree in Communication and Political Science. Later she decided to take a master’s degree in creative writing from Johnson Hopkins University, and a Master of Arts Degree in African History from Yale University.

To join the previous degrees mentioned, she has also received honorary doctorate degrees from the following institutions American University, Amherst College, Bowdoin College, Duke University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Georgetown University, Haverford College, Johns Hopkins University, Northwestern University, Rhode Island School of Design, Skidmore College, SOAS University of London, University of Edinburgh, University of Johannesburg, University of Pennsylvania, Williams College, and Yale University.

Chimamanda also has received some academic recognition, for example, a Hodder Fellowship¹ at Princeton University, a fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute of Harvard University, and a MacArthur Fellowship².

Although having had a marvellous academic career, what makes Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie outstanding is her writing skills.

She developed her passion for writing at the early age of seven years old.

However, the images that her first writings portrayed were a reflection of the American and British books she read, so, her characters in her own words “were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples [...] also drank a lot of ginger beer”. (Adichie, 2009)

¹ A Hodder Fellowship is given to promising artists and writers to enable them to pursue independent projects during the academic year at Princeton University.

² The MacArthur Fellowship Program is a program that aims to encourage individuals to follow their interests in the academic, creative, and professional fields.

It was not until she found African writers, such as, for example, Chinua Achebe (Appendix IV) and Camara Laye (Appendix V), that she realised that there was more to be written, as she defended in her TED Talk:

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized. [...] what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

Finding these authors created a mental shift in her mindset of how Africans should be portrayed in books, and why were those authors so important in this area.

Having suffered this mental shift, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie started to write about the reality she knew, not fearing that the Africa she describes is the one that people have in mind because she now wants to tell her story, the story of her homeland, regardless of people's pre-concept ideologies.

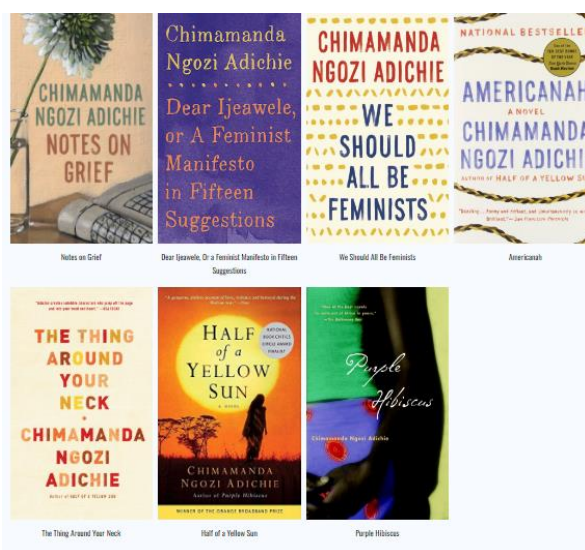


Figure 6 Chimamanda Novels

Retrieved from: Books - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. (2021, September 30). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. <https://www.chimamanda.com/book/> [Access Date : July, 4th 2024]

Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), tells the inner battle suffered by Kambili, a fifteen-year-old, and her brother on their newfound freedom after being sent to live with their aunt, escaping in this way of their father's restrictions. However, once their father comes to visit the inner battle comes alive, and the two siblings fight trying to understand where the lines between the old and the new meet. (Ngozi Adichie, 2005)

The following novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) recreates the story of the Biafran War intertwining the catastrophe felt by its people with a history of five main characters. In this story, the reader meets Uguwu, a thirteen-year-old, who works as a houseboy in the house of Odening, a university professor, whose house is the stage for the planning of a revolution. Then, there is Olanna the professor's mistress who left her privileged life in Lagos for a new, but not better life, in a university town, and her twin sister, Kainene who is the love interest of Richard, a young Englishman, even though she keeps rejecting the idea of being someone's property. (Ngozi Adichie, 2007)

In 2009, she released *The Thing Around Your Neck*. This is the first time that the author made a connection between Nigeria and the United States of America, with twelve stories that tell the stories of those who left in hopes of a better life and had to battle to have a place in their chosen land while trying to keep their customs and traditions alive. (Ngozi Adichie, 2009)

In the continuation of exploring the relationship between Americans and Africans, she wrote *Americanah* (2013). A powerful story where topics such as immigration, feminism, and finding an identity are explored, accompanying the story of Ifemelu and Obinze, two adolescents, who leave a military-ruled Nigeria, and try to make it in the unknown Western world. (Ngozi Adichie, 2023b)

As well as writing novels, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also wrote some essays. That is the case of *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014), a personal essay where she tries to explain what the complex world of feminism means for the time being, combining her own experiences with sexual politics, which can sometimes be hidden. This essay is the transcript of a TEDTalk of the same name presented in December 2012. (Ngozi Adichie, 2014)

The story of the next one can be seen as a little unusual. When asked by a friend how she could teach her daughter how to be a feminist and how to empower herself in the 21st century reality; this book came alive. In the format of a letter, *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017) offers as the name explains fifteen suggestions on how to become a fearless and powerful woman by trying to break the social norms of what is appropriate for a girl and what it is not. (Ngozi Adichie, 2018)

For now, her latest book is *Notes on Grief* (2021), a personal book, if not her most personal, where she exposes the sorrow that followed her father's passing, and how the

COVID-19 pandemic influenced her grieving process. Chimamanda's father passed away in the summer of 2020, the time when COVID-19 was striking, due to all the restrictions she had to face, her grieving process, how she managed being separated by an ocean and without the possibility of being present, exposing the anger and the loneliness that it involved.

Nevertheless, this book is not only about feeling sorry but is also a memoir of who her father was, telling his story from his time in the Biafran war, his career as a University Professor, to the last memories that she had of him facetimeing his family member during the pandemic. (Ngozi Adichie, 2021)

It is important to mention that in the course of her career, she has won an endless list of awards related to her books, for example Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2005: Best First Book (in the African and the overall categories) for *Purple Hibiscus*, in 2015 the "Best of the Best" within the second date of what is now the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, but used to be the Orange Prize for Fiction for *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and lastly, in 2013 for *Americanah* National Book Critics Circle Award. (*About - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, 2024)

From what was written about her long curriculum in the writing field, any of these books could be the object of study for this dissertation since all, perhaps only excluding the last one, give a different version of what Africa is compared to the versions that one has from Westerns stories, and they do make a point of what feminism is either in a more subtle way or in a more upfront manner; but, the book that will be explored is *Americanah*.

5.1 Ifemelu the Americanah

Released in 2013 *Americanah* explores the life of Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman who studies at the Nsukka University. While studying she struggled because her studies kept being delayed and even cancelled due to the constant strikes that occur in Nigeria due to its government. So, to achieve a better education and with the help of her aunt, Auntu Uju -her aunt who had to move to the United States of America due to some marital complications- she managed to get a student visa and move to the USA.

As soon as she lands, she feels a certain feeling of clash. She was hoping for a better and easier life because the West was portrayed as the land of opportunities and in Ifemelu's homeland those who had abroad seemed to show it as a privilege, so her hopes were high, to say the least. Yet, the America she found was a place of racism, an alien culture.

Upon her arrival, Ifemelu meets a country where everyone needs to have a label (2023:184), they cannot just be themselves they need to fit into categories based on their skin colours; in simpler words, she meets a world where racism is just an ordinary thing, something that comes along with it. She expresses how distressed she felt as soon as she had to label herself as a black African woman, and not just a woman, and how shocked she is that others who are not affected by this disturbed mindset just ignore her, as she said in a dinner party of one of her white boyfriend's, Curt, friend:

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 a black and I only became black when I came to America. (2023:290)

Her path in America is the story of the silenced immigrant who arrives in a new country and finds difficulties in fitting in their new reality and struggles with welcoming the new culture while trying to preserve their own. In other words, Ifemelu can be considered the image in the mirror of those who fled in hopes of encountering better opportunities just to have their dreams crushed by an alien society. Hence, to understand her, it is fundamental to understand her story.

As a child, Ifemelu always felt that she was living under her mother's shadow, especially when it came to something as simple as her mother's hair. As she describes her hair "was black-black, so thick it drank two containers of relaxer at the salon, so full it took hours under the hooded dryer, and, when finally released from pink plastic rollers,

sprang free and full, flowing down her back like a celebration" (2013:41), and always caught people's attention, and while staring at it people would ask if she was a foreigner because in their minds there was no biological explanation for someone from Nigeria to have "such bounteous hair that did not thin at the temples." (2023:41). While Ifemelu's hair was just coils brought up together, "bristly and grew reluctantly; braiders said it cut them like a knife." (2023:41)

Conversely to this insecure, she was a thoughtful young girl, and would not believe in all that was preached at the new Church they attended, even questioning the veracity of how someone could achieve things by the simplest act of praying, but could with the corruption that reigned in the country ("Ifemelu did not think that God had given Pastor Gideon the big house and all those cars, he had, of course, bought them with money from the three collections at each service, and she did not think that God would do for all as He had done for Pastor Gideon, because it was impossible [...] (2023:44)). Because of her beliefs, she tried to respect her family's religious path, and because her aunt was closer to The General, a powerful man, not without letting some comments free especially knowing that the people in charge were corrupted. " "Why should I make decorations for a thief?" [...] "Chief Omenka is a 419 and everybody knows it," she said. "This church is full of 419 men. Why should we pretend that this hall was not built with dirty money?" (2023:51)

This audacity of hers made her the curious young woman she would grow up to be. However, there were some things that she could not understand for example she could not understand why Obinze, her boyfriend, could think that his books were better than the ones she read, just because they were written in American English, his desire for America was another topic that she could not understand why someone from Lagos could hope to leave in go there. But her curiosity and her questioning met an end when she was forced to leave her hometown due to the strikes at the university.

Professors at the local universities were displeased with the regime "...we are not the enemy. The military is the enemy. They have not paid our salary in months." (2023:91); yet this time things were different from the previous ones, this time the strike did not seem to have an end to it, and students were trying to find an escape, and the solution that many found was to leave to study abroad under a visa. By a miracle, Ifemelu was able to win a student visa and leave for America, starting her adventure in an alien country.

In the case of Ifemelu it seemed to her that the ones who came before tried to erase any resemblances of their native culture, by changing the way their names were spelled, " She pronounced you-joo instead of oo-joo." (2023:104) and going as far to eliminate the language from their descendants, as it was the case of Aunty Uju's house "Please don't speak Igbo to him." (2023:109)

The erasing of a language can seem harmless from the outside viewer, controversial language and culture are connected and need each other. To understand one's language one will need to understand the culture, and vice versa. Language is more than spoken words, it reflects the cultural values, beliefs, and practices, as Potowki defended (2010). Our communication style is derived from our verbal and non-verbal communication, and it provides a sense of belonging to a community, so Ifemelu her aunt tried to remove Igbo from their house as a way of cutting ties with their previous community and to erase the African roots from their descendants.

Little by little, Ifemelu realized that America was not the treasure land people portrayed it to be, for instance when back home they all thought that Aunty Uju was thriving when she was struggling, although she was already a doctor when she arrived, she had to retake her exams because her license was not valid in the US. And once she got a licence, her patients did not want to have her as their doctor because of her skin colour, as she complained "one patient [...] told me to go back to where I came from." (2023:218).

Nevertheless, not being accepted by people just due to their skin colour was not something that Ifemelu had experienced as a racist attitude. The first time that she truly felt that racism and the sense of privilege were deep-rooted into America's mindset was with Cristina Tomas, the girl who was helping students in the process of registration at the University. Cristina Tomas spoke to her so slowly that at first, Ifemelu thought that she had a sort of illness that did not allow her to speak at a normal pace, but then it hit her. Cristina was not speaking at a normal pace to her, because of Ifemelu's accent and looking, because for people in America, speaking English in an African country was something impossible, however, what people do not know is that English is the official language of the country due to its past as colony of the British Empire. Although this was written in a novel, and as fictional as it can sound this happened to the author. As was mentioned earlier when Chimamanda arrived at her university residence one of the first compliments she received from her roommate was how well fluent her English sounded.

Hence, Ifemelu being shocked and feeling herself dissociating from herself, did not know how to react to that insult. So, after being able to breathe and restore her thoughts she decided to practise her American accent until she could disguise herself as an African American and not be known as just another African immigrant. And being an African American was better than being an immigrant, in fact even so dull activities as in university clubs they would segregate themselves from each other, separating one from another, and indicating who was what, as Ifemelu's new friend, Kofi described to her:

Try and make friends with our African Americans brothers and sisters in a spirit of true pan-Africanism. But make sure you remain friends with fellow Africans, as this will help you keep your perspective. Always attend African Students Association meetings, but if you must, you can also try the Black Student Union. Please note that in general, African Americans go to the Black Student Union and Africans go to the African Students Association. Sometimes it overlaps but not a lot. The Africans who go to BSU are those with no confidence who are quick to tell you 'I am *originally* from Kenya' even though Kenya just pops out the minute they open their mouths. The African Americans who come to our meeting are the ones who write poems about Mother Africa and think that every African is a Nubian queen. (2023:140)

From Kofi's statement, there can be an understanding that there is a segregation between them, the African-born. This prejudice between African Americans and African migrants has already been studied, for example in a doctoral thesis published in 2012 by Adaobi C. Ilheduru. In the thesis, he argues that prejudice is primarily created from negative stereotypes that both parties have of each other, with both parties defining themselves as superior to the other, and the distance between the two is also reinforced by internal racism between the two groups.

Still, she decided to take part in the ASA meetings, and that is where she felt warm. In a small room they were free to mock Americans and told them "You speak such good English. How bad is AIDS in your country? It's so sad that people live on less than a dollar a day in Africa." (2023:139), and mock their own country, but that mockery was a different type, it was not one based upon ignorance but "it was mockery born on longing, and of the heartbroken desire to see a place made whole again." (2023:139)

Our protagonist would conclude that American society is divided into categories; and everyone needs to find their place and follow those patterns, because there is not an in-between where people could just adapt themselves, they are either one thing or the other. As she wrote in her blog:

In America tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds- class, ideology, religion, and race. First, class. [...] Rich folk and poor folk. Second, ideology. Liberals and conservatives. [...] Third, region. [...] Finally, race. 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!) Americans assume that everyone will get their tribalism." (2023:184)

Having realised that, she discovered that to Americans she would always be an outcast, hence she decided to bring back her accent. Accepting her Nigerian accent was not the same as accepting her foreignness, in other words, she would act upon the norms accepted by the country she was in not be another African immigrant, and still at the same time, she would embrace her culture.

A moment where it was clear that to fit in, she needed to change herself, was when she got a job interview for her first serious work in America. She remembers the first time that she heard Aunty Uju commenting that to be taken seriously she had to lose her braids, Ifemelu at first was puzzled by that, because in her mind it could not be acceptable to have a job someone needed to change her appearance, but she soon found that being African in Africa was not the same as being in America; and she followed her friend, Ruth, and her aunt advice and relaxed her hair. Her white boyfriend, Curt, could not understand why such a change, he knew that Ifemelu embraced her hair, thus to him that change was something inexplicable until she made it clear to him:

My full and cool hair would work if I were interviewing to be a backup singer in a jazz band, but I need to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight is best but if it's going to be curly then it has to be the white kind of curly, loose curls or, at worst, spiral curls but never kinky.(2023:204)

This affirmation puzzled her boyfriend, but how could he understand what she was going through, and how many more difficulties she needed to pass until she could finally feel that America had welcomed her? He was a white man who came from a successful family, he had everything, how could he fully understand her problems, he had never had to face any difficulties.

Being black was not the only factor that separated her from the others. She had earlier noticed that the African Americans seemed to be more careless as if they did not

carry the weight of being a foreigner or could live without the fear of having their residence suspended by changes in the VISA policies as if they were a superior hierarchy among the Black community. She truly noticed this once she started dating Blaine.

Her second boyfriend in the USA was the founder of a group on the Princeton University campus called "Fellowship of African Students", a group where the members can discuss freely what identity and race truly mean and the issues that came along with it. Portrayed as an individual who besides being having an intelligence above the others, is also someone passionate and conscious about social problems, who spends most of his time involved in activism to create a fairer society.

This relationship was more than a simple act of love, it was also an exploration of cultural identity, and the problems that can emerge when people with different perspectives of what America is to immigrants of first generation (those who were born outside USA barriers) and the second generation (the sons and daughters of the first generation immigrants, in other words, those who were already born in the USA) ones. In summary, Blaine is the reflection of those whose experience is different, those who do not share the same perspective on race or identity, because their suffering cannot be equal to the outside's.

As much as she tried to fit in there would be someone to remind her that she was not like them, for example when she went to a salon to get her eyebrows done and the lady just answered "We don't do curly" (2023:292), or even with friends who did not understand her experience, and minimise everything because she was in America, or when calling her parents and they expected that she was doing great because she had escaped, and she just nodded in accordance because explaining to them how she truly was feeling would disappoint them. Even when her mental health started to deteriorate, she just shook it off, because diseases like anxiety and depression were something that only white people felt, because they enjoyed labelling everything.

She could hide those feelings from everyone, until one day when the bubble she was in just exploded. She was at a dinner party with her African American boyfriend, Blaine, friends; and the only one like her, a poet from Haiti, said that race did not matter there. Hearing that Ifemelu was hopeless, how could someone, an outcast like she say those things, had she forgotten how much someone like them struggles to fit in, and how could the others that were there agree with her, she just could not be silenced anymore and thus the words overpowered her and she could not contain herself to say:

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. [...] race doesn't matter when you're alone [...] But the moment 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. [...] We let it pile up inside our heads and when we come to nice liberal dinners like this, we say that race doesn't matter because that's what we're supposed to say [...]. (2023:290-291)

Our main character could not handle it any longer, she desperately needed to return home, and that is what she did. After years of fighting a war that she could not win, she went back to Nigeria, in hopes of meeting the new Nigeria, the developed one that her friends and family who stayed promoted, as if being Nigeria now was almost as good as being in America. Hence, Ifemelu became an Americanah, someone who after being overseas came back home.

Not surprisingly, the Nigeria she found was not the land of gold that people promoted, it was still a corrupted one, just with some advancements, such as, for example, having an air conditioner at the place of work.

After working for some time in a Nigerian magazine, the excitement initially felt to be able to leave a mark in journalism, due to the superficiality of the work produced and the difference in values, vanished into thin air.

Yearning for something that truly represented not only her capacities, but also herself, she decided to prioritise her integrity and decided to fulfil her life by continuing to write in the blog she created while in America "The Non-American Black", but this time she would use it as a full-time job, and besides the experiences she had already shared, she would reflect on what it means to be an Americanah.

5.2 Other Characters Experiences

Although the book is more centered on Ifemelu's experience, there are other experiences of immigration that are as important as hers.

5.2.1 Obinze

Obinze was Ifemelu's first boyfriend and her true love. He was born in America, but his mother decided to come back to Nzuka to be a professor at the local university. Obinze always had the dream to go back to America he would only read books that were written in American English because they were written in better English and the authors were a part of the intellectual society.

As Ifemelu he decided to leave when the strikes in the universities were starting to be unbearable, but unequally to what happened to Ifemelu, he kept seeing his Visa being rejected.

Seeing his son losing hope, his mother manages to get him false documentation, which helps him get to London. There he lived a clandestine life, working several jobs to be able to make it through.

Tired of this clandestine lifestyle, and after hearing about a way that people like him were receiving Visas faster and feeling desperate to be himself again, Obinze enters a marriage scam, where after marrying a British citizen, he would be able to obtain citizenship. After following most of the steps of the scam, and after meeting the woman he was supposed to marry, his values take the best of him, and he decides to step back in the decision. However, this decision cost him the achievement of his dream to go back to the USA. After stepping out someone tipped immigration services about Obinze's illegal state, and he got deported and sent back to Nigeria.

Feeling hopeless, and almost like a loser, he did not know how he could overcome that failure, but not wanting to be seen as someone who needed pity, he decided that it was time to start over.

Luckily, he found a job as a real estate agent, and since the Nigeria he found was still a corrupted one and had the advantage of being smart when it came to making decisions and having knowledge about Nigeria, he succeeded and became one of the most wealthy men in his hometown.

He had everything, a roof over his head, a wife and a daughter, a business that gave him the chance to travel, and the pride of being a powerful man, still, he felt that a

part of him was missing. There was something that money and success could not fulfil, in these terms, Obinze in the story is the representation that sometimes ambition and power are not the most important factors in someone's life.

5.2.2 Aunty Uju

Obinze and Ifemelu were not able to make it through in overseas territories, but there is still one character that was able to thrive, and that character is Aunty Uju.

She is described as a strong woman, who manages to survive in an unknown country, where she is all alone with a toddler. Still, she is also portrayed as someone who has internal struggles and doubts, and as someone who as soon as problems appear will run off.

As it was mentioned above, she had to leave Nigeria due to her relationship with The General, because when he passed away the protection, he gave her was gone, and she needed to ensure not only her but also her son's protection.

Hence, she escaped to the USA to pursue her medical career, only to discover that the qualifications she had were not the right ones following American regulations, so she needed to start from zero.

Passing the exams was not an easy task, sometimes she would question how she could, being already a doctor, and one that works in the best medical care centres in her country, not pass the exams. She blamed her success on the fact that she was alone taking care of Dike, her son, so, when she saw that there was the possibility of her niece coming, she took it. However, now that she could focus more on her studies, she noticed how behind she had gotten, and every time that she tried her hardest, it still felt that that was not enough, but quitting was not an option, she had come a long way to provide her son a better life than the one that might have if they had stayed. Hence, against all odds she finally got the letter she was hoping for, the one that was bigger than the ones before, the one that instead of wishing better luck next time, congratulated her and had explicit on it that according to American law, she was finally a doctor and could finally exercise it.

Her experiences reflect how hard it can be for an immigrant to enter a professional path that was already theirs in a new country, whether due to the cultural barriers or to their credentials being considered invalid. Being a doctor is not an easy career, but being a Black one made it even harder. While working in clinics she had to hear racist comments when the patients did not hear what they wanted.

Nevertheless, Aunt Uju also had some thoughts about being an African, but it is important to bear in mind that while she was still in Africa she was a part of the elite society, her material richness was just something that some of her fellow patriarchy could only dream of having, hence arriving at a country where she had nothing, and where people would always question her integrity, made her subconsciously despise her African roots.

Thus, she did everything she could so that her son would never know his roots. Denying their origins was easy while being alone, however, it became harder once they were third parties into the equation. The arrival of Ifemelu into their lives was not the only external factor that reminded her who she truly was, after her niece left their house, Bartholomew.

Bartholomew was Aunt Uju's more serious partner in the USA. He was a little bit older than she was, which created in Aunt Uju the illusion of how serious that relationship could have been, but the desire of having the happily after ever, vanished once he started to demand for a salary, meaning that he was going to have control over her, because he defended that it was things should work.

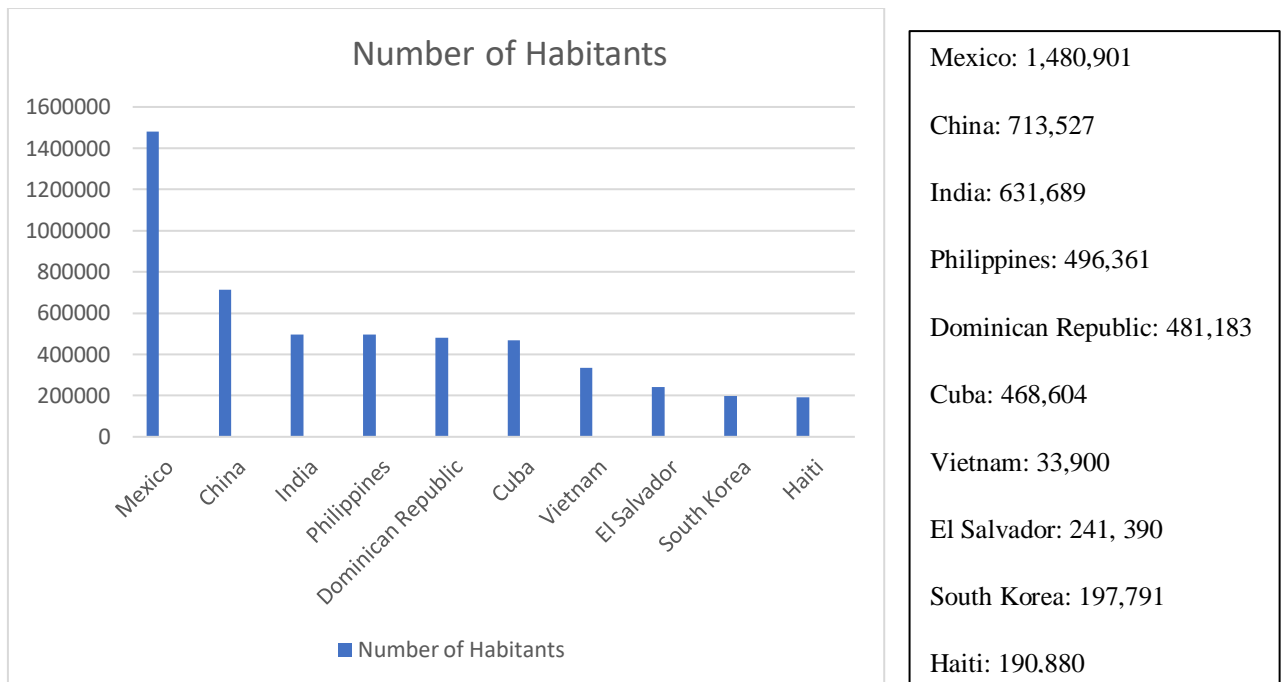
All these external influences not only made it harder to ignore her past, but it also prejudiced Dike's mental health. Her son grew up feeling different from his friends, because most of the places he had grown up in white neighbourhoods, due to her mother considering that those places could offer him more opportunities.

Still, feeling outcast throughout his whole life, and not having the answers he needed, having those feelings all clustered inside him made him feel desperate, and it resulted in his attempt to end his own life. Realising how her previous actions had influenced the path of the ones closer to her, she decided to be a better emigrant, accepting her roots while at the same time embracing her new home.

In this sense Aunt Uju represents a new image of an emigrant. In fact, all the characters from the book represent a different perspective, because there is not a single story from something as complex as immigration, everyone's experiences are different. Nevertheless, one thing that they have in common is that their search for prosperity in a country known to be the land of gold, was not easy.

5.3 Americanah: Fictional or a True Story

There were several challenges throughout the way, laws and regulations that could not be overpassed, and on top of all they had to deal with the racism in a country that as of mid-2020 had the highest immigration population, with a total of 50.6 million which is approximately 15.3% of the population. In the graphic below it can be seen where the majority, the top ten countries of the immigrants who enter the country in the period between the 2011 and 2020.



Graphic 1: Number of Habitants

Retrieved from: *US Immigration by country 2024*. (n.d.). <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/us-immigration-by-country> [Access Date: April, 16th 2024]

Although there is no mention of African countries in the previous list when separating by continent, we can notice that there is a large percentage of African immigrants in the USA, who perhaps must deal with racism, criticism, self-doubting, and difficulties that our characters had to face.

In the same period as before, of the 9543743 immigrants that entered the country, 991 288 were from African countries, which represents approximately 10 percent of them.

Reading this book can make one wonder how apart reality and fiction truly are, how thin can be the string that separates the two. Indeed, in the Introduction of the novel itself, Chimamanda describes how she feels and what it means to be Black in America:

I became Black in America. It was not a choice- my chocolate-coloured skin saw to that- but it became a revelation. I had never before thought of myself as "Black"; I did not need to, because while British colonialism in Nigeria left many cursed legacies in its wake, racial identity was not one of them. [...] In Nigeria, I was Igbo and Roman Catholic [...]
To be Black in America was to feel bulldozed by the weight of history and stereotypes, to know that race was always a possible reason, or cause, or explanation for the big and small interactions that make up our fragile lives. To be Black was to realize that it was impossible for people to approach one another with the simple wonder of being human, without the spectre of race lying somewhere in the shadows. To be Black was to feel, in different circumstances, frustration, anger, irritation, and wry amusement [...] (2023:vii-viii)

As it can be seen this outcast feeling was not something just made up for the novel, but it is not a new feeling, as Joseph Esghill, a man who moved to the United States when he was seventeen to pursue his studies, stated to an interview given to BBC (Annex II), published on 25th May 20220, states that one of the first things he noticed upon arriving from Trinidad and Tobago was the importance that race carried in the USA. Still, he recalls affirming that he would not enter that sensible topic, so he remained another African citizen in the shadows.

6 Introducing Telma Tvon

Speaking about a foreign country is easy because we are looking at it from an outsider's perspective. When it comes to our own country, it is not easy to delve into the inequalities that a part of our society still suffers. Hence, this next sub-chapter will analyse *Um Preto Muito Português*, written by Telma Tvon, who as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie moved to a foreign country.



Figure 7 Telma Tvon

Retrieved from: Negra, G. I. da M. (2018, June 18). *Telma Tvon Trouxe a voz da juventude Negra Portuguesa para o romance*. Geledés. <https://www.geledes.org.br/telma-tvon-trouxe-voz-da-juventude-negra-portuguesa-para-o-romance/> [Access Date: June, 6th 2024]

Telma Marlise Escórcio da Silva was born in 1980 in Luanda. In 1993, she moved to Portugal with her family, settling in Queluz. (TimeOut,2024).

She studied African Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon, and after graduating she did a master's in social services at ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon.

From an early age, she had shown an outrageous talent for expressing her thoughts in words. Thus, when she was still in school, at the age of sixteen, she created the rap group Backwordz alongside MCs ("Masters of Ceremony", as they are known in the rap culture) Lady, LG, and Zau. While it was active, between the years 1996 and 2000, the group took part in some mixtapes and even recorded some albums.

After leaving these groups, she coordinated the recording of a mixtape in 2001, called "Raparigas na Voz dp Soul", alongside Alexandre Santaella Cruz, known in the music world as DJ Cruzfader.

In 2005 she released *Finalmente*, a compact disc, alongside the soul singer Geny, while they collaborated in the group Lweji.

Besides the two groups that were already mentioned, she also took part in the group Hardcore Click, although further information about this group could not be found.

Her last recorded work in the music industry is in the songs *Alfamangaraguaia; Medo; Todos Respiravam Felicidade; E Tudo Era Delírio; Dois Problemas, uma Solução; Vadiagem; A Carta e os Canhões; Passado Presente; e Uma História Diferente*, all the songs mentioned are from the album *Samba de Guerrilha*, released in 2021 by the Brazilian singer Luca Argel in 2021. In her songs, the artist explored themes that were connected to the female experience.

Although she had left the rap industry in 2008, her artistic work did not end there, she still expresses her thoughts, however, she chose a different channel to have them delivered.

In 2018, she released her first book and the novel that will be analysed *Um Preto Muito Português*. The combination of the prose and poetry style which build up this novel, is a monologue for those who are not accepted and whose voice is not heard.

6.1 Budjurra, a very Portuguese black

Our narrator, Budjurra, although the name that appears on his citizenship card is João, is a young man whose parents traded Cape Verde for Portugal, in hopes of a better life.

Although he is not a migrant himself, the country that has been the stage for his life is still to accept him as a citizen of its own. The first example that illustrates how he was not welcoming is when people would call him the Black kid from Guinea, who had never been there (2024:10).

Hence, if he could not be one hundred percent Portuguese, was he accepted among the African community? Yes, and no. People would let him describe himself but would not be happy if he said that Africa is a part of him. In fact, in a conversation, he was having with a girl he had met in the metro, he called Cape Vert his homeland (2024:51), which led to a lively discussion:

"Eu disse-lhe que gostava de conhecer Cabo Verde, afinal também era a minha terra. Riu-se de uma forma que me incomodou e sentenciou: «Tu não és nem pouco nem mais cabo-verdiano. Tu não és nada cabo-verdiano. Podes estar convencido de que sim porque os teus pais nasceram lá mas tu não o és. Não tens nada de crioulo, a tua cor não diz nada [...] há pretos portugueses e tu és um deles [...] «Eu sou português mas também sou cabo-verdiano.» «Não, Budjurra, não és. Tu não tens aquela sabura. Olha bem para ti. Tão contido, todo frio. todo europeu. Não é mal nenhum mas é o que tu és. [...] «Não tens o sangue quente, não tens o mesmo sentimento que nós por viver. [...] não tens nada a haver connosco»" (2024:51)

During this lively conversation, João's friend Rossana denies him the right of calling Cape Verde his hometown, because he is not like them. The fact that his parents were born there is the only thing that ties him with Africa because, in the eyes of African natives, he is not only another Black but a foreign man.

Having heard that, the main character felt devastated, to say the least, all his life he recalls being called the foreigner Black child (2024:10) but back then he did not understand that that was said in a way to insult him because people used to complement that description of him with things as "o Preto da Guiné que cheirava a chulé [...] o preto macaco [...] o preto que devia ir para a minha terra [...]" (2024:10). People could say that he smelled and could compare him to a monkey that he would simply accept as the cross he had to carry just because of his ancestry; but would implicate him as saying that he did not belong in Portugal, even though he was born there.

Therefore, if people did not let him say that Portugal was his homeland, the only right thing to do was to admit Cape Verde as it, although it had never been there; because for people it would be more acceptable to call someone of African descent an emigrant than to call him a Portuguese. Still, that was not accepted in the Portuguese African community, just because he had descendants he was not entitled to the nationality. This unwelcoming from both parties made the main character grow up with a sense of nothingness surrounding him.

Nevertheless, the sense of belonging is not the only topic that this book abords. In the writing style of a diary this book accompanies João's journey in the country that does not welcome him, but what is interesting is that in the book is that the other characters, everyone surrounding the narrator is a representation of a stereotype. For instance, his family members are portrayed as the typical stereotypical African immigrant family.

Starting with his parents, were from different parts of Cape Vert, his father from Santiago, and his mother from Santo Antão; they both came with the hope of a better future, but this wish may have not been filled realised, since the professional fields they ended taken upon on were as a locksmith, his father, and as a domestic worker, his mother.

Then, there are his younger siblings, his brother, Carlos, and his sister, Sandra; and as the narrator describes those two are like two comedy characters straight from a British sitcom (2024:13).

When younger, Carlos was this quiet child who managed to get everyone's attention, especially when it came to the female audience, but as he grew older, a rage inside of him started to blossom, he despised every white person and isolated himself in his bubble of hatred and changed his behaviour. First of all, he rejected speaking Portuguese, the only acceptable language for him was Creole, he abandoned school when he was in the sixth grade because besides not wanting to keep his studies he did not believe that Portugal was not the place for people of his skin colour, he also started to listen to rap music and acting like his idols, smoking weed and bringing different girls home every night.

His sister was also a troublemaker herself, like her younger older brother she left school at an early age, she was in the ninth grade, but she decided to take a professional course to become a nail technician. As Carlos, she isolated herself in a hate atmosphere, but she did not hate the people who were different from her, she hated the ones who were like her, rejecting any remarks of her African ancestry and cultural values, but above all she hated women.

Differentiating the siblings from one another, in such a drastic way, can be a strategy created by the author to exemplify who were the good Africans, in this case, the parents, and João, who were the bad ones, in this case, the brother and the sister.

Nevertheless, this disparity in how people are described in the novel is more significant when João's group of friends is described, as can be demonstrated in the following examples.

For example, the first close female friend who is described in the book is his first girlfriend, Luísa. She had come from Angola to study Law in Porto, while she did not show how wealthy her family was, her family did, and when he met them for the first time, he was shocked, to say the least. He remembers that her mother was dressed as she would dress to attend an important ball (2024:20), but he did not take it personally, because he blamed it on the cultural differences between them, they had lived in Angola and he in Portugal, so he assumed that in Angola it was a natural thing to do.

However, he started to notice a heavy environment in the room, the conversation was not flowing, and everything went downhill once he told her mother what his parents did for a living.

She could not believe herself hearing him proudly saying that his mother was a maid, and his father was a locksmith, but surprisingly enough his parents' professional career choices were not what made her obligate Luísa to cut ties with him. What made her do such a thing was his skin colour.

According to her social norm, Budjurra was too white to be given the honour of being welcomed into the family

Later, in the novel, another female friend is introduced this time, Fernanda. Fernanda is a single mother of a three-year-old boy, Christian. His father is described as absent and careless of him and his other three children from different women. Fernanda is portrayed as the woman who was betrayed by her saviour, the man who saved her from her previous life and promised a better one, and when it came to showing, the man left her alone with the child. Having to fight to survive when it comes to economic survival is not the only challenge Fernanda and her little children have to face alone, Rui, Christian's father, has contracted HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, making Fernanda and her child carriers of the sexually transmitted virus.

In chapter forty-seven, Budjurra meets one of his friends Saraiva's friends at his friend Margarida's farewell lunch. The social gathering started well, the conversation was flowing, but there was a main topic which was the fact that many young minds, such as

Margarida, were migrating to Angola in hopes of a better future, but all was going well until someone said that the despair of economic power in countries like that one was unbelievable, how could in a developed world, in the same country, some can have so many possessions and others surviving with the minimum (2024:168).

Until that moment the girl had been sitting quiet, but she could not contain her thoughts any longer so she just expressed her ideas on the despair of opportunities saying that everyone should do the most with what they have and that the African situation was only like that because of its people behaviour, explaining that their problem was that they were lazy, that spend their time on criticising governments due to their lack of money, while they did not do much and spent what they have on money on beverages and illegal business. (2024:168). Defending her thesis on how the people she knew from that country behaved like.

It is important to know that the family whom she knows and has spent time with were the son of a former Angolan minister and the daughter of an Angolan general. (2024:169)

Everyone was shocked to hear those affirmations.

In the novel, Budjurra describes that girl in the beginning as someone quiet but self-aware that all eyes were on her, but after that comment, she was machiavellian and someone who only cared about her appearance and liked to show her means.

The author did not clarify the colour of the skin of this woman but being described as someone different with the difficulties faced by some, we can consider that differently from the other three previous, whom Telma Tvon told straight that they were either immigrants or from African descendants, we can conclude that she was a white female.

This dispersion between Black friends and White ones does not only occur in female friendships but there is also that division when it comes to male ones, although it is a small one.

In the case of the white friend, the narrator introduces Gonçalo. Gonçalo is what he calls an honourable Portuguese, someone who will defend his nation at all costs. Still, he has an internal dilemma, which is his family's richness. Budjurra explains that Gonçalo comes from a wealthy family, but still, Gonçalo is not like the other girl he had met although he was brought up in that world of richness, he does not want to end up like his father, who has been blinded by the power he possesses and believes that he is above everyone else, Gonçalo wants to be treated with respect and to have his voice heard.

Hoping, not only to be respected, but above all to be heard is an understandable wish, and that is what Budjurra, another male friend also hopes for, but his situation is way worse than some family issue, his situation could prejudice his future.

One sunny summer day Budjurra and some friends decided to meet up with some friends at Carcavelos beach. On his way he encountered two of his siblings' friends, Bruno and Margarida; after chatting for a little, they parted ways.

Arriving there, Budjurra started to notice that something bad was about to begin, before being told by the police to leave the place he could only notice that there was a cluster of people.

Overthinking about the whole situation he decided to call Bruno, who did not answer his calls, but after some time he called him back and answered not all, but some of his questions. What happened was that there were some robberies at the beach but even though they were not able to indicate the robber, the news that appeared in the media was that around five hundred Black teenagers had previously orchestrated a plan to invade Carcavelos and rob everyone who was there, it is important to notice that the everyone in this situation are the White people who were there. In this confusion, Bruno, Budjurra's friend, ended up being caught by the police and presumed to be guilty because one of the immigrants and some locals said that he was the one who committed the assault, he perfectly resembled them, he was black.

Luckily Bruno was not alone, he was with Margarida, who was a police officer herself, and told her colleagues that Bruno was not guilty because he was not even near the accident location.

This bias in terms of the experiences and how the characters are described is considered an intentional act by the author to describe how black people are treated in a country whose ancestry and history are covered in African blood. So, it makes one wonder why is a civilization that has been a part of another from an early age still being treated as inferior. Especially those that like João were born in the country itself? How can one country not accept people as their own, and always have in them the systematic prejudice towards one society?

6.2 Is Portugal an unwelcoming country?

If it is this bad for Portuguese people, how is it for those like Ifemelu who move to a country in hopes of finding a better life? The following question can be answered by this extract from an interview (Annex III) given by Petrina, a Youtuber who chose Portugal as her new residence after leaving Namibia, published on the website Travel Noir, on April 2nd, 2022, by Amara Amaryan. When asked how she felt in Portugal and if she had suffered racism in Portugal, Petra answered the following:

Living in Portugal as a Black woman has been different from other European countries I have stepped foot in. I felt calmer here when it came to the color of my skin, but I have had one encounter of racism with an elderly woman, which is quite normal here as most of the older generation are the ones that tend to see color as a threat or simply a thing of ignorance and lack of education.

And once asked if she felt that racism in Portugal was different than in her home country, she stated the following:

In Portugal, discrimination against the Black community does exist and most times is hidden in whispers. Systemic racism is probably the highest level of discrimination because people tend to have stereotypical notions against Black people and people of color and see them as a threat in terms of power and authority.

One thing that is also interesting is when she mentioned how connected Portugal and Africa are, there are years of history between the two countries as she stated “Portugal’s history and bloodline is covered with African ancestry”; which is true. When talking about Africa it is almost impossible not to mention Portugal or any other of the big empires who colonised the country and prejudiced how they became seen to the rest of the world.

**CHAPTER THREE- POST-COLONIAL THEMES IN
AMERICANA E UM PRETO MUITO PORTUGUÊS**

After having presented both authors and both works it is important to acknowledge where both novels can be inserted in the theories that were presented in the theoretical framework, Orientalism, cultural identity, and the Afrocentrism and Négritude movement.

Starting with Adichie's novel. In *Americanah*, among other characters, the reader is introduced to Ifemelu, and she will be the character that this work will focus on.

One theoretical concept that can be clearer than others is the cultural identity meaning and the diaspora experience. Ifemelu's journey is more than simple immigration, with the creation of two diaspora experiences, where Ifemelu had to explore her hybrid identity since the shaping of her cultural identity had been influenced by both her experiments as an outsider, once she moved to the USA, and as a repatriate, once she moved back to Nigeria. Therefore, her sense of identity was shaped by her experience in both countries and by the people she met along the way.

When it comes to the theory of Orientalism theory, all of Adichie's novels could be inserted into that framework, because the author provides a different vision of Africa than the ones that have been portrayed by Western works, and with *Americanah*, the goal remained the same. After moving to the United States of America, the main character finds herself surrounded by prejudice created by the preconception vision of the Orient as being inferior, creating in this way a reflection of what it means to be the other in a country where there is a sense of superiority.

Moving into the two movements, although *Americanah* does not align itself in straightforward form with the Négritude movement, the novel shares some of the core values of the movement by providing a voice to the unheard. For instance, Ifemelu's blog served as a platform where she could discuss her African identity, emphasizing how proud she was of her roots. Another example, where the author reinforces her identity is with the acceptance of natural curly hair, although hair might seem something simple, by having created a character that through the novel changes her hair in hopes of fitting into the Western beauty just to at the end accept her natural hair, reinforces the acceptance of her African heritage, which meets the values of the Négritude movement.

Furthermore, when it comes to the Afrocentrism movement the scenario is different. Starting with the fact that the story is told from the perspective of different African immigrants, provides a first-hand experience of what it means to be a part of the diaspora journey.

Not only did the author describe their path outside their home country, but at the beginning of the novel, Adichie described what their life was like in Nigeria, especially what the family life of Ifemelu was like, by describing that the author tried to break the stereotypes that one can find when in Eurocentric visions of Africa and its countries.

When it comes to inserting Telma Tvon's work within the four theories that were explained in the previous chapters the following can be written.

Starting with Edward Said's Orientalism theory, this novel was written from João's perspective, by describing his path Tvon humanizes the ones that were previously described in a simpler and pejorative manner. Still, the author also acknowledges the hybrid reality of the main character due to his Portuguese nationality and his African ancestry, with this Tvon breaks down the barriers that were once created that delegated human beings could not overlap the two societies, the Western and the Eastern.

Moreover, within João, the main character of the novel, the author not only wishes to broadcast what it means to be a part of the diaspora, but to be foreign in their own country.

Even though João is not an immigrant, he is the son of African immigrants who moved to Portugal in hopes of a better life, he still is a part of the diaspora experience. This experience is defined by his African identity, which is intertwined with the second definition of cultural identity provided by Stuart Hall. João's identity was built upon the changes in the African community in Portugal in cultural and social terms, in other words, João is the reflection of how immigration has endured that society.

Moreover, within the novel, the reader can witness the struggle that the character faces to not only find his identity but also how to insert himself to fully meet the social and cultural ideologies of the society he is in. This inner conflict can be the method chosen to describe the diaspora experience of those who are the sons and daughters of former immigrants, those who find themselves in-between, and who wish to be accepted by their counterparts while celebrating and honoring their heritage.

When it comes to how Telma Tvon chose to honor the African culture in the novel, the author decided to highlight the fact that the character preferred to be called by a name Budjurra instead of João, demonstrating how much pride the character has in his ancestry, and although a subtle move, this choice aligns with the Négritude movement, by highlighting the pride one has of his roots, and by demonstrating his resistance to the Western cultural values.

Lastly, there is a need to explain how this novel aligns with the core values of the Afrocentrism theory, as mentioned beforehand this theory showcases the African culture, by bringing awareness to those who defend its culture and history in their works. Therefore, this novel meets the objectives of the theory, by focusing on the importance that Budjurra gives to his roots, by highlighting the challenges of the diaspora experience Tvon brings awareness to the other validating their experience, moreover, by writing the text in a way that focuses mainly in the experience and the life of an African-Portuguese man, the author denied him the role of a peripheral character, and gave him the credits he deserved, creating in this way a unique story, that correctly demonstrates what it means to be an outsider in their own country.

The next chapter will consist of the comparative analysis, between the two.

**CHAPTER FOUR– IDENTITY FORMATION AND DIASPORA IN
AMERICANAH AND *UM PRETO MUITO PORTUGUÊS***

This chapter will compare how each novel explores the themes of identity and diaspora, then an analysis of how the “other” is portrayed, and finally examine how hybridity is shown in the novels and how shaped the characters, Ifemelu and João, identities.

Bearing in mind the concept of “diaspora” put forward by Hall, i.e., living “in a place where the centre is always somewhere else” (1995:6), and the idea that identity is more than “shared culture [...] which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (1996:1) it is “the ruptures and discontinuities” (1996:3) that one culture endures in. This chapter will, moreover, comparatively describe the characters' experiences, since within the novels, this concept is varied, since they do not come from the same social background.

Starting with the concept of diaspora.

Ifemelu lived in Nigeria her whole life until she was forced to move to the United States of America to pursue her studies, portraying in this way the African immigrant experience.

With Adichie's storytelling techniques, as she stated in an interview given to the INBOUND Team in 2023, she believes that it is best for authors to remain true to themselves and to what they have lived (INBOUND Team, 2023), as she defended in the introductory chapter of this novel “One discovers oneself through writing, and I saw in this novel my own enduring romanticism, often carefully obscured in cautious reason”. (2023: xi)

Furthermore, by having a female leading character, Adichie not only “weaves an Afropolitan feminist that in more consequential terms specifically advocates the plight of the migrant and migrated ‘Non-American’ Black or African woman” (Tetteh-Batsa, 2018:88), but she also remained true to what she defended this novel should be about:

Americanah could not be a story about Blackness from an outsider without also being an African immigration story. It is not the African immigration story with which the world is familiar, of poverty and war, but one familiar to me, the fleeing not from starvation but from discontent, and the reaching for dreams. (2023: x-xi)

Therefore, by remaining true to herself and by exploring her experiences, Adichie assures that the reader can comprehend how challenging it is not only to navigate and try to fit in, in a new cultural and social environment but to at the same time, deal with all

the complications that her skin colour brought to her since she is an African immigrant. Ifemelu struggles to fit in, feeling sometimes like an alien, as it can be understood in the following excerpt:

She hungered to understand everything about America, to wear a new, knowing skin right away; to support a team at the Super Bowl, understand what a Twinkie was and what sport “lockouts” meant, measure in ounces and square feet, order a “muffin” without thinking that it really was a cake, and say “I ‘scored’ a deal” without feeling silly. (2023: 135)

At first, everything starts well because she is living with her aunt and her son, so she has some family basis to rely upon, however, she does not feel that she can be her true self, because her aunt is trying to remove any trace of the Igbo culture from their house, because she does not want that her son would in the future feel prejudice due to their cultural background.

She tries to adapt to her aunt's beliefs, tries to understand her point of view, and respects it since she knows how hard her aunt has worked and is still working to be a successful woman.

Once the beginning of the scholar year arrives, Ifemelu must move, and that is when the real struggle begins.

After moving to another city, Ifemelu is completely alone, she does not know anyone, not even the girls she ends up sharing an apartment with, and if that was not hard enough, she needs to prove herself in everything that she does, to prove that she is not just another stereotypical African.

Feeling alienated and even more lonely in her fight for adaptation was so unbearable that towards the end of the novel, Ifemelu decides that enough is enough, she cannot deal any longer with years of mistreatment, years of fighting for a place that she had earned, she decides to move back home, to return to our Nigeria, describing another diaspora situation.

The return to her home country represents the psychological damage that reintegration can bring upon oneself, after having experienced life abroad. For example, Ifemelu was well known due to the blog that she decided to create when she was abroad, so she thought that once moving back finding a job in the area would not be hard, not only because of the professional experience she had but because of her transnational

identity, she thought that the new journalist companies that were opening in Nigeria ought to have someone who could speak about different countries with first-hand experience.

Well, that did not happen, and Ifemelu was once again stuck in the small Nigeria she had once escaped, but this time she decided that she was not going to run away, she ought to stay there, and if people would not appreciate her work, she would continue to use her blog, and use her words to truthfully describe what it meant to be a true Americanah.

While Ifemelu portrays the immigrant diaspora, João's reality is quite different. João was born in Portugal, and he is a Portuguese citizen, still, people he meets along the way find it hard to believe that people like him could be born in Portugal, questioning countless times in which part of Africa was he born, which part he was from, and wondering why his accent is so perfect until he answers that he was born in the country and that he had lived in Lisbon his whole life and that might explain why he speaks Portuguese so fluently. ("[...] eu até falo português conveniente" (2024:9))

If not feeling accepted by his motherland was not wrong enough, João does not even feel confident enough to present himself as an African man, because that was not where he came from, and there will always be someone who will correct him, if he says that he is African because he is not, he does not have the right to adapt his descendants either.

This way, João diaspora's experience is represented by his search for belonging, his wish to be accepted in both cultures, to be accepted as a Portuguese black man in his society, and to be viewed as a member of the African community in Portugal. Thereby, this character represents the African diaspora in post-colonial Portugal, exploring how the interactions between both cultures can influence the shaping of one's identity.

With his storyline Telma Tvon portrays João as the 'other', as an Afro-Portuguese, João represents the complexities of this dual identity, by trying to intertwine his African heritage with his Portuguese nationality, which only segregates him more from both communities, increasing the sense of loneliness that has grown into him.

In the case of João, his identity is marketed by the search for acceptance by others, since his identity is by the legacy of Portugal's colonial past has left in modern Portuguese society

His feeling of 'otherness' is explicit by the stereotypes about Africans and Afro-Portuguese that he witnesses constantly in the news, for instance in the novel he describes a scene where a burglary took place on the beach, and once João gets home he hears that

one of his innocent friends was stopped by the police. After all, according to a witness, he was guilty because his skin colour was the same as the burglar; and even if it is not a situation as serious as this one, there are some small actions that although for someone do not seem like it, they are racist actions, for example, every time that João has to disclose that he is, in fact, Portuguese and was born in the country, by asking if people are discriminating him, as it can be demonstrated in the following extract of when João was in a job interview:

Ontem candidatei-me a um emprego e, não obstante a informação estar no meu curriculum vitae, fizera-me a pergunta da praxe: «De onde é, João?»
Ao que respondi: «Sou português.»
Ela ficou, meio atordoada, mas insistiu: «Pois, mas tem outras origens, certo?»
Eu, parvamente, disse: «Tenho, claro, sou originário da Maternidade Alfredo da Costa, mas vivo na linha de Sintra.» (2024:14-15)

In conclusion, the shaping of João's identity is marketed by his search to be accepted, and Ifemelu's is marketed by her acceptance of her culture.

Once moving to the USA, she started to adapt to a new accent, so that people could not tell she was not born there, and she used this new American accent for a while until one day she decided that if people were not going to accept at all, treat her always as another she will embrace her foreignness then, by bringing her Nigerian accent back.

But the most significant move in her acceptance of her identity is within something as simple as her hair.

After moving, her aunt told her that if she wanted to be treated with respect, she needed to lose her curly hair, her hair was always something that she took special attention to because even in Nigeria it made her feel out of place because hers was not as perfect as her mother's.

Once she was with her aunt, Uju advised her to style her hair more properly, and to use a hairstyle that would conform with the Western standards on how African Americans should look like. Hearing that she decided that she was still going to use her natural hair, but it would be braided so that it would not be much different from what people had in mind when they thought about African women's hair.

Then, when she was living alone one of her African American friends told her that company leaders did not want diversity, if they were going to hire a Black woman, they

needed to fit into what was considered normal, thereby they ought to have their hair straight.

Being in the bad place that she was in, Ifemelu did not think twice and decided to always have her hair straight, by buying relaxers. But she did not think about the consequences of her actions, and after long use of that product Ifemelu's hair got so damaged that it started to fall out and she had to fully accept her natural looks.

Although accepting her natural hair sounds vague, it was a potent symbol in the shaping of her identity, because that was when she decided that she would no longer take upon the Western beauty standards and accept her heritage.

Moreover, by having two main characters who not only had different diaspora experiences but are also from different genders, by having this portrayed, the authors highlight that the feeling of alienation is not something that depends on gender. This can even be more evident since one of the other characters in Chimamanda's novel is also a man, Obinze, and he also experiences feeling like an alien, furthermore, his experience can be similar to Budjorra's, because he was born in the USA and then moved to Nigeria, which made him different from his counterparts, because although he had been living there his all life, people never fully accepted him as their equal due to his American past, and once he tried to return to America in hope for a better life, his wishes were cut down because he did not have an American passport, because he moved to Africa at a very young age.

In conclusion, with these novels, the authors do not want to restrict the possible experiences that one can have but want to use their novels as a mirror of their own experiences.

How the diaspora and the topic of identity are explored within the novels, it turns the novels into books that although were not written at the prime of the Afrocentrism and the Négritude movement, make them two more works in which these two movements influenced.

Starting with *Americanah*, Ifemelu's journey in the USA, and her feeling of alienation within the country, forces her into the creation of a blog, where not only does she describes the challenges that Black people need to face in a country where racism is a daily experience, celebrates her African culture, but she also exposes the biases and limitations that the Western view had created. Still in America by rejecting the Western standards she highlights her own culture

Her return to Nigeria symbolises her full acceptance of her identity and her culture.

Within this novel, Adichie intends to celebrate Nigerian identity, by for example including Igbo words in the novel and outlining its culture, for example when Ifemelu is describing her family life in Nigeria and how religion had affected her growing up.

Furthermore, by describing Ifemelu's fight to be accepted in the country the writer wished to outline how the colonial past had affected the Western views of countries like Nigeria and its society, by including certain stereotypes, for example, the conversation that Ifemelu has with some of the friends she had made in university, as it follows "You speak such good English. How bad is AIDS in your country? It's so sad that people live on less than a dollar a day in Africa." (2023:139)

Summing up, this novel by exploring the diaspora experience of Ifemelu, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie highlights what it means to be an African-Black immigrant in a society where racism is still present.

Moving into Telma Tvon's writing and how her novel can be included in these movements. Tvon's work is slightly different because her protagonist is inserted in a society that had previously owned his country, therefore her work is more focused on criticising the negative impact that the direct relations that Portugal had had with Cape Verde, and how that colonial past has influenced the creation of an image, where people like João will forever be outcasted and treated as inferior in the country they were born in.

João's search for his identity throughout the novel also emphasises both movements because while he tries to keep his African roots present in him, he must fight the oppression that he faces daily, and he needs to accept that he would have to challenge the Eurocentric view that is deeply rooted in his country.

One important detail that the author included is how the main character does not want people to call him by his birth name, instead, he wants to be called Budjurra because that is his African name, and by using it he feels more connected with his African roots, and by rejecting his birth, probably the author is using a metaphor for when the slaves had to change their names to a more Portuguese sounding name.

In conclusion, in this work, Telma Tvon writes in name of all the African descendants who were born in Portugal, but never accepted as citizens, and subtly criticizes the modern Portuguese society and its actions towards the members of this diaspora.

**CHAPTER FIVE: POST COLONIAL LITERATURE AS
ACTIVISM**

By providing the individual experience of different individuals, Ifemelu and João, in the modern society of previous colonisers, are representing the ongoing struggles that victims of the diaspora face when trying to insert themselves into the society, these novels insert themselves into the post-colonial literature.

Furthermore, these books can be used as an activism movement, because they were meant to represent the diaspora experience and highlight the complexities of this situation.

Using literature as an activism movement is something that is not new (Arpit, 2024), if we think about the concepts that were presented in the theoretical framework chapter most of them started by being explained in books, and that is what this last chapter will try to explain.

Hence, how has Literature helped in the construction of the identity of those in a diaspora situation? How did it help them break the stigma when texts that involve Africa and its society describe them as inferior beings?

Starting with the African experience in the United States. In this country, one of the firsts to become known to try to break the stigma was H.T. Johnson's response to Rudyard Kipling's poem *The White Man's Burden* (1899) (Gupta, 2024).

Kipling in his poem encouraged the USA to be like the European nations and encouraged them into take upon the burden, in this case, the Philippine Islands, (Manby, 1992) After publishing it, many demonstrated their disapproval of the message that the poem delivered and how it portrayed the natives; one of these responses came from H.T. Johnson an African American clergyman and editor, and his response came in a poem *The Black Man's Burden* that was published in April 1899, only three months after Kipling's poem.

Pile on the Black Man's Burden,
His back is broad though score;
What though the weight oppress him,
He's borne the like before.
Your Jim-crow laws and customs,
And fiendish midnight deed,
Though winked at by the nation,
Will some day trouble breed.

Pile on the Black Man's Burden,

At length 'twill heaven pierce;
Then on you or your children
Will reign God's judgments fierce.
Your battleships and armies
May weaker ones appall,
But God Almighty's justice
They'll not disturb at all

Retrieved From: CommonLit™. (n.d.). *CommonLit | The Black Man's Burden by Reverend H.T. Johnson | CommonLit*.
CommonLit. <https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/the-black-man-s-burden> [Access Date: June 29th, 2024]

With this poem the author wants to explain that the mistreatment that the Philippines were receiving was just an extension of the one that the Afro-Americans were receiving in their homeland, the United States of America.

Even though this was one of the most famous public demonstrations of repudiation towards the treatment that Africans were being given, it was not the first time that they chose literature to express how they felt. We can take for example the narratives written by former slaves, called slaved narratives, although there are few records of it, slaves started to write novels, which were then called slave narratives, where they described the horrors, they would encounter. (Gates, 1987:15)

One of the most notorious African Americans, and former slaves is Frederick Douglas.

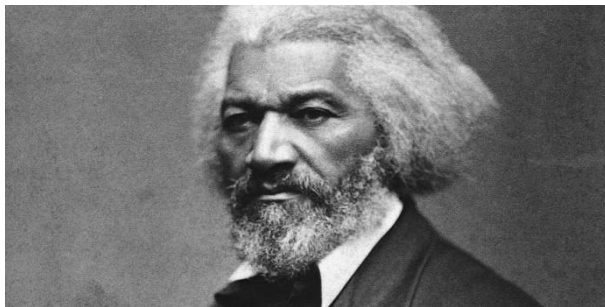


Figure 8 Frederick Douglass

Retrieved From: Zapata, C. (2024a, March 8). Frederick Douglass - Narrative, Quotes & Facts | HISTORY. *HISTORY*.
<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/frederick-douglass> [Access Date: June 29th, 2024]

Born into slavery around 1818 Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was the son of an enslaved Black woman and a white man, he was raised by his maternal grandmother, until he reached the age of six years old, and was forced to live in Wye House in work on a plantation.

While he was there, the wife of his owner taught him the alphabet, which led to Frederick then learning how to read and write by himself, and with the help of the Bible, he taught the other enslaved to read, which did not please the slave's owner, Thomas Auld.

Unhappy with his slave's behaviour, Auld transferred him to Edward Covey, this place was known to treat the enslaved brutally.

The treatment received made Frederick try to escape, and after trying for some time, he managed to successfully escape in 1838 and moved to New York to what was known as the safe house of David Ruggles, an abolitionist.

In New York, he reconnected with Anna Murray, a woman he had met while he was on the Aulds' property, and the two of them got married in September 1838.

After marrying the couple moved to Massachusetts. In the town of New Bedford, they met the Johnson couple, Nathan and Mary, who although of colour were free since birth, the couple motivated Frederick to change his surname to Douglass, after the poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) written by Sir Walter Scott that recounted how the Douglas family regained their influence after being banished.

In that town, Douglass started to attend meetings where they discussed the abolitionist movement, during these meetings he shared what he had lived as a slave and how he had escaped. Besides that, he became familiar with the journalist William Lloyd Garrison who encouraged him to become not only a speaker for the cause but also a leader of the movement,

Some years later, in 1843, Douglass took part in the project Hundred Conventions created by the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was a tour through the United States for six months. This tour met violence in its path from people who were against the movement, and during one of the attacks, in Pendleton, in the state of Indiana, some attackers broke Douglass's hand which never healed.

The attacks did not stop him, and in 1845, Douglass published *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, the first of the autobiographies he would publish.

His first autobiography became notorious by playing a crucial role in helping the abolitionist movement, by bringing to the attention of the horrors that enslaved were met.

After this one, he published two more autobiographies. *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglas* (1881).

Still in 1845, he travelled to Ireland and Great Britain and was stunned to finally experience real freedom as someone of colour. While in England he gave one of his most acclaimed speeches, the London Reception Speech,

What is to be thought of a nation boasting of its liberty, boasting of its humanity, boasting of its Christianity, boasting of its love of justice and purity, and yet having within its own borders three million of persons denied by law the right of marriage? [...] I need not to lift up the veil by giving you any experience of my own. Every one that can out two ideas together, must see the most fearful results from such a state of things [...]

After returning to the U.S.A. Douglass continued his fight for equality and launched his abolition magazine *North Star*, which later was renamed *The Frederick Douglass' Paper*, and was first made public a year before the Civil War began.

During the Civil War, he played a crucial role in the ending of slavery, as he expressed his disagreement with President Lincoln's ideas aloud, only reconciling with the President years later.

After the death of President Lincoln in 1865, and after the U.S. Constitution had included the laws that protected equally all citizens, Douglass gave a speech in Washington D.C., Lincoln Park in 1876. It is believed that after that speech Lincoln's widow gave him the late-president's favourite walking stick.

After the Civil War, Frederick Douglass became the first Black man in office, by being given the title of ambassador of the Dominican Republic, but it did not stop there, and in 1888, he received a vote for President of the United States, making history as he had the first African American to achieve it.

He remained an active voice for human rights until he died in 1895. (Zapata, 2024c)

Although Frederick Douglass is one of the most notorious former slaves to describe the horrors, he had encountered is not the only one to do so.

One other example of the new slavery narrative is Harriet Jacobs, although she was less famous than Frederick Douglass, in her way she became an active voice for anti-slavery.



Figure 9 Harriet Jacobs

Retrieved From: YEE, S. (2007, February 15). *HARRIET JACOBS (1813-1897)*. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/jacobs-harriet-c-1815-1897/> [Access Date: June 29th, 2024]

Born into slavery, as the daughter of two slaves, on February 11th, 1813, Harriet Ann Jacobs became known after publishing her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1852), written under the pseudonym Linda Brent.

In this autobiography, Jacobs describes how was her experience from the moment she was delivered to what she called Dr. Flint's home after her mistress died. In that house she suffered unwanted sexual advances from her new boss until she escaped in 1835 but remained in the whereabouts to be close to her children because one of the things that affected her was how children would be separated from their mothers at an early age to start working in houses. For Jacobs the thought of being separated from her children terrified her, so she stayed in an attic where no one would suspect her trespassing and where she could at least be near her son.

Years after her first escape, in 1842 she fully escaped and reunited with all her children. She escaped to Rochester where she joined a network of abolitionists and met Amy Post, a white abolitionist, who encouraged her to write her biography, and with the help of another white abolitionist, Lydia Maria, her book was edited and later published.

Still, she was not safe in New York, since slave catchers were trying to find her and the others who had fled, so she moved to Massachusetts, more specifically to the city of Boston.

In Boston she and her daughter, Louisa, joined the New England Freedman's Aid Society and one of their missions was to provide health care and create schools for Black people in Virginia, the state from which most of the slaves escaped. While in Boston she also joined the New England Women's Club movement.

Later, Jacobs and Louisa moved to Washington, D.C.; where Jacobs passed away on March 7th, 1897. (Yee, 2007)

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs take part in what opened the conversation for equal rights if it had not been for their courage to represent the horrors that African Americans had endured.

Although at first the intention of African American authors when publishing work was to bring to the surface the injustices that they as slaves endured, with the abolition of slavery and with the increase of immigration to the US, their intentions have shifted.

Now, not only do they want to bring awareness, but they want to write about their culture and their history in a more factual way than it has been previously described, and that is where authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie inserts herself.

Authors like her want to break the stigma that colonialism created, but more than breaking they want to expose it, they want to make others aware that although they are in a modern society they are still as mistreated as they once were, promoting a contemporary discourse.

In the case of Portugal having black authors publishing their works is a response to how non-Western societies have been described throughout the centuries in Portugal. Raising the question of how can that image be changed.

As Djaimila Pereira de Almeida wrote in her book *O que é ser uma escritora negra hoje, de acordo comigo* (2023) this is how she believes that the Black community is illustrated in the Portuguese literature:

Se olhar para a literatura da minha língua, cruzo-me com um retrato plurissecular dos negros ao nível da caricatura, enquanto enfeites decorativos: seres risíveis, vulgares, muitas vezes sexualizados, exóticos. Relegados para a condição de personagens vazias e estereotipadas, os indivíduos negros são raros no cânone português, sendo representados como seres humanos desprovidos de identidade. [...] É uma pena que tenhamos sido privados de formas de interioridade que surgem especificamente nas margens, só porque os escritores portugueses têm sido, senão mesmos racistas, ineptos. (2023: 72-73)

Like Telma Tvon, Djaimilia is also a part of the African Portuguese diaspora.



Figure 10 Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida

Retrieved From: L. Tharps, L. (2020, March 17). *For Black and Mixed-Race women, hair and identity are tangled together*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/that-hair-djaimilia-pereira-de-almeida.html> [Access Date: July 15th, 2024]

Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida was born in Luanda in 1982, but when she was young, she moved to Portugal with her father.

Like her counterparts, she grew up with a mixed feeling about her identity, she grew up with a father, whom she felt resented her blackness since he was a white man, and never explained to her what it meant to be black in a foreign country. (2022: 15)

That little feeling of rage was later transmitted to her novels, because as she mentions in her essay her writings were the only place where she could explore her true self, as she writes “Escrever deu-me um lugar na minha pele.” (2022:26).

Her debut novel, *Esse Cabelo* (2015), tells the story of a young girl who came to Portugal from Luanda. The story shows how a simple appointment at the hairdressers can initiate the discovery of new cultures, and how this vagal place can be full of prejudices. Yet, there is more to the story, this book not only tells the history of one’s hair but also the history of four generations who had described their path between Portugal and

Angola. Summing up is the reflection on how something as simple as a lock of hair can tell the story and the relationship between two countries. (Pereira De Almeida, 2020)

The second novel, *Luanda, Lisboa, Paraíso* (2018), describes the misfortunes that a father, Cartola, and his son, Aquiles, suffer when they arrive in Lisbon after leaving their hometown Luanda. Between sickness, debts, and communicating with their relatives who were left behind, they find themselves lost in the place they now call home. This abandoned feeling only goes away once they find shelter, and there they meet a friend. The story from that point on will portray the perfect balance between three miserable souls. (Pereira De Almeida, 2018)

Years later, she published *As Telefones* (2020), which can be considered a tribute to the diaspora literary genre. On it, we can read transcriptions from calls made between an Angolan mother, Filomena, and her daughter, Solange, who were apart from each other and used the telephone to communicate with each other and to eliminate the distance that is seen in cases like this, situations where mothers and daughters had to be separated in hopes for a better life. (Pereira De Almeida, 2020a)

Some books later, *Três Histórias do Esquecimento* (2021)- which is yet to have an English version published by the American book publishing company Farrar, Straus and Girous with a translation made by Alison Entrekin; it will be published under the name *Three Tales of Forgetting*. This book is the collection of three stories, two of which have already been published separately, *A Visão das Plantas* (2019), where we accompany the homecoming of Celestino, an old slave trader; and *Maremorto* (2021), where we meet Boa Morte da Silva, a former Civil War soldier who now valets cars in the outskirts of Lisbon; and a never-published story *Bruma*, the slave who taught Eça de Queiroz French literature. (Pereira De Almeida, 2021)

And lastly, there is one where the rage that the author felt as a little girl can be a metaphor for it. *Toda a ferida é uma beleza* (2023), is a story about a little girl who just wants to write peacefully, yet there is her godmother who wants to control her and make sure she is the idealization of a girl she has, and not what the goddaughter wants to be. This can be a metaphor for the author's personal life since people expect that Black writers must only write texts with a political message or else they are not true defenders of their heritage. (Pereira De Almeida, 2023a)

The author has other works, *Ajudar a cair* (2017), *Pintado com o pé* (2019), *Colagem/Coragem* (2020), *Regras de isolamento* (2020), *Os gestos* (2021), and *Ferry*

(2022); all of them wonderfully written in their terms, still, they are a little off the main topic, so that is why they were not individually described.

Going back to the book *O que é ser uma escritora negra hoje, de acordo comigo* (2023); the first part is an essay as it was mentioned above. It is divided into three parts. The first part is an essay with the same name as the book; the second one, *A minha imaginação não se distingue da minha identidade* (2022), is the edited transcript of an interview she gave with the Brazilian poet Stephanie Borges, where both authors enroll in a conversation to develop complex issues regarding the essay that had already been published in the magazine *Serrote* #41 and what does it mean to be a Black author who is also a woman. The last part, *A Restituição da Interioridade* (2023), is a conference that was presented at New York University in 2023.

In the essay, the author exposes her reality, but she also admits that she was a privileged one. What is interesting is that she does not say that she had privilege because of her education nor the fact that she had a loving and supporting family, she was privileged because of when she was born (Almeida, 2023:9).

After concluding that it is better now for black authors to blossom, she starts the debate on what it means to be a Black author, which is a truly interesting question, especially concerning how they use literature to expose their concerns. As she states:

Sou negra e escrevo o que sou. Mas haverá isso? Um ponto de vista particular, qualificável segundo esta etiqueta? O mundo em que vivemos parece achar que sim. Dum lado da barricada é-me dito que pertence aos exemplares dessa categoria um papel social que, a certo ponto, vai além do ofício de escrever propriamente dito. Desse lado, aguardam da escritora posições, declarações de princípio, um posicionamento claro sobre as questões do nosso tempo. [...] Não acredito que exista uma imaginação negra, a imaginação característica de autores negros. Também não acredito que tudo (na imaginação) seja político, como não acredito que os sonhos que temos durante a noite são políticos. E, contudo sou negra e escrevo o que sou, quem sou. (2023:34)

Although there is no right answer to what it means to be a Black author, their role in society is important, especially in a society that throughout the centuries has silenced them.

As Rosangela Sarteschi defended in her essay *Caminhos da resistência literária em seis poetas negros contemporâneos brasileiros* (2015):

A literatura de autoria negra constituir-se-ia, assim, no espaço da resistência e na forma de reconstituir o equilíbrio social: ao mesmo tempo elemento de preservação e de transformação da história. [...] são escritas que não abdicam do papel de interferir na cena cotidiana, são textos atravessados pelas tensões decorrentes desse posicionamento. Ao se apropriarem do espaço que está historicamente construído por e para as elites brancas, essas vozes erguem-se e expõem-se dialeticamente, contestando com veemência sua condição. (2015: 387)

Black Portuguese authors mainly focus their novels on the question of identity it was with this question that Telma Tvon started her novel, by highlighting how this question had harmed Budjurra all his life.

Perguntam-me várias vezes donde sou.

Sou filho de caboverdianos que há muito residem em Portugal. Sou neto de caboverdianos que nunca conheceram Portugal. Sou bisneto de holandeses que mal conheceram Portugal. Sou bisneto de africanas que muito ouviram falar de Portugal.

E donde sou eu? Eu até sou nascido em Lisboa, mas sou tão tido como estrangeiro. Não por minha opção, no princípio mas depois com o tempo, com as pessoas apercebi-me de que era um dos inúmeros lisboetas não alfacinhas. O meu nome é João mas eu conheço-me com Budjurra, ainda que este não esteja no meu BI Amarelo [...] (2024: 5)

This question of one's identity is a topic that is exposed in their literature because there seems to still exist a division between the "I" (the white Portuguese) and the "other", this segregation is mainly caused by the negative impact that colonialism had caused. (Sarteschi, 2019).

Besides this division, their connection to their African heritage also plays a key figure in the shaping of their identity. (Sarteschi, 2019). However, the intertwining of their identities, the Portuguese and the African, can create a feeling of unease, as Carla Fernandes wrote in her poem "Dupla Consciência" (2017):

Reproduzimos o que nos diz o seu mágico condão.

Mas não, não somos livres de consciência

Somos prisioneiros de uma dupla consciência

Da que nos oprime e daquela que se debate para ser livre da prisão. (2017:101)

Furthermore, their works are more than just exposing their unease about their identity, they are also created to share a new light on how they have been represented in Portuguese literature. When it comes to describing foreigners, they are usually portrayed as exotic creatures, someone inferior, or someone who was born to serve them.

Those visions were influenced by the Luso-tropicalism ideology, which emerged in the twentieth century in Gilberto Freyre, who was a Brazilian sociologist, in the book *The Master and the Slaves* (1933).

This concept was intertwined with colonial ideas and continues to be a part of modern society. It consisted of the idea that the Portuguese had the capacity to mold a society among their colonies and they and creating a peaceful community without prejudice. (Valentim & Heleno, 2017)

At first, it seems that this ideology was about creating and embracing an intercultural society, moreover, with it the Portuguese aimed to show that they were nicer than the other colonisers since they had inserted themselves in the colonies.

However, this was just a façade since it only helped in the creation of more stereotypes of the African community, for example, just the simple action of inserting themselves in the community made it look like colonialism was something that needed to happen so that the others could learn how to behave and for the countries to be able to develop itself within a more Western view.

Thereby, by still carrying importance in modern society as “part of modern sense” (Valentim & Heleno, 2017), this concept influences how they are portrayed in our society, and it is within the wish of bringing awareness to it, that authors, like Telma Tvon herself, are starting to write more works where the diaspora experience within the modern Portuguese society is explored.

Summing up, by exploring the diaspora experiences, and writing their works in a way that they can be included in the Afrocentrism and Négritude movement, using, thereby, their words as an activism manifesto.

CONCLUSION

As we have reached the end of this dissertation, the following conclusion will try to highlight the key findings within this work and provide recommendations on books about future investigations within the diaspora experience and post-colonial literature.

One question that may appear while reading this dissertation is why these two novels were chosen, why analyse a book written by a Nigerian author living in the United States of America and another written by a Portuguese author living in Portugal, and then compare both works? The reason for this is that, as mentioned in the introduction, this work's main objective was to offer a comprehensive understanding of how cultural identity in the context of the African diaspora is portrayed in both novels, it also intended to shed light on the post-colonial identity, by describing the search for identity the two main characters have throughout the novels in the modern societies they are inserted in.

Moreover, this research aimed to understand how *Americanah* (2023) and *Um Preto Muito Português* (2024) could insert themselves in works that have as their main basis the Négritude movement and the Afrocentrism ideology.

Furthermore, the authors created timeless works of art that will always take part in post-colonial literature, and it can be understood how literature can be used as an activism manifesto. It is not the first time that an author has used his or her words to describe the unfair situation the Black community has been part of for centuries, and why works from Black authors are so important and yet sometimes so overlooked.

Moreover, by analysing the struggles the two characters have to endure, it can be concluded that it is a common problem for victims of diaspora to not feel fully accepted by the people around them, regardless of the country they have emigrated to.

The choice of having two authors who come from different cultural and social backgrounds came after stumbling across a post on social media that had the intention of promoting the second novel having already read the first one in secondary school, the idea of combining the two felt like an interesting choice. As Jack Edwards, a British book reviewer said, “storytelling is such an interesting craft, and if you only read books written originally in your native language and by people from the same country as you, you don't get to experience the full scope of what storytelling can be.” (2024). I believe that this quote can sum up what the experience of reading these two novels felt like.

With their undoubted talent, the authors bring awareness to a topic, that although not a new topic is still an important societal issue. If we take a closer look at when the books were written. *Americanah* in 2013 and *Um Preto Muito Português* in 2017, to how the situation is now, we can acknowledge that perhaps there has been a slight change, but

the situation is further from being fully corrected, and with the increase of right-wing ideologies it makes one wonder how the problem will develop in the years to come.

If we take a closer look at what is happening in the United States of America for example, after the publishing of the novel, it came to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's attention that people started to call her a prophet, as she stated:

Shortly after the Black American George Floyd was murdered by a White police officer, a woman told me she had only just read *Americanah*, "You are a prophet, you foresaw this", she said, as if my novel were preparation for a seismic shift in America's anti Blackness. (2023: x)

Although Chimamanda does not consider herself a prophet in any way it is true, and it can be witnessed that within the ten years that separate the current year and the year of her book's publication the situation for African Americans has yet to improve. But with authors like her that mirror perfectly what it means to be an outsider, perhaps in the future, there will be a change in the situation.

When it comes to the Portuguese situation, as right-wing ideologies start to expand within the country, more news of mistreatment towards not only emigrants but also people like João, as Telma Tvon quoted in an interview she gave to the TimeOut Magazine in March 2024, she outlined that although Budjurra might not represent all the African communities in Portugal, he is a mirror to the experience of the victims of the diaspora (TimeOut,2024).

Furthermore, after reading the novels, a desire to find books that explored the same themes to understand better their points of view emerged, and it was important to share some of the results from that search.

When it comes to the situation of the African diaspora in the USA, one can find other books with similar purpose of not only exploring the diaspora experience as their main topic, but address, as well, questions of gender and identity, the same questions that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie approached in her works. For example, Abfi Nor Iftin's *Call me American: A Memoir* (2018); Tope Folarin's *A particular kind of black man*; and lastly, Toyin Falola's *Memories of Africa: Home and Abroad in the United States* (2023), for instance.

In the specific case of Portugal, I believe that the further readings can change the view of it. While on social media, a publication about books that explored the theme of

racism in Portugal caught my attention, the publication was done by Elga Fontes on her social media page on the Instagram platform, *quemmelera*. Being a victim of the diaspora experience herself, she tries to bring awareness to that topic, and on it she shared some books that have as their main topic the racism experience in Portugal, the content creator divided the books into two categories, ones that represented the past experiences, and others that represent the current situation.

Within the first category she included Isabela Figueiredo's *Caderno de Memórias Coloniais* (2015), *Tribuna Negra: Origens do movimento negro em Portugal 1911-1933* (2015), a book written by Cristina Roldão, Pedro Varela, and José Augusto Pereira, and lastly, Joana Gorjão Henriques' *Racismo em Português: O lado esquecido do colonialismo* (2016)

To acknowledge the current situation, she included two novels that were already mentioned during this dissertation, one that was the main case study, Telma Tvon's *Um Preto Muito Português* (2024), and the novel that appeared once discussing how their physical appearance has influenced their writings, *O que é ser uma escritora negra hoje, de acordo comigo* (2023). Besides these two the second part includes, *Imigração e racismo em Portugal* (2012), a book written by Nuno Dias and Bruno Peixe Dias, Joana Gorjão Henriques' *Racismo no país dos brancos costumes* (2018), Jorge Vala's *Racismo, hoje: Portugal em contexto europeu* (2021), Silvia Rodriguez Maeso's *O estado do racismo em Portugal: Racismo antinegro e anticiganismo no direito e nas políticas públicas* (2021).

Further reading of those books can help the understanding on how the experience does not vary, independently of the background of the authors and how they chose to represent it.

The intersection of postcolonial literature and intercultural business studies offers a profound understanding of identity, migration, and cultural integration. By examining two postcolonial novels that grapple with questions of identity and diaspora, one can gain insights that are crucial for success in a globalised business environment. This analysis is particularly relevant for a Master's in Intercultural Studies for Business, where understanding cultural dynamics is essential.

ISCAP Master's in Intercultural Studies for Business emphasises the importance of cultural competence in a globalised world. We believe that by studying postcolonial literature, one can develop a deeper appreciation of the cultural narratives that influence people's identities and experiences. This understanding is critical for businesses operating

in diverse environments, where sensitivity to cultural differences can enhance communication, foster inclusion, and drive successful international collaborations.

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Appendix I: Aimé Césaire

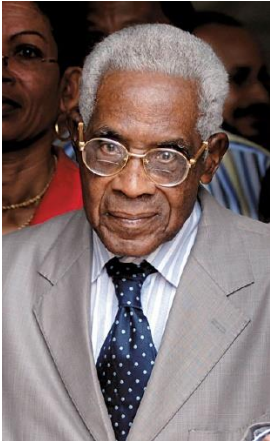


Figure 11 Aimé Césaire

Retrieved From: Lévesque, F. (2013, June 26). *Lire / Il y a 100 ans naissait Aimé Césaire*. Le Devoir.

<https://www.ledevoir.com/lire/381613/il-y-a-100-ans-naissait-aime-cesaire> [Access Date: June 28th, 2024]

Aimé Fernand Césaire, the second child of a minor government official, Fernand Césaire, and his wife, Éleonore, was born in Basse-Pointe.

His family had little possessions, but he still got a good education, and due to his great scholarly results, he received a scholarship to attend the Lycée Louis Le Grand in Paris, where he met his future associate Léopold Senghor.

Years later, the two of them and Léon Damas founded the journal *L'Étudiant Noir* (1934) which would become a piece of work very important to the Négritude movement.

In 1935, he enrolled in the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, where his studies were mostly focused on Black American writers. While he was there, he travelled to Dalmatia, and during his voyage, he started to work on his famous autobiographical poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, which would be later published in 1939.

After finishing his degree, he became a teacher and married fellow Martinican student Suzanne Rossi.

In 1939, after welcoming their first child the two of them moved to Martinique and took up positions as teachers at Lycée Schoelcher.

As World War II began the family moved to the Caribbean because Martinique had suffered a substantial economic crash, and during this time Césaire became more critical of the governmental system Martinique was under, establishing himself as a voice for the opposition.

In 1941, the couple founded an anti-colonial journal *Tropiques* to promote the Martinican identity.

He continued to write, and through his writings, he was an active voice in politics, achieving this was the nomination for mayor of Fort-de-France and, in 1945, he was selected as a deputy to the Constituent National Assembly of the French communist party. While being in such positions he fought for the recognition of Martinique and Guadeloupe as overseas territories of France.

In 1947, he co-founded another journal *Présence Africaine*, where works of other Black Francophone writers were published.

Still with the theme of the African diaspora in mind, he wrote more poetry, *Corps perdu* (1950), political essays *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950), and *Lettre à Maurice Thorez* (1956).

After the Soviet invasion of Hungary, he parted ways with the communist Party, and in 1957 he founded the Martinique Progressive Party.

The year of his departure from the communist party was the same year that he started to write dramas, including *Et les chiens se taisaient* (1956) and *Une Saison au Congo* (1965).

Although the formats of his writings changed through the years, they remained with the same essence highlighting the suppression that European countries had brought to Africa.

On April 17th, 2008, Aimé Césaire passed away in his beloved country, Martinique.

Appendix II: Léopold Sédar Senghor



Figure 12 Léopold Sédar Senghor

Retrieved From: Chibani, A. (2021, July 2). *Léopold Sédar Senghor : biographie courte du premier Président du*

Sénégal. <https://www.linternaute.fr/actualite/biographie/1776128-leopold-sedar-senghor-biographie-courte-dates-citations/> [Access Date: June 28th, 2024]

Born on October 9th, 1906, in Joal, Léopold Sédar Senghor was the son of a Malinké landowner, Basie Diogoye Senghor, and his fourth wife who was brought up by a Christian Fulani family, Gnilane Bakhoum.

Having grown up in a Catholic household he was sent to a Catholic mission school, where he learned to speak French, at the age of thirteen years he decided to pursue his studies in a priesthood.

Until 1926, he attended the Libermann seminary in Dakar but decided to switch to the Lycée Van Vollenhoven, where he graduated with honours, and one of his teachers impressed by his good work persuaded the colonial administration to give Senghor a scholarship so that he could pursue his studies in France.

In Paris he enrolled in Lycée Louis Le Grand in 1926, during his school years he became close friends with George Pompidou, who would later become the president of France, and with Aimé Césaire.

Having been in France for some time, he decided to grant his French citizenship, and after officially turning into a French citizen he followed a military path. He served during World War II in the 3rd Regiment of the Colonial Infantry. During his military years, he was taken as a prisoner in 1940, and while in a camp he started to write, writing his poems for *Hosties Noirs* (1948)

With the end of World War II, he returned to Senegal and decided he was going to follow a political path, and decided he would run for a seat in the French parliament. His political vision was mainly focused on the civil rights of the people residing in French colonies and not on achieving its independence, he believed that granting the Africans equal rights was the perfect pact to moderate the relations between Europe and Africa.

However, no one thought the same as him, and likewise, other colonies in Senegal fought for its independence and in 1960 became an independent country.

Surprisingly, although independence was not on his plans he was elected the first president of Senegal. During his mandate, he created a stable economy and approached Senegal with socialist idealism, all of which made France favoured him. Having run it for almost twenty years, since in 1981 he resigned.

After resigning, in 1983, he became the first black person ever to be given a spot in the Académie française.

He spent his last years between Dakar, Normandy and Paris.

On December 20th, 2001, Léopold Sédar Senghor died in France.

Appendix III: Léon-Gontran Damas

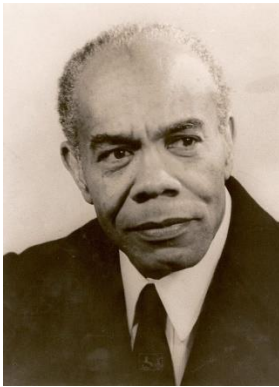


Figure 13 Léon-Gontran Damas

Retrieved From: *LEON GONTRAN DAMAS : L'un des pères de la négritude - Roots Magazine*. (2017, August 17).

Roots Magazine. <https://rootsmagazine.fr/leon-gontran-damas-lun-des-peres-de-la-negritude/> [Access Date: June 28th, 2024]

Born in French Guiana, on March 28th, 1912, Léon Damas, was a cultural theorist, a diplomat, an editor, and a poet.

His siblings and he were raised by his paternal aunt, Gabrielle Damas after his mother died in 1913. He stayed in French Guiana until 1924 when he left for Martinique to study at Lycée Victor-Schoelcher, where he met Aimé Césaire.

In 1929, he moved to France to attend the University of Law having been granted a scholarship to pursue his studies in law. Quickly he found out he was more interested in humanities and social sciences than he was in his course. Influenced by a pamphlet that expressed anti-colonial beliefs, by reading poets such as Claude McKay and Langston Hughes, and by the new environment he had settled in he started to call himself the poète Nègre, the Black poet.

After reuniting with his former classmate Césaire, and being introduced to Senghor, and after realising that they shared the same values in anti-colonial thoughts, the trio created the *L'Étudiant Noir* (1934)

His works became known because he was the first black author who would address the colonisation impact on the colonised. His famous poetry collection *Pigments* (1937), which would rather turn out to be the manifesto for the cause, identified the marks that the internalised racism left not only in the ones who suffered it directly but in the diaspora societies.

This book was translated into several languages and distributed throughout Africa. Even though it brought to light a serious topic in 1939, the French government expressed its displeasure with the collection and not only banned it but also burned the remaining copies because to them it was considered a threat to the security of the country.

Despite having his work rejected by France, he continued to write, and through the forty years spent on it, he wrote nine more works, a short story book, three essay collections, and five poetry books.

Besides being a great influence in literature, he also held influential positions. Having started in the army during World War II, he was later elected to the *Chambre des Députés* of the French National Assembling.

After serving for four years, he was an overseas editor for Radio France and editor of the journal *Presence Africaine*.

Later, he was a representative of the African Society of Culture for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). During his period as a UNESCO representative, he travelled through Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and, most frequently, the United States. It was in the United States that he would settle, where after teaching in some universities he was finally offered a permanent position at Howard University, where he remained until January 22nd, 1978, when he died.

Appendix IV– Chinua Achebe



Figure 14 Chinua Achebe

Retrieved from: Ellement, J. R. (2013, March 22). Author Chinua Achebe dies at 82. *BostonGlobe.com*.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/03/22/chinua-achebe-groundbreaking-african-writer-has-died-literary-agent-reports-today/FHKIs1s8yMa3tbuwu85lcM/story.html> [Access Date: June, 7th June]

Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, born on November 16, 1930.

His writing is marketed by his unsentimental depiction of how Africa has become a puppet to Western customs and values.

In his first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the reality of a man who cannot live under the new regime is explored, tracing the traditional life of the Igbo which was destroyed by the colonial government. In the sequel *No Longer at Ease* (1960) the main character deals with the consequences that came with newfound power after returning from his university studies in England. Years later the final of the trilogy was released in 1964.

As mentioned earlier, Chinua's books were a synonym for acting against Western influence, and this can be seen in his next three books. *Arrow of God* (1964) describes a village under the British Administration, where a priest is resented by where he had settled under the order of a white man. In both *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), the reader meets a postcolonial Africa full of corruption.

Obviously, the author has other books, he wrote some poetry collections, *Beware, Soul-Brother* (1971) and *Christmas in Biafra* (1973); *Another Africa* (1998), a combination of essays and poems combined with photographs by Robert Lyons; essays, such as *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975), *Hopes and Impediments* (1988), *Home and Exile* (2000), and *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2009); *How the Leopard*

Got His Claws (1973) a collaboration with John Iroaganachi; and his last register work was *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012).

Chinua Achebe passed away on the 21st of March, 2013, in Boston.

Appendix V – Camara Leye



Photo : Maurice Partouche

Figure 15 Camara Leye

Retrieved from: *Camara Leye - Tous les livres - Librairie Eyrolles*. (n.d.).

<https://www.eyrolles.com/Accueil/Auteur/camara-leye-122462/> [Access Date: June, 6th 2024]

Born on January 1st, 1928, Camara Leye was one of the first African writers to achieve an international reputation.

Until leaving for Conakry to study at the technical college of Poiret School, the author grew up in the old city of Kouroussa. With the help of financial aid, he managed to pursue his studies in engineering in the French town of Argenteuil.

His first novel, an autobiographic novel entitled *The Dark Child* (1953) [in the original *L'Enfant noir*] is the perfect recreation of his childhood in Guinea. In a poetic prose style, the author describes how is life in an African town where humane values are more considered than the alienation provided by Western technological advances. The sequel *A Dream of Africa* (1966) [in the original *Dramouss*] does not have the same sense of nostalgia as the first one, it is more of a criticism of the Africa one encounters when coming back; since in the book the character leaves an Africa which worries about preserving human rights, and at the arrive finds one where violence has spread as deadly decease.

Although he had gained some reputation, his best work only appeared in 1954, with the publishing of *The Radiance of the King* [in the original *Le Regard du roi*]. A

story about a white's man journey to a meeting with an African journey. This adventure in the African jungles makes one question his true meaning and his true essence in this world.

In 1956 he returned to Guinea and never stopped writing. Having written some short stories for periodicals such as *The Black Orpheus* and *the Présence Africaine*.

Camara Leye died February 4th, 1980, in Senegal, where he lived in exile since 1964.

Annex I: Bye-Bye, Babar

Retrieved From: Selasi, T. (2005, March 3). *Bye-Bye Babar* – *The LIP Magazine*.
<https://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/2005/03/03/bye-bye-barbar/> [Access Date: June 30th, 2024]

It's moments to midnight on Thursday night at Medicine Bar in London. Zak, boy-genius DJ, is spinning a Fela Kuti remix. The little downstairs dancefloor swells with smiling, sweating men and women fusing hip-hop dance moves with a funky sort of djembe. The women show off enormous afros, tiny t-shirts, gaps in teeth; the men those incredible torsos unique to and common on African coastlines. The whole scene speaks of the Cultural Hybrid: kente cloth worn over low-waisted jeans; 'African Lady' over Ludacris bass lines; London meets Lagos meets Durban meets Dakar. Even the DJ is an ethnic fusion: Nigerian and Romanian; fair, fearless leader; bobbing his head as the crowd reacts to a sample of 'Sweet Mother'.

Were you to ask any of these beautiful, brown-skinned people that basic question – 'where are you from?' – you'd get no single answer from a single smiling dancer. This one lives in London but was raised in Toronto and born in Accra; that one works in Lagos but grew up in Houston, Texas. 'Home' for this lot is many things: where their parents are from; where they go for vacation; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year). Like so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many.

They (read: we) are Afropolitans – the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you. You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue and speak a few urban vernaculars. There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands, and the various institutions that know us for our famed focus. We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world.

It isn't hard to trace our genealogy. Starting in the 60's, the young, gifted and broke left Africa in pursuit of higher education and happiness abroad. A study conducted

in 1999 estimated that between 1960 and 1975 around 27,000 highly skilled Africans left the Continent for the West. Between 1975 and 1984, the number shot to 40,000 and then doubled again by 1987, representing about 30% of Africa's highly skilled manpower. Unsurprisingly, the most popular destinations for these emigrants included Canada, Britain, and the United States; but Cold War politics produced unlikely scholarship opportunities in Eastern Bloc countries like Poland, as well.

Some three decades later this scattered tribe of pharmacists, physicists, physicians (and the odd polygamist) has set up camp around the globe. The caricatures are familiar. The Nigerian physics professor with faux-Coogi sweater; the Kenyan marathonist with long legs and rolled r's; the heavysset Gambian braiding hair in a house that smells of burnt Kanekalon. Even those unacquainted with synthetic extensions can conjure an image of the African immigrant with only the slightest of pop culture promptings: Eddie Murphy's 'Hello, Babar.' But somewhere between the 1988 release of *Coming to America* and the 2001 crowning of a Nigerian Miss World, the general image of young Africans in the West transmorphed from goofy to gorgeous. Leaving off the painful question of cultural condescension in that beloved film, one wonders what happened in the years between Prince Akeem and Queen Agbani?

One answer is: adolescence. The Africans that left Africa between 1960 and 1975 had children, and most overseas. Some of us were bred on African shores then shipped to the West for higher education; others born in much colder climates and sent home for cultural re-indoctrination. Either way, we spent the 80's chasing after accolades, eating fufu at family parties, and listening to adults argue politics. By the turn of the century (the recent one), we were matching our parents in number of degrees, and/or achieving things our 'people' in the grand sense only dreamed of. This new demographic – dispersed across Brixton, Bethesda, Boston, Berlin – has come of age in the 21st century, redefining what it means to be African. Where our parents sought safety in traditional professions like doctoring, lawyering, banking, engineering, we are branching into fields like media, politics, music, venture capital, design. Nor are we shy about expressing our African influences (such as they are) in our work. Artists such as Keziah Jones, Trace founder and editor Claude Gruzintsky, architect David Adjaye, novelist Chimamanda Achidie – all exemplify what Gruzintsky calls the '21st century African.' What distinguishes this lot and its like (in the West and at home) is a willingness to complicate Africa – namely, to engage with, critique, and celebrate the parts of Africa that mean most to them. Perhaps what most typifies the Afropolitan consciousness is the

refusal to oversimplify; the effort to understand what is ailing in Africa alongside the desire to honor what is wonderful, unique. Rather than essentialising the geographical entity, we seek to comprehend the cultural complexity; to honor the intellectual and spiritual legacy; and to sustain our parents' cultures.

For us, being African must mean something. The media's portrayals (war, hunger) won't do. Neither will the New World trope of bumbling, blue-black doctor. Most of us grew up aware of 'being from' a blighted place, of having last names from to countries which are linked to lack, corruption. Few of us escaped those nasty 'booty-scratcher' epithets, and fewer still that sense of shame when visiting paternal villages. Whether we were ashamed of ourselves for not knowing more about our parents' culture, or ashamed of that culture for not being more 'advanced' can be unclear. What is manifest is the extent to which the modern adolescent African is tasked to forge a sense of self from wildly disparate sources. You'd never know it looking at those dapper lawyers in global firms, but most were once supremely self-conscious of being so 'in between'. Brown-skinned without a bedrock sense of 'blackness,' on the one hand; and often teased by African family members for 'acting white' on the other – the baby-Afropolitan can get what I call 'lost in transnation'.

Ultimately, the Afropolitan must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between. While our parents can claim one country as home, we must define our relationship to the places we live; how British or American we are (or act) is in part a matter of affect. Often unconsciously, and over time, we choose which bits of a national identity (from passport to pronunciation) we internalize as central to our personalities. So, too, the way we see our race – whether black or biracial or none of the above – is a question of politics, rather than pigment; not all of us claim to be black. Often this relates to the way we were raised, whether proximate to other brown people (e.g. black Americans) or removed. Finally, how we conceive of race will accord with where we locate ourselves in the history that produced 'blackness' and the political processes that continue to shape it.

Then there is that deep abyss of Culture, ill-defined at best. One must decide what comprises 'African culture' beyond pepper soup and filial piety. The project can be utterly baffling – whether one lives in an African country or not. But the process is enriching, in that it expands one's basic perspective on nation and selfhood. If nothing else, the Afropolitan knows that nothing is neatly black or white; that to 'be' anything is a matter of being sure of who you are uniquely. To 'be' Nigerian is to belong to a passionate

nation; to be Yoruba, to be heir to a spiritual depth; to be American, to ascribe to a cultural breadth; to be British, to pass customs quickly. That is, this is what it means for me – and that is the Afropolitan privilege. The acceptance of complexity common to most African cultures is not lost on her prodigals. Without that intrinsically multi-dimensional thinking, we could not make sense of ourselves.

And if it all sounds a little self-congratulatory, a little ‘aren’t-we-the-coolest-damn-people-on-earth?’ – I say: yes it is, necessarily. It is high time the African stood up. There is nothing perfect in this formulation; for all our Adjayes and Achidies, there is a brain drain back home. Most Afropolitans could serve Africa better in Africa than at Medicine Bar on Thursdays. To be fair, a fair number of African professionals are returning; and there is consciousness among the ones who remain, an acute awareness among this brood of too-cool-for-schools that there’s work to be done. There are those among us who wonder to the point of weeping: where next, Africa? When will the scattered tribes return? When will the talent repatriate? What lifestyles await young professionals at home? How to invest in Africa’s future? The prospects can seem grim at times. The answers aren’t forthcoming. But if there was ever a group who could figure it out, it is this one, unafraid of the questions.

Annex II – Extract of the interview Joseph Edghill for BBC

(Retrieved from: Cabral, B. S. (2022, May 25). America's struggle with racism, as told by immigrants. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-61238017> [Access Date: June 6th, 2024]

Joseph Edghill, 65, has lived in the US for nearly half a century, but the past few years have felt very different to him.

Hailing from Trinidad & Tobago, he followed his mother to America at age 17 to attend college and make a living in a place he thought of as a land of prosperity.

He remembers his homeland as a mixture of races, where school and other aspects of daily life were well integrated.

But in America, it seemed, "it was quite a difference. The whole idea of race was in the news and you'd hear about it so frequently".

Early on, he consciously avoided engaging in it.

"I wanted to succeed in spite of race," he told the BBC. "If somebody else had issues with my race, that was their problem."

Joseph is part of a growing population of black immigrants in America.

Annex III – Petrina’s Interview

(Retrieved: Amaryah, A. (2022, April 1). The Black Expat: This is my experience of racism in Portugal - Travel noire. Travel Noire. <https://travelnoire.com/the-black-expat-this-is-my-experience-of-racism-in-portugal> [Access Date: June 6th, 2024]

TELL US WHO YOU ARE?

I am Petrina, the content creator behind FixWithPk on YouTube. My channel focuses on living in Portugal, moving abroad, business and travel tips and hacks. I am originally from Windhoek, Namibia, a beautiful country in the southern part of Africa neighboring South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

I am an entrepreneur in the business, travel, import and export industries, but not limited to these. I have been in the business consultancy industry for over 11 years.

WHY DID YOU MOVE TO PORTUGAL?

I moved to Portugal because of my marital family (my husband and kids). Portugal was never in my plan initially, more so to just travel, but it ended up being one of my home bases.

WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS WHEN COMING TO PORTUGAL?

I did not have any expectations moving to Portugal as I believe that even when a place can meet all your main needs, it will be fully flawed, especially when humans are involved because we govern on feelings and emotions.

Portugal was and will always be just a touch of a home base for me as I live between countries and continents.

HOW HAVE YOU FELT AS A BLACK WOMAN LIVING IN PORTUGAL?

Living in Portugal as a Black woman has been different from other European countries I have stepped foot in. I felt calmer here when it came to the color of my skin, but I have had one encounter of racism with an elderly woman, which is quite normal here as most of the older generation are the ones that tend to see color as a threat or simply a thing of ignorance and lack of education. Portugal’s history and bloodline is covered with African ancestry, hence their color tones and certain traditions and norms. I don’t get any racial indifference as a Black woman here compared to other women I

have met, that also boils down to the boundaries you set and how you carry yourself as a person in general and how you treat and respond to others.

WHAT HAVE YOU NOTICED ABOUT THE SYSTEMIC FORMS OF RACISM IN COMPARISON TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY?

In Portugal, discrimination against the Black community does exist and most times is hidden in whispers. Systemic racism is probably the highest level of discrimination because people tend to have stereotypical notions against Black people and people of color and see them as a threat in terms of power and authority.

This is absolutely different from where I come from in Namibia. Even still, I know all too well the evil greed behind racism as my home country has had a long brutal history of colonial oppression from white slave masters. Some white people in Namibia to this day still show their white privilege and tend to be racist. Thankfully, that is slowly dying out as more power and authority is being given back to the Black people in the country.

When you live in an African country, skin color is the least of your worries because 95% of people look just like you, and you grow up proud of your culture and people. Now the media is also covering more Black people and our future generations can see themselves represented honestly rather than a distorted standard of beauty that is not representative.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON MAKING THE MOVE TO PORTUGAL AS A BLACK EXPAT?

I love Portugal for its welcoming spirit towards foreigners and opening doors to those most in need. For solo female travelers you are also free to roam around and walk around anywhere, at any time without any harassment – except for those uncalled-for catcalls from men, who are mostly foreign men living in Portugal.

It is definitely one of the safest countries I have lived in, and I have been treated well here, thank God, and I truly believe that in my opinion, it is one of the top 5 least racist countries in Europe.