

**DIGITAL NATIONS AND FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES: WOMEN,
NATIONALISM AND ONLINE POLITICS IN A *BURNING AND
AMERICANAH***

By

Monisha Roy
23263001

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University
January 2026

© 2026. Monisha Roy
All rights reserved.

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Monisha Roy
23263001

Approval

The thesis titled “Digital Nations and Fragmented Identities: Women, Nationalism and Online Politics in *A Burning* and *Americanah*” submitted by Monisha Roy (23263001) of Fall, 2025 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of M. A. in English on 21 January, 2026.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Sumaiya Tasnim
Lecturer, ENH Department
BRAC University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

Israt Taslim
Dept. of English and Modern Languages
School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Lecturer

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

Firdous Azim, PhD
Departmental Head, ENH Department
BRAC University

Ethics Statement

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities at BRAC University, entitled “**Digital Nations and Fragmented Identities: Women, Nationalism and Online Politics in *A Burning* and *Americanah***,” is entirely my own original work. This work contains no form of plagiarism. At the same time, all sources and contributions of other scholars have been properly cited and acknowledged. The findings of my research are reported honestly and accurately. I believe this piece of study is valuable and may serve as a useful reference for future academic research at the postgraduate or doctoral levels.

Abstract

This paper analyzes how nationalist media and digital politics shape women's voice and identity in Megha Majumder's *A Burning* (2020) and Chimamanda's Ngozi Achebe's *Americanah* (2013). Using close textual analysis, this paper investigates how gender, race, class, religion and nationalism influence whose voice is heard or silenced within digital media. Drawing on postcolonial feminism, nationalism theory and digital media studies, this paper explores that digital platforms are not neutral spaces to express freely, rather it's a site of power, surveillance and public judgements. Through the character of Jivan and Ifemelu, this paper argues how digital space can enable and restrict women's agency. This digital space is not neither neutral nor equally accessible, rather it is a space that remains unequal, constructed and deeply structured by power. Ultimately, this paper offers a critical analysis of how contemporary literature exposes the limits of digital freedom and challenges the dominant nature of it, regarding voice, belonging and empowerment in the digital age.

Keywords: *Nationalism, digital-media, postcolonial-feminism, digital colonialism, women's agency.*

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation paper to my beloved parents and my partner.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the strength, patience and determination to complete this thesis despite the many challenges I faced throughout the journey.

I am deeply thankful to my respected supervisor, Sumaiya Tasnim Ma'am, for her valuable guidance, constant support and encouragement. She provided me with significant academic freedom in shaping my dissertation while also offering reassurance and motivation during difficult times when I struggled with self-doubt and emotional challenges. Her understanding and support played a vital role in completing my research work.

I also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the faculty members of BRAC University, as well as my friends and relatives whose encouragement, kindness and moral support helped me to stay motivated during the most challenging times.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Table of Contents	viii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	5
2.1 Digital Media as a Structural Force in Shaping Marginalized Women	5
2.2 Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity	5
2.3 Feminist Perspectives on Voice and Silence	8
2.4 Historical Forces Shaping Minority Experiences	12
2.5 Digital Media, Algorithmic Oppression and Digital Colonialism	13
2.6 Class, Gender and Performative identity in <i>A Burning</i>	16
2.7 Negotiating Identity in Digital and Diasporic Spaces	17
Chapter 3 Nationalism, Media and Public Judgment	19
3.1 Nationalism and Media Power.....	19
3.2 Public Judgment and Criminalized Speech in <i>A Burning</i>.....	19
3.3 Media, Race and Conditional Belonging in <i>Americanah</i>.....	24
3.4 Digital Voice, Surveillance and Unequal Consequences	26

3.5 The Role of Witness and Testimony	29
3.6 Memory, Archive and Digital Permanence	31
Chapter 4 Digital Space, Intersectionality and the Politics of Resistance	33
4.1 Digital Space Beyond Utopian Narratives	33
4.2 Blogging, Visibility and Disciplined Speech in <i>Americanah</i>	33
4.3 Online Hostility, Surveillance and Gendered Control.....	34
4.4 Digital Colonialism and Criminalised Expression <i>A Burning</i>	35
4.5 Unequal Digital Consequences.....	36
4.6 Intersectionality in Digital Space.....	37
4.7 Resistance and Its Limits.....	39
4.8 The Limits of Digital Liberation.....	40
Chapter 5	42
Conclusion	42
Works Cited List	46

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the contemporary twenty-first century world, identity has become a significant area of inquiry, profoundly influenced by the increasing forces of nationalism, global migration and digital media. Women in postcolonial societies navigate these factors through complex negotiations of vulnerability, belonging and visibility that reveal the existing structures of colonial and patriarchal power. Stuart Hall in his work *Identity and Diaspora* observes that identity is not a fixed essence, rather it's a "production" that is "never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall pp.110).

By turning private life into public visibility, digital media platforms actively shape how women negotiate vulnerability, belonging and visibility. Stuart Hall's understanding of identity as an ongoing "production" helps to analyze how women's identity in *A Burning* and in *Americanah* are continuously constructed and judged through media and public discourse. In postcolonial context, these processes are further complicated by inherent colonial hierarchies and nationalist ideologies that determine who belongs and who remains vulnerable.

Social media platforms are supposed to be a free and equal communication tool for all, regardless of someone's gender, class and identity. Unfortunately, these platforms have simultaneously become the tool for reinforcing existing power hierarchies. By analyzing *A Burning* and *Americanah*, this paper demonstrates how digital media practices reinforce existing power structures in the postcolonial era, revealing their impact on gender, nationalism and political engagement.

Megha Majumder's novel *A Burning* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* can be two significant works which deal with how women struggle to shape their identities within a complicated and unequal social system. The two central female characters, Ifemelu and Jivan face systematic pressure from their countries, their communities and the digital world which seems like a free place to share their thoughts, ideas which are actually an illusion. The narratives of these novels reveal how hard it is for a woman to find a stable sense of self which is actually caught within this entangled structure of the society.

Megha Majumder's *A Burning* (2020) is a contemporary novel set in Kolkata, India. The central character, Jivan, from *A Burning*, is an innocent young Muslim woman who lives in contemporary Kolkata, working in Pantaloons, a retail store (Majumder pp.14). Her digital expression becomes a site of surveillance, misrepresentation and punishment, exposing how nationalist ideology can be twisted and manipulated to serve personal advantages. At the same time, the consequences of such manipulation have a long-term impact on individuals and their aspirations as well.

In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013), the protagonist Ifemelu is a Nigerian woman whose experience reflect the complexities of race, migration and belonging. However, her anonymous blog initially appears to provide a space that seems to give her a space to express herself, creating the impression that she can say anything she feels. Unfortunately, this space functions quite differently from its appearance, this space subtly reshapes her sense of self, compelling her to frame her identity in ways that align with the expectations of the American audience. This complexity between visibility and control shows how digital space can empower and reinforce old colonial patterns. So, her frustrating self, decides to go back to her home which is in Nigeria.

This study employs qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and close reading. This approach enable the study to trace how nationalism, digital media and gender intersect in Megha Majumder's *A Burning* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. Through this method, the research analyse how women's identities are shaped by national narratives, political ideologies and digital spaces in these selected novels. By close analyzing the experience of Jivan and Ifemelu, the study highlights how women from marginalized communities negotiate visibility, vulnerability, credibility and belonging. Through a comparative a reading, this study identifies structural similarity and differences in how digital spaces faction within different postcolonial nationalist setting.

This paper incorporates feminist, postcolonial and digital media theories to examine how women's voice are marginalized within patriarchal and nationalist structure. Feminist theorists such as Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Mohanty provide a framework for understanding how women like Ifemelu and Jivan navigate the gender expectations which are embedded by society in both digital and physical space. This study also engages the theory of nationalism, including Partha Chatterjee's concept of nationalist differences, Rabindranath Tagore's idea of "aggressive nationalism" shows that nations can force people to follow strict rules. This paper illustrates how Ifemelu and Jivan deal with the pressure on their identity and sense of belonging. Together these ideas show how the nationalist ideologies decide who fits in and who does not, which affects women's lives both in physical spaces and within the digital environment. Additionally, Safia Umoja Nobel's "algorithm oppression" (Nobel pp.15) with Michel Foucault's concept of "Panoptical" (Foucault pp.195), this paper explores how digital platforms regulate women visibility and voice. In *Americanah*, Ifemelu's blog post shows how women's expression is shaped by algorithmic visibility and audience expectations, while in *A Burning*, Jivan's online presence becomes a site of surveillance, misrepresentation and

punishment. Both of these novels illustrate how digital platforms function as a system of control rather than a neutral space.

While previous scholarship has investigated nationalism, digital media or gender as a separate field of inquiry, this study addresses a critical gap by bringing these frameworks together through an intersectional lens. By connecting nationalism and feminism, it shows how societal and political forces jointly shape women's identity and regulate their self-expression in both offline and online.

Through a comparative reading of Megha Majumder's *A Burning* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, this paper explores how nationalist narratives and digital politics simultaneously limits expression according to the expected gendered role and imposes constraints among them.

This paper argues that digital space is neither equal nor neutral for postcolonial women. Rather, this platform operates as extensions of existing power structures regarding nationalism, patriarchal and colonial norms. It regulates women's speech according to their position within intersecting hierarchies of gender, race, class, religion and nationality.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Digital Media as a Structural Force in Shaping Marginalized

Women

While existing scholarship on *Americanah* has extensively explored theme of race, migration, hybridity and identity (Mahmoud p.6, Keresztesi pp.115), most studies have prioritized what Ifemelu says rather than examining how digital space shapes her voice. These analyses largely focus on content rather than the medium, overlooking the ways in which digital spaces condition speech, tone, language and credibility. Similarly, in *A Burning* scholarship has examined gender, class, religion but less attention has been given to how digital communication technologies mediate vulnerability, surveillance and marginalization.

This thesis addresses a significant gap in existing scholarship by investigating the digital media itself operates as a form of power structure in both novels. While existing scholarship has thoroughly explored themes of identity, migration, belonging and race. It has often overlooked the systemic structural power of digital space in shaping narratives. This thesis addresses that gap by examining digital media as a power structure that intersects with nationalism and gender to shape women's voice in *A Burning* and *Americanah*. By combining postcolonial feminist theory with digital media analysis, this research explores how women's voices are both resistant and constructed by digital colonialism, algorithmic oppression and the epistemic control exercised through Western dominated platforms.

2.2 Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity

Various scholars have argued that nationalism promotes cultural unity while simultaneously marginalizing minority and differently gendered groups through dominant ideologies of

control. This complex situation is central to literary analysis of societies marked by both political and patriarchal control over marginalized groups. In *The Nation and Its Fragment: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Partha Chatterjee provides a fundamental analysis of how nationalism in postcolonial context is deeply shaped by inherited political and institutional framework. He argues that “the postcolonial states were disciplined and normalized under the conceptual rubrics of ‘development’ and ‘modernization’,” while “nationalism was already being regulated” by colonial power (Chatterjee p.6). Chatterjee emphasizes that nationalism is the “entire product of the political history of Europe” (Chatterjee p.7), explaining how European models of governance and nationhood were transplanted to the postcolonial world. Existing scholarship drawing on Chatterjee has largely focused on state formation and elite politics. However, fewer studies examine how these nationalist structures shape everyday lives and voices, particularly women in contemporary cultural texts. These imported ideas are not naïve, rather they carry structural hierarchies that determine whose voice is recognized within the nation.

Chatterjee’s analysis of how postcolonial states construct “internal others” within their own borders is particularly relevant to understanding Jivan’s position in *A Burning* (Chatterjee p.7). As a Muslim woman in Hindu nationalist India, Jivan occupies the position of “internal other” which formally a citizen yet perpetually suspected of disloyalty to the national community (Chatterjee p.7). Scholars’ work on *A Burning* have often addressed political violence and nationalism. While fewer have connected these discussions to gender vulnerability and digital expression. This framework illuminates how extreme nationalist practices create social division, strengthen inequality and generate public conflict that affects especially women and minority groups.

Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* provides another crucial theoretical foundation for this study. Anderson defines

the nation as “an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson p.6). The nation is imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson p.6). This concept of imagination is not synonymous with falsity, rather it highlights the constructed nature of national belongings and the mechanisms, particularly print capitalism and now digital media, through which this belonging is produced and maintained. While Anderson’s theory has been widely applied to discussion of print media and nationalism, recent scholars note the need to extend this framework to digital space, where national narratives are rapidly produced and circulated.

Anderson’s framework helps to explain how both novels represent national belonging as a constructed category that includes and excludes according to criteria that appear natural but are in fact historically contingent and politically motivated. In *A Burning*, the imagined Indian nation is increasingly defined by Hindu identities and positioned Muslim as perpetual outsiders whose loyalty is always in question. In *Americanah*, American national identity, despite official rhetoric of diversity and inclusion, remains structured by whiteness, positioning Black immigrants as simultaneously visible (as racial others) and invisible (as individuals with complex histories and perspectives). Previous studies have examined these themes separately; this study brings them together by examining how digital media intensifies these processes on inclusion and exclusion.

Rabindranath Tagore’s critique of nationalism, as analyzed by Michael Collins, offers a particularly resonant framework for understanding the novel’s representation of how nationalist ideology constrains individual freedom. Collins explains that Tagore consistently defined “the nation as always the nation-state” (qtd. In Collin p.4), criticizing how political leaders manipulate nationalist sentiment to maintain power and control public behavior. Tagore

described nationalism as “the organized self-interest of a whole people, where it is least human and least spiritual” (qtd. in Collin p.8). By defining a nation as inseparable from the nation-state, Tagore exposes how nationalist sentiment can be used to regulate behavior and reinforce existing power structures within the nation. As a result, it often costs individual freedom. Scholars of Tagore have largely emphasized Tagore’s philosophical critique; this paper extends that discussion by examining how nationalist discipline operates through digital and media institutions in media and contemporary narratives. This understanding directly connects with the analysis of the novels *A Burning* and *Americanah* where nationalist rhetoric circulated through state institutions, media and public discourse to justify surveillance, exclusion and inequality. Individual lives, particularly women, are subordinated to collective ideologies which serve the interest of the elite class and powerful people. This thesis therefore aligns nationalism with feminism by showing how nationalist power structures disproportionately regulate women’s bodies, voice and credibility.

2.3 Feminist Perspectives on Voice and Silence

Feminist theory provides essential tools for analyzing how gender shapes the conditions of speech and silence represented in both novels. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” poses a question that frames this entire study. Her argument that the subaltern, particularly the ‘subaltern woman’ faces significant constraints in expressing herself because the structures of representation and interpretation are controlled by dominant groups who determine what counts as speech and how it will be understood (Spivak pp.28). Even when subaltern women do speak, their voices are appropriated, distorted by epistemic violence, this study extends her argument to digital space where similar structures of silencing exist.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s framework is crucial for understanding how speech works directly for women characters of the novels *Jivan* and *Ifemelu*. *Jivan* speaks through her

Facebook posts, but her words are repeatedly misunderstood and used against her. What she says is turned into evidence of crimes she did not commit. Her position as a Muslim, poor woman shapes not whether she can speak, but whether her speech is accepted as truthful or treated as a criminal. While Ifemelu holds a more privileged position which allows her a voice to speak in her blog space, her voice is still limited because she must shape her writing to suit or fit with the Western culture. Existing scholars on *Americanah* often celebrate the blog as a space of freedom; however, this study complicates that reading by examining how digital norms shape and limit expression. Although she has access to the digital platform and digital culture, unfortunately it is built around the Western values and expectations. As a result, she often filters her authentic self by adjusting her tone, vocabulary and cultural reference to get accepted in front of the Western culture. In the narrative, this can be seen through the careful framing of her opinions and the moderation of her critique in the blog post. This shows a deeper issue with how women from the Global South have access to online platforms, but they have to speak in a way so that they can fit into this Western framework. This voice is filtered and the freedom of expression is limited on this digital platform. It reflects Spivak's question "Can the subaltern speak?", where the subaltern refers to the women from colonized and marginalized groups whose voices are often distorted and constrained (Spivak pp.28). Both of these novels show that the access of voice digital media does not guarantee free expression as women's voices remain shaped by unequal power structures.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* critiques how Western feminism has often represented "Third World women" as a homogeneous category defined primarily by victimhood (Mohanty pp.17). Mohanty argues for attention to the specific, differentiated experiences of women in different postcolonial contexts, recognizing their agency and resistance rather than reducing them to passive objects of oppression. This critique informs this thesis's attention to how Jivan and Ifemelu navigate their

specific contexts with agency and resistance, even if they face structural constraints. Neither character is merely a victim, both make choices, take risks and assert perspectives that challenge dominant narratives. Many feminist readings of postcolonial texts often become repetitive and generalized; however, this thesis avoids these by situating each character within her specific national, digital and historical contexts.

Gay Tuchman's concept of "symbolic annihilation" provides another framework for analysing media representations of women. In her classic work "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media," Tuchman argues that mass media "symbolically annihilate women" through absence, condemnation and media trivialization (Gerbner qtd. in Tuchman pp.43). Drawing on George Gerbner's research, Tuchman demonstrates that women are systematically underrepresented, misrepresented and trivialized in media which contributes to their marginalization (Gerbner qtd. in Tuchman 44). Despite comprising more than half the population and a significant portion of the labour force, women are shown in limited, stereotypical roles that do not reflect their actual contributions and experience (Gerbner qtd. in Tuchman pp.43). Although women constitute a significant portion of the population, media representation often reduces them as narrow stereotypical roles. It limits their social and political significance as well. This form of symbolic annihilation continues in contemporary digital space, particularly in postcolonial context. Here women's voices are often misrepresented, trivialized and ignored.

This concept remains relevant for both of the novels when it comes to analyzing how digital media works for women, particularly in postcolonial contexts where historical patterns of marginalization exist in new technological forms. Both Ifemelu's blog and Jivan's Facebook post aim to counter symbolic annihilation by highlighting women's voices in contexts where they are often silenced or distorted. However, when structural authority decides whose speech gets strengthened and whose is rejected, both also run into the limitations of such resistance.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of 'intersectionality', introduced in her foundation essay *Demarginalizing the Intersectional Race and Sex*, provides an essential tool for analyzing how multiple forms of oppression interact to shape individuals' experiences. Crenshaw argues that Black women's experience cannot be understood through the lens of race alone or gender alone, rather the intersection of race and gender produce specific forms of discrimination that are invisible to frameworks that consider these categories separately (Crenshaw pp.139). This insight extends to the analysis of both novels, where character's experiences are highly shaped by intersecting identities of gender, race, class, religion and immigration status.

In *Americanah*, Ifemelu's identity cannot be understood in terms of any single category. Her experiences as a Black woman in America differ from that of African American women due to her immigrant status and Nigerian cultural background. Her experience as an immigrant differs from that of male immigrants due to gendered expectations and vulnerabilities. Her experience as a blogger differs from that of white bloggers due to racialized assumptions about credibility and specific challenges of writing about race for predominantly white audiences. Intersectionality illuminates how her blog becomes a site where these interesting identities are negotiated, revealed and challenged.

Similarly, In *A Burning*, Jivan's position at the intersection of Muslim identity, female, gender and poverty creates a specific vulnerability that any single-axis analysis would miss. Her Facebook post would carry different consequences if she were Hindu, or male, or wealthy. The novel demonstrates how the Indian states respond to her speech and it is customized according to her intersectional position, seeing in her a perfect culprit whose marginalization on various levels makes her difficult to defend and simple to criticize. Various scholar supplies intersectionality broadly, while this study uses it specifically to examine how digital media amplifies these interacting vulnerabilities in narrative form.

2.4 Historical Forces Shaping Minority Experiences

Joya Chatterji's *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*, provides crucial historical context for understanding the position of Muslim in Contemporary West Bengal, where *A Burning* is set. Chatterji demonstrates how the partition reshaped Bengal's political landscape, creating new forms of citizenship and activism while fundamentally altering the social hierarchy.

Although Chatterji's work primarily focuses on Bengali Hindu refugee politics, it also highlights how the partition reshaped the experience of Muslim minorities, whose "loyalty and belonging is frequently questioned" in the territory (Chatterji pp.156), providing important historical context for understanding Jivan's marginalization in *A Burning*. Her vulnerability is not only individual but also historical. It is rooted in partition era dynamics that positioned Muslims in West Bengal as perpetuating suspects whose belonging to the nation requires constant demonstration. This novel representation of how quickly Jivan is condemned reflects this longer history of suspicion and exclusion that digital media amplifies than creates.

A similar historical pressure operates in *Americanah*, where Ifemelu's identity as a Nigerian immigrant is shaped by racial and national histories that existed before digital media and continue to shape experience today. While her context is different from Jivan. Ifemelu also navigates inherited structures of exclusion which influence how her voice is received in American public and digital space as well. Understanding the historical context is crucial for analyzing digital phenomena without being overly focused on current events. Digital surveillance and immediate punishment Jivan's experiences are not unusual, but rather a digitally mediated extension of prolonged patterns of minority victimization that began with partition and have continued for decades. Digital platforms challenge traditional norms of exclusion and control. This historical scholarship allows the novel to read not as an isolated

incident but as a longer history of suspicion and exclusion that digital media intensifies rather than creates.

2.5 Digital Media, Algorithmic Oppression and Digital Colonialism

Safia Umoja Nobel's *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, provides a crucial framework for understanding how digital platforms reproduce and intensify existing inequalities. Nobel demonstrates that search engines like Google, despite appearing neutral and objective, encode racial and gender biases in their algorithm, systematically disadvantageous users who are not white and male (Nobel pp.15). This analysis reveals how Black women are particularly subject to algorithmic discrimination which dehumanize, sexualize and stereotype women. While Nobel focuses on search engines, this study extends her argument to literary representation of social media, showing how algorithmic logic shapes narrative outcomes in fiction. Similarly, Michel Foucault concept of the "Panopticon" explains how power operates through content surveillance of the content rather than through open force. (Foucault pp.195). Furthermore, it explains how individuals regulate their own behaviors because they believe they are always being watched. This narrative helps me to understand and explain how this digital space works as a system of monitoring and discipline. By applying this "Panopticon" concept both of these novels reveal how digital platforms operate as a model of surveillance structure which continuously monitors women and their speech which limits their individual freedom.

Nobel's framework demonstrates how digital platforms structure visibility and credibility, determining which voices are recognized as authoritative. This insight helps explain how Ifemelu and Jivan navigate online spaces, while algorithms and cultural norms determine how their identities and perspectives are received. Although Ifemelu's online presence functions within a digital ecosystem moulded by Western expectations about whose voices are

authoritative and legitimate, even though her blog is not directly controlled by search engines in the same manner as Google search results. The pressure she has to adjust her voice for American audiences reflects the larger algorithmic logic that marginalizes some viewpoints while elevating others.

In *A Burning*, algorithmic dynamics operate differently but not less powerfully. The rapid spread of narratives condemning Jivan illustrates how social media algorithms exaggerate dramatic and emotionally charged content, regardless of its truthfulness. The novel suggests that Jivan's Facebook post spread not because of its content which is about a relatively mild critique against the government. Rather, it is because it fits into existing narratives about Muslim terrorism that algorithms are easy to apply. This digital platform here functions not as a neutral medium but as an active agent in constructing and spreading the narrative that condemns her.

Michael Kwet in "Digital Colonialism: US Empire and the New Imperialism in the Global South" Talks about the concept of digital colonialism and he extends the analysis of digital power to the global level. Kwet defines digital colonialism as "a system where powerful Western countries and big tech companies control the internet's infrastructure, platforms and the flow of information" (Kwet p.4). This control creates a new form of dependency that echoes historical colonial relationships. It is working just like colonial powers extend resources and controlled economies in the Global South, tech corporations now extract data and control digital infrastructure in ways that benefit the Global North while subordinating the Global South.

Kwet's framework illustrates Ifemelu's blogging practice in *Americanah*. Although her blog gives her a space to talk about race and identity, she operates within digital infrastructure owned and controlled by Western corporations, using platforms designed according to Western

norms and serving predominantly Western audiences. Her voice is not simply free expression but this expression is mediated by the structure of digital colonial power that governs how her speech is expressed and received.

Danielle Coleman extends this analysis in her article “Digital Colonialism: The 21st Century Scramble for Africa through the Extraction and Control of User Data and the Limitations of Data Protection Law”. Coleman draws explicit parallels between historical colonial extraction of raw materials “such as copper, cotton, rubber, tea, gold, diamonds and tin” and contemporary extraction of user data (Coleman pp.419). She defines digital colonialism as systematic colonial practice conducted “through communication networks developed and owned by Western tech companies” (Coleman pp.423). This framework reveals how African users of digital platforms, including Nigerian users like Ifemelu, function as producers of raw material (data) rather than equal participants in the digital economy.

Aishat Oyenike Salami extends this argument in her analysis of “Artificial intelligence and digital colonialism in Africa”. Salami highlights that “most of the technology, equipment and systems that link the Africa people and their communities with their data, products and services are actually owned by Western technology companies” (Salami p.3). Her work demonstrates that decisions about digital tools used in Africa are made by foreign companies and governments where Africa has minimal input in it. This means the perspectives, needs and knowledge of the local communities are systematically ignored where it is prioritizing the pattern of control and inequality over African development.

Both Salami and Coleman emphasize that digital colonialism involves not only control of platform but also what they term “epistemic control” where the power is shaping depending on how people think and what they believe to be true. This concept is crucial for understanding Ifemelu’s experience in *Americanah*. When she writes about race and gender, her writing

responds to cultural beliefs and expectations which are shaped by Western epistemological domination. She attempts to speak as a Nigerian woman in the United States but must control how African perspectives are often misunderstood, distorted and ignored in Western digital spaces. Her blog thus becomes a site of both resistances to and complicity with digital colonial structure.

2.6 Class, Gender and Performative identity in *A Burning*

Madhumita Lahiri, in her article *Not Going Anywhere: Local Protests as Post-Global Politics*, investigates differences between incidents of state violence addressed by the Black Lives Matter movement and the portrayal of state murder in *A Burning*, focusing on Jivan. Lahiri argues that the novel “does not particularly concern ‘planetary convergence’” (Lahiri pp.303) but instead turns toward “the influence of digital communication platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp,” shifting focus on regional and national politics (Lahiri pp.302). This observation is critical for this thesis as it highlights how digital platforms in *A Burning* function not as tools of global connection but as mechanisms of local surveillance and national control.

Dr. Rashad Mohammed Moqbel Al Areqi’s article “The Upper Class’s Violation in *A Burning*” explores a Marxist lens to explore class conflict and ideological manipulation in the novel. Al Areqi focuses on Jivan as “a poor Muslim girl who lives in the Kalabagan slums of Kolkata” (Areqi pp.48), examining how she is “caught up in a systematic inequality produced by class hierarchy and ideological manipulation” (Areqi pp.49). This analysis illuminates how upper classes maintain power through “institutional violence, corruption and biased narratives applied through media and state machinery” (Al Areqi 50). Al Areqi’s work supports this paper’s analysis of how Jivan’s class position intersects with her gender and religious identity to produce her specific vulnerability to state violence.

Abdul Qayyum Khaki's article "A Study of Gender Performativity in Megha Majumder's *A Burning*" examines gender identity through Judith Butler's concept of performativity, focusing particularly on the transgender character Lovely. Khaki explains how Lovely "challenges her biological identity" through her determined pursuit of acting (Khaki pp.50). It demonstrates how Butler's framework illustrates how marginalized characters become targets of systematic prejudices. This analysis strengthens the argument that media and national politics shape who is silenced, who is seen as legitimate and who becomes vulnerable to social violence and state repression.

2.7 Negotiating Identity in Digital and Diasporic Spaces

The novel *Americanah* has focused primarily on race, identity, migration with less attention to how digital technology shapes these themes. Yasmine Nabil Mahmoud in "Identity Process and the Challenges of Immigration in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*" highlights how Ifemelu's experiences in the United States pushes her to reshape her sense of self through assimilation and identity adjustment, emphasizing that migration forces individuals "to incorporate new elements into identity to gain acceptance" (Mahmoud p.6). However, Mahmoud's analysis focuses on what Ifemelu says rather than how the digital platform shapes her ability to say it.

Rita Keresztesi argues in "Afropolitans in America: The Third Space in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*" that Ifemelu's blog is "more than just personal writing" because of how she mixes personal experience with political opinion, creating a "hybrid space" that challenges genre boundaries (Keresztesi pp.115). Other researchers have examined Ifemelu's identity as diasporic, hybrid and fragmented, drawing from Homi Bhabha's concept of "third space" from *The Location of Culture* to understand how she moves between Nigerian and American identities (Bhabha pp.37).

Therefore, literature on nationalism, digital media and postcolonial identities reveals that these themes have an enormous impact on shaping contemporary narratives and individuals' experience of belonging, exclusion and self-representation, especially for women.

Chapter 3

Nationalism, Media and Public Judgment

3.1 Nationalism and Media Power

Nationalism and media play central roles in shaping how individuals, especially women from marginalized or postcolonial backgrounds are perceived, judged and controlled within society's power structure. In both *Americanah* and *A Burning*, media is not simply a neutral communication tool, rather it functions as an instrument that reinforces nationalist ideology while reproducing inequality. Although, these novels take place in two different socio-political contexts, such as India and the United States. Both demonstrate how individual opinion and public perception can be manipulated by the media to determine whose voice is legitimated and whose is silenced.

This analysis primarily focuses on Partha Chatterjee's critique of postcolonial nationalism where he argues that nationalism in formerly colonized societies does not simply adopt Western models but recognizes power by creating "internal others" within the nation. Chatterjee explains postcolonial nationalism maintains control by defining who fully belongs to the nation and who remains conditionally included (Chatterjee p.7). This framework is relevant to understand the novel *A Burning* where it does not depict nationalism as a shared emotional bond, rather as a political structure that excludes marginalized people.

3.2 Public Judgment and Criminalized Speech in *A Burning*

In *A Burning*, nationalism operates as a system that defines who belongs and whose voice will be controlled. The setting is in the Republic of India, a nation-state with a government, defined territory, laws and institutions that is created to serve its population. However, the novel reveals how nationalist rhetoric functions to define belonging selectively, silencing or erasing ordinary

people's voice from the longer context. The realistic scenario of the Indian state is represented by police, politician's, powerful people and mass media. Here all working together to maintain narratives about who constitutes the authentic national community. Jivan, is a poor Muslim girl living in the Kalabagan slum of Kolkata. This detail is crucial to understand her vulnerability within the nationalist system. Her social position as a slum dwelling, Muslim woman places her in the margin of political and social power from the beginning of the novel. Her experiences and struggles are frequently overlooked by political machinery. For instance, her arrest following her Facebook post demonstrates how the state uses nationalist discourse to target those who question its actions. She shares a video of the train attack with a caption asking, "If the police didn't help ordinary people like you and me, if the police watched them die, doesn't that mean that the government is also a terrorist?" (Majumder p.6). Although this question in the Facebook post expresses her doubt rather than inciting violence, it is transformed by state and media as anti-nationalist speech.

Through Jivan's experiences, Majumder shows readers how pseudo-nationalism can be used as a tool to distract the masses from systematic injustice and perpetuate existing power structures. Following Chatterjee's idea of "internal others," Jivan is excluded because of her words alone but because of her identity which already places her outside the boundaries of acceptable citizenship. This exclusion is historically rooted. As Joya Chatterji explains, the legacy of Partition in Bengal positioned Muslim as a community whose "loyalty and belonging frequently questioned" within the Indian Nation State. (Chatterji pp.156) This historical suspicion continues to shape contemporary nationalist imagination where people often think of the Indian nation as primarily for Hindu, whereas Muslims are repetitively asked to prove their loyalty. Within this nationalist framework, Jivan does not fit the image of the authentic citizen. Her arrest is not about the truth, rather it is about protecting the image of the nation from the

people like her by disciplining those who are constructed as outsiders to threaten national identity.

Tagore's critiques of aggressive nationalism, as analyzed by Michael Collins in "Rabindranath Tagore and Nationalism: An Interpretation.", illustrates that nationalist ideology operates in *A Burning*. Tagore warned that nationalism tends toward "the organized self-interest of a whole people, where it is least human and least spiritual" (qtd. in Collins p.8). This description captures how the novel represents nationalist leaders, police and media manipulating narratives to create fear and justify injustice. Under this nationalism practice, political forces prioritizing unity through fear and division rather than genuine collective welfare.

The novel *A Burning* clearly illustrates selective justice through various portrayals of various individuals. When "Sonali Khan, the famous film producer whose name every household knows, was spotted in the booking room" (Majumder pp.36) and the state takes no meaningful action against her. The government does not arrest her, and the police do not pursue any charges against her. Jivan observes this difference bitterly "we hear that Sonali Khan is being kept under house arrest, which means that she lives, as before, in her own house. It shows here that even the meaning of 'position' is different for rich people". (Majumder pp.37). This contrast reveals how nationalist ideology operates selectively, targeting those already marginalized while protecting the privileged.

Jivan is arrested not primarily because of what she posted but because of what she is a Muslim girl from the slums whose very existence challenges the Hindu nationalist imaginary. Her intersectional marginalization as a poor, Muslim, female makes her an ideal scapegoat because she is easy to condemn, difficult to defend and saving political purposes by distracting from state failures. The nationalist leaders and the nation state do not allow her to question

government actions because such questioning, coming from someone in her position, threatens the carefully constructed narrative of national unity and governmental competence.

This represents what Partha Chatterjee calls the construction of “internal others” within the nation state in *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Chatterjee p.7). Despite formal citizenship, Muslim in Hindu-nationalist India are positioned as perpetual outsiders whose loyalty must be constantly demonstrated and can be instantly revoked. Jivan’s Facebook post becomes a convenient excuse to question her loyalty because she comes from a community whose existence challenges nationalist narratives. The real issue is not the post itself but her identity: poor, Muslim and a woman. All these factors make her incompatible with imagined community ideals.

Nationalism is an ideology that expresses a strong sense of pride, loyalty, and devotion among individuals toward their own nation-state. It can be a unifying force to bring people together and create a deep sense of belonging for their own nation. Benedict Anderson, who states in his book *Imagined Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, “a nation is not just a physical entity but rather an imagined community where people believe they belong together based on shared symbols, values, and narratives” (Anderson, pp. 15). This imagined community can create a strong sense of identity and unity among a diverse group of people. While Anderson’s concept of nationalism highlights the emotional bonds of people, Partha Chatterjee becomes important here because he shows that this idea about nation does not fully explain postcolonial nations, where nationalism often defines who belongs and who is excluded, especially women and marginalized groups. Rabindranath Tagore uses a critical perspective here. His critique of aggressive nationalism further highlights by warning that it limits freedom and silences difference rather than creating unity. Rabindranath Tagore is a man of many qualities. He is not only a remarkable writer but also a philosopher, poet, musician, artist, and has written on many topics. Tagore’s critique closely aligns with Partha Chatterjee’s

argument that postcolonial nationalism often reproduces a system of control rather than genuine freedom. Tagore's main argument about nationalism is that there are some powerful people who use the concept of nationality; they use this sentiment on the general public and manipulate it for their personal gain and to fulfil their political and ideological agenda. In some cases, individuals or any group exploit nationalism in a way that creates division within one nation and promotes discrimination. This is why Tagore writes in his work *Nationalism* that he saw nationalism as a tool that can divide people and can lead to violence as he states that "it is for self-preservation" (Tagore pp.18). It clearly shows the purpose of this type of nationalism where it reflects "the side of powers rather than human ideals" (Tagore pp.20) where it ignores empathy, ethics and genuine human connection. He does not see it as a unifying force but rather a source of division, which can bring division and violence. It can also harm both individuals and communities at the same time. Tagore warned that "nationalism is a great menace," (Tagore pp.19) because he saw this nationalism as a force that can bring trouble of division, war, and decline all moral values. He was concerned that if people give too much focus on nationalism, it can lead to the marginalization and suffering of vulnerable groups of people. Nationalism often excludes certain groups of people based on their ethnicity, religion, and so many other aspects. They create nationalist rhetoric, and they craft their plans in a way that creates a sense of 'us versus them' mind-set. Even in some cases, the government uses the concept of nationality to restrict and suppress people's basic human rights. This exclusionary nationalism is highly relevant in today's India which is highly relevant in Jivan's life in *A Burning*. The exclusion that is created by aggressive religious nationalism in *A Burning* operates defiantly but in a comparable way to the racialized nationalism depicted in *Americanah*.

3.3 Media, Race and Conditional Belonging in *Americanah*

In Adichí's novel *Americanah*, Ifemelu faces both gender and racial expectations from both in Nigeria and in the United States. She is judged for her hair, her choice, her opinion and even the tone of her voice. Although the United States is often imagined as a land of freedom, democracy and equality. Unfortunately, the novel *Americanah* reveals how American national identity is deeply shaped by whiteness both openly and subtly.

While American national rhetoric promotes multiculturalism, where belonging depends not only on citizenship alone but also on cultural norms and privilege of whiteness. As a Nigerian woman, Ifemelu realizes that she does not fit into this imagined community. A small but meaningful example appears early in the novel when she cannot find a hair-braiding salon in Princeton and has to travel to Trenton instead (Adichí pp.10). This brief detail shows how the needs of Black women are often invisible in privileged American space. It happens not because they are quickly and openly excluded from the American space, but rather because they are not simply considered in these spaces.

Rabindranath Tagore's critique of aggressive nationalism helps us to understand why Ifemelu feels the need to carefully adjust her behavior and speech in American society. Tagore argues that nationalism becomes aggressive when it demands conformity and suppresses individuality in order to protect the dominant national image. (Tagore pp.19) In *Americanah*, this idea is reflected in how navigates society, she learns American cultural norms closely and adopts speech, writing and behaviour to suit their expectations, ensuring she is heard and accepted (Adichí pp.11). It shows how national culture makes pressures to fit into the predetermined norms. Although America presents itself as open and democratic but its nationalism forces immigrants like Ifemelu to reshape themselves in order to belong where individuals navigate their identity and shape it in a way to avoid exclusion. It can be seen here

how American national culture, while presenting itself open and democratic, practicing pressure on immigrants like Ifemelu to conform. It reveals a form of structural nationalism that operates through social expectations rather than individual needs.

Ifemelu's blog challenges the dominant idea of race, especially through her posts such as "Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black" (Adichi pp.10). However, her voice is still limited here, as her main audience are White Americans. She is carefully adjusting her tone and voice to meet their expectations. While her digital space gives her visibility, it does not grant her complete freedom of expression. Her online presents illustrate how digital space amplifies marginalized voices but simultaneously limits them through structural control. She operates within what Nobel calls "algorithmic oppression," where digital systems privileges some of the voices, while silencing or marginalizing those voices that challenge dominant ideologies (Nobel pp.15).

Anderson argues the nation is imagined because its peoples here shape a same mental image of belonging which is created through stories, symbols and media rather than any personal connection (Anderson p.6). The imagined American nation does not include Black immigrants, rather it positions them as perpetual outsiders whose belonging is conditional on conformity to norms they did not create. Ifemelu must adjust her tone of writing because she knows her audience are American white people. Even when she criticizes American racism, she is treated as an outsider who should remain silent. Among the responses she receives an email from her White audience that "you are a racist. You should be grateful we let you in this country" (Adichie pp.302) shows many readers refuse to accept her evidence as valid. This can connect with Anderson's idea of an imagined community where belonging depends on shared belief. As a result, when Ifemelu challenges the dominant national story, she is pushed as an outsider of this imagined American community.

3.4 Digital Voice, Surveillance and Unequal Consequences

In both novels, the media do not function merely as neutral channels of communication but as active agents that shape public perception, amplifying certain narratives while silencing others. In *A Burning*, broadcast and social media work together to transform Jivan's questioning post into evidence of terrorism. The media do not investigate her claims or seek truth, instead they amplify sensational narratives that serve state interests and generate audience engagement. The novel illustrates how the media creates public judgement through selective representation. The novel demonstrates how the media shape's public opinion through selective representation. Jivan's statements are taken out of context, and her questioning tone becomes violent refusal. The media do not present her as a young woman expressing frustrations with government failure, instead she becomes a terrorist and an enemy of the nation, whose words alone are treated as proof of guilt. She becomes an enemy of the nation whose words prove her guilt without doing any serious issue against the nation. This transformation reflects Tuchman's analysis that media actively construct reality rather than simply reflect it (Tuchman pp.44).

In *Americanah*, media operate differently but with similar effects of distortion and control. Ifemelu's blog gives her a platform to articulate perspectives which excluded her from mainstream discourses, but this platform operates within constraints she does not control. Her audience's expectations shape what she can say. The need for readability and acceptability filters her authentic voice through Western norms. This reflects in Coleman's work on "Digital Colonialism: The 21st Century Scramble for Africa through the Extraction and Control of User Data and the Limitations of Data Protection Laws" where digital colonialism focuses on "data extraction and control by Western tech companies" where power shapes not only what information circulates but how people think and what they believe to be true (Coleman pp.423). The West controls not only digital infrastructure but these categories through which identity is expressed and understood in digital space. For Ifemelu, the American imagined community is

shaped through media that simplify, stereotype or ignore the realities of Black immigrant women. Even her resistant voice is filtered through this epistemic framework.

Spivak's question "Can the subaltern speak?" applies powerfully to both characters, though in different ways (Spivak pp.28). From *A Burning*, Jivan appears as a subaltern as she occupies multiple marginalized positions, such as she is poor, Muslim, female who lives in the slums of India. These intersecting identities place her outside the circle of power that determine whose voice is heard and taken seriously. Her attempts to participate in public discourse by posting on Facebook. But her expressions are frequently misinterpreted, turning them from statements of skepticism into proof of criminal activity. Her subaltern status determines whether her words are accepted is determined by not what she says but by who she is. It demonstrates how structural inequalities prevent subalterns from having their voice recognized even when they try to speak publicly.

From both of these novels, Ifemelu holds an independent role in contrast to Jivan. Ifemelu is educated, finally achieves financial success, and has a cultural advantage that Jivan does not. She has the ability to speak openly about race in America in her blog post. She writes "anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black" (Adichi pp.11). On a surface level, it seems she holds a leadership role in her blog space, she controls the platform and earns money from it. It seems she has her full agency in this digital media. Unfortunately, her voice is still influenced by what the American audience wants to hear from her. She explains race as something that can be 'decoded' rather than just asking systematic racial structure change. Through Spivak's framework, this shows that although Ifemelu can speak, her speech is filtered through dominant cultural expectations of her American audience. Her American audience wants to hear about race, but they want to hear it in ways that do not fundamentally challenge their understanding of one another or demand significant changes. Here, Spivak's argument is

useful to expose the limits of Ifemelu's voice. Spivak also argues that speaking within a hegemonic system does not guarantee genuine agency, as a result, Ifemelu has the agency to speak but the power structure of American society limits her language and tone to express herself independently. Ifemelu's privileges allow her more visibility than Jivan, but it does not free her from structural constraints.

Ifemelu's difficulty in communicating across cultural differences is highlighted by Mohanty's criticism of Western feminism for speaking for "Third World women" without paying attention to their unique experiences in "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (Mohanty pp.17). When Ifemelu speaks, her Nigerian perspective and her understanding of race do not fit properly with American racial narratives. Her Nigerian heritage and global viewpoint are frequently misunderstood by the American audience, who prefer that she discuss race in words that are familiar to them. It occurs because the dominant cultural frameworks determine what kind of knowledge is considered as legible. Even though the digital platforms provide her a prominent place where she can urge to convert her experience, her voice is constantly mediated to make it legible and acceptable to the dominant cultural framework. This process exemplifies epistemic violence, in which knowledge from a marginalized group is distorted, misinterpreted and loses its authenticity in order to make it consumable for American discourse.

The consequences of digital expression are not uniform, rather they are shaped by an individual's location within the intersecting hierarchies such as class, religion, gender and national belonging. *A Burning* and *Americanah*, both novels demonstrate similar acts of speaking in digital spaces but radically different outcomes depending on the structural privileges of Jivan and Ifemelu. Jivan faces extreme consequences, including imprisonment, investigation, and perhaps even execution just because of her "Facebook, where she writes that the government is also a terrorist?" (Majumder p.6). Her political opinions are turned into

terrorist acts and her expression is criminalized. Digital platforms are used as a tool here for monitoring and gathering evidence of disloyalty. Her tragedy serves as an example of the most catastrophic outcome that may occur when marginalized women speak out against nationalist narratives: imprisonment and even death, rather than just rejection or criticism. Ifemelu's aftershocks are weaker but still notable because she encounters bitterness, criticism, pressure to fit in, and ultimately a feeling of inauthenticity that affects her choice to leave America. Ifemelu states that she “just finished a fellowship at Princeton and for years she wrote an anonymous blog about race” (Adichi pp.364). But, her speech is restricted, controlled, and awarded only when it satisfies specific standards; it is not criminalized. Although, “she is, famous race blogger in America,” she can articulate critiques of American racism and achieve professional recognition (Adichi pp.394). These various results show how the two characters are positioned as repressed and mediated in their respective countries. The comparative reading between Jivan and Ifemelu clarifies how privilege mediates risk rather than eliminating constraint. Jivan’s position as “a poor Muslim woman from Kolkata slum” (Majumder pp.13) renders her particularly vulnerable to direct state violence, while Ifemelu’s relative privilege—being educated, eventually middle-class, and having evidence—protects her from the most catastrophic outcomes such as legal repression. But this protection comes at the conditional visibility where freedom of expression is limited. Together the novel reveals that digital platforms do not all equalize expression rather amplify preexisting hierarchy.

3.5 The Role of Witness and Testimony

The issues of witnesses and testimony—who is trusted, whose story is taken at face value and how testimony is evaluated based on the speaker's social position are heavily explored in both novels. In digital scenarios, where information circulates quickly and is evaluated using both conventional hierarchies and new computational logics, these issues become more problematic. Jivan's inability to prove her innocence in *A Burning* is due to the deliberate denial of her

testimony rather than a lack of proof. When the police arrest her a group of boys are “coming from the nightclub” but the police do not ask anything because they hold a powerful position as “their father knows the police commissioner” (Majumder pp.14). In contrast when the police arrest her, she says to them again and again that she is “a working girl. I work at Pantaloons. I have nothing to do with police” (Majumder pp.13). She here tries to explain the context of her Facebook post, testifies to her innocence, and explains her actions. However, her words have no effect on the state's story. According to Spivak, the subaltern's speech is often misconstrued in accordance with frameworks that prevent comprehension, rather than just being ignored (Spivak pp.28). Jivan talks, but her testimony is evaluated based on stereotypes about Muslim women that turn any statement into proof of guilt. It illustrates how the preference for digital proof is more significant over human testimony. Jivan's Facebook post turns into a more "real" one than her own confession that she is saying to the police. Her own justifications are serving as lies, but her post in social media is viewed as real which gives us a clear insight about the digital space and how it is misused by the powers of the society. This preference for digital evidence over human testimony is indicative of larger trends in surveillance societies, where data is thought to disclose truths that subjects are unable to accurately report.

In *Americanah*, testimony issues are handled differently as Ifemelu's blog serves as a type of testimony, shedding light on her own experience with race in America and exposing factors that mainstream debate often ignores. However, her testimony is often challenged, ignored, or reframed by those who reject her narrative. The angry emails she receives: "You are a racist. You should be grateful we let you in this country" (Adichie pp.302) indicates a refusal to accept her evidence as valid. Miranda Fricker in her *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* defines this process as “testimonial injustice” which occurs when prejudice causes someone who hears to provide a speaker's message less credit (Fricker p.1). Ifemelu faces testimonial injustice when her allegations of racism are dismissed as exaggerated,

her perspective appears ungrateful, and her testimony is evaluated based on assumptions about African immigrants rather than on its own qualifications. Digital platforms may increase inequality by allowing for quick dismissals and harsh responses.

3.6 Memory, Archive and Digital Permanence

The relationship between memory, archives, and the past is fundamentally altered by digital technologies in both novels. For marginalized people, whose prior expressions may be monitored, recovered, and used against them, digital communication provides new forms of permanence that have special consequences. Throughout the narratives of the novel, Jivan is persistently haunted by her Facebook post. This haunting represents the broader context of digital entrapment where a momentary explosion turns into a permanent archive of suspicion. Her post is repeatedly detached from the original context and transformed it to a criminal intent. It is collected and replicated by the state and media and portrays her as a terrorist.

This novel shows how utterances that would have been fleeting in pre-digital contexts a remark to a friend and now can be retrieved and decontextualized, creating new vulnerabilities. Digital permanence is devastating for Jivan. Her post is a public record, consequently she cannot change it. The digital archive is regarded as more trustworthy than her live evidence, therefore she is unable to explain it away. It defines her in the eyes of the public and the state, thus she is unable to move past it. The novel suggests that marginalized persons face unique risks because of digital permanence because their expressions are more likely to be monitored, recorded, and exploited against them.

In *Americanah* Ifemelu has a more conflicted attitude toward digital permanence. Her blog serves as an archive of her changing views on race, which she eventually stops publishing, but which is still available online. She does not completely escape her digital history when she goes to Nigeria; her American blog character follows her and influences how people view her.

However, Ifemelu views this digital collection as proof of her achievements as a writer and public intellectual.

The differences between Ifemelu and Jivan's interactions with digital archives show how socioeconomic position shapes the meaning of digital permanence. For Ifemelu, the digital archives are viewed as both a resource and a constraint, allowing partial control over her public identity. For Jivan, it is viewed as an instrument of mass destruction. Their disparate positions within overlapping hierarchies are reflected in this difference: Jivan's marginalization means that enemies can completely take her digital trace, but Ifemelu's relative privilege gives her some influence over her digital legacy. This difference in the experience of Jivan and Ifemelu demonstrates that digital archives do not affect all individuals equally, instead they reinforce existing hierarchies of class, religion, gender and power.

Chapter 4

Digital Space, Intersectionality and the Politics of Resistance

4.1 Digital Space Beyond Utopian Narratives

In *Americanah* and *A Burning*, digital space emerges as both opportunity and danger for postcolonial women's expressions. While early discussion of the internet is often embraced as utopian narratives of digital liberation, promising free speech, democratizing of knowledge and empowerment for marginalized voices.

However, both the novel *Americanah* and *A Burning* illustrate how these digital platforms interact with existing power structures to shape who can speak and how their voice is received. Technology that guarantees visibility and offers speaking liberation now frequently operates as a potential system of bias, exclusion, and surveillance, especially for women. Safiya Umoja Noble's argument from *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, these digital platforms are not impartial instruments, rather they are part of power structures that determine which voices are heard and which are silenced (Noble pp.15). She shows how internet communication is shown as a political arena where gender, race, class, and nation converge to determine who can speak and who is silent. This chapter examines the experiences of Ifemelu and Jivan in digital spaces, highlighting the unique challenges of digital expression for women in distinct power structures.

4.2 Blogging, Visibility and Disciplined Speech in *Americanah*

In *Americanah*, digital media first appears by Ifemelu as a liberating environment. She finds that blogging provides an opportunity for social criticism where she may address racism in America outside of the diplomatic and political constraints of mainstream conversation, allowing her to express ideas and emotions that she is unable to in offline settings. Her blog

gains popularity, drawing readers, bringing in money and positioning her as an authority on racial dynamics in America. This achievement appears to confirm the democratizing power of internet platforms. But as the story goes on, it becomes more and more clear how limited Ifemelu's digital voice is. She understands that assumptions about what sorts of narratives are considered valuable and “remarkable” in Western eyes are imposed by digital space. She must adjust her voice to fit these expectations to attract and retain readers, a process that eventually results in feelings of alienation and inauthenticity.

Ifemelu discovers after giving a diversity talk that her audience “did not want the content of her ideas; they merely wanted the gesture of her presence” (Adichie pp.302). This realization highlights the fundamental paradox of digital media for underrepresented voices: visibility is frequently dependent on compliance. The blog area is governed by Western standards of visibility, readability, and acceptability rather than being a neutral platform. Gendered and racist obstacles to online expression that postcolonial feminist scholars have examined are reflected in this situation. Collins’ arguments on “Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment” talks about “controlling images” as stereotypes that limit how women, especially women of color, can be seen and heard (Collins pp.69). Ifemelu challenges expectations that she displays manifestations of Black womanhood, such as being intelligent but not violent, critical but not threatening, and exotic but not incomprehensible. Her genuine speech is filtered by these expectations through frameworks that she did not design.

4.3 Online Hostility, Surveillance and Gendered Control

The limitations are further demonstrated by the hostility that Ifemelu encounters. She gets emails saying things like, “Your talk was bullshit. You're a racist. You ought to be appreciative that we allowed you to enter this nation” (Adichie pp.302). This answer demonstrates how

internet audiences contribute to the spread of patriarchal and nationalist ideologies that require immigrant women to express gratitude and keep quiet.

Ifemelu's existence in America is a gift that can be taken away, and her speech should be one of gratitude rather than criticism. This is the obvious hidden message. Instead of being a place of pure resistance, digital space becomes a location of control. This is what Michel Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, about how modern power operates through surveillance, normalization and internalization of control rather than direct repression. Ifemelu's online presence illustrates the "disciplinary logic" where she is not silenced but disciplined (Foucault pp.206). It demonstrates the scenario of how digital space reproduces the mechanism of surveillance and monitors the postcolonial voices by extending disciplinary power into the digital media.

4.4 Digital Colonialism and Criminalised Expression *A Burning*

In *A Burning*, Megha Majumdar portrays digital space as a risky tool used by the government for monitoring and control rather than as a place for freedom and self-expression. One Facebook post that questions the government's response to a deadly train attack completely changed the life of the protagonist, Jivan. The state appropriates the post as proof of anti-national attitude even though it expresses uncertainty rather than calls for action.

Digital colonialism, a concept that refers to the extension of colonial power relation into the digital sphere, operates not through direct force alone but by regulating visibility, monitoring expression and shaping the knowledge that circulates online. This aligns closely with Michel Foucault's theory of power which emphasizes how control is exercised through systems of surveillance and knowledge production. Significantly, Michael Kwet in "Digital Colonialism: US Empire and the New Imperialism in the Global South" and Danielle Coleman in "Digital Colonialism: The 21st Century Scramble for Africa through the Extraction and

Control of User Data and the Limitations of Data Protection Laws” established the idea of "digital colonialism," and states that it offers an essential framework for comprehending how global power dynamics influence the digital experiences which are depicted in both novels. The term "digital colonialism" describes how Western nations and businesses dominate online platforms, infrastructure, and information flows, resulting in new kinds of reliance that are reminiscent of past colonial ties (Kwet 4; Coleman 423).

In *A Burning*, digital colonialism manifests through Jivan's Facebook post which is interpreted as anti-national and criminalized by the government of India. Her post poses a threat as a crime against the state rather than as an opinion. By categorizing her remarks as anti-national, the government turns common responses into crimes, highlighting the extreme vulnerability that those on the periphery of society—especially underprivileged Muslim women—face when utilizing digital media.

4.5 Unequal Digital Consequences

The differences between Ifemelu and Jivan's digital experiences highlight the ways in which intersectional positioning influences the opportunities and dangers associated with online expression. Despite the limitations Ifemelu encounters, she has some influence over her online persona in *Americanah*. She uses digital space to negotiate identity and critique power. She has the freedom to decide what to write, how to present her points, and even whether to keep posting. Because of her relative privilege regarding education, legal standing, and cultural capital, she can take chances and tolerate criticism without suffering terrible consequences. However, for Jivan in *A Burning* this very digital space does not provide Jivan with these kinds of opportunities. She has no say over how the state interprets her role. Her Facebook comment is instantly distorted as proof of terrorism and taken out of context. The shift demonstrates how, in the context of authoritarian nationalism, internet platforms blur the lines between speech and

criminal activity. When a Muslim woman from the slums expresses what may be accepted as criticism from a middle-class Hindu citizen, it becomes proof of terrorism.

This unequal treatment shows that rather than encouraging equality, digital space often increases already existing inequalities. Ifemelu can speak out against and critique racism because, although occasionally unwanted, her criticism is ultimately accepted in American racial discourse. Instead of being criminalized, her voice is controlled. Jivan's small act of challenging the government is completely unacceptable; her voice is viewed as fundamentally harmful since it contradicts nationalist ideology and comes from an outsider.

The comparison illustrates what critical race scholars have called "differential racialization" in Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, the process by which certain groups are racialized differently in accordance with the demands of dominant culture (Delgado and Stefancic p.9). This uneven racialization in digital space determines which criticism is accepted and which is illegal, as well as which expression is protected and which is under surveillance. Digital platforms perpetuate these dynamics in new technological forms rather than surpassing them.

4.6 Intersectionality in Digital Space

Intersectionality, as defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", helps to explain how overlapping social identities shape experience of power, marginalization and digital expression. According to Crenshaw, many types of discrimination that are not observable through single-axis analysis result from the junction of several marginalized identities (Crenshaw pp.139). According to their locations within overlapping hierarchies, this theory sheds light on how Ifemelu and Jivan experience digital space.

Gender, ethnicity, or nationality are insufficient for fully understanding Ifemelu's experience. She experiences gendered racism as a Black woman in America, which influences what readers expect from her site. She encounters stereotypes about Africa that are different from those regarding African Americans as an immigrant from Nigeria. She has access to platforms and audiences that working-class immigrants might not have since she is an educated, eventually middle-class writer. These overlapping identities influence both what she writes and how it is interpreted.

Intersecting identities are negotiated, exposed, and contested on her blog. She attempts to convey her nuanced viewpoint—Black and African, Nigerian and American, critical and optimistic—but discovers that audience expectations and digital platforms push her toward oversimplified identification classifications. The dynamics of the platform encourage identifiable positions: she is successful as "the non-American Black" pundit, but her success demands ongoing performance of an identity category that comes short of capturing her complexity (Adichi pp.339).

The immediate consequences of Jivan's intersectional vulnerability are more catastrophic. Any one-dimensional study would overlook her unique vulnerability to state violence because of her location at the connection of poverty, female gender, and Muslim identity. If she were financially secure, masculine, or Hindu, the consequences of her Facebook post would be different. Every facet of her marginalization contributes to the others: as a poor person from the slums, she lacks the means to defend herself or reject the narrative created against her; as a woman, her public speech challenges gendered expectations of silence; and as a Muslim, that speech is interpreted as fundamentally dangerous. The novel shows how her intersectional position influences the state's reaction to her speech. She is a perfect scapegoat since she is easily condemned and hard to defend due to her marginalization on several fronts. No influential group will support her, and no media source will challenge the guilt narrative.

Because she is explicitly targeted because she falls at the intersection of several oppressed groups, her intersectional marginalization is important to her oppression rather than triviality.

4.7 Resistance and Its Limits

Both *Americanah* and *A Burning* highlight how resistance is always limited, which complicates straightforward accounts of digital resistance by the structures in which it takes place. Ifemelu's blog is an example of resistance; she questions prevailing racial narratives, reinforces viewpoints that are usually left out of popular discourse, and produces community among readers who hold similar critical viewpoints. However, similar opposition is found in digital infrastructure formed by algorithms she cannot comprehend, managed by Western businesses, and obtained by audiences whose expectations limit her ability to express herself.

Antonio Gramsci in "Selections from the Prison Notebooks", refers to her resistance as "contradictory consciousness" because it simultaneously challenges and conforms to prevailing ideology (Gramsci pp.333). In *Americanah* Ifemelu in her blog discusses white supremacy but relies on white readers to make her blog successful and she criticizes American racism in ways that are understandable to American viewers. She eventually leaves America as a result of this contradiction, not because her resistance is ineffectual but rather because it comes at too great a cost in terms of alienation from herself.

However, in *A Burning*, Jivan is not portrayed as a helpless victim. She retains an inner life of memory, hope, and humanity throughout her imprisonment and punishment, which state authority is unable to completely destroy. Her resistance is existential rather than public or political; she refuses to turn into the terrorist that the state has created. Although it does not alter her situation, her internal resistance is an example of agency that endures in the face of severe limitations.

4.8 The Limits of Digital Liberation

The idea that underprivileged people are unavoidably empowered by digital communication is finally questioned in both novels. This presumption is common in early internet discourse and still widespread in tech industry rhetoric, ignores the ways in which digital platforms are incorporated into existing power systems. As Safiya Umoja Nobel argues that digital technologies are not neutral where algorithms and platforms reproduce existing power structure, controlling which voice is ignored and which voice is established (Nobel pp.15). Both of the novels show that effective resistance needs both structural change in the structures that control visibility, belonging, and power as well as access to a voice.

Ifemelu has a voice in *Americanah*; she may blog, be read, and achieve success. However, because she must adjust her voice to the expectations of the audience, this access does not result in freedom from constraints; rather, it generates new kinds of limitations. Her ultimate choice to give up blogging and go back to Nigeria is an acknowledgement that voice is not enough. She needs better settings that allow her to express herself authentically, not additional platforms. This is what Safiya Umoja Nobel argues about where she is not asking about the voice to speak in online space rather she is challenging the structural biases that Ifemelu is facing through her blogging space.

In *A Burning*, Jivan's use of Facebook is not protecting her, rather it makes her more vulnerable as her online expression is exploited against her. Digital platforms may raise rather than lower danger for women who are not marginalized on several overlapping dimensions. It can connect with Nobel's argument about "digital space is in neutral; it reproduces inequality" which helps to explain Jivan as her Facebook post makes her more vulnerable rather than protecting her. (Nobel pp.15). The novels critique utopian myths of digital liberty by suggesting

that, for the most vulnerable, silence may be the safest reaction to digital surveillance. This is a rather dismal conclusion.

When taken as a whole, the novels show that digital space is not equal nor neutral. Instead, it perpetuates and reinforces existing inequalities by allocating the advantages and disadvantages of digital expression based on one's place in racial, class, gender, religious, and national hierarchies. In digital space, women's voices are carefully controlled, filtered, and monitored based on their identities and social status rather than just being allowed or silenced.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In Megha Majumdar's *A Burning* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, this thesis has examined how nationalism, media and societal power structure shape the voices of postcolonial women. While digital platforms are often seen as a space of freedom, this paper has argued that these platforms are neither neutral nor liberating for women.

Through close reading and analysis used by feminist, nationalist, and postcolonial digital political theories, the thesis demonstrates that digital spaces frequently reinforce existing hierarchies of race, gender, class and nationality, influencing who can speak and how their voices are received.

The comparison between Ifemelu and Jivan highlights the various dangers associated with speaking online. Ifemelu's voice is influenced by algorithmic visibility, Western norms and audience expectations, although her blog allows some resistance and self-expression. She can criticize “racism in America”, but only in ways that do not fundamentally challenge the self-perception of her predominantly white audience. (Adichie pp.309). Her success depends on performing a specific identity category “the non-American Black” that limits the authenticity of her genuine voice. (Adichie pp.310). Over time, this pressure produces alienation which influences her decision to leave the United States and return to Nigeria.

In contrast, under conditions of aggressive nationalism where social media serves as a weapon of state surveillance and repression, Jivan's digital expression is criminalized. Her “Facebook post” challenging the authority of the government; a typical public conversation in democratic terms is transformed into evidence of terrorism. (Majumder pp.14). Her experience illustrates how marginalized women are denied the ability to determine their own speech,

particularly those who are excluded from the imagined nation. Jivan's life is destroyed not by what she says, but by how the state and media appropriate her words and rebuild them for political ends.

The study has shown how nationalism plays a vital role in regulating women's digital presence. Nationalist identity defines the limits of acceptable speech and determines who is allowed to question the state power. In both novels, women who challenge dominant national narratives are positioned as outsiders, regardless of their legal citizenship. Digital media intensify this process by amplifying suspicion, accelerating judgment and preserving speech as permanent evidence.

At the same time, this paper challenges the simplified idea of resistance in digital space. Resistance here is not absent, it is constrained. Ifemelu is allowed to critique, yet it demands constant negotiation with audience expectations and dominant cultural framework. Jivan's digital presence offers almost no space for resistance, as her speech is immediately absolved into the system of surveillance and punishment. This constructing outcomes visualize that resistance is shaped by structural position rather than individual intention or courage.

Intersectional approach is significant to understanding these dynamics. Gender alone cannot expose the risks faced by women in digital space. The intersection of gender with race, religion, class and nationality produces different forms of vulnerability and control. Digital spaces use these differences by treating speech as data rather than a safe human communication tool.

This thesis also contributes to a broader debate about digital colonialism by showing how contemporary technologies continue the older pattern of domination. The whole digital infrastructure and its norms are shaped by western power. As a result, postcolonial women are often required to translate their experience into a framework that is understandable for the

dominant audience but limiting for self-expression and representation of their identity. The theoretical frameworks reveal how nationalist ideology produces boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, how digital platforms perpetuate existing inequalities and how women who are positioned differently along overlapping dimensions of identity encounter distinct speech conditions. Digital expression becomes a site where power determines risk, visibility and punishment, rather than functioning as equal opportunity.

The novels highlight the significance of literature in providing critical perspective on technological advancement. Even in an increasingly digital world, literature remains a vital space for tracing the human consequences of structural power and for questioning dominant narratives of progress and freedom. By combining literary analysis with theories of algorithmic injustice and digital colonialism, this study demonstrates that literature and theory together offer insights that neither could achieve independently.

Both novels encourage readers to question the promises of digital liberty and consider how power structures influence technological advancements. They argue that for postcolonial women to truly enjoy digital freedom, nationalist, patriarchal, and colonial structures that limit the visibility of women's voices must be challenged. This shift is ultimately a political issue rather than a technological one, including the struggle of representation, authority, and belonging that cannot be resolved by platforms or algorithms alone.

This thesis has argued that digital space is neither equal nor neutral for postcolonial women. Through a comparative analysis of *A Burning* and *Americanah*, it has demonstrated how nationalism and digital media intersect to regulate women's speech according to their positions within intersecting hierarchies. Both novels reveal that meaningful resistance requires not only access to voice, but structural transformation of the systems that govern visibility, belonging and power. Without such change, digital space will continue to reproduce the same

exclusion and hierarchies found in offline life. By foregrounding women's experience in both novels, this thesis highlights the urgent need to rethink digital freedom beyond utopian narratives.

Works Cited List

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah*. 2013. Barcelona, Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial; Literatura Random House, 2013.
- Mohammed, Rashad. "The Upper Class's Violence and Violations in Megha Majumdar's *A Burning*." *مجلة العلوم والتربية والدراسات الإنسانية*, vol. 6, no. 21, 18 Feb. 2022, pp. 564–581, <https://doi.org/10.55074/hesj.v0i21.431>.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 1991.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London, Routledge, 1994.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, Routledge, 1990.
- Butkus, Clarice Marie. "Social Media, Marginalised Identity and Liminal Publics." *Opus.lib.uts.edu.au*, 2023, <http://hdl.handle.net/10453/173479>
- Castells, Manuel. *The rise of the network society*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Chatterji, J. (2007). *The spoils of partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coleman, Danielle. "Digital Colonialism: The 21st Century Scramble for Africa through the Extraction and Control of User Data and the Limitations of Data Protection Laws." *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*, vol. 24, no. 24.2, 2019, p. 417, <https://doi.org/10.36643/mjrl.24.2.digital>
- Collins, Michael. "Rabindranath Tagore and Nationalism: An Interpretation." *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, no. 42, 2017, hasp.ub.uni-

heidelberg.de/journals/hdpapers/article/view/2210,

<https://doi.org/10.11588/hpsap.2008.42.2210>.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed., New York, Routledge, 2000.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” Chicago Unbound, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/.

Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. 3rd ed., New York, New York University Press, 2017.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Penguin Books, 1977.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York, International Publishers, 1971.

Stuart, Hall. *Essential Essays, Volume II: Identity and Diaspora*. Durham, Duke University Press, 1990, pp. 222–237.

Keresztesi, Rita. “Afropolitans in America: The Third Space in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah*.” A Companion to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, edited by Earnest N. Emenyonu, James Currey, 2017, pp. 109–124.

Khaki, Abdul Qayyum. “Gender Performativity and Identity Issue: A Queer Study of Megha Majumdar’s *A Burning*.” Critical Review of Social Sciences and Humanities, vol. 2, no. 1, 24 June 2022, pp. 47–58. <https://journals.getownship.edu.pk/index>

- Kwet, Michael. "Digital Colonialism: US Empire and the New Imperialism in the Global South." *Race & Class*, vol. 60, no. 4, 14 Jan. 2019, pp. 3–26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396818823172>.
- Lahiri, Madhumita. "Not Going Anywhere: Local Protests as Post-Global Politics." *Novel*, vol. 55, no. 1, 1 May 2022, pp. 95–112, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-9615009>.
- Mahmoud, Y. "Identity Process and the Challenges of Immigration in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013)." (2023): 1-26. https://misj.eg/article_298300
- Majumdar, Megha. *Burning*. S.L., Vintage, 2021.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1984, pp. 333–358, www.jstor.org/stable/302821.
- Moretti, Franco. *Distant reading*. Verso Books, 2013.
- Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. NYU Press, 2018. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1pwt9w5>. Accessed 25 Nov. 2025.
- Rabindranath Tagore. *Nationalism*. Holistence Publications, 19 Mar. 2024.
- Salami, Aishat Oyenike. "Artificial Intelligence, Digital Colonialism, and the Implications for Africa's Future Development." *Data & Policy*, vol. 6, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1017/dap.2024.75>.
- Sengupta, Anwesha. "Bibliography." *Streets in Motion*, 31 Aug. 2022, pp. 271–288, resolve.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/streets-in-motion/bibliography/3FD3CC70CFE04D038F360FBC33E54C70, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009109208.009>. Accessed 22 Sep. 2025.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* New York, Columbia University Press, 1988.

Tuchman, Gaye. "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media." *Culture and Politics*, 1978, pp. 150–174, link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-62397-6_9.

Zuboff, Shoshana. "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism." *Social Theory Re-Wired*, 15 Jan. 2023, pp. 203–213, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003320609-27>.