

Becoming- Michelle Obama's Incredible Journey

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Abstract

A few decades ago, it was a dream that a black family could occupy the White House, while on the other hand, it was a dream for a black family to think of accomplishing that mileage. Textually, I have suggested that *Becoming* articulates a typical understanding of this historical paradox, because of its representation of Michelle Obama as a caliber of this unique accomplishment. This is because, from a historical perspective, there has been a noted unparalleled series of events that came about with her as the first African American woman to become the First Lady in a country where once in history, people of her genealogy were enslaved. Therefore, from African American criticism, *Becoming's* reflection of Michelle Obama is a description of her deliberate aim of subverting some of the preconceived images that misrepresent black women and the holistic African American community. In addition, I have problematised the idea of culture in several realms as well as class status, which altogether acts as an informative zone of images that are distinct to the former United States First Lady. Other than that, after a realisation that she uses language to inscribe herself in history and literary landscape, the fourth entry has dwelled on strategies that Michelle Obama as a woman writer employs to inscribe the self in *Becoming*.

Keywords: White House, Historical Paradox, First Lady, African-American.

By presenting herself as a "working-class black student," "lawyer," and "First Lady," Obama reveals the malleability of her identity. According to Obama, in her autobiography, she is able to give voice to her many personas and discuss how each one has influenced her development and outlook on life. The term can also be read as an attempt by Obama to become the "subject of her own discourse," or the protagonist in her own story. In *Becoming*, Obama is given the opportunity to share her side of the tale for the first time and correct the record. "If any type of writing is capable of aiding in the Black woman's endeavors to rectify the record, it is autobiography, for nowhere does one find literature as a celebration of life more than here," writes Mary Burgers. Barack Obama can rewrite her own story and establish her own identity by writing an autobiography. Obama, writing as a former political figure and former First Lady of the United States of America, does not shy away from combining details from her own life and a message that is deeply meaningful to her. *Becoming*, given its subject matter and author, fits neatly within the category of memoirs written by former First Ladies. Since both Black American women's autobiographies and the genre of First Lady memoir have been virtually omitted from the literary canon, Obama's book can be seen as an intersection between the two. Being the only African American First Lady in the United States, Michelle Obama is a member of a minority within a minority. Obama is also a political analyst, and her autobiography is one of the most insightful of the twenty-first century because it shows how, despite the exclusion of African Americans from American politics, the country has achieved progress by electing its first African American president. In this paper, you will see that Obama's autobiography

Becoming creates a synthesis between the life-writing tradition of African American women and the autobiographical sub-genre of the First Lady memoir.

This study shows how African American women develop their identities via self-reflection and autobiographical writing. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* by Patricia Collins is the first source that helps create a theocratic framework. Collins argues that black women's self-definition is integral to their shared consciousness. Women of color can fight back against being objectified and labelled "Other" if they take control of their own identities. By engaging in these behaviors, black women are better able to navigate the ways in which their identities are misrepresented by dominant culture. Because of this, black women often choose to define themselves apart from other black women. Collins discusses the process of coming to terms with one's identity in his writing. By insisting on defining themselves, Black women cast doubt on the veracity and motives of individuals in positions of authority when it comes to describing African-American women. When we, as Black women, identify ourselves, we are rejecting the premise that those in power have the right to define our experience for us. The very act of insisting on Black female self-definitions confirms Black women's power as human subjects, regardless of the content of Black women's self-definitions.

Collins argues that defining oneself is about more than just the person. Instead, it should be interpreted as calling into question the authority of those who manufacture these false representations, even if they are neither black nor female. These stereotypical portrayals of black women—Jezebel, Sapphire, and the enraged one—have persisted throughout history and are still widely accepted today. Self-definition is therefore vital for black women in order to expose the authority figures' sway over their public perceptions, and to establish black women as the authorities and more reliable sources for naming and (re)defining one's own personhood.

A significant part of my interpretation of Michelle Obama's autobiography *Becoming* is on the idea of self-definition. Obama struggles to find her identity within the confines of the conventional ideas and definitions that have been applied to her. In the second chapter of my thesis, as Obama rises to prominence as a public figure—possibly the most prominent public female figure in America today—the need of self-definition becomes paramount. Her autobiography is full of sexist and racist stereotypical depictions of women that are intended to control the reader. The author's use of first-person narration makes it possible for her to reveal the tactics she employed to fight back against these representations and ultimately create a unique persona for herself in the role of First Lady.

For my analysis, I also consider the idea of intersectionality. In her 1989 essay "Demarginalization the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," Kimberle Crenshaw first used this term to describe her critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. While the concept of intersectionality is not new, her method is unique in that it targets issues that affect Black women. Crenshaw defines intersectionality as the exclusion of Black women from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse since both are based on a discrete set of experiences that do not adequately reflect the interaction of race and gender.

Crenshaw argues that neither "the women's experience" nor "the Black experience" can adequately describe the realities faced by black women. A racial and gendered intersectional paradigm underlies the events. As a concept, intersectionality draws attention to these distinctions both between and within groups.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson develop the idea of overlapping personae in their book *Reading Autobiography*. 'Identities, or subject positionings, develop within collectivities and out of the culturally defined disparities that pervade symbolic interactions within and between collectivities,' the literary critics write as a conclusion on identity difference and commonality. Obama's racial, gendered, class, and national identities are all intertwined throughout *Becoming*. The authors Smith Michelle Obama's life serves as an inspiration to all girls from low-income African communities and is an illustration of the American Dream. The American people need and must read *Becoming*, the autobiography written by Eunice Barron. The tale of Michelle Obama, an African American woman from a working-class family who was able to attend elite universities and eventually become the First Lady of the United States, is a living embodiment of the American Dream. Obama's autobiography was fascinating because it was written in the author's own words, giving the reader a glimpse into her childhood and early adulthood as a result. Michelle wanted to establish herself as a strong mother, so she found a method to juggle her professional and maternal responsibilities. Michelle was a dedicated mother to Malia and Sasha as well as a successful career woman. Also, she mentions that Susan Sher and Valeria Jarrett are friends of hers who are also working mothers who put their families first. The author claims that even after being First Lady, she made time to focus on her family, particularly her daughters. The book's main goal is to encourage women that they may succeed in both the professional and domestic spheres. It's admirable that she's trying to advance professionally while simultaneously being a present and attentive mother. All around the United States, people were won over by this kind of behavior. Obama said she still makes time to get out with her girls despite her busy schedule as First Lady. The book's main goal is to encourage women that they may succeed in both the professional and domestic spheres.

A female relational self, according to Nancy Chodorow's expansion of Miller's work, develops inside a parental framework that treats sons and daughters differently. When daughters are seen as extensions of their moms, they learn to identify with and define themselves in relation to others. Males whose mothers treat them more apart from one another develop a sense of self-distinction and stronger ego boundaries than girls do. "The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world; the basic masculine sense of self is separate," as the saying goes and Watson touch on intersectionality, the study of how one person can hold many identities and the benefits and drawbacks of doing so. That this diversity of identities has intersectional rather than additive impacts is their main argument. To put it another way, we can't merely add up the impacts of one identity to the consequences of another to grasp the speaker's perspective. When a black woman shares her life story, she is not speaking in the dual capacities of "woman" and "black". It's to use your black lady voice to transform personal ambitions into aspirations for the welfare of one's loved ones and the community at large. Clearly, Obama's identities overlap, and as a result, Michelle does not speak in her official capacities as either an African American or the First Lady. Instead, she speaks as an African American First Lady of America.

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Critic Emily Lorde from *The New Yorker* says that in Obama's memoir *Becoming*, she chronicles the rather more modest development of a solid household life, but still exposing the stresses and delights of self-creation for black women. To that end, the theme of family is explored at length here. Obama claims that Michelle was shielded from the violence and instability of the south side of Chicago by her strong familial ties. She talks about how important family is at trying times. For instance, she mentions how her grandfather Southside's daughter Carolyn took him home after his divorce from her grandmother. Family is extremely important, as seen by Michelle's mother's willingness to stay at the White House and assist Michelle in taking both Malia and Sasha to school. The political implications of the relational self were developed by the French feminist Luce Irigaray. Mellor goes on to add that the image of the pregnant woman, who experiences herself as two-in-one, can be used to develop the political implications of this relational self, citing the work of French feminist Luce Irigaray. Instead of basing political and economic decisions on an evaluation of self-interest (what modern economists call "rational choice"), the "relational self" engages in what sociologist Luce Irigaray terms the "practice of gift giving," which entails submerging one's own desires in the desire for the good of one's family or the whole community. *Patterns of Slavery and Freedom in Black American Autobiography* is a book written by Sidonie Smith that analyses the common themes found in African American biographies. Smith analyses the patterns of what she calls a "break into a community" and a "break away from the enslaving community" through the stories of ten Black slaves. The autobiography of Barack Obama contains this pattern, as discussed in this thesis. Obama places these recurring themes in the context of the many major life changes she describes. I use Smith's pattern to show how Obama goes to "white" areas and avoids "black" ones. In the first chapter, Obama leaves her racially mixed neighborhood in search of educational opportunities and the American Dream. Obama, whose husband is now the 44th president of the United States, sneak into the White House. There are very few accounts of this kind of "break into a community" among African Americans. Obama uses resistance in the form of backtalk to get where she needs to go, both academically and politically. Bell hooks claims in her article "Talking Back" that "back talk" and "talking back" indicate treating an authority figure as an equal. Just having an opinion, or the courage to disagree, was enough. Backtalk is defined as "flagrant resistance" by Johnnie Stover in his book *Rhetoric and Resistance in Black Women's Autobiography*. Obama's exposure of instances in which she used backtalk to express her resistance and self-belief is crucial to the success of this thesis, and that's why the term "flagrant resistance" is used to describe her behavior.

The present paper has focused on *Becoming* from gender, race and class as the main entrance into the study of Michelle Obama's self-inscription. Ultimately, I argue that images gotten herein represent her as a woman, black woman and as the first African American woman to become the First Lady of the United States and the implication such an achievement has for her as a black woman in a society that has recorded a wide range of the white majority's representation. With respect to culture, it has been noted that gender is the core concern. It is the source from which I have scrutinised roles that mirrors what Michelle Obama does from the landscape of motherhood, work and family. I note that there is a connection between her and her community as a product of the South Side. This connection propels her narrative on the study of her in conjunction with the race. With respect to race, this argument has interwoven subject from functions that she does that, in turn, subvert some of the intergenerational stereotypes that depict black women as lazy, promiscuous and submissive. Lastly, I have discussed factors related to spaces both physical and psychological. On the same, it has been noted that discovery dealt with at many scenes is instrumental in her discovery or transcending the self and coping in life. This study has dwelled on subjectivity and agency to affirm the importance of studying the subject from her own story. Herself and the story of herself is an indication that "women define for themselves and their readers, women as she is". However, the content assessment of *Becoming* is not enough in the study of self-inscription. I argue that, beyond thematic construction and interpretation of events, its form indicates extra areas that Michelle Obama has tied her personal and collective stories that stretch the nexus and emphasis of her experiences as a woman, black woman and a creative writer.

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