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INTERSECTIONAL OTHERING: AN ANALYSIS OF INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES IN SEBBAR'S *SHERAZADE* AND ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*

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Abstract

This article examines intersectional othering in Leila Sebbar's *Sherazade* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, exploring how race, gender, culture, and class influence the protagonists' experiences of oppression and resistance. Sebbar's Sherazade addresses the postcolonial intricacies of cultural alienation and Orientalist conventions in France, refusing submissive portrayals while reclaiming storytelling as a means of liberty. Adichie's Ifemelu highlights institutional racism, cultural dislocation, and Eurocentric beauty standards as a Nigerian female immigrant in America, questioning assimilation and reaffirming her Nigerian identity. In both novels, ideas of hybridity and exclusion are explored, showing how colonial legacies and systemic differences affect intercultural situations today. Within this frame, the article highlights the perseverance of marginalized women in reclaiming their identities, opposing systematic marginalization, and amplifying their voices through the juxtaposition of these works. Sebbar and Adichie provide an effective criticism of interrelated oppressions, enhancing the worldwide dialogue on intersectionality, identity, and empowerment.

Keywords: *Intersectionality, Othering, Identity, Sebbar, Adichie,Sherazade, Americanah.*

KESİŞİMSEL ÖTEKİLEŞTİRME: SEBBAR'IN *ŞEHRAZAT'I* VE ADICHIE'NİN *AMERICANAH*'INDAKİ KESİŞİMSEL KİMLİKLERİN ANALİZİ

Öz

Bu makale, Leila Sebbar'ın *Şehrazat* ve Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie'nin *Americanah*'ındaki kesişimsel ötekileştirmeyi analiz ederek, ırk, cinsiyet, kültür ve sınıfın kahramanların baskı ve direniş deneyimlerini nasıl etkilediğini incelemektedir. Sebbar'ın Şehrazat'ı, Fransa'daki kültürel yabancılaşmanın ve Oryantalist geleneklerin postkolonyal karmaşıklıklarını ele alır ve itaatkâr tasvirleri reddederken hikâye anlatıcılığını bir özgürlük aracı olarak kullanır. Adichie'nin Ifemelu'su, kurumsal ırkçılığa, kültürel yerinden edilmeye ve Amerika'da Nijeryalı göçmen bir kadın olarak Avrupa merkezci güzellik standartlarına dikkat çeker; asimilasyonu sorgular ve Nijeryalı kimliğini yeniden onaylar. Her iki romanda da melezlik ve dışlanma fikirleri ele alınır ve sömürgeci mirasların ve sistemsel farklılıkların günümüzdeki kültürlerarası durumları nasıl etkilediği gösterilir. Bu bağlamda, makale, bu eserleri yan yana getirerek marjinalleştirilmiş kadınların kimliklerini geri kazanma, sistematik marjinalleşmeye karşı çıkma ve seslerini yükseltme konusundaki azmini vurgulamaktadır. Sebbar ve Adichie, kesişimsellik, kimlik ve güçlendirme üzerine dünya çapındaki diyaloğu geliştirerek, birbiriyle ilişkili baskılara yönelik etkili bir eleştiri sunar.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Kesişimsellik, Ötekileştirme, Kimlik, Sebbar, Adichie, Şehrazat, Americanah.*

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1.INTRODUCTION

Postcolonialism, which "aims to reverse the unequal power relations between Western and non-Western societies" (Young, 2003: 2), gained prominence as a theoretical framework in the 1980s. Postcolonial literature, on the other hand, is characterized as a response to 'Eurocentrism,' functioning not merely as literature that follows the era of empire but also as a critique of colonial dynamics. (Boehmer, 2005) In his 1978 work Orientalism, which initiated discussions on postcolonialism, Edward Said contends that orientalist knowledge is formed and generated through discourse (Loomba, 2015: 38). Said examines the ways in which the West portrays the East, emphasizing that these portrayals enable the West to perceive itself as superior while portraying the East as exotic, primitive, and distinct. The West employs the East as the 'other' to delineate its identity via Orientalism. Within this context, Said uses discourse analysis to comprehend the emergence of colonial discourse on the East in literary, artistic, scientific, and political works. (47) He argues that the establishment of cultural hegemony legitimizes colonial authority through these representations.

Accordingly, Postcolonial feminism, often known as 'third world feminism,' emerged as a critique of Eurocentric Western feminism, which overlooked the disparities in class, race, emotions, and settings among women in colonized regions. Seeking a peaceful solution to the problems of all marginalized women, postcolonial feminism is an exploration of how gender, nation, class, race, and sexuality intersect with colonialism and neo-colonialism in the various contexts of women's lives. (Schwarz & Ray, 2005) Collins argues in *Black Feminist Thought* that two main elements have historically motivated U.S. Black women in their critical social ideas. The first consideration was the escalation in racial segregation that preceded World War II. Most African-American women lived in areas where their children registered in mostly Black schools during this era, and they also attended mostly Black churches and related community groups. Mostly, ghettoization was meant to help Black Americans be more politically under control and economically exploited. Black communities, however, provided African-American men and women a unique environment to apply African-derived ideas for the growth of oppositional ideas and knowledge meant to challenge racial injustice. (Collins, 2000: 8-11) Similarly, by the 1980s, new critical discourses addressing oppression and prejudice emerged, both in the United States and in regions colonized by Europe, including Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In this context, bell hooks examines marginality as both a site of oppression and a source of resistance highlighting the exclusion of the voices of Black women and other marginalized groups from the centre.

> [w]hether feminist struggle to end sexist oppression is more important than the struggle to racism or vice versa. All such questions are rooted in competitive either/or thinking, the belief that the self is formed in opposition to an other. [...]Most people are socialized to think in terms of opposition rather than compatibility. Rather than seeing anti-racist work as totally compatible with working to end sexist oppression, they often see them as two movements competing for first place. (hooks, 1984: 29)

The author, as a Black woman, discusses the significance of anti-racist activities in the feminist movement. She also argues that people often view these movements as competing for first place, leading to competitive thinking. Thus, she defends that we must assess these two struggles by examining their intersecting, overlapping commonalities.

Within this frame, Kathy Davis asserts that intersectionality encompasses the interplay between gender and race, along with additional categories of difference in personal experiences, social practices, institutional structures, and cultural concepts, and the implications of these interactions on power dynamics. She contends that intersectionality represents an inclusive initiative for feminist theory and highlights the theoretical dominance of gender and the exclusions inherent in white Western feminism. (2008: 89) In this context, the critical viewpoint that black women cultivated due to their exclusion based on race and gender became the foundation of the notion of intersectionality. What drives black women, who feel that they are more disadvantaged than many other groups and do not hesitate to express it, to these thoughts is basically the fact that they are excluded by white women and that they want to be left out of the feminist movement. In this context, hooks underlines that historically, white feminists equated the social status of women with that of enslaved blacks, claiming they were equivalent and that "the term woman refers specifically to white women, and the term blacks or negroes refers

to black men only" (hooks, 1981: 147). The economic hardships, lack of education and healthcare, environmental conditions, and poverty in ghettos raised awareness of the vastly different living standards between them and white women. Additionally, the brave ascent of black women in impoverished neighbourhoods, who spent more money and became poorer to overcome racism, contributed to establishing Black Feminist Theory and 'intersectionality,' which was predicated on this foundational theory.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, the founder of the concept of intersectionality, frequently presents the cases she encountered and their outcomes, highlighting the compulsion black women faced to choose between discrimination rooted in race and gender. She claims that treating these two factors individually is a mistake, as black women have both racial and gender identities and endure dual prejudice. According to Crenshaw, this approach stressed the need to consider several identities. She argues a legislative system based on race or gender fails to represent black women. Black women's experiences were regularly contrasted with those of privileged white women in feminist theory and anti-racist policy talks, she notes. Crenshaw emphasizes that 'intersectionality' challenges the idea that prejudice is distinct and underlines the necessity of human rights and equality. Intersectionality, in this context, emphasizes the convergence and intersection of social identity groups within the same identity, an aspect often overlooked. She adds that in such cases, several forms of oppression and inequality may combine to create complex problems and personal obstacles, stressing that people may face diverse challenges and disadvantages. Thus, "the concept of intersectionality […] has united women on a stronger platform by considering different identity characteristics and experiences together" (Batu& Görmez, 2024: 408).

Crenshaw notes that black women sometimes confront prejudice like white women, but sometimes they face it like black men. Race and gender biases often cause dual discrimination for black women, she claims. They sometimes face prejudice as black women, not just as victims of racial and gender discrimination. In this manner, black women epitomize what Barbara Smith refers to as 'geometric oppression' (Smith, 1976: 5). Being black, female, and economically disadvantaged in a patriarchal culture requires them to navigate a triadic consciousness of race, gender, and class. black women, who often claim that ideological systems of oppression ignore them, use intersectionality to understand how systems and processes interact and sustain each other. The main criticism of intersectionality is its alleged attempt to create a 'new caste system,' according to Crenshaw. She says it tries to create more egalitarian societies and 'healing practices' rather than one with a racial hierarchy placing black women at the apex. She also argues that the tension results from the assumption that claims of exclusion must be unilateral and compares the intersectionality framework to traffic at a crossroads, claiming black women may suffer discrimination from several sources. (Crenshaw, 1991) Consequently, it may be asserted that the collective experience of diverse affiliations and identities has fostered a unique opportunity for women to unite and amplify their voices to an unprecedented degree. (Avcil, 2020: 1307)

Considering this information, Leila Sebbar, the first author in this study, adeptly examines the psychological intricacies of being born in a nation historically occupied by France and having parents of disparate nationalities, alongside the intersection of racial and gender-based discrimination, through diverse literary mediums, including short stories and novels, as a female writer with direct experience. According to the author, "childhood represents the threshold of the history of women. The subjects of her first two full-length works are "young girls who have been forgotten, neglected, sequestered, battered, and sexually abused" (Marx-Scouras, 1993:49). Sebbar in *Sherazade* re-examines the legendary figure of Arab culture, Sherazade, through a modern lens, tackling themes of migration, gender, identity exploration, and cultural clashes. The novel recounts the story of Sherazade, the daughter of immigrants raised in 20th-century France and caught between two conflicting cultures. This Sherazade, while sharing a name with the legendary narrator of the Arab East, faces a distinctly different struggle for existence in contemporary society. The young girl's struggle to establish her identity and position arises from a clash between her family's Algerian heritage and the present values of French society. Within this framework, the novel addresses intersectional identities and the othering of women, which arise from issues related to women's societal duties and the challenges of the immigrant experience, as seen through Sherazade's personal journey. Through this character, Sebbar explores the cultural disparities between the Arab East and the West, the conflicts between tradition and modernization, and the identity issues faced by immigrant women specifically. The novel centres on immigration, the pursuit of identity, and the multifaceted nature of gender, recounting the

story of a young girl maturing within French culture while facing social and personal isolation. In this backdrop, Sherazade poignantly illustrates the cultural othering and identity exploration encountered by immigrant women in the post-colonial era.

Accordingly, this study focuses on the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a significant figure in postcolonial feminist literature. Similar to Sebbar, her experiences of colonialism and the Nigerian Civil War during childhood have influenced her literary works. Numerous works of hers address themes of religion, migration, gender, and feminism. Adichie, a prominent voice in Nigeria, has established herself as a significant figure in contemporary world literature through her novel *Americanah*, which received various awards. The novel effectively conveys a compelling narrative that addresses the issue of othering, notably with race, identity, immigration, and gender. *Americanah* thoroughly examines the issue of othering through individual identification and societal definitions of that identity. It tackles the mechanisms of othering at both individual and systemic levels, consistent with the theories proposed by postcolonial scholars. The protagonist Ifemelu's experiences in America explicitly illustrate several aspects of othering, encompassing Said's concept of orientalism and Fanon's notion of the alienation of the black body.

Given the aforementioned information, it is evident that Sebbar's *Sherazade* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* participate in a distinct dialogue that emphasizes themes of otherness, including the marginalization of immigrants and women, identity conflicts, and tensions with societal norms across various cultural contexts. The two main protagonists, Sherazade and Ifemelu, encounter marginalization and identity turmoil as they acclimate to their new environments. Sherazade, a North African girl, contends with her Arab identity, whereas Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman, wrestles with her African and Black identity in America. These themes underscore the sense of solitude and cultural disparities encountered by immigrants in both novels. Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity articulates the experience of being caught between two distinct cultures, a theme prominently featured in both *Sherazade* and *Americanah*. Both novels explore the protagonists' struggle to establish their identities amidst two distinct cultures, addressing the notion of hybridity as a consequence of othering. The essential aspect of cultural in-betweenness results in the othering of both characters. Furthermore, due to their gender roles, female protagonists in both novels encounter marginalization and persecution inside their own culture as well as in the new society they inhabit. They confront the gender expectations associated with womanhood, rendering them as the 'other' inside both their own culture and the nation in which they reside. Thus, the female identity is crucial in the othering processes of both novels. In light of this information, the study aims to examine how the aforementioned novels depict intersectional identities, elucidate the othering of these identities, and explore what these novels reveal about intersectional othering within postcolonial and feminist contexts.

2.INTERSECTING IDENTITIES AND OTHERNESS IN *SHERAZADE*

Sebbar uses a contemporary perspective in her novel that presents intersectional othering to recount Sherazade, a figure considered a powerful trope for contemporary Arab and Muslim women writers, particularly those addressing an international audience (Gauch, 2007: xi, xiv). The author portrays Sherazade as a seventeen-year-old Algerian runaway residing in Paris. Ensnared between the realms of Africa and Europe, her parents' heritage and her own, as well as the colony and the metropolis, she seeks her authentic identity. In the narrative concerning possession, identity, and the reality of metropolitan existence in the late twentieth century, Julien, the son of French-Algerians and a fervent Orientalist, pursues her. Confined by Julien to a clichéd exotic archetype, Sherazade strives to establish her own interpretation of Algerian womanhood, therefore dismantling norms and preconceptions. Julien's preoccupation with her motivates her toward self-discovery and decision-making for the future.

Intersectional theory, the context in which the novel is examined, proposes that various sources of oppression, such as race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers, create disadvantages for individuals. In this vein, Crenshaw suggests that "black women frequently encounter dual discrimination, resulting from the intersection of race and gender-based discriminatory practices. Intersectional paradigms emphasize that the discrimination experienced by black women is not merely a combination of racial and gender biases, but rather a distinct form of discrimination specific to their identity" (1989: 149).

As such, the intersectionality paradigm is especially pertinent to Sherazade's circumstances in Sebbar's novel, since her identity is influenced by several intersecting axes of oppression. As a young Algerian woman in Paris, she confronts the combined marginalization of her identity as a postcolonial subject and as a female in a patriarchal country. She embodies the role of an ethnic and cultural 'other' inside French culture as the offspring of an Algerian immigrant family while simultaneously contending with the sexist conventions prevalent in both the patriarchal immigrant community and French society. Her experiences cannot be entirely attributed to her gender or ethnicity; rather, they exemplify the distinct prejudice arising at the confluence of these identities. Sherazade's challenges with belonging and identification illustrate the interaction of systematic racial and gendered oppressions, akin to the unique experiences emphasized by Crenshaw in her examination of discrimination against black women. Sherazade's interactions with Julien and French culture further highlight the exoticization and limitations imposed on her identity by Western colonial viewpoints. Through Sherazade, Sebbar illustrates how the junction of race, gender, and cultural history engenders a complex feeling of 'othering,' contesting monolithic narratives of oppression and underscoring the necessity for an intersectional comprehension of her struggle. Her name epitomizes this intersectional dynamic, both associating her with a tradition of Orientalist illusions and obliterating her originality.

In this frame, the title assigned by the author to the novel holds significant importance. The piece starts with a notable historical allusion. The question is, "Is your name really Sherazade?" (Sebbar, 1991: 1). Sherazade, the namesake of the piece, embodies a figure in The Arabian Nights who, as some assert, lived via her intellect, while others attribute her survival to her femininity, so bequeathing a legacy to all women. However, Burton particularly emphasizes the traits of wit and intelligence embodied in a powerful and determined woman as the dominant characteristics of Sherazade, stating that it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. He adds that "she had thoroughly examined the works of poets and memorized them; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, and she was kind and courteous, sagacious and humorous, well-read and well-mannered" (Burton, 2002: 19). Building on this point of view, showing Sherazade as an anti-stereotypical Asian woman in a Muslim setting sheds light on sexual power dynamics and leads to a more culturally and historically informed view of gender issues and how the image of Asian women has changed over time. (Dağoğlu, 2023) Guach's analysis of works based on a Sherazade tradition shows her as a vocal activist whose stories will never end and whose determination has grown in the face of rising fundamentalism and the widespread portrayal of Arab and Muslim women in Western media as voiceless, subjugated, exploited, and uneducated victims. Her stories gradually transcend what were once perceived as insurmountable barriers. (2007: xi-xviii) The system determines the fate of all women, and Sherazade, the protagonist, must return to the roots of this history associated with a woman's name and craft fresh tales that contest the predetermined destiny. Expanding on this idea, Charles Nunley states that

> [t]he most explicit sign of Sherazade's problematic relationship to dominant culture is, of course, revealed in her name. Instead of designating an individual unique in all her attributes, Sherazade's name links her with fiction and, specifically, with the work that originally shaped France's romanesque view of the Orient: Les Mille et une nuits. [I]n her narrative, Sebbar uses Les Mille et une nuits to situate her heroine within the context of French literary exoticism. (Nunley, 1996: 239)

Despite Sherazade's origins in different historical, geographical, and social contexts than the mythical storyteller of Baghdad, she is consistently linked to the latter because of her name. The French iteration of her name is reduced and simplified by the prevailing French culture. The transition from spoken Arabic to written French led to a partial diminishment of her identity: "Sherazade's name is a perfect metaphor for France's assimilation policy with regard to immigrants. What is most representative of other cultures must be cut off for the other to be accepted and assimilated into the fabric of French life. What could be viewed as the richness of difference is rejected as unnecessary excess" (Donadey, 1998: 266).

The rationale for choosing the name Sherazade is to enable the character's movement from a limited domain to a boundless one via storytelling. Clarissa P. Este explicates this occurrence as follows: "The narrative can take several shapes; it may be reversed, filled with porridge and converted into a banquet for the destitute, adorned with gold to amplify its opulence, or transfer its audience to an alternate dimension" (Estes, 2019: 31).

In this regard, Sebbar's perspective reinterprets this cult work, nearly as ancient as mankind, and recreates its historical repercussions inside contemporary storylines. Thus, the author uses Sherazade to reimagine France's connection with colonial Algeria. She challenges centuries of literary exoticism by reimagining Sherazade within the contemporary Francophone setting and changing her name. Despite her conception centuries ago and her Arab heritage, Sherazade faces the new world of Paris, the epicentre of Europe. In Paris, while savouring a can of Coke, Sherazade establishes a bond with another Sherazade, who, centuries earlier, endured sexual abuse as a concubine in a harem, awaiting her demise. Sherazade, like the other characters in the novel, experiences profound isolation from society, characterized by loneliness and a lack of direction. She simultaneously experiences the allure of a dynamic world before her and the frustration of being unable to engage with it.

The growing ethnic diversity in France and the responses to this transformation closely relate to Sherazade's estrangement in Paris. Julien's statements precisely illustrate the apprehension and strain over identity perception throughout this transformation. At this point, his contemplation,

> France is becoming multiethnic society […] not to mention the West Indies and other islands still under French domination . . . Those of original French stock will become the new minority in a few decades […] Because you are the ones who're going to have two-tone children, half-castes, crossbred, adulterated offspring, bastards ... hybrids ...mongrels…" (Sebbar, 1991: 205)

affirms the scenario at hand. Julien's comments highlight the ethnic variety that has resulted from growing immigrant populations in France as well as the social conflicts this has generated. While stressing that national identity is dynamic and susceptible to hybridization, the negative jargon employed reveals racial and discriminatory attitudes towards the changing of French identity. However, Sherazade's refusal: "Me, children? I won't have any" (205) of having children can be interpreted as an indication that reframing identity does not align with Julien's suggestions, as it diminishes her agency to effect change. Dependence on that will once more depend on the other without active participation in effecting change.

Sherazade's hesitation to redefine her identity results in a sense of alienation and disconnection. As such, Edward Said indicates exile as "the unbearable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home" (1984: 49). He posits that the plurality of vision partially mitigates social displacement: "Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is contrapuntal" (55). The exile evolves to a new environment, encountering new customs, activities, language, and linguistic expressions that, in contrast to their memories of the old, create a contrapuntal juxtaposition. In this frame, Sherazade's conflicting emotions during her visit to an art exhibition expose the West's propensity to exoticize the immigrant 'other' and her own disintegration of her identity. In the exhibition, the artworks she identifies with evoke both admiration and alienation. As the West portrays the East as an exotic 'other,' Sherazade struggles to identify her own reality within these depictions, which exacerbates her sense of alienation. As an Algerian immigrant, the artworks reconfigure her cultural heritage via a Western lens, even as she also experiences profound exclusion from this perspective. The veils that adorn the skin of the concubines portrayed in the *Arabian Nights* closely resemble her fantasies. The depictions of Turkish harems, African slaves, and eunuchs, among other characters, conjure the ambiance of an Arabian narrative. Her engagement with artistic representations reflects her traumatic memories and her search for identity; "Sherazade wanted to go to the Louvre to look at the women of Algiers, always the same ones. Julien suggested going to the Versailles Museum to look at the huge picture in the Algerian gallery. The Capture of Abd al-Qadir's Retinue by Horace Vernet" (Sebbar, 1991:203). In her endeavour to reach Algeria with her companion Pierrot, Sherazade seeks to save the recollections of her former experiences, amassed from the eastern nights. Her aim is to preserve consciousness of her individuality and the spiritual energy she represents. Upon examining these artworks, Sherazade perceives with profound conviction that the portrayal of women in *Arabian Nights* composed centuries ago, remains unaltered. This image has transitioned from Eastern to Western consciousness, where the Western artist's interpretation of the lady depicted in the narratives has overshadowed truth. The Western artist has indelibly influenced the portrayal of the Oriental lady as passionate and untrustworthy via art.

In this respect, in the novel, Julien elucidates the conventional interpretation of 'odalisque' in Orientalist art, implying that it represents "for Western artists the indolence, voluptuousness, the depraved allure of Oriental women" (203). However, Sherazade is captivated by the paintings she observes, meticulously examining the women depicted inside them and exclaims: "'I am not an odalisque.' These women are always reclining, exhausted, with a distinct look in their eyes, almost as if asleep; for Western painters, they evoke the languor, lust and seduction of Eastern women" (203). This remark incisively examines the influence of Orientalism on Western artistic expression and representation. The statement aligned with Edward Said's idea of Orientalism, illustrates that Western painters recognize the East through their own imaginative lens. Thus, Said posits that Western discourse has constructed a specific representation of the Orient to justify its economic, intellectual, and moral dominance over the region, its inhabitants. He refers to this as "the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness" (2016: 15). In this frame, the Western viewpoint reduces women to exhausted, submissive, and sensual objects of exoticism. Sherazade's repudiation of this portrayal illustrates her endeavour to dissociate from these preconceptions and reject the constraints imposed by the Western masculine perspective. She critiques the portrayal of Eastern women by Western artists and reveals the preconceptions inherent in these depictions. Sherazade's reply indicates that Western perceptions depict Eastern women as solely eroticized, docile, exotic, and 'other.' Yet, the recurrence of the term 'odalisque' in the novel enables the exploration of various interpretations of the label and Sherazade's diverse reactions to the odalisque figure, ranging from rejection to identification and interest.

Furthermore, Sherazade's conflict with her name, as stated in the novel, "[e]ither say Camille or Rosa according to the person" (Sebbar, 1991: 91), highlights the demands of cultural integration. Her endeavour to adopt the name 'Rosa' in order to assimilate it into French culture underscores the postcolonial conflict between erasure and identity. Sherazade's alteration of her name influences her psychological identity, exacerbating the conflicts she faces with her feeling of belonging. Despite her efforts to gain acceptance as Rosa, her race and origin are perpetually disregarded, underscoring the dual disadvantage she endures as both an immigrant and a woman. The name alteration signifies the various oppressions encountered by immigrant women in a postcolonial and patriarchal context.

Apart from her name, the following remarks of Sherazade, which reflect her attempt to undergo a total transformation in herself, are also quite significant: "Rosa Mire and I'll be eighteen. I'll be of legal age you understand. I'll have been born in Paris and be studying psycho" (192). In this regard, the author presents an intriguing narrative that explores the themes of identity and belonging, highlighting Sherazade's deliberate endeavour to reconstruct her name and past as she forges a new identity. The new name signifies a hybrid identity, reflecting both French and a different cultural background, while also pointing out the intersectional othering she experiences. The portrayal of Eastern women in the West reflects the colonial mentality's endeavour to dominate the feminine form. Sherazade, however, by rejecting this portrayal to some extent, demonstrates both individual defiance and a postcolonial perspective. These women were consistently portrayed as illiterate and submissive sexual objects. Such caricatures inspired and legitimized 19th-century Western demands for the liberation of 'Arab' and 'Muslim' women, a phenomenon termed "colonial feminism." (Ahmed, 1992) These stereotypes, defined as "arrested, fixated [forms] of representation that deny the play of difference" (Bhabha, 1983: 27), have remained unchanged. Hence, there are renewed calls for military involvement in certain Islamic nations to emancipate Muslim women, thereby appropriating feminist ideology for political purposes. Within this frame, Sherazade's contemplation of her quest for individual freedom and autonomy reveals the dubious and flexible nature of origins. She is clearly making an effort to comprehend her identity and the influence of society on it. Sebbar presents an intersectional analysis of migration, cultural identity, and belonging through these expressions.

Sherazade's clarification, "I go where I want to, when I want to, and my place is everywhere" (Sebbar, 1991: 92), so powerfully captures the difficulties experienced by young women, particularly in the Islamic world, where cultural and religious standards may restrict their mobility. Sherazade, a lady who has endured perilous circumstances, is confined, assaulted, and subjected to torment by her captors. She is ultimately freed after her captivity photograph is disseminated to the global media. Furthermore, by accompanying the group of Palestinian women who effectively protect their land, Sherazade begins to see the meaning of women's unity: "Seated at

the foot of the olive trees, as guardians of the tree of life, God's tree, they spend the night in the field until their replacements arrive, a changing of the guard organized by the old women of the community" (196). The journey to the Middle East is enlightening in significant respects. It provides her with a deeper comprehension of the globe broadly, the Middle East specifically, and her complex position as both an insider and an outsider. The Algerian Arabic she speaks distinctly signifies otherness and alterity within the Arab World.

As such, Spivak, a seminal figure in postcolonial feminism, analyses the marginalization of postcolonial women's voices, whom she categorizes as subaltern. As a theorist highlighting the deficiencies of Western-centric methodologies, she examines the impacts of colonialism and patriarchy via an intersectional lens. She describes "identity as a wound, exposed by the historically hegemonic languages" (Spivak, 1992: 770), wherein writing in French transforms autobiography into a locus of identity fragmentation. Spivak's methodology centres on a fundamental concern of postcolonial theory: the issue of representation and language. Obliged to articulate themselves in Western languages, postcolonial persons perpetuate the supremacy of these languages, therefore marginalizing indigenous languages and cultures. Writing in dominant languages impedes the complete expression of identity and fosters an ambiguous connection with one's own identity. A reality that is neither entirely local nor entirely global ensnares the postcolonial person. Spivak's insight is essential for comprehending the influence of language on the identities of postcolonial folks. This setting, whereby dominant languages undermine identity, constitutes a primary critique of postcolonial literature and thought.

Besides all this, in her struggle for liberation in contemporary Paris, Sherazade encounters a conflict not just with the isolating dynamics of Western culture but also with the traditional ideals enforced by her Algerian community. The contemporary lifestyle of Paris, characterized by individual liberty, enables Sherazade to explore her personality and liberate herself from patriarchal constraints. Conversely, the conventional norms of her Algerian family and community compel her to delineate her femininity within the parameters of 'honour' and 'family honour.' This contrast is most apparent in her attire, interpersonal connections, and sexual orientation. Sherazade 's choice to wear a short skirt in Paris not only exoticizes her inside Western culture but also jeopardizes her acceptance in her own group owing to allegations of immorality. This predicament positions her between two realms: she endeavours to reconcile the emancipating yet exclusive modernism of Paris with the confining yet socially inclusive traditions of Algeria. Sherazade's struggles illustrate the disintegration of postcolonial immigrant identity and the complex subjugation imposed by patriarchal rules. In this setting, her narrative elucidates the dual dynamics of liberation and constraint inherent in an intersecting identity.

In light of this information, it is obvious that Sebbar, as a female postcolonial author, explores "the dream of belonging and inhabiting, with the fate of being relegated to the margins in one's own country by one's family origins" (Sebbar, 1991: 171). While Sherazade's external journey has facilitated her internal quest for self-awareness and empowerment, her interactions with France and Algeria—one being the former colonizer and the other the formerly colonized; one her birthplace and the other her ancestral land—are poised to be an ongoing struggle. Her story explicitly engages with Spivak's inquiry, "Can the subaltern speak?" (1988). Spivak articulates the notion that hegemonic forces suppress social groups and deny them the ability to articulate their own histories. In this setting, Sebbar's Sherazade embodies a subaltern character, a young lady of Algerian heritage confronting ethnic and gender-based marginalization in France. Sherazade's narrative illustrates her endeavour to assert her voice within a repressive societal framework. Her narrative encompasses not just her own experiences but also the larger subaltern voice influenced by French colonization and anti-immigrant laws. In this vein, Spivak inquires, "is the subaltern's voice genuinely audible, or does it permeate the hegemonic discourse?" (1988) The examination of the question indicates that Scheherazade's tale should be regarded not just as a personal insurrection but also within the framework of a post-colonial pursuit of identity. Consequently, Scheherazade's narrative serves as a compelling illustration that exposes both the potential and constraints of the subaltern's endeavour to articulate their own tale. As a result, in Sherazade, Sebbar constructs a tale that interweaves individual and communal adversities, highlighting the complex oppression experienced by postcolonial women. In Sherazade's journey, Sebbar examines the intricacies of identification, belonging, and resistance within the overlapping contexts of race, gender, and cultural heritage. The protagonist's experiences—spanning her encounter with Orientalist preconceptions and her resistance to patriarchal traditions—illustrate the overarching difficulties of exerting agency within a fragmented postcolonial context. Ultimately, Sebbar's

reinterpretation of Sherazade's legacy highlights the transformational capacity of storytelling as a vehicle for self-expression and a mechanism for deconstructing prevailing myths.

3.INTERSECTING IDENTITIES AND OTHERNESS IN *AMERICANAH*

Adichie offers an intersectional criticism of racism, gender, and migration in her audacious novel *Americanah* by means of Ifemelu's experiences. Unlike in Nigeria, where race was not a major indicator of identity, Ifemelu is compelled to negotiate a racialized life in America, where Blackness is created inside strict hierarchies. A young Nigerian lady, Ifemelu, pursuing a university degree in America, explores the realities of tribalism influenced by social class and skin colour in modern society through her friendships, romantic relationships, observations of gender norms, and cultural disputes, all intricately interwoven within *Americanah.* While examining the diverse interpretations of her African identity in Africa, Europe, and America, she reveals essential themes of racism and cultural othering that frequently remain overlooked. The narrative of Ifemelu and Obinze, two childhood lovers—one migrating to America and the other to Europe—illustrates that Westernization entails being 'exposed' to Western influences. Thus, *Americanah* demonstrates how several identity categories can marginalize individuals by depicting Ifemelu's experience of navigating ethnic, cultural, gender, and linguistic forms of intersecting othering in America. Ifemelu's experiences, although embodying Adichie's critiques of racial and cultural processes in America, also furnish a robust intellectual basis for examining intersectional marginalization.

Ifemelu's experiences of intersectional marginalization in the United States are not limited to racial and cultural dimensions; they are also shaped by her identity as a woman. In the process, the strong female figures in her life deepen her awareness of gender and identity. Aunty Uju, the mistress of a Nigerian general, and Mrs. Maduewesi, the mother of Obinze, are two ladies who impact Ifemelu's development. The general's financial support and the servile connection Aunty Uju has with him shape her life. As a result of Mrs. Maduewesi's honesty and confidence, Ifemelu begins to think more critically about cultural imperialism and domestication. Obinze's mother introduces Ifemelu to the first of her intersectional identity conflicts: the challenges of being born a woman. She advises Ifemelu about her relationship with her son, warning her that since "nature is unfair to women" (Adichie, 2013: 72) and women are supposed to shoulder the weight, they would have to suffer the consequences of their jointly agreed activities.

Within this context, Ifemelu's recognition of gendered oppression, particularly with respect to beauty standards and class distinctions, is also much enhanced by her realization of racial injustice in America. She pointed out that prejudices and biases about beauty significantly contributed to the oppression of women, especially black immigrant women. Upon observing a magazine depicting a white woman in an African nation with black children, Ifemelu said, "her skinniness is by choice and theirs is not by choice" (Adichie, 2013: 162), highlighting the disparate situations individuals face across many global locales. Upon her initial meeting with Blaine during a train journey, Ifemelu was absorbed in a women's magazine featuring "images of small-boned, small-breasted white women on the rest of the multi-boned, multi-ethnic world of women to emulate" (178), underscoring the notion that white women's physiques were deemed the benchmark. Curt, a Caucasian male, characterizes the women's magazine Essence as "racially skewed" (294) for exclusively highlighting black women, seemingly unaware that the majority of women's magazines establish beauty norms for white women and predominantly feature white women in their content. Ifemelu and Curt scrutinize several periodicals and find that just three mixed-race or racially ambiguous black women are featured in almost two thousand pages, underscoring the scarcity of black women in the realm of popular culture creation.

The other important point that is stressed in the novel is the unavoidable consequences of being a foreigner in a different nation, as illustrated by Ifemelu's ambitions and challenges. A young woman full of dreams, Ifemelu is naturally prone to her claims; she wants to live like the Americans she watches on television, "full of bliss, where all problems had sparkling solutions in shampoos and cars and packaged foods" (113). She aspires to graduate from an American university so she may fulfil these ambitions. In *Americanah* it is clear that racial, cultural, and social factors intricately shape Ifemelu's experiences as a Black African woman in America. The concept of intersectional othering, as articulated by Crenshaw and characterized by the interconnectedness of social categorizations like race, class, and gender, is recognized for generating overlapping and interdependent systems

of discrimination or disadvantage (Taylor, 2019) and is especially insightful in evaluating these experiences. Accordingly, upon arriving in America, Ifemelu gains a profound understanding of the concept of 'race.' In Nigeria, race is not a major factor in identity; whereas in America, being black signifies a new form of identity and also acts as a foundation for discrimination. Ifemelu's understanding of race as a crucial aspect of identity in America is profoundly connected to the nation's legacy of racial segregation and systemic discrimination. The ongoing presence of racial inequality, influenced by the Jim Crow laws and the enduring fight for civil rights, still impacts the experiences of black immigrants today. In this regard, "While the process between the 1920s and the 1930s is regarded as the Jazz Age, which refers to the great prosperity of America as a nation [...] life for the African Americans in the South was the exact opposite of the situation at the time" (Ulucan, 2024: 1925). Slavery ended in the US in 1865, but racism against black people persisted.

Ifemelu notes that black individuals in America encounter biases and systemic disparities. Ifemelu, as an African immigrant, experiences marginalization through the challenges black individuals face in job interviews related to their names or the ongoing presence of racial microaggressions. She remarks to Laura, who claimed there was a significant difference in the attitudes of Africans and African-Americans, highlighting that African-Americans were quite rude: "Maybe when the African American's father was not allowed to vote because he was black, the Ugandan's father was running for parliament or studying at Oxford" (Adichie, 2013: 173). Ifemelu suggests that the frustration of African-Americans regarding the discrimination they have faced throughout history warrants comprehension. The other quote from the novel, which is related to Ifemelu's blog post, is, "Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't 'black' in your country? You're in America now" (221). Ifemelu's articulation of her racial consciousness and critique of white supremacy in her blog posts acts as a form of resistance to this kind of marginalization. This remark demonstrates Ifemelu's awareness that Americans do not distinguish between Black Americans and Black non-Americans. The primary focus of the post is how Black non-Americans must embrace and interact with this identity to navigate America's racist structures.

In this regard, Fanon demonstrates how colonialism and decolonization enforce a sense of normalcy on black individuals, leading to psychological changes in their bodies and lives, as well as the lightening of their skin tone and self-image, a phenomenon referred to as 'denegrification.' Founded on a flawed understanding of expectations and norms, colonialism fostered the notion that Whiteness was superior and Blackness was inferior. Colonizers did not consider blackness as a civilized Self feature; therefore, "native is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values. He is, dare we say it, the enemy of values" (Fanon, 2021: 6). Similarly, during her relationship with Curt, Ifemelu feels self-conscious about her skin tone due to the differences they shared. She reads in the eyes of white girls and strangers as they walk hand in hand. "Why, her?" she asks everywhere they go. "She was not light-skinned, she was not biracial" (Adichie 2013: 293). She occasionally experiences the chill of servers in restaurants who disapprove of their relationship. However, despite all the odds, she continues to date Curt and leaves him alone when she discovers he is courting another woman.

Additionally, a significant point of the novel is the metaphor of sunscreen concerning the concepts of intersecting identities and otherness. In the narrative of *Americanah*, certain characters engage in the application of bleaching creams alongside sunscreen. This situation causes Ifemelu considerable discomfort, given her strong sense of racial pride. Furthermore, when Ifemelu's cousin Dike attends camp, the leader distributes sunscreen to all the white children but neglects to provide it to Dike, arguing that he does not require it. This profoundly impacts the young boy. It instils in him a sense of abnormality. The concept of sunscreen serves as a representation of racial dynamics in the novel. A notable concern is the racial hierarchy. Not all individuals of European descent possess the same characteristics, nor do all individuals of African descent, as stated in the novel:

> There is a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on top, specifically White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP, and American Black is always on the bottom, and what is in the middle depends on time and place. (Or as that marvelous rhyme goes: if you are white, you are all right; if you're brown, stick around; if you're black, get back!) Americans assume that everyone will get their tribalism. But it takes a while to figure it all out. (Adichie, 2013:190)

At first, Ifemelu finds it challenging to grasp the rationale behind the exclusion of Jews, even considering their white ethnicity. Nevertheless, she later discovers that university applications frequently sought a student's maternal surname as a means to ascertain their Jewish identity, resulting in their exclusion from the institution. Similarly, not all individuals of African descent display the same level of pigmentation. It is apparent that individuals of mixed heritage do not encounter the identical challenges faced by those of solely African descent.

African hair, which intersects otherness originating from race, culture, and identity, serves as another metaphor the author utilizes in her novel. Hair plays a significant role in the idealized beauty standards across various cultures. It is nearly unfeasible for Africans to wear their natural hair. Natural hair frequently carries negative stereotypes, particularly in professional environments. Certain African women, who have historically straightened their hair using damaging chemicals, challenge these stereotypes and choose to wear their hair in its natural state. This practice gradually transformed into a method of protest and a vehicle for women to articulate their identities. Ifemelu's blog enables Adichie to communicate her ideas directly to her audience. One of her notable blog posts is titled "Hair As Race Metaphor." (Adichie, 2013) Ifemelu argues that prominent figures like Michelle Obama and Beyoncé should encourage women to embrace and display their natural hair in media representations. According to Ifemelu, people use Afro wigs as costumes during Halloween celebrations. Politicians, nature enthusiasts, artists, and poets should not view women who choose to wear their natural hair in this way, given their unique motivation to prevent hair damage:

> Is that the perfect metaphor for race in America right there? Hair. Ever notice makeover shows on TV, how the black woman has natural hair (coarse, coily, kinky, or curly) in the ugly "before" picture, and in the pretty "after" picture, somebody is taken a hot piece of metal and singed her hair straight? Some black women would rather run naked in the street than come out in public with their natural hair. (Adichie, 2013: 300)

The quote above metaphorically utilizes hair to examine the racial and gender-based marginalization of black women in America, highlighting the societal demands imposed on their bodies. The classification of black women's natural hair textures as 'unattractive' and the compulsion to adhere to a beauty ideal characterized by straightened hair illustrate how Eurocentric beauty standards undermine black women's identity and self-image. black feminism analyses such coercions in relation to the distinct experiences of black women at the junction of race and gender. In this context, natural hair transcends mere aesthetics, serving as a symbol of resistance and a means of identity expression. Adichie, connecting this transformation process to methods of othering, underscores how black women's attempts to express their identities clash with the white supremacist beauty concept, resulting in a sense of fragmentation in their identities.

Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry,' significant in postcolonial theory, is also highlighted in Adichie's novel *Americanah*. Bhabha assesses the interactions between the colonized and the colonizer, along with the inherent contradictions in their relationship. Mimicry refers to the phenomenon where the colonized adopt the language, culture, and traditions of the colonizer. According to Bhabha, this phenomenon transcends mere imitation and serves as a form of protest. Imitative characters struggle to preserve their identities while adapting to new cultural contexts. Both seek social acceptance while maintaining their nativist connections. This process may lead individuals to question their identities, potentially resulting in an identity crisis due to the simultaneous desire to belong to their own culture and the effort to assimilate into the dominant culture. The power of the colonizers inherently reveals their own vulnerabilities. In this context, imitation serves as a strategy to gain visibility in the perspective of the colonizer. According to Bhabha, imitation transcends mere copying; it involves appropriating the colonizer's culture and adapting it to the context of the colonized. (Bhabha, 1984) This represents a deliberate opposition to the colonial system. In this respect, Ifemelu exemplifies a state of being that navigates the tension between assimilation and resistance within a white supremacist society, as articulated in Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry.' As a black woman in America, she seeks social acceptance by conforming to white beauty standards, yet she critically distances herself from these norms and grapples with preserving her authentic identity. Experience of straightening her natural hair illustrates the paradox of mimicry; it serves as a strategy that aims for conformity while simultaneously demonstrating that such conformity is ultimately unattainable. Ifemelu, by partially emulating the standards of white society, exposes the dynamics of othering within her culture and critiques the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized through this mimicry.

Furthermore, postcolonial theory attributes a significance to accent that surpasses its linguistic structure, viewing language as a tool of power. An accent serves as an indicator of the speaker's ethnicity and social status within the context of identity. The statement illustrates the power dynamics inherent in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. An accent can foster a sense of belonging within one group while simultaneously acting as a means of alienation for another group. Accent serves as a tool for assessing group dynamics within communities. Ania Loomba poses the question in her book on this subject: "In what voices do the colonized speak—their own or in accents borrowed from their masters?" (2015: 193). Will the subaltern gain attention if she speaks, irrespective of her accent? These questions extend beyond contemporary postcolonial theory. The accent issue significantly contributes to Ifemelu's character development. Initially, she emulated the American accent, exerted considerable effort, and achieved success. She then ponders why this signifies success. Her imitation of the American accent lacks authenticity, leading her to perceive it as a hollow victory. She has assumed a voice that had not been hers for an extended period. Subsequently, she resolves to abandon her American accent. She derives significant satisfaction from speaking with her Nigerian accent, perceiving it as a manifestation of her authentic identity. In addition to flawlessly imitating the colonizer's language, deliberate alterations to it serve as a form of protest.

The following section from the novel, which illustrates Ifemelu's marginalization due to her accent and her subsequent self-realization, is significant: "She had won, indeed, but her triumph was full of air. Her fleeting victory had left in its wake a vast, echoing space, because she had taken on, for too long, a pitch of voice and a way of being that was not hers." (Adichie, 2013: 178) A telemarketer praises Ifemelu on her American accent, prompting her to cease feigning it. The receptionist for the university registrar, on the other hand, addresses Ifemelu as though she lacks proficiency in English, inducing feelings of guilt regarding her accent. However, Ifemelu is not American, and by equating sounding American with success, she concedes that being American is superior to being Nigerian. She insists that she still identifies as Nigerian, recognizing that American customs and language do not belong to her. The telemarketer's response is a hollow victory, as she does not prioritize her American identity over her Nigerian one or regard herself as American. This realization marks the initial phase of reclaiming her Nigerian identity and embracing her true self.

Moreover, in literary works like *Americanah*, the presence of glass ceilings symbolizes a profound form of discrimination Black women face. The term, initially used in the Wall Street Journal, denotes a metaphor that illustrates the invisible barrier faced by women and other marginalized groups in their pursuit of higher professional attainment. (Reiners, 2024) According to this explanation, the rationale behind discrimination typically stems from being a woman or belonging to a minority group; however, the circumstances are particularly acute for Black women. They encounter the dual challenge of navigating the public sphere as both black and female individuals. The same topic is explored in *Americanah* in the following manner: "And then I write about my mom being bitter at work because she felt she would hit a ceiling and they wouldn't let her get further because she was black" (Adichie, 2013: 330). While she articulates her discontent by ascribing her mother's professional setbacks to external circumstances, it is evident that racial prejudice plays a significant role. The novel comprehensively examines the experiences and obstacles encountered by black women, conveying significant messages via a black feminist perspective.

Americanah also examines the challenges faced by black feminism as experienced by the female characters in the narrative. Ifemelu, the protagonist, receives a gentle admonition from her lover's mother regarding the inequities faced by women, both from nature and culture, despite the prevalence of the error committed. Similarly, Ifemelu's aunt relocates from her own country to America due to her child being born out of wedlock. All ladies recognize that departing from their current location and moving to a strange city might assist them in overcoming difficult periods. In this regard, women from minority backgrounds are not the exclusive recipients of this twofold form of discrimination. Loomba emphasizes the victimization of women across many global locations: "She thus challenges a simple division between colonizers and colonized by inserting the 'brown woman' as a category oppressed by both. Elite native men may have found a way to 'speak,' but, she suggests, for those further down the hierarchy, self-representation was not a possibility" (2015: 195).

Foucault advances the argument by claiming in his lectures at the College de France that "racism is above all the precondition that makes killing acceptable" (Society Must Be Defended: 256). Foucault's claim indicates racism's devastating impact on politics. Racism enables authorities and societies to justify exclusion, misery, and death of some groups under the guise of protecting the 'greater good.' It highlights that power functions via both explicit oppression and hidden, normative acceptance of lives considered unworthy of protection.

In conclusion, Ifemelu, as a Nigerian woman living in America, struggles with her psychological condition and inadequacy. She aspires to return to Nigeria, balancing her new identity with her Nigerian roots. In America, however, she endeavours to assimilate while maintaining her cultural identity. Bhabha examines these experiences via the lens of third space, positing that intercultural encounters generate new identities. This alteration engenders confusion, conflict, and novel identities. The 'in-between' space complicates the boundaries of two cultures, intertwining their differences. This complexity underscores the importance of hybridity, which has often been simplistically defined in post-colonial discourse as cross-cultural 'exchange.' Such a definition has faced criticism for overlooking the inherent imbalances and inequalities in the power dynamics it entails. (Mambrol, 2016) Ultimately, seeing Adichie's Americanah from this perspective reveals that the novel clarifies the complexities of intersectional othering through Ifemelu's pursuit of identity. Ifemelu's experiences of prejudice as a woman and a black immigrant exemplify the intersectionality of race, gender, and class, resulting in distinct types of marginalization. In this backdrop, the novel interrogates not just a singular narrative but also the intersecting dynamics of societal inequities worldwide. Ifemelu's acceptance of her identity and her defiance of cultural standards underscore the potency of resistance and personal agency against intersectional marginalization. Adichie's narrative compels the reader to confront biases and foster a more equitable understanding of society.

4.CONCLUSION

Sebbar's *Sherazade* and Adichie's *Americanah* present profound examinations of intersectional othering, revealing the intricate oppressions influenced by race, gender, culture, and class. The narratives of Sherazade and Ifemelu illuminate the complex dynamics through which systemic inequalities influence marginalized identities while also highlighting the resilience and agency necessary to navigate and challenge these forces. The juxtaposition of these texts reveals a deeper understanding of the theoretical and practical implications of intersectionality, highlighting the impact of both global and local circumstances on the experiences of oppressed individuals.

Sebbar's *Sherazade* situates its protagonist at the intersection of colonial history, cultural alienation, and patriarchal oppression in postcolonial France. Sherazade's fragmented identity embodies the complexities faced by postcolonial immigrants as they manoeuvre through the intricate dynamics of assimilation alongside the imperative of cultural preservation. Her interactions with Western Orientalist stereotypes, especially through her association with Julien and the Parisian milieu, highlight the tendency to exoticize Eastern women as submissive and eroticized entities. Sherazade's rejection of these restrictive representations constitutes a notable act of resistance, as Sebbar contests Orientalist and patriarchal discourses while reaffirming storytelling as an instrument for liberation. Moreover, the novel explores the complexities of articulating marginalized experiences, as elucidated in Gayatri Spivak's notion of the subaltern. The symbolic name of Sherazade and its subsequent erasure within the prevailing culture illustrate the extensive postcolonial reality of fragmented identities. Sebbar's narrative highlights the profound capacity of storytelling to serve as a means of self-definition and resistance, demonstrating the lasting importance of intersectional analyses in comprehending complex layers of oppression.

In a comparable manner, Adichie's *Americanah* explores the complexities of intersectional othering, particularly through the dimensions of race and migration, centring on the nuanced experiences of Ifemelu as a Nigerian immigrant in America. The narrative offers a profound examination of systemic racism, cultural dislocation, and Eurocentric beauty standards, employing metaphors such as hair and skin tone to elucidate the insidious nature of racial hierarchies. Ifemelu's developing awareness of race underscores the complexities inherent in African and African-American identities, revealing the persistent impacts of colonialism and systemic racism. In Ifemelu's brief embrace of an American accent and her adept manoeuvring through cultural mimicry,

Adichie explores Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity, illuminating the contradiction of assimilation as both a means of survival and a locus of resistance. Furthermore, Ifemelu's blog entries offer a pointed analysis of the distinct challenges encountered by black women in both professional and personal domains, highlighting the intricate layers of intersectional oppression. Through the reclamation of her Nigerian identity and a rejection of societal conventions, Ifemelu exemplifies the profound impact of self-acceptance and the defiance of systemic marginalization. Within this frame, the two novels intersect in their examination of systemic disparities and their endorsement of individual empowerment through narrative and the reclamation of self. As Sherazade traverses the complexities of postcolonial France, Ifemelu grapples with the nuances of racialization and cultural dislocation within America, illustrating unique yet interrelated manifestations of intersectional othering. The journeys of the protagonists illuminate the collective challenge of establishing one's identity amidst constraining systems, demonstrating the dynamics of intersectionality across various sociocultural landscapes. Sebbar's emphasis on the postcolonial condition and Adichie's exploration of race and migration provide interrelated viewpoints on the global aspects of marginalization, enhancing the conversation surrounding intersectionality and othering. Ultimately, both *Sherazade* and *Americanah* elevate their narratives, urging readers to confront deep-seated biases and re-evaluate the complex intersections of identity and power. Through the amplification of marginalized women's voices and a critical examination of the intersecting systems of oppression that inform their realities, Sebbar and Adichie present profound visions of resistance, hybridity, and self-empowerment.

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