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Gender Violence and Resilience in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017): A Transnational Feminist Approach

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Dedication

Nadjet MOKRANI

To my beloved parents. To my dear family. To all those who provide me with moral support.

To my Friends and classmates.

Lynda BENZIANE

To my beloved parents, who supported me all along my studies. To my brothers and to my aunt. To all my friends, teachers, and those who love me.

Abstract

This study explores the manifestation of gender violence and resilience in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). By utilizing a perspective analysis approach between the two authors' representations of transnational feminism, this dissertation aims to show their shared focus on the struggles and resistance of female characters across generations and locations. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's theory, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003) serves as a guiding framework for the analysis. A significant finding of this work is that all female characters in both novels grapple with gender issues and violence, demonstrate various forms of resistance, and reflect the essence of transnational feminism. Through perspective analysis grounded in Mohanty's theory, this dissertation concludes that Gyasi and Shamsie portray transnational feminism in their respective literary works, delving on the diverse experiences of immigrant women within the domestic diaspora, presenting their different issues and collective stories and emphasizing the importance of resistance and resilience in the face of oppressive systems.

Keywords: Yaa Gyasi, Kamila Shamsie, Transnational Feminism, *Home Going*, *Home Fire*, Gender, Violence, Resistance, Resilience, Discrimination, Racial, and Agency.

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I / General Introduction

The issue of gender violence and resilience has garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of transnational feminism. This perspective challenges the notion of fixed states and borders, instead focussing on the movement and flow of people, ideas, and cultures across national boundaries. Transnational feminism rejects terms such as international and global feminism, which have been critiqued for essentialising and homogenising the experiences of "third-world women." (Mohanty, 2003, p.237) Instead, it employs perspectives from feminist theory along with socio-political relations to unravel and contextualise gender themes entrenched within patriarchal structures across the world.

Gender violence is a pervasive issue affecting women globally. It encompasses physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse, as well as harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation and forced marriage. As Mohanty argues in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003), gender violence is deeply embedded within patriarchal structures that transcend national boundaries, affecting women disproportionately across the globe (p. 241). However, despite these systemic challenges, women demonstrate remarkable resilience. Mohanty further suggests that resilience involves the ability to adapt and recover in the face of adversity, becoming a crucial coping mechanism for survivors of trauma (p. 244).

Transnational feminism provides a framework for understanding and addressing gender violence by recognising the interconnectedness of women's experiences across national boundaries. Transnational feminism recognises the diversity of women's experiences and the need for context-specific analyses. The concept of transnationalism has become increasingly important in studies of globalisation, politics, and literature. It challenges the notion of fixed states and borders and refers to the movement and flow of people, ideas, and cultures across

national contexts. Transnational feminism has emerged as a critical response to the limitations of western feminist models. It rejects terms such as international and global feminism and meticulously employs perspectives from feminist theory along with socio-political relations to unravel and contextualise gender themes entrenched within patriarchal structures across the world.

This dissertation examines how the female characters in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) demonstrate resilience in the face of gender violence. By exploring their experiences, the dissertation aims to show how these characters resist, survive, and empower themselves, thereby challenging dominant narratives of victimhood and offering alternative stories of agency and resilience. The selection of these two authors is significant as they come from diverse backgrounds and societies that have been victims of diaspora and displacement. Gyasi is an Afro-American author who traces her roots to Ghana, while Shamsie is a British Middle Eastern author of Pakistani descent. By comparing the female characters in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017). This dissertation aims to explore how the female characters resist and negotiate oppressive structures, how they challenge Essentialist notions of identity, and how they assert their resilience in the face of adversity.

Gyasi and Shamsie, both women of colour, represent the voices and perspectives of Afro-American and British Pakistani women, respectively. Their novels offer a nuanced portrayal of the intersections of race, gender, and nationality, and challenge the limitations of Western feminist models. Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) tells the story of two half-sisters in eighteenth-century Ghana and the generations of their descendants that follow. Through this multi-generational saga, Gyasi explores the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and patriarchy on African women.

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) on the other hand, is a modern-day retelling of Sophocles' *Antigone* set against the backdrop of contemporary Britain. The novel tells the story of a British Pakistani family torn apart by radicalisation and the consequences of their political choices.

By employing a transnational feminist approach to the analysis of *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) this dissertation aims to explore how transnational feminism can be used to understand women's experiences across different cultural and socio-political contexts. By comparing the female characters in these novels, the dissertation intends to explore how they resist and negotiate oppressive structures, how they challenge essentialist notions of identity, and how they assert their resilience in the face of adversity. Ultimately, this dissertation seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of women's experiences across the world by emphasising the importance of a transnational feminist approach in understanding gender violence and resilience.

1. Review of the Literature

Gyasi and Shamsie are contemporary writers who have garnered significant critical attention for their respective works. Their novels are analysed through various lenses, including memory, home, trauma, and identity. These themes are explored through two main approaches: Feminist philosophy and the transnational perspective in literature.

Mar Gallego (2019) examines the intersection of sexuality and healing from a transnational perspective within the African diaspora in *Home Going (2016)* focussing on the experiences of enslaved women. He argues that the novel challenges the official historiography of slavery by giving voice to marginalised women, emphasising memory. He claims that the novel's discourse offers a multifaceted portrayal of black individuals, giving voice to their experiences and challenging the monolithic narrative of slavery. By doing so, the novel seeks to correct the historical record and present a more nuanced understanding of the institution of slavery and its impact on black bodies. (P.1)

Gallego also asserts that the concept of healing from slavery was essential in African philosophical systems, particularly for enslaved Africans, in order to remain whole and healthy despite the unspeakable trauma they endured. In Gallego's view, Gyasi chronicles new forms of identity and agency that promote individual and generational healing and care as forms of protest and resistance against toxic definitions of hegemonic gender and sexuality. (p.2)

Complementing this transnational perspective, Abdalhadi Nimer Abdalqader Abu Jweid (2023) analyses the portrayal of black women's experiences throughout history from a feminist perspective in Gyasi's *Home Going (2016)*. In his article "*Mind of Darkness: Social Equality and Courageous Code in Yaa Gyasi's Home Going.*" The author argues : “Gyasi's novel uses historical aesthetics narrative to critique the unspeakable oppression experienced by black women within slavery and patriarchal stereotypes. The novel provides a vivid picture of

women's suppressed voices and marginalized experiences, challenging misogynoir through the lens of feminist courage code.” (p.1)

According to Abu Jweid, “the concept of “courageous code” refers to a hypothetical notion that emphasises women's subjective experiences and their evolving intricacies, aiming to replicate traditionally male-dominated social roles. Moreover, it is less about the subjective reality of masculine attitudes.” (p.4) In the article " *Mind of Darkness: Social Equality and Courageous Code in Yaa Gyasi's Home Going*." The significance of the concept of feminist “courageous code” is demonstrated in empowering black women's social status and self-autonomy and investigating the development of African women's feminist subjectivity, which transforms harmful patriarchal stereotyping into powerful feminist subjectivity and social equality.

Building on feminist and transnational approaches, Mohamed Adil Mahmoud (2023) in his article " *Gender Discrimination Against Women in Yaa Gyasi's Home Going*." Explores the plight of female characters in *Home Going (2016)* from the perspective of gender inequality and its impact on women's lives. He focusses on the various forms of inequality faced by female characters in *Home Going (2016)* showing how women are marginalised, victimised, demoralised, oppressed, and subjected to sexual violence in both Ghana and the United States.

He breaks into anger over how patriarchal societies in both countries keep women in a state of subordination and deny them job opportunities, which might help them become independent. According to Mahmoud, “The aim of the study is to emphasise the problem of gender discrimination and stress the importance of giving women independence, saving them from ill-treatment so that they may contribute to the progression of their country as well as their own development.” (p.1) Mahmoud's study emphasises the social construct of gender and how it affects the lives of female characters in *Home Going (2016)*. He argues : “Gender is a

constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes.’’
(p.3)

Similarly to Gyasi’s novel, Shamsie’s has attracted critical attention from scholars who have analysed it through the lens of feminism, transnationalism, and diaspora. Just as in Gyasi’s work, Shamsie’s novel is approached from these perspectives to explore its themes and representations. For instance, Asma Zafar & al. (2020) explore the cultural transformation of the Pakistani diaspora within the context of Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) against the backdrop of globalization. The article delves into the profound impact of globalisation on cultural identity, emphasising the significant roles of media and language in reshaping the lives and identities of the Pakistani diaspora, particularly post-9/11. It focusses the struggles of third-world countries to preserve their cultural uniqueness amidst the dominant influence of Western dominance, noting that Pakistani Anglophone fiction is a vital conduit for voicing these challenges. (p.1)

Home Fire (2017) challenges the conventional narratives surrounding Muslim identity by presenting multifaceted characters who are in constant struggle with their cultural, religious, and national affiliations. Shamsie’s narrative reveals the cultural transformation of the Pakistani diaspora through aspects such as language, religion, economy, and governance, illustrating the broader implications of cultural transformation and globalization. The weakening or breaking down of borders, as the study points out, leads to a dilution of established cultural identities, which are fundamental to the concept of nationhood. (p.3)

The article interprets these cultural shifts under the influence of globalisation, which is seen as a historical force that transcends traditional boundaries and redefines socio-cultural relations and identities, giving rise to the notion of a 'global village.' The study thus connects

individual experiences and global phenomena, offering a comprehensive view of the complex interplay between globalization and cultural identity. (p.4)

Similarly, Inam Ullah et al. (2022) explore the issue of identity crisis and trauma faced by diaspora communities in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). The authors argue : “The struggles of the diaspora community are not limited to the host country but extend to their country of origin as well.” (p.1) They argue that the novel challenges conventional views and presents a stark picture of the complex reality faced by diaspora communities.

The study emphasises the characters' struggles with duality in national and cultural identities, leading to a profound sense of dislocation and social stigmatisation based on prejudice and discrimination. (p. 9) The theoretical framework of Avtar Brah's theory of "Difference as Social Relations" is used to support the analysis, illuminating the narrative of divided loyalties in *Home Fire* (2017) and the complexities of the characters' identities. (p. 3) The study concludes that the struggles and stigmatisation faced by the characters in the novel reflect the larger experiences of diasporic individuals. It shows the challenges of negotiating multiple identities, which are further complicated by societal pressures and discrimination. Aneeka's experiences in Pakistan reveal that diaspora identity issues are not limited to the hosts, and discriminatory attitudes in both countries contribute to her identity trauma. (p. 11)

Nabila Hanif & al.'s (2022) artical examines *Home Fire* (2017) through a feminist stylistic analysis to explore the feminist perspective within the Pakistani diaspora. The authors focus on the analysis of gender-specific word phrases and sentences in the novel, claiming that Shamsie's novel is a powerful tool that shapes social realities. They support their argument by referencing and portraying women's experiences and delving through the characters' responses to intense racial and anti-Muslim attitudes in Britain, specifically focussing on Aneeka's

protective personality and her relationship with her brother Parvaiz Pasha, a committed extremist due to his religious responsibilities.

The research also aims to determine whether there is a distinct stylistic difference between women's work and men's work, or if it is simply a variation trend. (p. 1) illuminating the gender differences in the Islamic point of view. (p.8) The purpose is not just to explain the formal elements of writing toward their own purpose but to demonstrate their fictional importance for the text's meaning. In conclusion, Hanif et al.'s article aims to demonstrate how Shamsie's writing contributes to a broader understanding of identity and societal norms within the context of the Pakistani diaspora.

2. Issue and Working Hypotheses

Despite existing research on gender and transnationalism, there is a notable lack of studies examining their intersection in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). The representation of women's experiences in the context of violence and resistance is a critical area that warrants further exploration. While both novels have been analysed individually, comparative studies that address how these works reflect and critique societal expectations surrounding gender and violence are scarce.

Gyasi and Shamsie portray the complex realities faced by women shaped by violence and transnational contexts. Their narratives challenge dominant stereotypes and underscore the strength and resilience of their female characters. The absence of integrated analyses that connect these two works suggests a significant gap in understanding the broader implications of their portrayals.

This study seeks to address the following research questions: How do Gyasi and Shamsie illustrate the impact of trauma on their female characters? In what ways do these depictions

reveal the connections between gender and transnational experiences? To what extent can Chandra Talpade Mohanty's ideas on transnational feminism be applied to these narratives? By conducting a parallel analysis of *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) this dissertation aims to deepen our understanding of the intersection of gender, violence, and transnationalism through Mohanty's theoretical lens.

3. Research Outline

This dissertation, titled "Gender, Violence, and Resilience in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) A Transnational Feminist Approach," is structured into three chapters, each focussing on themes relevant to both works. The objective is to demonstrate how the study of transnational feminism across these texts yields significant insights into the intersections of gender, violence, and resistance.

The first Chapter One: Methods and Materials provides an overview of transnational feminism, drawing on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's influential works, including *Feminism Without Borders : Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity* (2003) and *Feminism and Globalization: The Challenge of the Local* (2002). The chapter begins with a summary of Mohanty's advocacy for a decolonized feminist theory and praxis. It offers background information on the different historical contexts explored in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) along with detailed biographies of Gyasi and Shamsie that provide context for their narratives. The chapter concludes with comprehensive summaries of both novels, analyzing how they articulate issues of gender, race, and the legacies of colonialism, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

In the second chapter : Gyasi, Shamsie, Gender, and Violence delves into the portrayal of gender issues and violence against women in the novels. This chapter analyzes how these

themes are emphasised in the lives of female characters and examines the various forms of violence they face in relation to transnational feminism. It the intersection of gender issues with violence, including marginalization, systemic oppression, and societal norms that perpetuate harm against women.

Chapter Three: Women's Resistance focusses on the various forms of resistance exhibited by female characters in the novels. We explore how these women navigate oppressive circumstances, including cultural expectations and patriarchal structures. The first section examines women's resilience, detailing their strategies for survival and self-preservation in the face of adversity. The second section focusses on instances where women actively challenge societal norms and assert their agency. This focus on women's experiences throughout the chapters reflects the centrality of transnationalism in our study.

Chapter One: Method and Material

I/ Transnational Feminism: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter examines the methods and materials used in studying transnational feminism, applying Chandra Talpade Mohanty's framework from *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003). Mohanty critiques Western-centric feminism, arguing that it often overlooks the experiences of women in non-Western contexts. She introduces the concept of transnational feminism, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of feminist struggles across borders. By examining feminist scholarship through this lens, Mohanty challenges the dominance of Western feminism and emphasises the need for a more inclusive and intersectional approach. This theoretical framework will be applied to analyse two contemporary novels, *Home Going* (2016) by Yaa Gyasi and *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, allowing us to explore the complexities of gender, race, class, slavery, discrimination, and resistance.

Mohanty's focus on "global interconnectedness" emphasises how colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism shape the experiences of women worldwide. She argues for a feminism that is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and attentive to issues of race and class, writing that, "A radical, anti-racist, and non-heterosexist feminism must confront the hegemonic capitalist system." (Mohanty, 2003, p. 133) This perspective is particularly relevant in analyzing the two novels as both *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) deal with characters navigating the challenges of identity, belonging, and resistance. This chapter will first outline the key theoretical foundations from *Feminism Without Borders : Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity* (2003) and then introduce the materials used, including summaries of the novels and brief biographies of Yaa Gyasi and Kamila Shamsie.

A/Summary of Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity* (2003)

Chandra Talpade Mohanty is a prominent feminist scholar and activist known for her critical work on transnational feminism. In her book, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity* (2003) she calls for a decolonized feminist approach that prioritises the diverse experiences of women, especially those from the Global South. Mohanty critiques Eurocentric power structures and emphasises the need for inclusive feminist scholarship that recognises differences among women.

The book is organised into three main parts, starting with an introduction that argues for the necessity of transnational feminism. Mohanty defines transnational feminism as "a practice of solidarity that foregrounds the links between gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation as they are shaped by imperialism and globalization." (p. 2) This perspective challenges Western feminist narratives that often homogenise women's experiences and overlook the unique struggles of women from various backgrounds, including women of colour and Third World women.

In the first part, Mohanty critiques Western feminist scholarship, particularly in the chapter *Under Western Eyes*, which discusses how such scholarship often erases the agency of Third World women. She advocates for a nuanced approach that recognises the complexities of women's lives. In *Cartographies of Struggle* she emphasises the importance of understanding the intersections of race, class, and gender in shaping women's realities, arguing for a decolonial feminist praxis that empowers marginalized voices.

The book further explores themes of identity and community in the chapter *What's Home Got to Do with It?* Where Mohanty and co-author Martin discuss how the concept of home can both empower and limit women of color. They draw on personal narratives to illustrate the

significance of home in shaping political identities. In *Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Locations* Mohanty addresses the complexities of building coalitions among women of diverse backgrounds, advocating for solidarity that recognises and respects these differences.

In the second part of the book, Mohanty focusses on the need for solidarity among women workers in the global economy, particularly in *women workers and the politics of solidarity*. She gives attention to the exploitation faced by Third World women in the labour market and calls for collective organizing to foster feminist solidarity. In *Privatized Citizenship, Corporate Academies, and Feminist Projects* she critiques the corporatization of education and its impact on feminist scholarship.

In the third part, Mohanty emphasises the importance of building alliances across borders, promoting a transformative feminist politics rooted in collective resistance. She argues for an anti-racist, anti-capitalist approach that centres the experiences of marginalized women. Mohanty's work underscores the necessity of challenging systemic inequalities and advocates for a more just global economy that respects and values the diverse struggles of all women.

II-Material Section

A-Historical Backgrounds

1. The Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Colonial Rule in Africa

Africa holds a strategic and unique position due to its central location among the world's continents and its abundance of natural and mineral resources, along with human capabilities. This made it a target for European ambitions, as they competed to discover and exploit its resources and subjected it to colonial harassment in various forms. The need for capital investment and access to raw materials further drove the colonization of Africa. (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012, p. 1)

Slavery and colonialism are interconnected historical phenomena that had a profound impact on Africa, particularly during the transatlantic slave trade, which forced millions of Africans into slavery in the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries. Slavery, defined as a system of forced labor where individuals are owned and work without pay, devastated African societies and caused the loss of valuable human capital. This brutal trade displaced millions from their homes and families. (Josipović & Vujeva, 2021, pp. 2-3)

Simultaneously, colonialism can be defined as the supremacy of one group over another, where the lives of the colonized are controlled by a foreign elite with different cultural backgrounds who refuse to assimilate. This domination is reinforced by missionary doctrines that reflect the colonizers' belief in their cultural superiority (Sommer, 2011, pp. 8-9). Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) describe colonialism as "the direct and complete supremacy control of one country by another, with the foreign power holding state power."(p.1)

Alternatively, the transatlantic slave trade was a major driving force of the economy in many European countries, particularly once the New World was discovered and a global market developed. The slave trade and slavery have fulfilled their basic function of providing the primitive capital that led to the accumulation of enormous wealth the structure of African colonies was aligned with the needs of the metropolis, ensuring that African economic and political structures served the interests of their home governments (European powers). Colonialism, therefore, in all intents and purposes, was a disservice to Africa. (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012, p.8)

During the pre-colonial era, the transatlantic slave trade dominated European trade with Africa. Approximately 12 million slaves were exported from Africa through the transatlantic slave trade, with an additional 6 million estimated to have been involved in other slave trades (Boxell, .al, 2019, p. 6). The establishment of European colonies in Africa facilitated the transatlantic slave trade, providing a means to extract resources and labor from the continent. This colonization was driven by changes in the mode of production in Europe, specifically the industrial revolution, which transformed the economic landscape and led to a shift away from a slave-based economy (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012, p. 1).

The transatlantic slave trade was a global enterprise that transported approximately 17 million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries. This trade, often referred to as the triangular trade, interconnected the economies of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. It involved three stages: European ships departing with goods to exchange for slaves in Africa, the perilous journey across the Atlantic, and the transportation of goods produced by slaves, such as sugar, cotton, and coffee, back to Europe. Slavery, spanning several centuries, stands as one of the most significant and enduring atrocities in human history. Its traumatic impact on millions of individuals worldwide cannot be measured.

Ghana, known as the Gold Coast prior to its independence, was significantly impacted by both the transatlantic slave trade and British colonialism. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, an estimated 1.3 million slaves were exported from Ghana, making it a major source of slaves for the transatlantic trade. (Perbi, 2004, p. 22). This trade had a profound impact on Ghanaian society, leading to the decline of traditional industries, the disruption of social and political structures, and the emergence of a new system of slavery centered on the export of slaves to the Americas. The British colonization of Ghana in the late 19th century further exacerbated the damage caused by the transatlantic slave trade. The British imposed their system of governance, culture, and religion, which disrupted traditional Ghanaian societies and led to the erosion of local cultures, languages, and identities. Additionally, the British exploited Ghana's natural resources, particularly gold and cocoa, for their own benefit, causing significant impoverishment of the local population. (Perbi, 2004, p. 23).

In summary, the impact of the transatlantic slave trade and British colonization on Ghanaian society was devastating. It led to the decline of traditional industries, the disruption of social and political structures, and the exploitation of Ghana's natural resources for the benefit of British colonizers. This exploitation and cultural erosion have left lasting scars on Ghanaian society.

1. The Post 9/11 Impact on Muslim Communities in United Kingdom

The aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks saw a surge in Islamophobia, not just in the United States but globally. In the United Kingdom this period marked a sharp rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, with discrimination and hate crimes becoming more prevalent. Scholars emphasise that this shift went beyond mere backlash against the events, revealing deeper racial dimensions. Islamophobia, as argued by some, is embedded within Western institutions, functioning as a form of racism that affects individuals beyond just Muslims. (Gafur, p.18) This

broader racialization is crucial in understanding why different communities, including Sikhs and Hindus, have also experienced hostility.

In the context of the ongoing global refugee crisis, *Home Fire (2017)* provides a powerful representation of the impact of post-9/11 Islamophobia on Muslim women and their resistance. The novel captures the personal struggles of Muslim women in Britain, who face exclusion, discrimination, and the pressures of identity and belonging in a society where they are marginalized.

Muslims in the United Kingdom faced increasing scrutiny and suspicion, particularly in the wake of laws that expanded the British government's power to revoke citizenship from individuals suspected of terrorism. (Akhtar, 2019, p. 2) Disproportionately affected Muslims, exacerbating their sense of alienation. Alongside these legal challenges, many Muslims struggled with their identity, caught between the pressures of assimilating into British society and the realities of discrimination. The result was a complex experience of dislocation, particularly for those in diaspora communities.

The years following the 9/11 attacks saw a significant increase in violence targeting Muslims in the UK and across Europe. Incidents of physical abuse, property damage, and discriminatory practices became more frequent. (Mrda, 2014, p.12) The subsequent London bombings further heightened tensions, reinforcing negative stereotypes and making it even more challenging for Muslims to navigate public life. (Mrda, 2014, p.17) Despite these adversities, the experiences of Muslim refugees and immigrants have evolved over time. Efforts by the United Kingdom government to improve support systems for asylum seekers, though helpful, have not entirely mitigated the hostility and barriers these communities continue to face.

A notable development has been the recognition of the specific challenges Muslim women face, particularly in terms of gender-based violence and access to services. These experiences of vulnerability are compounded by cultural and religious barriers, which often leave women in isolated positions. This resonates with the themes explored in *Home Fire* (2017) where the complex interplay between gender, identity, and societal expectations shapes the characters' lives. Much like the struggles faced by Muslim women in post-9/11 Britain, the novel's female characters resist oppressive narratives and assert their identities despite immense pressure.

The connection between post-9/11 policies, media hostility, and the rise of far-right sentiment underscores how these factors contribute to a broader environment of exclusion. Asylum seekers, particularly those from Muslim backgrounds, have frequently been targeted by hostile media portrayals, reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Despite these challenges, many Muslim refugees in Britain have found ways to rebuild their lives and contribute to their communities. Initiatives led by refugees themselves have been instrumental in promoting inclusion and fostering resilience.

The ongoing global refugee crisis reminds us of the importance of continuing efforts to support marginalized communities. The themes of resistance and resilience, particularly for women, are essential in understanding how individuals navigate systems of oppression. These struggles, both within and beyond the scope of the novel *Home Fire*, reflect broader societal challenges in the post-9/11 world.

B/ Biographies of the Authors:

1. Biography of Yaa Gyasi

Yaa Gyasi was born in 1989 in Mampong, Ghana, and moved to the United States at a young age. She grew up in Huntsville, Alabama, where her father was a professor of French at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and her mother was a nurse. After attending high school in Huntsville, Gyasi earned a bachelor's degree in English from Stanford University and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Gyasi's debut, *Home Going* (2016) was published in 2016 and was inspired by her first trip back to Ghana in 2009. At the age of 26, the novel earned her numerous accolades, including the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Award for Best First Book, the PEN/Hemingway Award for a First Book of Fiction, the National Book Foundation's Under 35 honours for 2016, and the American Book Award. In 2020, Gyasi was also honoured with the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Literature. As of 2016, she has made her home in Berkeley, California. Her work has made her an influential and important figure in contemporary literature on the African diaspora and delving into the enduring impact of colonialism and slavery. Gyasi's unique perspective and compelling narratives have contributed to contemporary discourse. (Yaa Gyasi – Wikipedia)

2. Biography of Kamila Shamsie

Kamila Shamsie is a Pakistani-British novelist born in 1973 in Karachi to Muneeza Shamsie, a literary critic and writer, and Begum Jahanara Habibullah, a memoirist. Growing up in a literary family, Shamsie began her literary journey with the publication of her first novel, *In the City by the Sea*, in 1998. Since then, she has written several other noteworthy books, including *Burnt Shadows*, *Kartography*, and *Home Fire* (2017) which won the Women's Prize

for Fiction in 2018. Shamsie's best-known *Home Fire* (2017) tackles important and timely issues, particularly in relation to the British Museum, and presents a reimagining of Sophocles' Antigone. Her contributions to women's freedom across borders establish her as a key transnational feminist writer, particularly within the British-Pakistani context.

Despite being one of the youngest voices in literature, Shamsie has received numerous accolades for her literary work, including Kamila Shamsie's literary achievements, which include the Prime Minister's Award for Literature, the Patras Bokhari Award, and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for fiction. She has also been recognised as one of the BBC's 100 women and named on Granta's list of the 20 best young British writers. In 2018, she received the Women's Prize for Fiction for *Home Fire* (2017) and in 2019 she was awarded the Nelly Sachs Prize. Shamsie's writing is known for its powerful narrative style and its focus on supporting women's issues from a pivotal point, giving voice to women worldwide from different positions in life, making her a prominent figure in the global literary landscape. (kamila shamsie Wikipedia)

C/ Summaries of the Novels:

1. Summary of *Home Going* (2016) by Yaa Gyasi

Home Going (2016) written by Afro-American author Yaa Gyasi, explores the interconnected lives of two half-sisters, Effia and Esi, and their descendants. Both sisters were born in 18th-century Ghana to their mother, Maame, but their lives took very different turns. Effia, Maame's first daughter, marries a wealthy British officer in Cape Coast Castle; Esi, her half-sister, is captured and sold into slavery, enduring the brutal conditions of Southern plantations in America.

The descendants of Effia and James Collins are depicted in chapters entitled "Quey," "James," "Abena," "Akua," "Yaw," and "Marjorie." Quey grows up in Cape Coast Castle, where slaves are held before being transported to the United States; after marrying Nana Yaa for political reasons, they have a son, James, who falls in love with a girl named Aku. Even though he is married to another woman, James ends up with Akua, and they have a daughter, Abena, who remains unmarried due to misfortune in their new village. Abena's daughter, Akua, raised by a missionary, has dreams about fire that lead to her daughter's severe burns. Her son, Yaw, grows up without knowing his parents; he and his wife, Esther, eventually move to the United States, where they become teachers but remain scarred and isolated until Yaw reconciles with his mother. Their daughter, Marjorie, struggles with her sense of belonging between Ghana and America.

The chapters entitled "Ness," "Kojo," "H," "Willie," "Sonny," and "Marcus" trace the descendants of Esi, who was sold into slavery in the United States. Ness, Esi's daughter, marries Sam and has a son named Kojo, who is raised in Maryland. Kojo faces the difficulties of runaway slave laws and marries Anna. Their son, "H," becomes a sharecropper and later endures hardships in a coal mine. H marries Ethe, and they have a daughter named Willie. Willie and her husband Robert go to New York, pursuing her dream of becoming a jazz singer but encountering obstacles due to her race. Sonny, Willie's son, battles addiction but eventually gets clean. His son, Marcus, studies the convict leasing system that imprisoned his great-grandfather. Marcus meets Marjorie in California, and together they journey to Ghana to confront their shared history and fears.

2. Summary of *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie

The story of *Home Fire* (2017) is about three Pasha siblings, Isma, Aneeka, and Paravaiz, whose lives are devastated by the recurrent memory of their father's involvement with

a notorious terrorist group. Isma, the eldest daughter, dedicates her life to raising younger twin siblings, Aneeka and Paravaiz. After their mother's death, Isma's dream of pursuing her studies abroad could finally come true, but due to her father's past, she is detained at the airport and subjected to strict controls.

Meanwhile, Aneeka falls deeply in love with Eamon, the son of a powerful British politician, Karamat Lone, who had previously spoken against Muslims like the Pasha family. Eamon, despite his father's disapproval, becomes entangled in a passionate affair with Aneeka. Paravaiz, seeking to find a sense of belonging and identity, is lured by the allure of his late father's militant group. He travels to Syria to join the ranks, leaving his family devastated and desperate to bring him back home. Aneeka seeks justice for her brother, using her relationship with Eamon as leverage to uncover the truth and fight against the injustice of the system.

III/ Results

The study that we have carried out on Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) in light of transnational feminism has allowed us to discover two prominent figures of contemporary third-world literature who grapple with women's issues in their respective societies. Their works are considered of major importance in the ongoing discourse on gender, resistance, and social justice. Gyasi and Shamsie's novels explore the complex challenges faced by women navigating the intersection of culture, tradition, and modern life. Through their stories, the authors focus on the resilience and strength of their female characters as they confront patriarchal power structures, displacement, and the ongoing impact of colonialism.

Throughout the analysis of the aforementioned novels, we have demonstrated how the authors depict their female characters as symbols of resilience and resistance. The first chapter delves into the themes of violence, discrimination, and stereotypes in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). In *Home Going* (2016) Esi's narrative reveals the harsh realities of slavery and the intersectional oppression faced by African women, showcasing systemic sexual violence and objectification. Willie's story further illustrates the impact of racial and gender discrimination, emphasising the barriers created by colourism in her personal and professional life. In *Home Fire* (2017) Aneeka challenges stereotypes surrounding Muslim women, showcasing her sexual independence and defiance against societal expectations. Isma's experiences expose the intersectional discrimination faced by Muslim women in the West, exposing the emotional toll of racism and Islamophobia. This chapter underscores the necessity for a nuanced understanding of identity and the complexities of discrimination confronting marginalised individuals.

Moving on to the third chapter, we identified that women's resistance takes diverse forms in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017). Effia showcases resilience against colonial oppression, while Marjorie asserts her agency by preserving her cultural roots. Aneeka embodies defiance against societal norms and family expectations, demonstrating strength in confronting political authority. Isma balances cultural expectations with personal aspirations, highlighting the complex navigation of tradition and individuality. These findings illustrate that women's resistance encompasses resilience, defiance, and agency, shaped by unique circumstances. Collectively, they underscore the dynamic experiences of women striving for autonomy within patriarchal frameworks.

In summary, our findings align with the principles of transnational feminism. Firstly, they confirm that violence and gender issues transcend geographical boundaries, affecting women's lives regardless of their location. Secondly, our research demonstrates that women's resistance is multifaceted and manifests in different ways based on their unique experiences.

Chapter Two: Gender Violence in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017)

Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the portrayal of gender violence in Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). Both authors utilise these concepts to illuminate the complex experiences of women who navigate a world shaped by violence, gender discrimination, ethnic stereotypes, and marginalization. Through their narratives, they explore how systemic oppression affects women's lives and identities, highlighting the intersecting forces of race, class, and gender that contribute to their struggles.

Stereotypes, as commonly held beliefs grounded in preconceived assumptions about social groups, often become linked to specific cultures or races. These stereotypes, as Bosena Tebeje (2004) notes, "contribute to perceptions of discrimination, leading to long-lasting negative effects on individuals" (p. 6). Gender discrimination, in particular, arises from persistent inequalities between men and women across various facets of life. Tebeje emphasises that "these disparities not only hinder progress but also act as a significant barrier to development and a cause of violence against women" (p. 8). Addressing these issues requires a deeper understanding of the intersection between gender roles, stereotypes, and societal norms to work toward a more equitable society.

In the first part of this chapter, the analysis focusses on Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) specifically exploring African women's experiences during the colonial period and Reconstruction Era, from slavery to gender discrimination. Gyasi portrays slavery as a form of gender-based violence, depicting the physical, sexual, and psychological harm inflicted upon enslaved women and the resulting intergenerational trauma.

In the second part, the analysis turns to *Shamsie's Home Fire (2017)* which explores the intersection of gender discrimination and ethnic stereotypes within the British Pakistani community. Shamsie portrays instances of oppression and discrimination faced by women, emphasising the unique challenges arising from the intersection of gender and ethnic identity. The analysis delves into Shamsie's depiction of the struggles against gender stereotypes in contemporary England and analyses the impact of societal prejudice on British Pakistani women.

1.1 Esi and the Violence of Slavery in *Home Going* (2016)

Gyasi's *Home Going (2016)* poignantly portrays the violence and brutality of the transatlantic slave trade, focussing on its profound impact on individuals and generations of African and African American families. Esi's story in particular emphasises the intersectional nature of oppression that African women endured during the colonial era, including racial, gender, and class-based violence. As Esi's narrative unfolds, Gyasi explores how the institution of slavery not only inflicted physical and psychological trauma but also represented the systemic commodification and dehumanization of African women.

Esi's story begins in Ghana, where she is born to Maame and Big Man, her mother having escaped slavery in the Asante region. Esi's life is immediately tied to the historical violence of slavery, as her mother's escape signals the pervasive nature of enslavement in the region. Kamila Shamsie, in her analysis of Gyasi's novel, notes the multi-generational narrative that *Home Going (2016)* presents, intertwining time and place to depict the lasting legacies of slavery and colonialism. "The novel spans multiple generations and locations, including Ghana and America, creating a spatio-temporal paradigm that encapsulates both colonialism and slavery." (Angy Salah, 2022 p. 4)

Despite the vast scope of the novel, Esi's story provides a deeply intimate account of how these broader historical forces impact individual lives, especially for African women. Once captured by British soldiers, Esi is imprisoned in Cape Coast Castle, a white fort along the West African coast originally built for trading timber and gold, later becoming a notorious site for the transatlantic slave trade. Gyasi writes:

“Esi was kicked to the ground by one of the soldiers, his foot at the base of her neck so that she couldn't turn her head to breathe anything but the dust and detritus from the ground. The new women were brought in, and some were wailing so hard that the soldiers smacked them unconscious. They were piled on top of the other women, their bodies deadweight. When the smacked ones came to, there were no more tears. Esi could feel the woman on top of her peeing. Urine traveled between both of their legs.” (Gyasi, 2016, p.33)

This brutal scene exposes the dehumanization and physical violence Esi and the other women endured in the dungeon, forced to exist in unbearable conditions. In the novel, Esi is forcefully kicked to the ground by soldiers who resort to knocking, then unconscious. These unconscious women are then added to the group, their weight adding to already burdened bodies. When they regain consciousness, their tears have ceased. Esi, who is underneath another woman, can feel the woman urinating, with the urine flowing between them. By focussing on Esi's perspective, Gyasi enables contemporary readers to mentally place themselves in the dungeon and understand the oppressive environment and dehumanizing treatment endured by Esi and the other African women at the hands of British soldiers. (Mikić, 2022, p. 6)

Feminism Without Borders (2003) by Chandra Talpade Mohanty emphasises the importance of understanding how colonialism and patriarchy work together to oppress women of color. Esi's experiences echo Mohanty's assertion that women's oppression is shaped by intersecting structures of power, including race, gender, and class (p. 90).

The violence that Esi faces is not just about race but also about her vulnerability as a woman, a subject to both colonial domination and gender-based exploitation as illustrated in Mohanty's

framework, which is crucial for understanding Esi's suffering as it intersects with both racial and gender hierarchies, positioning her as doubly oppressed by the institution of slavery. After her imprisonment, Esi is sold to a plantation owner in the American South, where she is forced to endure back-breaking labour on a cotton plantation.

Her enslavement in America deepens her trauma, as she experiences further violence, punishment, and dehumanization. This period in Esi's life illustrates what Mar Gallego (2019) describes as Gyasi's darker portrayal of trauma, particularly for Black women whose possibilities for resistance were severely limited by the violent structures of slavery (p.7).

In America Esi's story becomes a symbol of the compounded suffering that African women endured not only as slaves but also as women, exploited sexually, and subjected to the brutal power dynamics of colonialism and patriarchy. Esi stands for the brutality, dehumanization, and commodification experienced by African women at the hands of colonizers. Through her narrative, Gyasi portrays the vulnerability of African women, exploited to serve the interests of capitalism, imperialism, and the base desires of colonial powers. In distressing events, another soldier takes Esi to his residence, subjecting her to rape and torture. One of the most harrowing moments in the novel occurs when Esi is raped by Governor James. Gyasi writes

“Governor James eventually approached Esi, sentencing bar. After a grim examination of her body, he ran his hand between her legs, which returned stained with blood. While being offered a semblance of sympathy. Esi doubted his true understanding. He signaled, and before she could react, the soldiers ushered them out of the desperate Esi cried out for her treasured possession, a golden-black stone from her mother. She desperately dug the ground but was abruptly lifted by the soldier. In the end, all she held was emptiness.”(p.49)

This passage powerfully encapsulates the violation and loss Esi experiences. The rape she suffers is not just a violation of her body but also of her identity and heritage, symbolised by the loss of the stone her mother gave her. Esi's physical and emotional trauma reflects the systemic sexual violence that colonial powers inflicted upon enslaved women, treating their

bodies as commodities to be used and discarded. Esi's rape is emblematic of the broader objectification of African women during the slave trade, as their bodies were reduced to property and their identities stripped away. The act of rape in the novel represents a deeply personal form of colonial violence, one that seeks to break not only the body but also the spirit of the individual.

As Esi clutches at the ground for her mother's stone, the reader is reminded of the profound disconnection from culture, family, and self that slavery enforced upon African women. This is what Mohanty's analysis of Third World women's experiences emphasises how colonialism operated through gendered violence, often using women's bodies as tools of conquest and control. (Mohanty, 2003, p. 53).

Through Esi's narrative, Gyasi not only exposes the brutal realities of slavery but also critiques the power imbalances that colonialism entrenched. As Cañellas i Bosch (2018) observes in *Home Going (2016)* serves as a condemnation of the slaving industry and the broader colonial systems that facilitated such exploitation. (p. 3) The novel underscores the enduring impact of oppressive systems. Esi's trauma resonates across generations, embodying both the brutality of the transatlantic slave trade and the resilience of African women. Gyasi's portrayal of Esi conveys the intersectionality of oppression, race, gender, and colonial domination. Drawing on the theories of Mohanty and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) by centring Esi's experience, the novel reveals the compounded suffering endured and honours the resilience of those who survived. It ensures the voices of silenced women are heard and the violent legacy of slavery is remembered." (p.299)

1.2 Willie Gender Race and Discrimination

Gender discrimination has long been entrenched in societal structures, impacting women in multifaceted ways. Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) powerfully explores this issue, especially within the African diaspora. Willie, a descendant of Esi, navigates her life through the Reconstruction era and into the early 20th centuries, facing the compounded effects of racial and gender inequality. Raised in Pratt City by her parents, H and Eth, Willie's journey begins as she performs at her father's union gatherings, where the first signs of discrimination begin to shape her reality.

When Willie relocates to Harlem in the early 1900s, she is met with new layers of social exclusion. While no longer enslaved, she remains confined by deeply rooted prejudices against her skin color. Willie's dark complexion disqualifies her from performing in popular venues, and even her relationships outside of the Black community are restricted. These barriers, though less overt than slavery, are equally limiting, casting a shadow over both her career and personal life. The systemic limitations that Willie faces represent a larger structure of colourism, which restricts her from fully participating in a society that claims to offer freedom.

Willie's experiences demonstrate the deep impact of colour-based discrimination within early 20th-century Harlem and beyond. Her exclusion due to her dark complexion reflects the rigid boundaries of acceptance in American society, which diminish her opportunities both professionally and personally. As Adil Mahmood (2023) explains in *Gender Discrimination Against Women in Yaa Gyasi's Home Going (2016)* this discrimination stems from a historical legacy that marginalizes women based on race and gender, reinforcing their social and economic exclusion. (p. 5) Willie's struggles, shaped by the intersection of racial and gender prejudices, illustrate the continued challenges Black women face in navigating barriers within a society that claims progress but still enforces exclusion.

Additionally, the internalised beauty standards surrounding skin tone exacerbate these struggles. Willie's husband, who passes as light-skinned, faces fewer obstacles than she does, reflecting how colourism impacts opportunities. This dynamic becomes more visible when Willie witnesses a minstrel show at the bar where she works. These shows, as Cañelas i Bosch (2018) notes, perpetuate harmful stereotypes by caricaturing African Americans, while erasing the brutal realities of slavery, especially in the South. (p. 10) Willie's narrative not only captures the enduring limitations imposed by colour and gender but also underscores the need to confront the continued social inequities faced by Black women across the nation.

One of the most prominent forms of discrimination Willie endures is the sexualization of her race and class. Despite the legal end of slavery, Willie's dark complexion becomes a source of rejection and exploitation, limiting her options in housing and employment. This racialized sexualization is clarified in a disturbing incident at the Jazzing establishment, where Willie works. One evening, her boss orders her to clean the men's restroom, and there she encounters her husband, Robert, and two white men. One of the men blocks her exit and touches her face, his hands moving down her body without consent. Robert, furious, confronts them, only for the man in the grey suit to turn the situation into one of dominance, forcing Robert to engage in intimate acts with Willie while they guard the door.

Although Willie is not physically harmed, this incident is a brutal demonstration of the power dynamics and sexual violence she faces as a woman in a male-dominated world. Gyasi poignantly depicts the ways gender discrimination shapes Willie's life, as she navigates a society where women, especially those in vulnerable positions, are subject to exploitation and abuse. Her experiences reveal how gender-based inequality deprives her of agency and autonomy, as her value is often reduced to her ability to meet the expectations of a patriarchal society.

The gender discrimination Willie faces goes beyond physical abuse, extending to the societal structures that limit her opportunities for personal and professional advancement. As a woman, she is forced into roles that confine her, such as domestic work, which offers little security or recognition. Gyasi's portrayal of Willie's struggles emphasizes the broader issue of gender inequality that persists in systems where women's contributions are devalued and their rights restricted, reflecting the deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that shape the lives of women across different contexts

In one instance from *Home Going* (2016) Willie experiences a profound violation of her dignity. A man promises not to touch her but instead forces her husband, Robert, to perform sexual acts for him and his friend while they guard the door. The encounter is degrading, leaving Willie feeling violated. As Gyasi states :

"Well, why don't you come over here and give her a kiss?" the grey suit asked. He had already unzipped his pants with his left hand. With his right hand, he stroked his penis.

"Don't worry, I won't touch her," he said. And he kept his word. Robert did all the work that night while the blue suit guarded the door. It wasn't more than a few tear- stained kisses and carefully placed hands. Before the grey suit could ask for Robert to enter her, he came, a shuddering, breathy thing. Then, immediately after, he grew bored with his game." (p.196)

Gyasi's portrayal reveals how gendered violence, even when indirect, strips women of their autonomy and subjects them to the impulsive power of a male-dominated society.

The Reconstruction era and the years that followed brought new challenges for Black women, as they navigated a society that continued to oppress them despite the abolition of slavery. Willie, living in Harlem during the 1920s, faces significant barriers in finding work, primarily limited to low-paying domestic jobs with little opportunity for advancement .These struggles reflect the limited economic options available to Black women at the time, as they were forced to take on menial labour to survive. Chandra Mohanty *Feminism Without Borders*

(2003) underscores the interconnected systems of oppression that transcend geographical boundaries, emphasizing how race, class, and gender combine to marginalize women globally (p.42). Willie's experiences exemplify the intersection of these oppressive forces within a post-Reconstruction society.

This demonstrates the deeply rooted nature of discrimination toward and exploitation of Black women during the post-Civil War era. Gyasi's powerful depiction forces readers to confront the harsh realities of systemic injustice faced by Black women. Such oppression emphasises the ongoing need for advocacy and action to challenge and dismantle these ingrained systems of discrimination that continue to impact gender equality in modern society.

2.1 Ethnic stereotypes in *Home Fire* (2017)

Kamila Shamsie explores the complex challenges faced by racialised individuals navigating a secular world. The story captures the experiences of characters who endure various forms of marginalization and discrimination due to ethnic prejudices prevalent in society. As Lizelle Brink (2015) explains in *Exploring the Meaning of Stereotypes*, "a stereotype is the general view or preconception of the attributes or characteristics that should be possessed by something or members of a particular social group." (p. 30) Stereotypes oversimplify attributes and assign them to individuals based solely on their group membership. These generalizations about ethnicity, cultural behaviours, abilities, values, or associated practices often lead to human rights violations. (Odumah, 2016, p. 4)

Shamsie delves into the complexities of ethnic stereotyping as a symbolic form of violence, focussing particularly on women. Through the character of Aneeka Pasha, Shamsie exposes the intersection of gender, religion, and ethnicity within British society. As a British Pakistani Muslim woman, Aneeka confronts the stereotype that women in third-world countries

like Pakistan are deprived and marginalized, alongside the societal expectations placed on Muslim women in the West. She faces the double oppression of being marginalized both as a woman and an ethnic minority. Rather than portraying Muslim women as oppressed or submissive, Shamsie rejects reductive stereotypes by depicting Aneeka as a character who embodies agency and strength, despite the discrimination she encounters. Throughout the novel, Aneeka grapples with the pressures of conforming to traditional expectations while simultaneously resisting the stereotypes imposed by British society.

One significant stereotype Aneeka faces is the assumption that she is connected to terrorism, simply because of her Pakistani Muslim background. In *Home Fire* (2017) her relationship with Eamonn, the son of the British Home Secretary, brings up several ethnic stereotypes and assumptions. A pervasive stereotype is that Muslim women are sexually repressed and unable to make independent decisions about their bodies. However, Shamsie challenges this stereotype by portraying Aneeka as a sexually independent woman who is confident in her decisions and unafraid to express her desires. When Aneeka is accused of using her sexuality to manipulate Eamonn, labelled a "gold digger." (Shamsie, 2017, p. 159) This accusation reveals deeply ingrained prejudices against Muslim women, painting them as either sexually repressed or as using their sexuality for manipulation. This dual stereotype reflects the narrow societal expectations placed upon women like Aneeka, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The stereotype that Muslim women are sexually repressed reflects a broader assumption that women in certain cultures, particularly in Muslim societies, lack agency over their bodies and sexuality. Aneeka's character directly challenges this assumption. Her relationship with Eamonn shows her exercising autonomy over her body, choosing her relationships freely, and defying the notion that she is subservient or passive. Shamsie uses Aneeka's sexual independence

to question these stereotypes, positioning her as a woman who takes control of her desires rather than being controlled by the oppressive cultural narratives that surround her.

This stereotype is further addressed through Aneeka's juxtaposition of faith and personal autonomy. As Akbar et al. (2022) argue, Aneeka's decision to have sex with Eamonn, followed by her observance of prayer the next day, disrupts the stereotype that Muslim women are sexually passive or submissive. Rather than conforming to the reductive notion that Muslim women lack agency over their own bodies, Aneeka exemplifies independence, confidence, and the capacity to make choices that align with her own values.

Akbar et al. Further assert that "Aneeka's portrayal is fearless and challenges the preconceived ideas surrounding Muslim women's sexual identities." (p.12) Initially, her relationship with Eamonn may appear as manipulation, but Shamsie ultimately reveals the depth and sincerity of their connection, subverting the stereotype of the 'manipulative' Muslim woman. " (p. 10). As Shamsie (2017) expresses: " Aneeka is not just a representation of her community, but an individual with her own desires, struggles, and the ability to navigate her identity on her terms." (p.159)

This perspective emphasizes that Shamsie's narrative dismantles stereotypes by illustrating the complexity and individuality of Aneeka, allowing her to emerge as a fully realized character who challenges societal norms and expectations.

Furthermore, Shamsie critiques the broader societal context in which these stereotypes arise. The depiction of Aneeka as both a Muslim woman and a British citizen illuminates the tension between Western and Eastern expectations of women. By challenging both the assumption of Muslim women's sexual repression and the idea that they gain power solely through manipulation, Shamsie exposes the harmful, limiting nature of these narratives.

Aneeka's character embodies a rejection of these binary stereotypes, refusing to conform to societal expectations that seek to define her based on her ethnicity, religion, and gender. Additionally, the stereotype of radicalism and fundamentalism often associated with the hijab in Western societies adds another layer of complexity to Aneeka's character. The assumption that hijab-wearing women are passive or radicalized is deeply entrenched in Western perceptions of Muslim women. However, by engaging in a physical relationship with Eamonn and spending nights at his flat, she directly challenges this stereotype. Exercising her freedom to make choices about her body and personal life, she refuses to let the hijab limit her autonomy. In doing so, Aneeka not only breaks down the stereotype of the sexually repressed Muslim woman but also reclaims her agency, demonstrating that wearing a hijab does not equate to a lack of freedom.

This critique of Western stereotypes extends beyond sexual repression to broader fears surrounding terrorism. As Aneeka's family background becomes public knowledge, she is subjected to the stereotype that she, too, is connected to terrorism. This stereotype, fuelled by Islamophobia and ethnophobia, reflects broader societal fears of Muslims in the West. The media and even members of her own community reinforce this narrative, particularly in relation to her brother Parvaiz's involvement in terrorist activities. Aneeka's struggle to maintain her identity amid these pressures exposes the neurotic implications of diasporic trauma, where ties to her cultural heritage are challenged and questioned. As Shamsie writes, "She was the sister of a terrorist, and nothing else about her mattered." (Home Fire, 2017, p. 250)

The quote, "She was the sister of a terrorist, and nothing else about her mattered." (Home Fire, 2017, p. 250) powerfully illustrates how Aneeka's identity is overshadowed and reduced by her brother's actions. Despite her own distinct values, struggles, and ambitions, society fixates solely on her familial connection to Parvaiz, ignoring her as an individual. This reduction

of her identity reflects how deeply ingrained stereotypes about Muslims and terrorism can be in Western societies, where even personal choices and achievements are dismissed in favour of a singular, negative narrative.

Shamsie portrays how such stereotypes dehumanize individuals like Aneeka, erasing their complexities and humanity. The quote captures the symbolic violence of ethnic stereotyping, showing how assumptions about one's background particularly in a climate of Islamophobia can strip away one's individuality, reducing them to mere labels tied to collective fears and prejudices. This reflects the broader societal challenge Muslims face in being seen beyond harmful, generalized associations with extremism.

The political landscape in *Home Fire* (2017) further complicates Aneeka's experiences with ethnic stereotyping. Karamat Lone, the British Home Secretary, plays a significant role in shaping these experiences, especially when his policies impact Aneeka's family. Karamat's decision to revoke the citizenship of British nationals involved in terrorist activities directly affects Parvaiz when he joins ISIS and is later killed.

Karamat's policy prevents Parvaiz's body from being returned to Britain for burial, exacerbating Aneeka's grief and amplifying the stereotype that Muslims, especially those with ties to terrorism, are unworthy of basic human rights such as burial. Karamat's actions reflect a broader stereotype of Muslims as threats to national security. By revoking Parvaiz's citizenship, Karamat reinforces the notion that Muslims are collectively responsible for the actions of a few, perpetuating harmful narratives about Muslim identity. Karamat himself, though a British Pakistani Muslim, expresses his internalized prejudice when he states, "I hate Muslims who make people hate Muslims" (Shamsie, 2017, p.180). This statement reveals his complicity in reinforcing Islamophobic stereotypes, as he views Muslims through the same lens of suspicion that many in British society do. His policies, aimed at protecting Britain from extremism,

ultimately marginalize and dehumanize the Muslim community, casting them as perpetual outsiders in their own country.

In this way, Shamsie uses Aneeka's character to reveal how stereotypes function as mechanisms of control, reducing individuals to simplistic categories. By challenging these stereotypes, Aneeka's struggle becomes one of feminist resistance, as she reclaims her agency in a society that seeks to define her through restrictive, oppressive lenses.

2.2 Isma and Gender Discrimination

In Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) gender discrimination is intricately portrayed through the character of Isma, a British Muslim woman of Pakistani descent. Her experience reflects the intersection of gender, religion, and ethnicity, each compounding the other to shape her marginalization. As a Muslim woman in a post-9/11 Western society, Isma faces discriminatory attitudes that limit her opportunities and reinforce her exclusion.

Isma challenges these stereotypes, particularly the Western misperception of Muslim women as passive or oppressed. She navigates her identity with resilience and intelligence, defying the reductive narratives imposed on her. However, despite her strength, she cannot fully escape the biases that society holds against her. One of the clearest examples of this is her treatment at Heathrow Airport, where she is detained and questioned solely based on her appearance and name. This moment underscores how deeply embedded stereotypes fuel discriminatory behavior. Stereotypes significantly contribute to discrimination, as suggested by R. C. Gardner et al. In their article *Stereotyping and Prejudice: A Social Psychological Perspective* (1969) stating that "stereotyping leads to discrimination against members of the ethnic groups being stereotyped" (p. 4).

The invasive and demeaning interrogation she endures highlights the intersectionality of her oppression. The fact that she is a woman, a Muslim, and of Pakistani descent makes her a target for suspicion. Despite her efforts to avoid drawing attention to her faith, the scrutiny she faces is inescapable. Shamsie draws attention to this moment through a poignant exchange between Isma and the interrogator:

“Do you consider yourself British?” The man said. “I am British.” “But do you consider yourself British?” “I’ve lived here all my life.” She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive.”(p. 11).

This dialogue captures the tension Isma faces. Despite her British citizenship, her belonging is constantly questioned. The interrogator’s repeated questioning implies that, in his view, being Muslim and being British are mutually exclusive. The subtle yet pervasive doubt in his tone reflects the larger societal assumption that Muslim women, regardless of their integration, are inherently outsiders.

Isma’s response, which comes off as defensive and hesitant, illustrates the emotional toll of being forced to constantly prove her loyalty and identity. Shamsie’s portrayal of this interaction clarifies the insidious nature of such discrimination: it is not just an affront to Isma’s legal status as a citizen but an attack on her very sense of belonging. The scene, therefore, serves not only as a critique of Western perceptions of Muslim women but also as a broader commentary on how gender, race, and religion intersect to create unique and compounded forms of marginalization.

Isma faces a form of discrimination known as guilt by association, which occurs when individuals are targeted and punished based on the actions of their family members rather than their own behaviors. Her brother Parvaiz has chosen to join ISIS in Syria, and because of this association, Isma is subjected to additional scrutiny at the airport. This discrimination is unjust,

as she is being judged based on her brother's actions, over which she has no control. As Shamsie declares:

“ When people talk about the enmity between Shias and Sunnis, it usually centers on some political imbalance of power, such as in Iraq or Syria—as a Brit, I don’t distinguish between one Muslim and another.” “Occupying other people’s territory generally causes more problems than it solves”—this served for both Iraq and Israel. “Killing civilians is sinful— that’s equally true whether the manner of killing is a suicide bombing or aerial bombardments or drone strikes. There were long intervals of silence between each answer and the next question as the man clicked keys on her laptop, examining her browser history.” (P.12)

This quote reveals the discrimination against Isma and demonstrates the issue of holding individuals accountable for the actions of others. It underscores Shamsie's perspective on the complex sectarian conflicts and the consequences of foreign occupation. The moments of silence between each question and the search of Isma's browser history emphasise the intrusive and unjust treatment she faces due to prejudice and preconceived notions. Despite being linked to extremism and travelling on a valid visa, Isma is subjected to hours of detention and questioning about her family, religious beliefs, and travel plans.

Moreover, her treatment reflects a broader societal tendency to link personal identity with the actions of others. As a British citizen : " Isma struggles to fully embrace the culture associated with her shared ancestors, creating a sense of nostalgia for a unified past." (p. 5) The discrimination she faces, grounded in guilt by association, reveals how personal attributes that reflect Pakistani culture contribute to her marginalization.

The intersectionality of Isma's experiences illustrates the compounded layers of discrimination that Muslim women face in Western societies. Shamsie critiques these broader social structures through Isma's character, using her struggles to reveal the societal divisions that continue to marginalize women like her. By illustrating Isma's journey, *Home Fire (2017)* becomes a powerful commentary on how deeply ingrained stereotypes and discriminatory

practices shape the lives of Muslim women, who must constantly navigate the intersection of gender, religion, and ethnicity in environments often hostile to their existence.

Furthermore, media representations play a significant role in perpetuating these stereotypes, particularly about Muslim women, who are often depicted as passive, oppressed, or victimized. Such portrayals reinforce narrow, reductive views of their identities, mirroring the societal tendency to oversimplify complex identities. Shamsie critiques this reductionist view by showing how Isma, despite her intelligence and resilience, is continually viewed through a lens of suspicion and hostility.

This reductionist portrayal reflects broader patterns of discrimination faced by Muslims in the post-9/11 world. Pakistani post-9/11 fiction illustrates these tendencies, and Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) provides a vivid commentary on the challenges faced by individuals from the Orient in adapting to Western societies. Isma's experience at the airport is emblematic of the struggles faced by Muslim women globally, who are often subjected to Islamophobia, racism, and gender-based discrimination. Many of these challenges stem from entrenched issues within host communities, such as the perpetuation of racist and Islamophobic attitudes and the construction of the "new Orient," a term referring to how Muslim identities are othered and seen as foreign despite being integral parts of Western societies. (pp. 4-5)

By weaving Isma's personal story with these larger societal patterns, Shamsie critiques how gender, race, and religion continue to be sources of marginalization in modern Western societies, particularly for Muslim women. This intersectional approach underscores the complexity of their lived experiences and emphasises the need for a more nuanced understanding of identity in the contemporary world.

Isma also encounters gender role discrimination as a carer and responsible older sister. This form of discrimination occurs when individuals are treated according to traditional gender roles and expectations. Her journey begins with her efforts to escape poverty and the challenging circumstances resulting from her father's abandonment and her mother's death. As the responsible older sister to her siblings, she defies traditional gender roles and strives to provide for her family. However, her siblings and even Aneeka sometimes perceive Isma as overbearing, choosing to guard certain aspects of their lives from her. (p. 8)

The narrative transitions from seemingly lighthearted microaggressions against Muslims within Eamon's social circle to the more serious restrictions faced by individuals with Pakistani passports when it comes to international travel. (p. 7) When Isma decides to pursue her studies and enrol in a PhD. program in America, she faces intersectional discrimination based on her gender, religion, ethnicity, and nationality. As a Muslim woman of Pakistani descent and a British national, these intersecting identities create unique experiences of discrimination that cannot be fully understood when examined in isolation.

This chapter demonstrates how both Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) examine the enduring struggles faced by racialised individuals in their societies. Through their characters' experiences, the novels reveal the destructive impacts of gender violence, slavery, ethnic stereotypes, and gender discrimination, which reinforce societal divisions and limit opportunities. The characters confront various forms of marginalisation, including guilt by association and gender bias. By emphasising the intersectionality of these issues, the novels show how different aspects of identity compound experiences of oppression. Ultimately, *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) urge readers to confront their biases and work toward a more inclusive society, challenging the systems that perpetuate discrimination and violence for a more just world.

Chapter Three: Women's Resistance and Resilience in Gyasi and Shamsie

Introduction

While the second chapter explored how Gyasi and Shamsie portrayed gender and violence, this chapter focuses on women's resistance in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017), examining how both Gyasi and Shamsie illustrate the struggles faced by women from the Global South, particularly within African-American and British Pakistani communities. By addressing socio-cultural concerns and demonstrating resilience, these novels provide powerful narratives that reveal how women confront challenges that threaten their autonomy and identity.

Vinshagen (2007) defines resistance as “intentional actions that aim to challenge, change, or maintain societal circumstances. It acknowledges that resistance involves contestation, implying a struggle against dominant practices. In essence, resistance cannot be understood without considering the practices of domination it seeks to confront” (p. 5).

The experience of women's resistance is analyzed through the lens of transnational feminism, emphasizing how resistance and breaking societal chains shape women's lives globally. This perspective underscores the challenges women face in multicultural societies, emphasizing their struggles against various forms of oppression and injustice.

The first section examines how Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) portrays the resilience of African women across generations, illustrating their capacity to overcome obstacles that threaten their existence. This analysis emphasizes the role of resilience and resistance in confronting these challenges.

The second section explores the themes of resilience and defiance in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) investigating the experiences of women who resist oppression and societal expectations, including cultural and religious norms. Shamsie stresses the significance of

resilience in breaking free from these constraints. The resilience of women emerges as a vital element in escaping oppressive systems, overcoming adversity, and asserting their identities. By examining the experiences of women in *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) this chapter illustrates the power of resilience and resistance in challenging patriarchal norms and advancing gender equality.

1.1 Effia's Resilience in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016):

Effia Otcher, a significant character in *Home Going* (2016) demonstrates her strength as she defies societal norms and religious constraints. Born in 18th-century Ghana into the rich tapestry of Asante culture, she grows up in a society deeply rooted in traditions and cultural norms, where life revolves around deep rituals and customs that are an integral part of daily life, set against the vibrant backdrop of Ghanaian culture. Effia shows a brave spirit that challenges socio-cultural norms; her relationship with her stepmother, Baaba, significantly influences her early life. Baaba embodies strict enforcement of cultural norms and traditions, influencing Effia's upbringing. Despite, Baaba's neglect, including emotional, verbal, and physical abuse, emphasising the rigid expectations placed on women and the stifling influence of cultural norms.

Effia's resilience is first demonstrated through her ability to navigate the oppressive environment created by her stepmother, Baaba. In Ghanaian society, women are expected to conform to strict gender roles and cultural expectations, and Baaba embodies these norms with rigid authority. From a young age, Effia faces Baaba's cruelty, including neglect and emotional abuse, designed to suppress her individuality. Despite Baaba's constant attempts to undermine her, Effia does not succumb to feelings of worthlessness or defeat. Instead, she quietly endures the mistreatment, maintaining a strong sense of self in a society that often devalues women.

This resilience is further illustrated by Effia's response to the dual pressures of colonialism and traditional patriarchal values. As Mohanty discusses in *Feminism Without Borders* (2003) women in colonized societies often face layered forms of oppression, needing to resist both foreign domination and internal cultural hierarchies. Effia's ability to withstand Baaba's abuse without allowing it to define her illustrates her strength. Even as she faces the challenges of colonial rule, she remains unyielding. Effia's survival in an environment designed to suppress her individuality serves as a testament to her inner strength and quiet defiance against the structures meant to control her.

However, her resilience is profoundly tested when she learns that her biological mother is Maame, an enslaved woman. This revelation compels her to confront a painful truth about her identity and complicates her sense of belonging in a society that values lineage and family ties. For much of her life, Effia has accepted Baaba's authority, believing it was her duty as a daughter to endure her mistreatment. The knowledge that her entire life has been built on a lie shatters her understanding of herself and her place in the world. This emotional trauma, stemming from the betrayal of her perceived identity, challenges her to reevaluate her sense of self-worth and belonging.

Despite the potential for this painful revelation to crush her spirit, Effia demonstrates remarkable strength in processing the truth. She reframes her identity not as a victim of circumstance but as a woman capable of carving out a place for herself in a world that seeks to define her. Her resilience lies in her ability to acknowledge her trauma while refusing to let it diminish her sense of self. This ability to maintain her identity amidst upheaval reflects the resilience that Mohanty describes where women resist by reclaiming their identities in the face of oppressive structures. As Effia confronts the loss of her former self, she begins to construct a new identity, rooted in the acceptance of her past while embracing her strength and agency.

Transitioning from her internal struggles, Effia's most overt act of resistance occurs when she chooses to marry James Collins, a British officer, defying her family's expectations that she marry within her tribe. This decision is particularly significant given the oppressive context of 18th-century Ghana, where cultural norms dictate that women align with traditional roles and marry within their community. Her father's plans for her to wed a local chief exemplify the societal pressure on women to fulfil predetermined roles that reinforce patriarchal structures. In the quote, Effia's father articulates his vision for her future:

“The white man arrived to take Adwoa with him,” Effia said. Her father nodded. “The white men reside in the Cape Coast Castle, where they exchange goods with our people, her father explained. “Like iron and millet?” She inquired. He placed his hand on her shoulder and kissed her forehead, but as he pulled away, his expression appeared troubled and distant. “Yes we get iron and millet, but we must give them things in the return. That man came from Cape castle to marry Adwoa, but you, my own, I have bigger plans for you than to live a white man's wife. You will be wedded to a man from our community.”(p.12)

This passage illuminates the conflict between cultural expectations and Effia's personal desires. Her father's reference to “bigger plans” for her life reflects the weight of traditional expectations placed upon women to marry men from their own community, ensuring the continuation of familial and cultural legacies. The paternal kiss signifies affection but also embodies the paternalistic attitudes that restrict Effia's autonomy. While her father envisions a future steeped in tradition and local customs, Effia contemplates a path that diverges from these expectations, showcasing her determination to carve out her identity.

Choosing to marry Collins represents a profound act of defiance against the patriarchal structures that seek to dictate her choices. While the marriage may not align with her romantic desires, it serves as a means for Effia to assert her agency within the constraints of her society. By rejecting her father's plans and opting for a relationship with a British officer, Effia resists being defined solely by her tribal affiliation. This act of defiance is not merely personal; it challenges the societal norms that dictate women's roles in marriage and positions her as a

participant in the changing dynamics of colonial power. However, this decision is fraught with complexity, as Effia's marriage to a foreign man raises questions about her identity and the sacrifices she must make. By marrying Collins, she steps into a world that both empowers her and strips her of the familiar ties to her community. This tension reflects her resilience; she is willing to endure the challenges that come with her choice, including potential alienation from her culture and family, in pursuit of a life that she believes could offer greater autonomy.

Effia's prior suffering under the emotional abuse of her stepmother, Baaba, further informs her resilience in this pivotal moment. Throughout her youth, Baaba's harsh treatment instills in Effia a sense of struggle and survival that shapes her worldview. Baaba embodies the oppressive nature of patriarchal expectations, but Effia's experience of enduring that abuse cultivates a desire for liberation. Thus, her decision to marry Collins can be interpreted as both an escape from her painful past and a means of asserting her individuality in a society that has continually sought to suppress her.

The layers of Effia's resilience become apparent as she navigates the repercussions of her marriage. In a colonial context where race and gender intersect, her choice reflects the broader struggles faced by women in colonized societies. By marrying Collins, she not only defies her father's expectations but also engages with the complexities of colonial relationships. Her resilience is characterized by a willingness to endure the repercussions of her choices while striving to assert her identity in an environment that often seeks to diminish it.

Ultimately, Effia's marriage to James Collins serves as a poignant example of her resilience, embodying her struggle against the constraints of traditional norms and the oppressive structures of colonialism. It represents a significant moment in her life where she must confront the realities of her decisions, balancing the desire for personal agency against the backdrop of her cultural identity. Effia's journey highlights the intricate interplay between

resistance and the sacrifices that come with challenging societal expectations, illuminating the profound resilience of women in their quest for autonomy and self-definition amidst oppressive circumstances.

The character's resilience is vividly illustrated through her endurance of the complexities of life at Cape Coast Castle. As the wife of a British officer, she enjoys certain protections from the harsher realities of colonial oppression; however, she is not immune to its moral consequences. Increasingly aware of the slave trade occurring beneath her, she grapples with the unsettling realities of her privileged position. This conflict is poignantly captured in the following passage:

"She had observed James appraise a king's crown and declare it worth four pounds. But what about the human being? Effia had been aware of people in the dungeons, but she had never thought about what happened to them. If James saw women who resembled her, would he return haunted by what he had witnessed?" (p.28)

This moment marks a pivotal development in her moral journey, highlighting her growing resistance to the dehumanization inherent in the slave trade. Despite her advantageous position, she questions the commodification of human lives, demonstrating resilience in maintaining her moral integrity. Mohanty emphasizes that women in colonized societies often resist not only physical domination but also the moral compromises imposed by colonial powers. Her capacity to empathize with enslaved individuals while still benefiting from the oppressive system underscores her profound moral resilience.

The complexities of her situation further complicate her experience within the colonial framework. Although her marriage to James affords her security and status, it also entangles her in the violence of the slave trade. This internal conflict is expressed in her haunting reflections on the enslaved individuals held in the dungeon. Her awareness of the suffering endured by these individuals, many of whom share her ethnic background, accentuates the

emotional burden she carries as a witness to the horrors of colonialism. This moral complexity challenges her to confront uncomfortable truths about her identity and complicity. Yet, her resilience is evident in her refusal to accept the dehumanization of others. While she may not be able to directly challenge the colonial system, her internal resistance reflects a quiet yet profound strength.

In navigating this moral landscape, she emerges as a complex character who embodies the struggle to retain humanity amidst the oppressive structures of her society. By acknowledging the plight of the enslaved and grappling with her position within the colonial hierarchy, she illustrates a nuanced form of resilience that transcends mere survival. Her journey highlights the emotional and ethical dimensions of resistance, revealing how deeply personal struggles can intersect with broader societal injustices.

As the story progresses, resilience becomes evident in her relationships with descendants, as she overcomes challenges from the abuse of her stepmother to the moral complexities of colonialism enabling her to pass down a legacy of strength and survival. This generational resilience is a key theme in *Home Going (2016)* where Gyasi illustrates how this strength reverberates through future generations. Her narrative exemplifies resilience against systemic oppression, as her defiance of societal expectations, moral resistance to dehumanization, and maintenance of self amidst colonial complexities embody the resilience described by Mohanty. Her journey serves as a testament to the strength of women in colonized societies, who assert their moral and emotional agency while navigating their struggles.

1.2 Marjory's Agency and Language Resistance in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016):

Marjorie, one of the last descendants in Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) is a Ghanaian-American woman living in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, representing a key link between her ancestral past and her contemporary existence. The legacy she carries is one of displacement and survival, originating with her ancestor Effia, who lived through the era of slavery and colonial exploitation in the 18th century. Marjorie's story is emblematic of the ongoing struggles of African descendants in postcolonial societies, where identity is continuously negotiated between the preservation of heritage and the pressure to conform to dominant societal expectations.

In her struggle to navigate life as a child of immigrants in the United States, Marjorie resists the pressure to adopt English as her sole language of communication. This resistance is significant because it challenges the normative idea that assimilation into a Western-dominated, postcolonial society requires the abandonment of indigenous languages. Marjorie's deliberate choice to continue speaking Asante Twi, her ancestral language, becomes a form of defiance against cultural erasure. Language, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) argues, is a site of both oppression and resistance, especially for women in postcolonial contexts. (p.101) Marjorie's insistence on using Twi is an act of reclaiming her identity, an assertion of her agency amidst the pressures of cultural assimilation.

Gyasi presents Marjorie's resistance as a deeply personal and intergenerational journey, one that is reflected in her relationship with her grandmother, Akua. Through this relationship, Marjorie begins to understand the importance of preserving her cultural roots in a world that often seeks to erase them.

According to Alex Weik von Mossner (2023) Marjorie and Marcus's visit to Cape Coast Castle is a journey of remembrance and overcoming inherited fears. Marjorie wears a black stone necklace inherited from Effia, who is Marcus's great-great-great-great-grandmother Esi's sister. Despite their fears of the ocean and fire, Marcus and Marjorie engage in a reliving of their ancestors' traumatic experiences to fully escape from past trauma. During their swim in the ocean, they confront the vast expanse of time and space. Marjorie then places the inherited necklace around Marcus's neck, symbolising the act of breaking the chains of the trauma that has been passed down through their family lines. (p.13)

In her daily life, Marjorie experiences the tension between her Ghanaian heritage and the expectations of American society. Her parents, striving to integrate into their new environment, inadvertently push her towards conforming to the norms of their new home. Yet Marjorie resists, clinging to her ancestral language as a symbol of her connection to her roots. This is vividly illustrated in a scene where her grandmother reprimands her for speaking English:

“Speak Twi,” her grand mother replied sharply, slamming Marjorie on the back of the head. “Sorry”, Marjorie mumbled. At home in Huntsville, her parents spoke to her in Twi, and she answered them in English. They had done this since the day Marjorie brought a note home from her kindergarten teacher...The note read: Marjorie does not volunteer to answer questions. She rarely speaks. Does she know English? If she doesn't, you should consider English as a second language. Or perhaps Marjorie would benefit from special care? We great special education classes here. Her parents were livid...Her father read the note aloud four times, shouting. “What does this foolish woman know?”... Until now, it was the first language that popped into her head. She had to remind herself that her grandmother required the opposite.”(P. 243)

Within this statement, Gyasi directly affirms Marjorie's resistance and refusal to adopt a new language, and her conflict between her ancestors heritage and her contemporary environment, emphasising the importance of breaking chains in the empowerment and emancipation of black women. By making a conscious effort to keep her ancestral language, Marjorie embraces a new language while staying connected to her roots. Her resistance is also reflective of the larger

postcolonial context in which she exists. In colonized societies, the imposition of the coloniser language is often a way of asserting dominance and control over the colonised population. As Rahman (2019) points out, many people in formerly colonized countries adopt the language and culture of their colonizers in the belief that it is superior. Marjorie's refusal to fully embrace English as her sole language of expression, therefore, becomes an act of resistance against this imposed cultural hierarchy. By choosing to hold on to Twi, she not only preserves her own cultural identity but also challenges the narrative that suggests assimilation is the only path to success in a postcolonial world. (P.1)

Marjorie's first actual act of liberation is experienced during the trip to the beach with her grandmother, Akua, a direct descendant of Effia. In this pivotal journey, Marjorie connects with her ancestral background, learning about Effia's trials and triumphs, creating an intimate connection with her roots and paving her own path. In breaking chains and acculturation pressures, Marjorie embraces her true identity and reconciles with her roots, Gyasi aims for Marjorie's character to demonstrate how it is possible to retain one's unique cultural identity and yet mix with a foreign culture without losing oneself in the process. As Gyasi writes:

“Majorie nodded as her grand mother took her hand and walked her farther and farther out into the water. It was their summer ritual, her grand mother reminding her how to come home. Marjorie returned to Alabama three shades darker and five pounds heavier. Her period had come while she was with her grandmother, and the old woman had clapped her hands and sang songs to celebrate Marjorie's womanhood. She didn't want to leave Cape Coast, but school was starting and her parents wouldn't let her stay any longer.” (P. 243)

In this passage, Gyasi illustrates Marjorie's connection to her heritage through a symbolic ritual with her grandmother at the ocean. The act of walking farther into the water represents Marjorie's journey back to her cultural roots, as the ocean recalls ancestral memory and the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Her grandmother's reminder of how to “come home” signifies the importance of staying grounded in her heritage despite living in America. The

physical changes Marjorie experiences her darkened skin and the onset of womanhood mirror her internal transformation, as she grows more attuned to her Ghanaian identity. The celebration of her womanhood reinforces her connection to her lineage, while her reluctance to leave Cape Coast reflects her deepening bond with her ancestral land. Gyasi uses this moment to emphasise the possibility of honouring one's cultural past while navigating life in a foreign world, without losing one's identity.

Marjorie's journey in *Home Going* (2016) emphasises the struggle to reclaim cultural identity through language, resisting assimilation. By preserving her native tongue, she defies the dominant culture and strengthens her connection to her heritage. Gyasi presents this act as a powerful assertion of identity, showing how language is a tool for challenging oppression. Marjorie's resistance reflects the broader postcolonial experience, where reclaiming language is essential for maintaining cultural integrity and resisting erasure by colonial influences.

2.1 Isma's Resilience in Kamila Shamie *Home Fire* (2017)

Isma, a young British Pakistani Muslim woman, plays a crucial role in *Home Fire* (2017) as she symbolises resistance, sacrifice, love, and courage in the face of adversity. Her journey revolves around balancing the cultural expectations of her family and community with her own individual aspirations and desires. She grapples with the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles that prioritize familial duties over personal goals, while also striving to pursue her own path and ambition fulfillment. Isma's childhood was marked by a variety of socio-economic difficulties, creating a less than ideal environment. Nevertheless, she displays an inherent strength to preserve amidst adversity from an early age, and pressing circumstances necessitated her premature adoption of a mother-like role following her father's absence, Adil Pasha, because of joining ISIS and her mother's death, resulting in a seemingly destined journey of hardship and struggle.

According to Aicha Aness Malik (2022) young British Pakistani Muslim women face many pressures within their community, including balancing cultural expectations, religious beliefs, and outside influences. (p.13) Isma's path deviates from the typical version of an orphan; her transitions from a sister to a maternal figure, as she takes on the responsibility of raising her younger siblings, Aneeka and Paravaiz, Isma's life is a testament to resilience, strength, and determination. Despite facing the familial crisis, she did not let it break her spirit. She went from barely surviving to thriving, Isma's resilience became undeniably apparent when she battled through socio-economic limitations to achieve her academic dreams.

Isma's resilience, despite the weight of family responsibilities and cultural expectations, leads her to carve a new path in America. Her determination to build a life beyond the constraints of her upbringing reflects a deep desire for personal fulfillment. Pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology exemplifies her belief that one can rise above socio-economic barriers and seek new opportunities. Shamsie highlights the importance of this decision when Isma says,

“My siblings and I were orphaned shortly after I graduated from university.”
They were twelve-year-old twins. I took on the first job that I could secure.
Now that they've grown up, I can go back to my life.” “You will be going
back to your usual life in Amherst, Massachusetts.” (p.11)

The moment marks when Isma reclaims her autonomy after years of sacrifice, demonstrating a balance between family duties and personal aspirations. Her pursuit of a Ph.D. in sociology is not merely an academic endeavour but an act of resistance. By choosing a discipline that critically examines societal structures, she challenges the very limitations that sought to confine her. Despite the cultural expectations imposed on her, Isma remains resolute in her ambition to carve her own path. Her admission to a prestigious university in Massachusetts symbolizes both personal achievement and a victory over the socio-economic challenges of her early life. Her ability to transcend these barriers and succeed in academia underscores her intellectual and emotional fortitude.

However, her academic success is only one aspect of her journey of resistance. As a British Pakistani Muslim woman, Isma faces the complexities of identity and belonging in a post-9/11 world. According to Marsha and Valerie (2019), racialized migrant women continue to encounter economic and social challenges during their migration and resettlement, often dealing with personal losses, economic hardship, and discriminatory systems. (pp.12-13) Isma's experiences align with this analysis, as she navigates barriers not only as a woman but as a migrant viewed through stereotypical lenses. Young British Pakistani Muslim women like her must balance personal ambitions with societal expectations, demonstrating immense strength as they defy social norms and challenge patriarchal structures. Despite these challenges, Isma remains steadfast in her dreams, striving for a future of her own making.

Her internal resilience is tested when she encounters racial and religious profiling at the airport, a reminder of the external pressures aiming to undermine her autonomy. Yet, Isma remains composed throughout the ordeal. Shamsie writes,

“The Muslim woman who worked in customer service at Heathrow had found her a spot on the next flight out without any charge. Throughout the entire journey, she had been worried about the interrogation that awaited her in Boston, convinced that they would detain her or send her back to London. However, the immigration official had only asked her where she was going to study, made a comment about the university's basketball team that she didn't quite understand but tried to look interested in, and then waved her through. As she walked out of the arrival's area, she saw Dr. Shah, her mentor and savior, who looked unchanged since Isma's undergraduate days, except for a few silver strands in her cropped dark hair. Seeing her raise a hand in welcome, Isma understood how it might have felt, in another age, to step out on the deck and see the upraised arm of the Statue of Liberty and know that you had made it, that you were going to be all right.” (2017, pp.13-14)

Isma encounters external pressures such as racial profiling at the airport, yet each experience reveals the strength she gains from it. After enduring a stressful encounter with airport security, Isma shows remarkable composure despite the humiliation and anxiety surrounding her. As Shamsie (2017) writes:

“It had been some time since then. By now, the plane should be boarding. Isma glanced at her suitcase, which she had re-packed after the woman had left the room. She had been worrying ever since if repacking the suitcase without permission could be considered an offense. Should she mess up the clothes to make it look like she hadn't intentionally repacked them, or would that make the situation worse? Isma stood up, unzipped the suitcase, and opened it up so that its contents were visible. A man then entered the office, carrying Isma's passport, laptop, and phone. She allowed herself to feel a glimmer of hope, but the man sat down, gestured for her to do the same, and placed a voice recorder between them.”(p.11)

From this quotation, Shamsie illustrates Isma's resilience as an immigrant and her resilience in the face of discrimination due to her identity and hijab. Isma's resilience is evident when her brother is enticed by their father's militant group. He travelled to Syria to join ISIS, pleading with her to reconcile the affection of her kin while abhorring his extreme ideologies. The concepts of resilience and resistance in *Home Fire* (2017) are intricately interwoven patterns. Throughout Isma's journey, Shamsie recognizes resilience as a fundamental aspect of victimhood and survival.

As an emblematic figure, Isma boldly defies societal expectations, cultural norms, and religious constraints deeply embedded in her contemporary Pakistani culture. Her journey symbolizes the breaking of chains and rebellion against the sectarian political and ideological pressures imposed by both British society and her personal circumstances. Isma challenges the expectations within her community, starting with her family, where she vigorously opposes traditional familial roles. Shamsie suggests that resilience plays a critical role in a world shaped by judgement, prejudice, and hardship, particularly through Isma's journey.

After experiencing trauma and the profound loss of her brother, Isma redefines her perspective on terrorism and eventually comes to terms with Parvaiz's fate. The tension in her relationship with Aneeka, especially when Eamon addresses their father, Karamat, reflects Isma's emotional challenges. Despite these difficulties, both sisters exhibit remarkable strength, defying societal, cultural, and religious constraints. Isma, in particular, symbolises the breaking

of traditional expectations within her family and the larger context of her Pakistani heritage, challenging sectarian and ideological pressures. (p.189)

2.2 Aneeka's Agency in Kamila Shamsie *Home Fire* (2017)

Aneeka is portrayed as a strong and resilient character who defies societal norms and expectations. Her resistance to the stereotype that “Muslim women need to be saved from Muslim men” is a powerful statement against the misconceptions and prejudices that exist in Pakistani society. Aneeka's struggles to break free from these stereotypes and to search for autonomy in the public sphere are a manifestation of her desire for empowerment and liberation.

Aneeka's narrative of sole deviance from the perceived description of a female in Pakistani society is a form of resistance against the restricted status order of women. Her character represents the potential for women to break free from the constraints of traditional gender roles and to assert their autonomy in the political stage. Shamsie's portrayal of Aneeka as a democratic and autonomous woman who discards gender discrimination is a powerful message for the empowerment of women in Pakistan and beyond. Furthermore, Aneeka's insistence on familial affection and her realisation of society's racial stigmatisation against Muslims in Europe underscore the complexities of identity and belonging in a globalized world. Her character represents the struggles of individuals who are embroiled between competing cultural and political forces and who must navigate the challenges of belonging to multiple communities.

Aneeka's defiance against family hegemony and societal norms is evident when she abandons the safety of her sister Isma's home, explores new territories, and seeks personal independence and social identity. This seminal act of rebellion illustrates her determined character, motivated by societal expectations that symbolize chains in the traditional sense. Her

defiance is not just an act of personal rebellion, but it is a protest limitation imposed that aims to restrict female independence and agency. As Shamsie states,

“All those boys at university, whose families no one knew. And unlike Isma, Aneeka had always been someone boys looked at and someone who looked back. More than looked, though Aneeka always guarded that part of her life from her sister, who was, perhaps, too inclined to lecture.” (p. 25)

In this passage, Aneeka is depicted as a carefree individual who wants to explore relationships with boys, in contrast to her sister, Isma. This shows that Aneeka is not afraid to go against societal norms and expectations when it comes to relationships and family control. By engaging in relationships with boys at university whose families are unknown, Aneeka is demonstrating her independence and a desire to break free from the constraints of traditional expectations. She explores the idea of agency by challenging social expectations and traditional constraints, expressing herself freely, and making choices that prioritize her own personal fulfilment and desire.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty et al. (1991) argue that resistance can only be defined as a cumulative reaction to power, not as something inherent in its operation. If power can only be understood in the context of resistance, this misconception is problematic both analytically and strategically, as it limits theoretical analysis and reinforces Western cultural imperialism (p. 86). They add that as individuals, citizens, mothers, and wives, women deplore the loss of resources and lives in the present senseless resistance to change towards a more equal and just society. Equally, they condemn discrimination and injustice based on race or ethnicity just as much as that based on gender. They believe their hope lies in joining with progressive forces to achieve a future human society in harmony with the environment and free of discrimination and inequality between men and women, black and white, believer and unbeliever. (p.338)

Aneeka, on the other hand, is an example of a strong commitment to her Muslim identity, even in the face of Islamophobia in Western society, she remains steadfast in her faith,

refusing to let social pressures reshape her core beliefs. She performs her daily prayers, abides by Islamic religion, and negotiates her place in society, which is often hostile to her religious expressions. These mirrors are faced by numerous Muslim immigrant women in the West who often experience discrimination and social exclusion. She grapples with the constant public scrutiny and the insidious devaluation of her identity. This steadfast determination underlines the break-free of individuals who, like Aneeka, choose their identity over social acceptance.

Aneeka's unwavering defiance against cultural norms is also evident in her approach to romantic relationship status, contrary to Aneeka's audacious affair with Eamon, the son of a British secretary, she resists and utilises her relationship as a source of strength and resistance against the state's effort to control her personal life. This deliberate action serves as a testament to her agency and her ability to challenge authority. Furthermore, it exemplifies her audacious defiance as she navigates the intricate political landscape surrounding Eamon's father, Karamat, using their relationship as a means to secure the release of her brother Parvaiz. This stance against political authority emphasise her unwavering commitment to breaking free from the chains that bind her. Aneeka's relentless resistance against the societal expectations imposed on women in Pakistan is a powerful demonstration of her independent and empowered character. Her narrative stands as a symbol of personal and political freedom within the larger socio-political landscape. As emphasizes by Akbar and Qasim (2022) Aneeka embodies the qualities of a strong, self-sufficient woman. (p. 14).

In Shamsie's work, the political status of women in Pakistan becomes a crucial factor in their pursuit of personal and political liberation. Aneeka challenges the rhetoric that undermines women's rights and confronts the limited perspectives on female persecution in her homeland. She refuses to allow religion to be instrumentalised for political gain and rejects institutional barriers that curtail her freedom of speech in England. Aneeka's unwavering determination to

advocate for women's rights and freedom in Pakistan showcases her remarkable ability to dismantle oppressive power structures and carve out spaces of liberation within the dominant discourse, as illustrated in the following quotation:

“Aneeka 'Knickers' Pasha, the 19-year-old twin sister of the Muslim extremist Parvaiz 'Pervy' Pasha, has been named as an accomplice in her brother's activities. It is claimed that she pursued Eamon, the 24-year-old son of the Home Secretary, and used sex as a means of control in an attempt to persuade his father to allow her terrorist brother to re-enter England.” (Shamsie, 2017, P.159)

Shamsie's portrayal of Aneeka as a politically engaged and autonomous woman challenges the traditional role of women in Pakistani society. Aneeka's involvement in dumping anti-women's speech and her opposition to the instrumentalization of religion for political gain demonstrate her commitment to breaking the chains that bind women in conservative societies. Her determination to protect her brother and to speak out against injustice, despite facing racial discrimination and hostility from the establishment, is a testament to her courage and liberation.

Aneeka has been unfairly labelled as an accomplice to a terrorist simply due to her attempts to use her influence on a government official's son to secure her own brother's release from prison. When she travels to Pakistan to retrieve her deceased brother's body, she is not allowed to do so. Her family in Pakistan distances themselves from her, and the British government refuses her requests. Just like her brother did, Aneeka wants nothing more than to return to a normal life in England and get justice for her brother with a proper burial there. She pleads with the press, saying, “I am here to seek justice. I appeal to the Prime Minister: let me bring my brother home.” Despite her emotional appeals, a powerful and hateful narrative is spread against her pursuit of justice. One tabloid even referred to her disrespectfully as a “slag, terrorist-spawn, enemy of Britain.” (Zia Ahmed et al., 2021, p.11).

Khan et al. (2020) suggest that Aneeka breaks stereotypes by exercising her freedom to the fullest extent. Despite not being related to Eamon, she develops a friendly relationship with

him, and her hijab does not restrict her choices in life. Her hijab remains a garment of her choice, rather than an obstacle to the free exercise of her will. Her disposition projects her as being 'in-between' and of hybrid nature. (p.6) Also, they add that Aneeka is democratic by temperament and liberal by approach in her way of life. However, despite their liberal approach, they are subjected to discriminatory treatment in public. They are viewed with suspicion, bullied in public, humiliated, and called names, as well as frequently subjected to intolerant behaviour in public places merely because of wearing hijab. The study concludes that hijab itself is not the problem, but the reaction is triggered by the rising Islamophobia, cultural racism, growing intolerance to multiculturalism, and dwindling secular values in European countries (p.12).

In addition, Aneeka's refusal to accept her brother's fate becomes an act of severe rebellion against the British authorities. In a heartwrenching encounter in the British consulate in Karachi, Aneeka publicly protests against the British government, refusing to allow her brother to become another victim of an uncaring bureaucracy. Values of their society, nor its cultural and religious expectations. Instead, they should be given the chance, space, and freedom so that they themselves can create their own identities. Aneeka's defiance was not simply rebellion but rather an internal drive for self-expression, individualism, and freedom from paternal control. Aneeka's breakdown of social chains unveils the complex power dynamics that govern global politics. She emerges as a symbol of world-wide Muslim women who persist in unfolding their Muslim identity in societies that promote and perpetuate Islamophobia, drowning her path through family traditions, societal norms, political authority, and global empathy.

According to Zia Ahmed et al. (2021) Shamsie argues that the West exhibits an excessive preoccupation with anti-Muslim sentiment. Despite being born and raised in the UK,

Isma faces questioning about her British identity at the airport while preparing to pursue a Ph D in the US. Isma anticipates her bags being thoroughly searched due to her Muslim identity, but the extent of the search and suspicion exceeds her expectations. It is perplexing when she is asked if she considers herself British, as her Muslim British identity is already evident through her possession of a British passport. Furthermore, she undergoes further interrogation regarding her beliefs about different sects of Islam, homosexuality, suicide bombers, social media websites, and US military interventions in various parts of the world. This much is the extent to which the western security agencies would probe a British-born young woman only because she was a Muslim. (p. 7)

Aneeka's resistance to societal norms and expectations is a form of resistance against the conservative chains that bind women in Pakistani society. Her character represents the potential for women to assert their autonomy and to challenge the traditional gender roles that have long marginalised and deprived them of their rights and freedoms. Shamsie's portrayal of Aneeka as a politically engaged and autonomous woman is a powerful message for the empowerment of women and the importance of challenging societal prejudices and misconceptions. Despite the challenges and discrimination she faces, Aneeka's resistance is a testament to the power of individual agency and the potential for change.

This chapter demonstrates how both *Home Going* (2016) and *Home Fire* (2017) despite their differences, offer a unified perspective on women's resistance and resilience against societal norms and patriarchal traditions. The characters in both Gyasi's and Shamsie's works display resilience and the breaking of chains of adversity, serving as powerful reminders of the old and new world challenges women face in their pursuit of identity and independence.

V/ General Conclusion

This study examines Yaa Gyasi's *Home Going* (2016) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) through the lens of transnational feminism, focussing on gender issues, the violence of slavery, and women's resistance. Despite their different backgrounds, our analysis reveals several similarities between the two authors' works. Both authors explore the experiences of immigrant women within the domestic diaspora, presenting collective stories of oppression faced by their female characters. Through their narratives, they offer profound insights into the experiences of Third World women from Afro-American and Pakistani perspectives, emphasising the significance of women's resistance and resilience.

Our analysis underscores the prevalence of discrimination, violence, and ethnic stereotypes against women in both novels. Each narrative portrays the suffering, marginalisation, oppression, and violence endured by women while also emphasising their resistance and struggle to break societal chains.

In *Home Going* (2016) Yaa Gyasi offers a powerful portrayal of African women battling the oppressive forces of colonialism, slavery, and patriarchy. The novel explores the systemic violence and racial oppression that African women face, emphasising their resilience in the face of these overwhelming hardships. Gyasi illustrates how these women fight against ethnic stereotypes and patriarchal domination, shedding light on their enduring strength and determination to dismantle the shackles imposed by a colonial past.

In *Home Fire* (2017) Kamila Shamsie shifts the focus to British Pakistani women, who struggle against societal norms, striving for freedom, equality, and essential rights. The narrative delves into the specific challenges they face, such as Islamophobia and cultural expectations, which often perpetuate and reinforce the obstacles they must overcome. In

addition, Shamsie explores the tension between individual autonomy and societal pressures, illustrating how these women seek to redefine their identities and break away from the limitations imposed upon them by their communities and the broader world.

Both authors present new forms of resistance that challenge and transcend societal constraints. Through a feminist lens, we recognise slavery, discrimination, ethnic stereotypes, patriarchy, inequality, and all forms of gender violence as oppressive forces that women confront. These forces are central in both novels, reflecting the experiences of the female characters as they resist and overcome these barriers. Our dissertation closely examines the varied forms of women's resistance, including their resilience and efforts to break free from oppressive structures. By analysing these narratives, our study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on transnational feminism, offering a deeper understanding of women's experiences in the broader context of globalisation, migration, and cultural exchange.

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