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**Identity and Exile in Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*
(2005) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017)**

Presented by :

- BOURABAH Leticia

- MENANA Nouara

Supervised by:

Mr KHOUDI Mohamed Amine

Board of Examiners :

Chair: Mr HATEM Youcef, M.C.B, UMMTO

Supervisor: Mr KHOUDI Mohamed Amine, M.A.A, UMMTO

Examiner: Ms MATMER Dalila, M.A.A, UMMTO.

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The Master domiciliation laboratory:

Dedications

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Abstract:

This research paper is a comparative study of *Minaret* (2005) and *Home Fire* (2017), by the two Muslims authors who live in Britain, namely Leila Aboulela and Kamila Shamsie. Due to the African and Asian origin of the two authors, their writings focus on the challenges faced by expatriates, particularly Muslims in their new societies. The main purpose of this study is to point out that the two narrators explore important issues such as exile and identity, they also show the importance of identity in strengthening cultural ties and restoring a sense of belonging in the life of an expatriate. Both novels examine the extent to which Western societies influence certain individuals in exile, causing them to easily integrate into the cultures of their new environment, in return for which they are stripped of their true identity. Our research has relied on Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality introduced in Graham Allen's *Intertextuality* (2000). First, we have established some affinities that appear between the female protagonists: Najwa, Isma and Aneeka in the two selected novels, we have also examined the similarities between the male characters: Omar, Parvaiz, Tamer and Eamonn. We have concluded our formalist study by evaluating the connections between the two parental characters: Zeinab and Karamat. Concerning our thematic approach, we have come to assign identity and religion, in addition to family and Islamophobia as three central themes within both novels. After analyzing the two narratives using Kristeva's Intertextuality, we have reached the conclusion that identity and exile are two important issues expressed by the experiences of different characters who are forced to confront the challenges and complexities of living in a world where one's identity is constantly being questioned and challenged.

Key words: Exile, Identity, Intertextuality, Islamophobia, the Western World.

I. General Introduction

The world in the early 21st century is characterized by a scene of large-scale movement of individuals who leave their homeland and cross particular national, geographic and psychological borders voluntarily or under pressure. African and Asian migration, in particular, has been influenced by a range of political factors, including wars, political instability, poverty and lack of economic opportunities. In many cases, these factors have led to a migratory crisis where large numbers of people are forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in other countries. In this regard, Sherif Toubal in *L'Héritage d'exil*, argues : “The immigrant is an exile of the womb, difficult living conditions led him to go and seek elsewhere, to go into exile”(Toubal, 2014, P.5).

Concerning the concept of exile, Edward Said defines it as ‘the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home’ (Said, 2000 P.180). Wherefore, it is a form of existence that generates a continuous feeling of disengagement from the context and the permanent nostalgia for a past, a land and a culture that no longer exists. Furthermore, the term ‘exile’ carries a strong emotional connotation, implying a sense of loss, displacement and alienation. It suggests that the immigrant is cut off from their roots, culture, identity and must adapt to a new environment that may be unwelcoming or hostile. This can be especially problematic for individuals who have a strong sense of attachment to their cultural and national identity. The absence of familiar cultural and social contexts can also make it difficult to maintain one's religious or political beliefs leading to a crisis of identity.

Recently, Asian and African diasporic authors have developed a distinctive literary genre that is characterized by the publication of Muslim authors who have written a variety of works including fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Additionally, the experience of being part of a

diasporic community can shape an author's writing, particularly in terms of sense of identity and the challenges they face in navigating different cultural contexts. Their writings often reflect their experiences as members of the Muslim community living in a foreign country and address themes such as identity, culture, religion, migration and belonging.

To illustrate this Asian and African diasporic fiction, one may refer to Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). These two authors question the feeling of belonging to a culture or a country. Both novels aim to explore how identity is formed in exile through sensory and cultural experiences that arise between two different worlds. This separation can lead to feelings of isolation, disorientation and a loss of one's sense of identity. Exiles may struggle to fit into their new environment where they may face language barriers, cultural differences and discrimination on the one hand. On the other hand, nostalgia for the first homeland generates a feeling of homesickness and loss of identity. It is clear that identity and exile are two experiences that can have a lasting impact on individuals and societies.

Minaret and *Home Fire* offer a poignant portrayal of Muslim individuals trying to navigate the challenges of living in a new society while still maintaining their cultural and religious identities. Through the journeys of their characters, Aboulela and Shamsie highlight the tension between traditional Muslim values and the pressures of Western culture. They also show the discriminations and prejudices that can result from being viewed as an outsider in a new community. Ultimately, the two novels demonstrate how exile can challenge an individual's sense of self and force to confront the complexities of their identity. To conclude, both female authors aim to confirm that identity is an important part of individual's life, particularly the Muslim in exile because it strengthens family ties and preserves the sense of original belonging to the expatriate in his different environment.

Review of Literature

Both Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) have received a large bulk of criticism. First, Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* has been studied by many scholars from different perspectives. Ahmed Kofa Babajo and Jane Augnabor Omesiete study the novel from a psychological and sociological perspectives. In their article entitled *Faith as identity in Leila Aboulela's Minaret and The Kidness of Enemies*, they argue that *Minaret* belongs to contemporary feminist works due to the social and cultural issues that Aboulela focuses on. They confess :“ *Minaret* stresses how far Aboulela agrees with hermeneutics islamic feminist concerning the following issues: reinterpretation of some religious sources from feminist and progressive perspectives, decolonization, patriarchy, hijab and harem and so on.”(Babajo&Omesiete, 2015, P.11). In this sense, these two critics argue that Aboulela writes *Minaret* in order to raise issues related to Muslim women in general. Most of the Middle Eastern and African Muslim women suffer from injustice and tyranny because of the strict laws imposed by societies and clerics who believe that Islam favors men over women. In addition, critics believe that *Minaret* seeks to introduce the African identity and Islam in order to correct the misconceptions inculcated by the colonialists. To conclude, both critics Babajo and Omesiete assert that Aboulela's *Minaret* aims to expresses the importance of religion and identity as it rejects the patriarchal rules that oppresse woman's rights.

In addition, *Minaret* has been studied by Peter Morey from a cultural and sociological perspectives. Morey, in his article entitled *Halal Fiction and the Limits of Postsecularism: Criticism, critique, and the Muslim in Leila Aboulela's Minaret*, considers *Minaret* as a predominantly religious work, he also believes that the novel emerges through Islamic ideals and it seeks to clarify matters as well as evaluate characters and circumstances based on religious teachings. The critic argues that Aboulela aims to convey the idea that religion is always considered a part of individuals life that distinguishes right from wrong. In this sense,

Morey admits : “The real politics of the book lie in the distinction between believers- such as Najwa, Tamer and the women at the Mosque- and unbelievers like Omar, Anwar and Lamya”(Morey, 2017, P.5). This confirms that the content of the novel focuses on religion as an essential aspect when Aboulela writes *Minaret*.

Moreover, Dr. Seda Canpolat in her article entitled *Scopic Dilemmas: Gazing the Muslim Woman in Fadia Faqir's My Name Is Salma and Leila Aboulela's Minaret* which aims to study the novel *Minaret* of Aboulela through the racist and sexual stares of Muslim women. The critic believes that *Minaret* belongs to post-colonialism as well as to contemporary Muslim feminism, considering Aboulela a contemporary Muslim author who seeks to raise sensible issues. The most important of which is the defense of religion and identity against what is called Islamophobia. Canpolat admits: “ the British-Sudanese author Leila Aboulela does not conceive of herself as black or Arab but as expressly Muslim ‘Restraint’”(Canpolat, 2015, P.11). In this sense, the critic agrees that the content of *Minaret* focuses on the aspect of religious as a main axis in the novel. In view of the racial and sexual problems that Muslim women suffer from in the West, Canpolat believes that *Minaret* depicts the racist stare of a Muslim woman, but as for the experience of the protagonist Najwa, her exposure to the discriminatory gaze was not due to the color of her dark skin, but rather her problem is due to the shape that defines her identity. Moreover, Canpolat points out that Aboulela aims to emphasize identity and religion in her novel *Minaret* and this is due to her strong sense of belonging to Islam above all .

By the same token, Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire* has been the subject of many studies among them, Dr Asiya Khatoun, Shadab Fatima, Tarique and Siraj Ahmed Channa in their research paper : *Exploring Muslims’ Diasporic Identities : A Textual Analysis of Shamsie’s Home Fire*, examine how Pakistan diasporic community constructs their identity through characters such as Aneeka, Parvaiz and Eammon. As noted by researchers: “ The British

shows their extreme racial and islamophobic attitude, owing to that, the characters suffer a constant refusal of recognition consequently Aneeka strategically reverts to more defensive identity''(Shedab, Tarique, Khatoon, Channa, 2020, P.1). The study concludes that the second generation of the Pasha family displays their identities on some level and constantly makes an effort to reconcile with the past. Therefore, Shamsie provides his reader an alternative narrative of the Muslim world.

In addition to this, *Antigone* from Sophocles is brilliantly adapted to the present day in Shamsie's novel *Home Fire*, combining elements from the classical work with modern issues. In this sense, Claire Gail Chambers in her review *Sound and Fury: Shamsie's Home Fire* explains that the novel is a post-9/11 Antigone, she says : ''*Home Fire* operates as a post-9/11 Antigone and its adaptation element is immediately signaled by the novel's epigraph from Seamus Heaney's translation of Sophocles's play: the ones we love. . . are enemies of the state''(Chambers, 2018, P.208). Shamsie revisits the classic play with new layers and then explores the issue of British Muslims joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Accordingly, this article highlights some major issues raised by Shamsie, including language, assimilation and justice.

Peter Morey in his book *Islamophobia and the Novel* examines how contemporary works of fiction have framed and answered to the emergence of anti-Muslim prejudices, showing how their portrayals of Muslims both reflect and refute the ideological preoccupations of media and politicians in the post-9/11 West. Morey argues that Shamsie offers a potted history of Pakistan from its inception to the present. Moreover, her story covers different geographical locations and examines the effects of economic, political and military globalization. Thus, in *Home Fire* Shamsie challenges the stereotypes of Islamic behavior that the 'Clash of Civilizations' narrative thrives on by presenting complex and nuanced characters who defy simple categorization. In this perspective, Morey claims :

“They contest the notion of a clash of civilizations and oppose overt Islamophobia with a more nuanced sense of the multiple possibilities for Muslim identities in the modern world”(Morey, 2018 P.184). *Home Fire* explores themes of identity, loyalty and love within a Muslim family, showing that their motivations and actions are shaped by a range of factors beyond religion. By humanizing her characters, Shamsie undermines the notion that all Muslims are inherently violent or extreme, instead highlighting their individuality and common humanity.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

From the above review of literature, it is noticeable that Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* (2005) and Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire* (2017) have been studied from different perspectives. To our best knowledge, no previous research has studied the two works together. Both novels offer insight into the experiences of those who are exiled from their homeland and the impact that displacement can have on one's sense of identity. Through their nuanced depictions of identity and exile, Aboulela and Shamsie ultimately challenge notions of home and belonging, highlighting the fluidity and complexity of these concepts in the contemporary world. Therefore, our main objective in this dissertation is to analyse both novels by drawing parallels and identifying the intertextual connexions that relate them. To accomplish this task, we will read them closely under the theoretical concept of Intertextuality, which Julia Kristeva introduced and developed. This theory will be applied in both novels where we find that the protagonists navigate their sense of identity while being in a state of displacement, how their cultural heritage shapes their identity and how their experiences of exile affect their relationships and interactions with others. These novels suggest that exile can lead to a heightened awareness of one's identity, but also to a sense of displacement and loss, as characters struggle to reconcile their past and present selves.

Methodological Outline

At the methodological level, we will divide our dissertation into five sections. In the first section, we have provided an introduction which gives an insight of the whole work. It starts with a general introduction in which we review the literature about Laila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). In the second section, we will present methods and materials. In method, we will provide an insight on Julia Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality. In Materials, we will provide some biographical elements on the two authors and an overall synopsis of both novels. The third section of our research paper will present the results, offering valuable insights into our findings. The discussion which is the fourth section will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter will deal with a formal study of the two novels at the level of characterization. Yet, the second chapter will undertake a thematic investigation about the two novels. To end with, the conclusion of our dissertation which is the fifth section, will be a restatement of the main ideas we dealt with in our work.

II. Method and Materials

A-Method

This part of our research explores the theory of Intertextuality by Julia Kristeva to discuss the logical link existing between exile and identity showed in both works. By using Kristeva's theory, we can analyze the ways in which two novels are connected and how they interact with one another through their intertextual references. This allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the literary traditions, cultural contexts and historical influences that shape each novel, as well as the ways in which they contribute to ongoing literary conversations and debates.

Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality

'Intertextuality' is a modern literary and cultural theory that has its origins in twentieth century linguistics (Allen, 2000, P.2). This theory has sometimes been defined "as a set of relations which a text has with other texts and for discourses belonging to various fields and cultural domains"(Zengin, 2016, P.299). This notion is first introduced by the French theorist Julia Kristeva in her writings on literary theory. In her essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel*(1966), Kristeva expands Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia, describing his conception of the literary word as "an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context"(Allen, 2000, P.38). In her essay, Kristeva situates the word within a three-dimensional space and she describes this interplay in terms of three dimensions: the writing subject, the addressee and exterior texts. Kristeva argues that the meaning of a word is defined both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal dimension refers to the immediate context in which the word is used, such as the sentence or paragraph in which it appears. The vertical

dimension refers to the larger cultural and historical context in which the word is used, such as the political or social context in which the communication takes place. Although the horizontal axis is the linear connection between author and reader, the vertical axis connects the text to other outer texts. Thus, the meaning of a word is not fixed or stable but is constantly changing and evolving as it is used in different contexts. In this regard, Kristeva writes:

Horizontal axis (subject-addressee) and vertical axis (text-context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read... any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another (Allen, 2000, P.38).

Contrary to Bakhtin, Kristeva considers the word not as an intersection of voices, but rather an intersection of texts. She argues that “authors do not create texts from their own mind, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts”(Allen, 2000, P.35). Hence, a text as Kristeva says :“is permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text in which several utterance, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another”(Allen, 2000, P.35). To Kristeva, all texts are intertexts because they refer to the pre-existing texts which means that every text is an echo of other texts and there is no originality in the work. Moreover, all the texts are affected by previous works and can not be separated from each other.

According to Kristeva, cultural texts are not merely written or spoken words, but rather complex symbolic systems that encompass a range of linguistic, social and cultural practices. These texts are always situated within specific historical, cultural contexts and they are constantly evolving as they interact with the changing social, political and economic conditions of the world around them. As Kristeva writes : “Texts are made up of what is at times styled ‘the cultural (or social) texts’, all the different discourses ways of speaking and saying, institutionally sanctioned structures and systems which make up what we call

culture”(Allen, 2000, P.36). Throughly, the text is a compilation of cultural textuality rather than a distinct or separate object. Since they are both composed of the same textual texts elements, individual texts are cultural texts can not be isolated from one another. In addition to this, the text is a ‘practice and productivity’ in Bakhtin's terms ‘double voiced’, ‘it is intertextual status represents its structuration of words and utterances that existed before, will go on after the moment of utterances”(Allen, 2000, P.36). According to Bakhtin, the text is about productivity and practice. Consequently, it is intertextual position represents its arrangement of already-existing words and utterances, creating a text that is ‘double voiced’(Allen, 2000,P.36).

Furthermore, one of the major concepts established by Kristeva in her new intertextuality is the ambivalence of language, in which she employs Bakhtin’s dialogic quality of words while rejecting the Aristotelian principle of singularity based on logic. To be more specific, for Aristotle it would be illogical and paradoxical to say that ‘something (A)’ can be in the same time ‘something (not-A), or the human subject cannot be both here and there at the same time. However, as Kristeva perceives the text to be the subject, she contradicts Aristotle by claiming that ‘the dialogic word or utterances is double-voiced, and possesses a meaning (A) at the same time it possesses an alternative meaning or meanings (not -A)’(Allen, 2000,P.43). For Kristeva, language can be considered to be illogical and a text may have at least two meanings at once.

B-Materials

1-Biography of the Authors

Aboulela’s Biography

Leila Aboulela is a Sudanese author whose literary work focuses on cultural identity and assimilation issues for Muslim expatriates. Religion is also a major theme throughout

Aboulela's work. She is the daughter of an Egyptian mother and a Sudanese father, she was born in Cairo and raised in Khartoum. She attended Khartoum University and received a degree in Economics. She then moved to London in 1987, where she attended the London School of Economics and obtained a masters degree in statistics. The economic crisis in Sudan and concern for her growing family led Aboulela to stay in Britain. Aboulela and her family then moved to Scotland, where she lectured in Statistics and worked as a part-time research assistant. Living in exile inspired Aboulela to begin writing in 1992; her stories were first broadcast on BBC Radio and published shortly thereafter.

Aboulela has written several short stories, including *The Museum* which earned her the first-ever Caine Prize for African Writing. Her first novel, *The Translator* (1999) was long-listed for the Orange Prize for Fiction and shortlisted for the PEN/Macmillan Silver Pen Award. Her second novel, *Minaret*, was published in 2005. She has also written several radio play broadcasts, including *The Mystic Life* (2003) and *The Lion of Chechnya* (2005). *The Translator* is taught in universities in Sudan (Procter, 2009).

Kamila Shamsie's Biography

Kamila Shamsie is a Pakistani British writer and novelist. She was born in Karachi, Pakistan. As a female born in the early 1970s, in a culture in which girls were expected to become only wives and mothers, Shamsie was fortunate in her family background and the support she received : her affluent and literary family already included several female writers, including her mother Maneeza Shamsie and her great-aunt Attia Hosain. Consequently, her literary aspirations were positively encouraged (O'Reilly).

Shamsie wrote her first novel *The City by the Sea*, while still in college, and it was published in 1998 when she was 25. It was shortlisted for the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in the UK and Shamsie received the Prime Minister's Award for Literature in Pakistan in 1999.

She studied and taught in the United States. She has a BA in Creative Writing from Hamilton College in Clinton, NY and an MFA from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Several times awarded by the Pakistan Academy of Letters for her fiction, she writes for The Guardian and works for the BBC. Kamila Shamsie is one of the most remarkable ‘story tellers of our time’, she has been described by The New Indian Express as ‘a novelist to reckon with and to look forward to’(Hamilton, 2003).

2-Summary of the Novels

Summary of *Minaret* (2005)

Minaret raises the problem of confrontation between Islam and the West. On the one hand, Aboulela’s narrative deals with important issues that express the bitter reality experienced by Arabs and Muslim refugees in Western societies. On the other hand, *Minaret* shows the importance of religion and identity in the lives of Muslims whether immigrants or exiles. The story focuses on the life of the protagonist Najwa between the past and the present, through asynchronous events. Najwa who belongs from a rich and Westernised family in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. Her family is also known in Sudan because her father is one of the most famous politicians who works as a government official. Najwa’s life changes completely after a rebellion that puts her father in prison on charges of corruption, then he is sentenced to death by hanging, for that reason her family flees to London.

Najwa's conditions change for the worse, after she got used to the luxurious life in Sudan, she becomes haunted by misfortunes in London. Her mother dies and her twin brother Omar is imprisoned. Then Najwa begins her journey of searching for self-peace in exile. Furthermore, the protagonist lives two different love stories that radically change her life. Moreover, Identity and religion become a source of strength and faith for Najwa. As for the

Hijab, it appears as an essential element in the story by which she imposes her respect and principles as a Muslim refugee in London.

Summary of *Home Fire* (2017)

Home Fire, set in 2017, it revolves around the families of two British Muslims of Pakistani heritage : Adil Pasha, a jihadi killed years earlier on his way to Guantanamo ; and Karamat Lone, the British Home Secretary. The story has five narratives, each focusing on a different character. It begins with Isma, Adil's daughter, who has recently arrived in Massachusetts to pursue postgraduate studies after years of caring for her younger siblings, Aneeka and her brother Parvaiz who has recently moved to Syria after being supposedly radicalized.

As the story unfolds, the siblings are forced to confront the consequences of their father's actions and their own beliefs and loyalties. The novel explores the complexity of identity and the different paths that people can take in response to the same cultural heritage. Through her characters, Shamsie highlights the prejudice and discrimination faced by Muslims in the UK and the difficulties of navigating the tension between Western and Islamic cultures. The characters of this novel struggle to the ultimate drama in the contradictions between the religious, moral and political values of their origin and adoption countries.

III .Results

This research paper is a comparative study of Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Kamelia Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). Its aim is to study the issues of identity and exile in the two novels. To reach our goal, we have relied on Julia Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality. In fact, the two novels are close. Both authors have written extensively about the experiences of being an expatriate Muslim in the UK and have explored themes of identity, belonging and displacement in their works. Their novels often delve into the complexities of navigating multiple cultures and the challenges of reconciling one's heritage with the values of the society in which one lives.

Through the deep analysis of *Minaret* and *Home Fire*, we have deduced that both novels deal with sociological and cultural themes. The two narratives express the conflict between the West and expatriates, especially Muslims, due to the different ways of thinking and living. They also show the violent practices that individuals are exposed to, such as racial discrimination and exclusion within their new societies. We have also introduced some of the aggressive manifestations prevalent in the West against Islam, such as Islamophobia which aims to spread bad ideas and fear of the Islamic religion and Muslims. Islamophobia can make it more difficult for individuals in exile to rebuild their sense of identity and find a sense of belonging in their new environment. This can also lead to feelings of insecurity and fear which can further isolate individuals and make it difficult for them to integrate into their new communities.

In addition, we have identified the role of the family in shaping an individual's sense of identity and cultural bonds. Forced displacement can also break up family ties, causing significant emotional trauma and possibly leaving individuals without a support system. The loss of family ties can also exacerbate the sense of separation experienced by those in exile.

The final findings that we have reached are related to the cultural difference expressed by the two novels where religion can be considered as a major aspect in shaping an individual's identity, particularly those who are Muslims and it also plays an important role in framing cultural practices, values and beliefs. Indeed, *Minaret* and *Home Fire* considered the hijab and prayer as religious duties that Muslims must practice in order to represent their identity. However, these religious practices are regarded as complex issues in Western societies; expatriates may face challenges in maintaining their identity. This can lead to feelings of transference and loss which can exacerbate the challenges faced by those in exile. By exploring these themes in their two respective novels, Aboulela and Shamsie are shedding light on the experiences of a significant and often marginalized Muslim community in the UK. Their narratives help to give voice to the experiences of expatriate Muslims and to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about their culture and identity.

IV- Discussion

Identity and religion are two important issues that have been dealt by many authors, most of whom are considered immigrants as they organize their writings in the country to which they immigrate and live. Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* and Kamelia Shamsie's *Home Fire* are two literary works that express the challenges faced by those in exile. In addition, they consider identity as an important aspect of expatriat life. Both novels aim to explain the difficulty of integrating Muslims into new societies due to different cultural values and beliefs. In this sense, the present research aims to study the two cited novels using Julia Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality. First, we will devote a chapter to the analysis of the characters in the two novels, while defining the close relationship between each of the two characters in the two narratives. Concerning *Minaret*, there are four characters represented first in the female protagonist Najwa , followed by her brother Omar then Anwar and finally Zeinab. For *Home Fire*, we will also analyze four characters the first of which is the protagonist Aneeka, then her brother Parvaiz, followed by Eamonn and the last character is Karamat. As for the second chapter, our comparative study will carefully analyze the plots in both novels, through it we will explore three most important themes : identity and religion as one issue, family and Islamophobia. In this study, we aim to identify the common aspects between each theme of the two stories in order to indicate the extent of their congruence.

Chapter One : Characterization in Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* and Kamila Shamsie's

***Home Fire* : An Intertextual Analysis**

This chapter focuses on the analytical study of the characters in *Minaret* and *Home Fire* with using Julia Kristeva's intertextuality. First, we analyse each character in both novels in terms of appearance, role and dialogue style. We then attribute meaningful similarities between two selected characters in order to indicate that they are related to each other. The intertextuality in the two novels is first between the protagonists Najwa and Aneeka, due to their participation in social and cultural experiences in which they embody the image of the veiled Muslim woman in London, in addition to their role in preserving families despite the difficult challenges they face in exile. The second comparative study concerns two male characters, Omar and Parvaiz who go through a complex experience of exile that leads to the tragic end of their lives. Moreover, their story reflects the situation of some young people who are lost in their new communities due to weak religious faith and poor education.

The following study focuses on Tamer and Eamonn, two young expatriates who have a love affair with Najwa and Aneeka. The experiences of these two male characters are manifested in sacrifice for the sake of love. Through it, it shows some of the difficult challenges a man faces to keep his life partner, as their role shows that the difference in living standards and culture does not prevent the pursuit of love. The last comparison is related to Zeinab, Tamer's mother and Karamat, Eamonn's father. Their experiences reflect the ease of their integration into the new environment because of their influence on Western culture and life style which makes them forget their identity. Moreover, they sometimes express their fear of religious people, which may indicate that they have Islamophobia. As a result, they reject their children's relationships with the veiled Najwa and Aneeka. The aim of studying these selected characters is to confirm that they are linked in terms of their cultural and social

experiences. It also indicates that identity and exile are two issues raised in a similar narrative style.

1- Najwa and Aneeka

The main female characters in both *Minaret* and *Home Fire* have a significant role in shaping the narratives of the two novels. The two novelists imaginatively create their characters to represent the societies they write about. These novels about clashing cultures, family loss and grief look at the complex struggles faced by Muslims trying to find their place in a post 9/11 world. Aneeka in Shamsie's narrative converges with Aboulela's main character as they share some features, especially their strong religious beliefs and loyalty towards family. The two protagonists suffer due to the choices of their family, in particular those of their brothers. Therefore, they experience painful events during their journey.

To start with, Aboulela introduces the protagonist Najwa in her novel as a young Sudanese woman from a prestigious family of the bourgeois class in Sudan, whose father is one of the most important political figure. Najwa's family lives in very comfortable conditions of luxury equipments as well as servants and cars. Najwa is not like the rest of the Sudanese girls; She lives an independent life, due to the upbringing she receives from her Western-minded family which makes her appearance and thoughts tend to the liberal European culture. In addition, no one controls her life, she is not subject to any authority, unlike the girls of her generation who live according to the laws of customs and traditions.

Was I not an emancipated young woman driving her own car to university? In Khartoum only a minority of women drove cars and in university less than thirty percent of student were girls.(
Aboulela, 2005, P .10)

In this sense, it is indicated that Najwa is challenging the patriarchal system. She admits that she is among the minorities who drive cars in Khartoum, which means that Sudan is a male-dominated society where women's freedom is limited. As for Najwa, she is the young woman

who does not accept such laws. It also refers to the lives of women in Sudan where religious teachings and duties always affect them, Najwa describes them : “the tobés that covered their slimness - pure white cotton covering their arms and hair”(Aboulela,2005, P.19). It is known in Sudan that most of the women are conservative and wear the hijab. Unlike independent Najwa who wears short clothes and goes to parties “my too short skirts and too tight blouses”(Aboulela,2005, P.19)

On the other hand, Najwa's strong personality makes her responsible for her brother Omar and she defends him most of the time, to the extent that her family insures Najwa over him. In this sense, her mother asks her : “Look after Omar, you're the girl, you're the quiet, sensible one. Look after Omar. And year in, year out, I covered for Omar. I sensed his weakness and looked out for Omar.”(Aboulela, 2005, P.17). Even though the twin brothers are same age, Najwa is characterized by sobriety and wisdom, unlike her brother Omar who always acts recklessly, but Najwa overlooks his faults because she loves him “The empathy of twins gripped ”(Aboulela, 2005, P10). Regarding the experiences that Najwa lives, it can be said that her life changes suddenly after her father's trial for the crime of corruption and his support for a totalitarian regime. As a result he is executed, the reason why Najwa and her family are forced to flee to London where events radically change Najwa's life. Among these events is that Najwa returns to her religion and identity after she was ignorant of her origin because alienation makes her feel dispersed. To consider the hijab and the mosque as the two sources of her strength, her personality changes from a Westernized woman to a conservative Muslim.

In the same way, Shamsie portrays Aneeka as a beautiful and obstinate law student of nineteen years old. She is a Muslim woman who wears Hijab and lives in London. Many characters note that Aneeka is beautiful and invites sexual advances from boys. Moreover, Aneeka is deeply loyal to her twin brother that's why she spends most of her journey trying to

find a way to make sure that he can return to Britain safely even after joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Parvaiz joins ISIS without bothering about how his sisters will be affected. However, Aneeka faces this abandonment by staying fiercely devoted to her twin and determined to support him despite his actions against the government simply because he is her brother.

Concerning Isma, she takes a different approach and tells the police about her brother's activities. Aneeka is hurt and shocked when she found out about it. Isma tells Aneeka that eventually the police would have discovered everything and Aneeka cries out loud: “You don’t know that. They might not have. And then he could have come home. He could just have turned around the moment he knew he’d made a mistake and come home. You’ve made him not able to come home. Isma, you’ve made our brother not able to come home ”(Shamsie, 2017,P.27). Isma tries to comfort her enraged sister by saying that the only option for her to keep herself and Aneeka safe is by giving up Parvaiz. In this sense she says : “I wasn’t going to let him make you suffer for the choices he’d made” (Shamsie, 2017, P.28). Despite her profound love and worry for both of her siblings, she makes the decision to inform the police, a choice that Aneeka views as nothing less than a betrayal. In this sense, she says :

“I mean it. You betrayed us, both of us. And then you tried to hide it from me. Don’t call, don’t text, don’t send me pictures, don’t fly across the ocean and expect me to ever agree to see your face again. We have no sister”(Shamsie, 2017, P.28).

While parvaiz is dissatisfied with his life and does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, he asks Aneeka to find a way to get him back to london. However, the law is not on his side and Aneeka desperately hoping for help from Eamonn Lone ; the son of a powerful political figure, Karamate Lone. Aneeka displays a familial love that comes from being a twin with her brother and despite his errors, she still considers him as a member of the family. She

worries about her brother for the past six months because of his absence after joining the terrorist group. In this regard, Aneeka says to Eamonn: “That’s my twin. I’ve spent every day the last six months sick with worry about him. Now he wants to come home. he wants to come home. He want me to bring him home, even in the form of a shell”(Shamsie, 2017, P.55).

Later, came Parvaiz who after realizing his mistake following his father's footsteps, tries his best to escape but he is killed. Being a British citizen, he also deserves to be buried in the United Kingdom. Aneeka insists on bringing her brother’s dead body to London and goes to Pakistan without telling anyone. She goes against all wishes of her sister and the state in order to follow her own personal beliefs and tells the media that there is neither justice nor law and asks the Prime Minister of Pakistan :“let me take my brother home”(Shamsie, 2017, P.123). She fights and faces permanent injustices in her quest to get her brother’s dead body back to the land where it belongs. Aneeka is doing what she believes is right but her opposition to the state carries a deeper significance, she performs a personal revolution against an oppressive rule despite the consequences. Thus, Aneeka’s actions are admirable because she expresses feeling of love and duty towards her brother and has the courage to act on these feelings. From this, we may understand that the female characters of both novels face complex and intricate situations that lead to self-destruction.

After analyzing both characters Najwa and Aneeka, it is evident that there are some connections between them. First, both are considered as female protagonists and share crucial common points since both are heroic and devoted sisters. The two protagonists prove that the unity of family is sacred and the bond of brotherhood must be strong, indeed they decide to remain brave not only for themselves but for the sake of their respective brothers. Additionally, both Najwa and Aneeka experience the loss of loved ones, which shapes their actions and decisions throughout their stories. Najwa loses her father, her family's wealth and

status after the fall of their regime, while Aneeka loses her twin brother Parvaiz to the extremist cause. Both characters are forced to confront their grief and try to find a way forward.

The second element that they both share lays in the unwilling journey they experiences in London since both navigate their faith and culture in a Western society where they demonstrate resilience and determination in the face of adversity. These connection between the two characters highlight the universal experiences of Muslim women in the modern world. Furthermore, Shamsie portrayal of Aneeka makes us to think about Aboulela's protagonist, since both present an image of the veiled Muslim woman who lives in the West, where the Western society and culture are in direct opposition to their identity and religion.

To conclude, Najwa the protagonist of *Minaret* and Aneeka in *Home Fire* are both portrayed as complex and multi-dimensional characters. Ultimately, the intertextual connection between *Minaret* and *Home Fire* serve to highlight the struggles and complexities of Muslim women in the modern world and the tension between cultural traditions and individual aspirations faced by those who seek to navigate their way through the often-conflicting demands of tradition and modernity. This implies, in light of Kristeva's words that a text can not be studied independently of another texts. Kristeva argues: “each word (text) is an intersection of another words (text) where at least one other word(text) can be read ”(Allen, 2000, P.39). This means that when studying a text, it is important to consider its intertextual connections, the ways in which it references or alludes to other texts and the ways in which other texts may have influenced its creation. By doing so, we can gain a deeper understanding of the text's meaning, as well as the cultural and historical context in which it is produced.

2- Omar and Parvaiz

In addition to the similarity in the main female characters : Aboulela's and Shamsie's works pave the way for various parallels that exist between the male characters. To begin with, Najwa's fraternal twin Omar, is completely different from her according to what the writer describes. He is influenced by the European way of thinking and living in addition to his only concern to complete his studies in London like his rich friends, sounds like a perpetual dream clearly when he once admits "I want to go to London. I hate studying here"(Aboulela,2005,P.26) which is repeated many times in the story. Omar is a reckless and irresponsible young man, worse than that, he follows a bad path and has perverted friends. In addition, he takes drugs, alcohol and his life swings between crazy nights with various girls. Even as Najwa states : "I smelt him and guessed what the smell was. But I didn't want to believe it. Hashish? Marijuana?"(Aboulela,2005,P.77). In fact, Hashish and Marijuana are types of drug with addictive substances and poisoning the nervous system that leads to drowsiness or unconsciousness. This corresponds to Omar who commits an immoral and illegal behaviors due to his addiction to alcohol and drugs which affect his condition in a turbulent and dangerous way.

As for Najwa, her fear for her brother Omar makes her close her eyes to all the illegal behaviors that he always commits. She is well aware of his turbulent condition in Sudan and after exile, but in London there are strict laws that led to the incarceration of Omar for drugs possession which led to the loss of his youth. Despite everything that happen, Najwa maintains her relationship with her brother and has never thought of giving up him. Najwa's responsibility towards Omar makes her travel long distances to visit him in prison. In addition, she strives to provide him everything he needs. On one of her visits to her brother, she confesses : "It's been ages since you sent me an invite. You know I would come and see

you every weekend. You know that''(Aboulela,2005,P.67). While Omar appreciates Najwa's efforts and admits that she takes long way to visit him.

After all, there is a strong relationship between Najwa and her brother Omar. This bond consists of love and attention. Omar is an important part of Najwa's life, he is a member of her family and the closest person to her. As for Najwa, her role towards her brother lies in caring and paying attention, even if it requires sacrificing for him. Although Najwa suffers from personal and ethnic problems in London, but Omar's being in prison makes her defy those difficulties and not give up because her safety is related to her brother's safety.

Similarly, Parvaiz is Aneeka's twin brother and Isma's younger brother. Parvaiz's chapter begins with him and a guy called Farooq in an electronics shop in Istanbul, where they stopped to pick up fresh recruits on their way to the airport. The story then goes back in time to the day Isma informed the family she was moving to the United States. Both Aneeka and Parvaiz know that she had applied for a student visa. However, because of their jihadi father, the siblings are doubtful that Isma's application would be approved. Parvaiz is particularly passionate in sound design, however there are few opportunities for him to pursue this. Just before Isma leaves, Farooq approaches Parvaiz and claims to know other jihadi who know their father, Adil. Then, he uses Adil as a tool and convince him that Jihad is the solution and that joining ISIS will allow him to follow his father and carve out his own identity. Farooq takes over as the sole parental figure in Pavaiz's life, replacing both Isma who raised him and Aneeka who provided him with emotional support :

Farooq would talk and Parvaiz would listen to those stories of his father for which he'd always yearned— not a footloose boy or feckless husband but a man of courage who fought injustice, saw beyond the lie of national boundaries, kept his comrades' spirits up through times of darkness (Shamsie, 2017, P.68).

Farooq plays a significant role, he uses Parvaiz's self-doubt and insecurity to recruit him to his cause. Parvaiz represents a young man who is disillusioned with life in Britain and makes a bad decision. Therefore, he is immediately captivated and he devours all of Farooq's heroic and amazing tales about his father. His family has always treated their father as something shameful, so he is never able to admit that he is curious about learning more about him. Parvaiz eventually decides to travel to Raqqa, Syria, to support the cause that his father believed in because Farooq promises him a life that would give him the high social status he believes he deserves, a world where he could achieve his dreams and a world which provides an opportunity to tackle the roots of racial discrimination, injustice and inequality. As Farooq puts it :

There is a place we can go to now. A place where migrants come in to join are treated like kings, given more in benefits than the locals to acknowledge all they've given up to reach there. A place where skin color doesn't matter. Where schools and hospitals are free, and rich and poor have same facilities... Where someone like you would find himself working in a state-of-the-art studio, living like a prince. Your own villa, your own car. Where you could speak openly about your father, with pride, not shame (Shamsie, 2017, P.75).

Overall, It may be said that there are connections between the two male characters Omar and Parvaiz. First, both characters represent nineteenth years old twin brothers. Omar is the brother of Aboulela's protagonist Najwa and Parvaiz is the twin brother of Shamsie's protagonist Aneeka. The other point that connects Omar and Parvaiz appears in the difficult journey they face in which the same causes lead to dire consequences for both of them. Omar and Parvaiz follow wrong ideas and bad companies, in addition they both commit the same guilt. According Omar in *Minaret*, he is a corrupt young man who does not know how to manage his life properly, due to his poor choice of companions and he becomes addicted to drugs that lead to the end of his life in prison. As for Parvaiz, he is recruited by a dishonest man with extremist

ideas who convinces him to join ISIS in Syria. As a result, he is not allowed to return to London and sentenced to die in exile.

In conclusion, the parallels between Omar and Parvaiz are very clear in *Minaret* and *Home Fire*. Both of them explain the reasons for the moralities corruption of some young people in societies. Despite their different backgrounds and circumstances, both Omar and Parvaiz share a sense of disillusionment with the societies in which they live. However, both characters ultimately come to regret their choices and suffer tragic consequences as a result. For Omar and Parvaiz, are two young men whose lives are ruined by a lack of religious awareness. Their stories are intertextual in that they are shaped by the historical and cultural contexts in which they exist and they engage with larger social and political issues that are relevant to their time and place.

In addition, the similar role of Omar and Parvaiz is a hint of strong intertextuality between *Minaret* and *Home Fire*. Therefore, both novels explore the theme of the role of religion in shaping one's identity and the consequences of a lack of religious education and awareness. Overall, the intertextual nature of both novels illustrates how literature reflects and engages with the complexities of our world. According to Kristeva, all texts are interconnected because they are produced through the absorption and transformation of previous texts. Kristeva argues that when we read a text, we bring with us a knowledge of other texts which we use to interpret and understand the text we are currently reading. In this way, any text can be seen as a "mosaic" of quotations, as each word or phrase is imbued with meaning derived from other texts and cultural references (Allen, 2000, P.39).

3- Tamer and Eamonn

Another comparison that can be drawn between *Minaret* and *Home Fire*, is the secondary male characters Tamer and Eamonn. Different from the previous male characters, the young Tamer is 19 years old who lives in London but he was born in Sudanese capital of Khartoum where their father works and he is of Sudanese origin. This means that Tamer and his sister Lamia also have the same nationality unlike his mother, Dr. Zeinab, an Egyptian who works as a doctor in Cairo. According to Tamer's description in the novel, he is a handsome young man, similar to his mother, Dr. Zainab, but he is taller than her and has beautiful features with large prominent eyes with curved nose. As for his education, he studies at an international secondary school affiliated with the American system in Amman specializing in business administration. This speciality is not Tamer's wish, but rather his father's decision, in fact Tamer wants to study Muslim history.

Suddenly, a change occur in Tamer's life because he soon falls in love with Najwa, not because of her appearance but is impressed by her religiosity and adherence to the teachings of Islam to the point that he asks her to marry him. This is what he indicates in the story during their conversation, Tamer really falls in love with Najwa as he is jealous of her. Najwa's morals and religious convictions make Tamer confident to marry her and he does not care about anything else.

Like her male counterpart in *Minaret* , Eamonn in *Home Fire* is portrayed as a tall and charming son of a powerful political figure who becomes home secretary. Eamonn is initially presented as Isma's friend and potential romantic interest. However, when he views a photo of Aneeka, he falls in love immediately. When back to london, he tracks Aneeka down and saw her ; she was dressed in a white hijab and he wished to “unpin the white hijab that framed her face”(Shamsie, 2017,P.38). Aneeka acts recklessly during her first meeting with Eamonn,

asking him if he lived alone at home, to which he replies affirmatively. Soon after, she enters his house and completely unpinned her hijab; meanwhile, she looks Eamonn as a seducer. Even Eamonn is perplexed and hesitant to interpret Aneeka's movements and could not deduce her intentions. Lately, he thought Aneeka was gently showing his heartbeat when she places his hand on her chest and then she said “We match”(Shamsie, 2017, P.40), then the two fall into a furtive romance, keeping their relationship a secret from their families.

Still, Aneeka persuades Eamonn to keep their relationship a secret until she allows it and says : “I won’t tell anyone about you; you don’t tell anyone about me. We’ll be each other’s secret,”(Shamsie, 2017, P.42) Eamonn questioned it. “Why? Upon this, she answered, ‘I don’t ask ‘why’ about your fantasies, Do I?’”(Shamsie, 2017,P.42). But what Eamonn does not realize is that Aneeka has a reason for being with him besides pure love. She needs his help in convincing his father to provide safe passage and protection to Parvaiz who joins ISIS. It is clear that Eamonn lost himself after meeting Aneeka and changes from being emotionless to being more emotional. Even though he knows Aneeka trapped him to save her brother, he becomes angry for a short time, but later, he calms down and promises never to abandon her in any situation. So he goes to his father, to help Parvaiz return safely and tells him about Aneeka, whom he truly loved :

Eamonn picked up a paperweight with a lion and unicorn etched on it, turned it in his hands, a little shy, all the other concerns pushed to the side as he told the man he loved most in the world about the woman he loved most in the world (Shamsie, 2017,P.57).

After studying both secondary characters Tamer in *Minaret* and Eamonn in *Home Fire* , it becomes clear that there is an interrelation between them. First, both Tamer and Eamonn are considered to be from immigrant families in London that are affected by modern society. In addition, both characters are similar in terms of cultural and living standards, as Tamer is the son of a prestigious family and does not face any financial problems, like Eamonn who comes

from a rich and well-known family. Compared to the roles represented by Tamer and Eamonn, we find that there is a coherent relation, as they both sacrifice for love. Tamer is the love interest of the protagonist Najwa in *Minaret* and their relationship is complicated by their different social classes and the political turmoil in Sudan. Eamonn, on the other hand, is the son of a British politician and falls in love with Aneeka whose twin brother joins a jihadist group. They both defy their parents to marry the ones they love, as a result their lives end sadly.

When it comes to analyzing similarities between these characters, we can use Kristeva's theory of intertextuality to identify the ways in which these characters are connected. Overall, intertextuality is a crucial concept in literary theory, as it highlights the interconnectedness of texts and the ways in which they influence and shape each other. According to Kristeva, Intertextuality refers to the connection between existing texts and revised texts. In this context, Graham Allen (2000) argues that a “text is not an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality” (Allen, 2000, P.36). It means that a text is a product of another text that was previously written by others. Every text is created by an individual or a group of individuals, who are themselves products of the culture in which they live. They draw upon their own experiences, beliefs and values when creating a text, but they are also influenced by the wider cultural context in which they operate.

4-Zineb and Karamat

Another parallel that can be drawn between *Minaret* (2005) and *Home Fire* (2017), concerns the two parents Dr.Zeinab and Karamat Lone. First, Dr.Zainab who is the mother of Tamer and Karamat Lone the father of Eamonn have a significant impact in the two novel's plot. Basically, Dr.Zainab is an Egyptian woman who lives in London but works as a doctor in Egypt. As she is described by Najwa, Dr. Zeinab is a strong and respected personality,

gaining value in society and she has an open mind and tends to Western culture. She travels most of the time for professional reasons and also participates in several international conferences. Dr Zeinab is described as having dark skin, but lighter than the color of her children, because she is Egyptian and not Sudanese, elegant in her dress and taking good care of her appearance. Indeed, she is a charismatic woman with an attractive charm, her appearance is always beautiful and regular. As it is mentioned in the novel :“She looks elegant in a brown two-piece suit, full make-up and shiny high-heeled shoes”(Aboulela, 2005, P.54). Another description of her, is provided by Najwa : “Doctor Zeinab smiles as she walks into the kitchen. I like her - her thick auburn hair, the way she beams at Mai, the way she stands waiting for the kettle to boil, her hands on her hips, not caring that her stomach is bulging”(Aboulela, 2005,P.51). In addition, Dr. Zainab is not only elegant in appearance, but also a good-hearted and hard-working woman . That is why Najwa does not stop describing her in a beautiful and polite manner. Moreover, she admits that she loves her because Dr. Zainab always treats her in a nice way.

It is true that Dr. Zainab is a kind and affectionate woman who loves and takes care of her children, but with regarding to her son Tamer, she is somewhat intolerant, as she does not support his ideas and respects his personal choices, neither in studies nor in his relationship with Najwa. Rather, she rejects her son's relationship with the maid because she believes that Najwa's circumstances does not commensurate with their standard of living. Dr Zainab says when she visits Najwa to convince her to leave her son :

I can't sleep at night for worry.' She sniffs. 'What is going to become of him? He fails his exams and instead of applying himself and working hard, he imagines himself in love. And with who? You're old enough to be his mother even if you don't look it! And lie tells inc the Prophet, peace he upon him, married Khadijah and she was fifteen years older than him. Is this an argument? We live now, not then. And when I reason with hint, he storms out of the house and for one whole day puts his mobile off so I can't reach him! (Aboulela, 2005,P.32).

Zeinab's reaction to her son Tamer's relationship with Najwa indicates a kind of discrimination against Najwa, not racial discrimination, but Najwa's appearance does not appeal to Dr. Zeinab because she does not like the veil. Instead, she would prefer her son's future woman to be civilized. One of the reasons, Dr. Zeinab is biased towards religion is that she has been living in London for a long time therefore she is affected by the culture of modern society which makes her forget about the original identity that she belongs. Regarding London, it is one of the countries that calls for intellectual liberation, contrary to Muslim values. Moreover, the problem of Islamophobia is wide spread, as immigrant Muslims are subjected to brain washing by the enemies of Islam then Muslims become seculars and take a wrong picture of Islam. This is the case of Dr. Zeinab who refuses Tamer to be religious. For her religiosity spoils his thoughts and destroys his life. As a result, Dr. Zeinab is influenced by anti-Islamic ideas, while Islam according to Najwa is simple and easy contrary to what secularists claim.

In parallel, Karamat Lone lives in Holland Park, he is the first Muslim Home Secretary and an anti-terrorism crusader. Raised as a Muslim, but he places more importance on his national duty than religion. The character is really divisive because he has imposed tough sanctions on people like Parvaiz who becomes radicalized and moves to countries like Syria. He proposes to strip them off their British citizenship and he also has very controversial views about what Muslim women should wear and is condemning of the Hijab. Thus, Karamat Lone sees Adil Pasha's extremism as a breach of faith towards Britain's multi-cultural social structure, a crack in the solidarity among the British citizens and a treason against the State.

The moment Eamonn confesses his love for Aneeka and his decision to marry her, even though her brother is recruited by the terrorist in Syria, Karamat stops acting like his father and starts acting like the mighty Home Secretary and the cruel enemy of those who

could endanger Britain's national security. Karamat becomes an enemy of the Pasha family's members and when he completed his investigation of Aneeka's matter, looked up and restricted his son from meeting her again.

You will have no more contact with this girl. I'm setting up a security detail for you.
Dad ! Look, just, meet her. All right ? I'll bring her over..
All this security around the house, and the nexus of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State is just going to waltz in on the arm of my son.
Don't you ever refer to her in that way again. She's the woman I'm going to marry (Shamsie, 2017,P.57).

Aneeka wants to give his brother an identity but she refuses to accept the reality that Parvaiz is not allowed to be buried even in his birth place in England. She protests against the British authority by not accepting their rule that Parvaiz is not anymore a British citizen and she goes to retrieve her brother's body from Pakistan. Through this rule, Karamat Lone demonstrates his authority in a culture that has been dominated by the British Government and this has had negative effects on the lives of various characters. Karamat Lone also manipulates his son by telling him that he will only help the Pash family if he leaves Aneeka. As a result Eamonn leaves aneeka, however her father betrays him and does nothing to help the Pasha family. Karamat Lone decides to deliver the final blow by revoking Aneeka's citizenship as well, as a way to further punish her. However, he ultimately decides against it when he realizes that she no longer has a British passport anyway, as it was taken from her when she tries to join her brother in Istanbul. He says :

She couldn't return to the UK on her Pakistani passport without applying for a visa, which she was certainly welcome to do if she wanted to waste her time and money. As for her British passport, which had been confiscated by the security services when she tried to join her brother in Istanbul... Let her continue to be British; but let her be British outside Britain (Shamsie, 2017, P.32).

Through an intertextual analysis, we can see how the similarities can be used to explore different aspects of Muslim identity and the immigrant experience in the United Kingdom. One of the key similarities between the two characters is their status as immigrants to the United Kingdom. Both Dr.Zeinab and Karamat Lone experiences life in a different country and culture before coming to the UK and this informs their perspectives on British society. In addition, Dr.Zeinab and Karamat become secularists because of Islamophobia. With regard to their roles, they both represent paternity that leads them to fear for their children's lives. According to Dr.Zeinab, she tries to protect her son Tamer from his relationship with Najwa. In addition, she rejects his religious tendencies due to her belief that religiosity is the reason for the loss of youth.

In parallel, Karamat Lone tries to protect his son Eamonn from Aneeka because she is the daughter of a jihadi. Furthermore, he cuts all ties with Islam in order to be considered an atheist and maintains his position in England. Indeed, his commitment to British values is utterly sincere. Moreover, both of Dr.Zeinab and Karamat are considered one of the most important figures in society as they are highly respected. For Zeinab, she is a successful doctor, while Karamat is the British prime minister and a self-made man who works hard to achieve his goals and overcomes many obstacles along the way.

In conclusion, Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* is in Kristiva's words a permutation of Aboulela's novel *Minaret* at the level of characters. The idea of permutation suggests that the characters in *Home Fire* are not direct copies of those in *Minaret* but are instead reworked or adapted in some way. According to Kristeva, a text meaning can be understood as 'a permutation of text, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, intertexts or existed texts, in which several utterance, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another'(Allen, 2000, P.35). In this sense, a text is not a self-contained entity but rather exists in relation to other texts and its meaning is shaped by those relationships. In other words, the meaning of a

text is not fixed, but rather emerges through a complex interplay of various elements, including the reader's own experiences, the cultural context in which the text is produced and the textual references that are woven into the text itself.

Chapter Two : Intertextual and Thematic Connections between Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

This chapter aims to study Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* and Kamelia Shamsie's *Home Fire* from a thematic perspective using Julia Kristiva theory of intertextuality. First , we carefully analyse the events taking place in both novels and explore the three most important themes: identity and religion as an inseparable part , family and Islamophobia. Then we seek to indicate that these three elements relate to issues of identity and exile by explaining how it contribute to reconstructing the expatriate's sense of belonging to an identity by preserving their religious practices in the new society, particularly for those who are Muslim. In addition to the difficulties in integrating into the other society due to different cultural values and beliefs, especially the forms of violence and discrimination they suffer. Then, we show that expatriates' sense of separation, the loss of family and religious support facilitate their integration into the new communities. By analysing these three themes, we identify the most important ideas proposed by the two novels and compare them. We also study the roles played by the characters to represent the issues raised. Finally, to confirm the strong relationship between the two novels, we elucidates the extent of compatibility between their respective narratives.

1-Identity and Religion

Identity and religion are seen as body and soul, they are two inseparable parts. Additionally, since religion is frequently linked to the concept of identity, we always refer to religious identity. For instance, when the issue is related to a person's being, we often focus on his identity that includes religion as the most important part. Hence, the focused theme includes identity and religion. In this regard, James Fearon defines identity as the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race,

ethnicity, religion, language and culture (Fearon, 1999, P.4). Accordingly, Aboulela seeks to represent identity and religion in her work *Minaret* (2005) by using the protagonist Najwa who plays an important role in the story. In addition, the author identifies the setting as a key point to emphasize the value of identity and religion. Setting is often considered as the main pillar of the story because it refers to the connection between time and place, as two important units that connect events and help to understand them sequentially and precisely.

First, Najwa is the young woman whose life completely changed after being exiled with her family to London. Najwa was ignorant of the foundations and teachings of her religion, she even did not know anything about the customs and traditions of her Arab Muslim country Sudan. However, she changes and begins to search for her identity and adhere to the teachings of her religion. In this sense, she says : “I was happy because I was praying again”(Aboulela, 2005, P.40). Accordingly, her choice to wear Hijab, receiving religious and guidance lessons at Regent's Park Mosque was the first step in changing her personality. Najwa admits : “Waffa took me shopping for my first headscarves. I ended up buying from Tie Rack”(Aboulela, 2005, P.49). Although the veil has always been considered as a complex issue in Western societies, Najwa defies some secularists by wearing the veil in London and accepting her new personality to represent the image of the authentic Arab Muslim woman. Najwa admits :

When I went home, I walked smiling, self-conscious of the new material around my face...I was invisible and they were quiet. All the frissons, all the sparks died away. Everything went soft and I thought, Oh, so this is what it was all about ; how I looked, just how I looked, othing else, nothing non visual (Aboulela, 2005, P.50).

Additionally, Aboulela identifies the setting as an important element for her exploration of identity and religion. It is also considered as a part of the character's lives and influences their roles. It is true that Najwa used to travel to London and spend her holidays with her family

there, but exile and the idea of not returning to Sudan disturbs Najwa. However Najwa's mother's death is considered a severe blow in Najwa's life because she suffers from exile in London. Therefore, her trauma is the first reason toward her change. To begin the journey of selfsearching, identity becomes her only refuge. Najwa confesses at her mother's funeral : “ When she told me that I should pray for my mother, I felt that same bleakness in me. I became aware of that hollow place”(Aboulela, 2005, P.31). In addition, Najwa concludes suddenly that she is negligent in performing her religious duties, this is what refers to her epiphany, which is a moment of sudden and great realization or reevaluation. For Najwa, her epiphany happens when she decides to enter the Mosque and learn about Islamic foundation. She deliberately chooses to wear hijab, Najwa says : “I reached out for something new. I reached out for spiritual pleasure and realized that this was what I had envied in the students who lined up to pray on the grass of Khartoum University”(Aboulela, 2005, P.40). For comparison, Najwa's personality after repentance is different from before. She can not be considered a new woman who finds what she is looking for. As for religion and identity, they become two important parts of her life, “ In the mosque I fell like I'm in Khartoum again”(Aboulela, 2005, P.42). Moreover, she refuses to surrender, neither Anwar's love nor the temptations of London can seduce her. Najwa declares : “I have changed”(Aboulela, 2005, P.42).

Shamsie in her part, follows two families in London who have fundamentally opposed perspectives on how to deal with their Muslim identity. Members of one are religiously practicing individuals while members of the other reject the religion entirely, calling it retrograde and misogynistic. In the novel, Shamsie depicts the condition of immigrants in Britain. Shamsie's characters are immersed in a multicultural environment and each of them has a special relationship with Islam. Especially, she has presented Isma who is Aneeka older sister and one of the five protagonists of the novel as a proud muslim woman and who is an

example of a devout and a conservative woman with a strong Muslim background and good religious habits. While interacting with other characters in the novel, Isma also serves as a representative for Pakistani cultural values. Moreover, she particularly likes Pakistani pop songs. Her mastery of the Pakistani national language, that she employs frequently in her conversations with other characters can be seen for instance when she asks Eammon Lone :“so you don’t understand bey-takallufi”(Shamsie, 2017, P21) which is a famous Pakistani song. Likewise to Isma, her sister Aneeka is also a practicing Muslim and believes in Allah. Moreover, she feels comfortable using the turban to cover her head.

Muslim women who wear the veil are stigmatized and they are regarded on the one hand as oppressed and on the other hand as religious fanatics. Whereas, Aneeka and Isma both wear Hijabs as a way to express their faith and claim control over their own bodies, they face various levels of opposition from the outside world because they wear a Hijab. For instance, when Isma first meets Eammon, he enquires about Hijab as a dress code and remarks, “cancer or Islam _which is the greater affliction ?.. I meant, it must be difficult to be Muslim in the world these days”. I’d find it more difficult to not be Muslim.”(Shamsie, 2017, P.18) She said. Additionally, the Hijab is a symbol of religious and female empowerment. As Aneeka says to Eamonn :“I get to choose which parts of me I want strangers to look at, and which are for you”(Shamsie, 2017,P.42). Isma and Aneeka both reject the negative stereotypes of hijab and continue to wear it as a form of their cultural pride. By doing so, they preserve their culture and Muslim identity in Britain. Shamsie uses multiple perspectives to show that Islam, like any religion, is not uniform, despite the dangerous way it is frequently portrayed. Through this portrayal, the author may also seek to promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance, as well as challenge preconceived notions and biases.

After analyzing the theme of identity and religion in Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017), we apply Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality in order to draw the appropriate connection and parallels between the two novels. For Aboulela and Shamsie, their objective is to raise a difficult and sensitive issue, as it is considered an integral part of human life. As for the two authors, they both are Muslims and live in exile in London. This means that their choice of the theme of identity and religion stems from an emotional experience. We also notice that both stories raise the issue of identity and religion in the same manner, as they rely on employing the three protagonists : Najwa, Isma and Aneeka in order to represent the veiled woman. In addition, there are some religious expression in both novels that refer to Islam, such as Allah, Mashallah, Quran and so on. These fine details in *Minaret* and *Home Fire* are sufficient to indicate the existence of Intertextuality. By examining both novels, we can draw parallels between them and gain a clear understanding of the ways in which identity and religion intersect in contemporary fiction.

Both novels explore the experiences of Muslim women in Western societies and the challenges they face in reconciling their religious and cultural identities with the expectations and values of the society they live in. Hijab is one aspect of this identity, but there are many others that are explored in these stories. In addition, Aboulela and Shamsie refer to worship, fasting and prayer in their two narratives. These pillars are considered among the foundations of Muslim religion. Both novels seek to express the harsh reality suffered by Muslims immigrants in Western countries. London is the place where Najwa and Aneeka meet which also represents the world that holds opinions of prejudice and hostility to Islam.

Therefore, it is stated in both stories that religious identity is the only refuge for Muslims. Together, these intertextual connections demonstrate the ways in which literature can build upon and expand upon existing narratives, allowing readers to explore complex themes and ideas in a new meaningful ways. Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality suggests

that authors do not create works entirely from their own minds, but rather they draw upon existing texts and cultural references, as they provide a starting point for writers to build upon and expand upon established narratives. As stated by Kristeva : “Authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from preexistent texts”(Allen, 2000, P.35).

2- Family

Family is the second central theme in both novels. To start with, in *Minaret* (2005) Aboulela chooses to explore value of family, especially among Muslims. She explains how sister is responsible for her family members to the point of sacrifice. In relation to *Minaret*, Aboulela aims to represent the protagonist Najwa as a symbol of giving and sacrifice, she is the loyal sister who grew up on the concept of sacrifice for the sake of her brother Omar. It is also mentioned that Najwa has always been a supporter of her brother, in addition to enduring his reckless behaviors. She never complains about the extreme tiredness and the responsibility that she bears, because she considers herself to be the mother who has to bear and take care of her family members. Despite the problems and difficulties that Najwa faces in exile with her family to London, she sticks to her brother Omar even after his imprisonment, whereas it is never mentioned in the story that Najwa wants to abandon her brother.

Indeed, Aboulela focuses on the qualities of Muslims in which sisters always represent the role of the mother. Moreover, Najwa’s brotherly attitude towards Omar carries all love and affection. Her constant concern and fear for his condition, in addition to her visits every week to reassure him. All this indicates the strength of the fraternal bond that unites the sister and her brother. Najwa, like every Muslim woman, is brought up on the concept of sacrifice for the sake of her family's comfort. The cruelest sacrifices that Najwa makes is giving up the love of her life Anwar, despite the sensitive situation she thinks of her brother’s interest first, which is related to his freedom and his future. In this sense, Najwa admits : “I can help Omar

next month when he comes out of prison. Maybe he can persuaded to become a student''(Aboulela, 2005, P.34). Here, Najwa talks while thinking about her brother's interest, although her heart is broken at the separation of her beloved Tamer as a result of this sad situation, sincerity and loyalty appear between the brothers, as the bond of kinship is confirmed. Inside the story, Najwa accepts the money that Dr. Zeinab gives her in exchange for giving up Tamer and she actually sacrifices love in return hoping to help her brother and provides him with better conditions. In the end, Aboulela portrays the beautiful feature in the family where brothers represent a sacred element of great value and importance, in addition to the fact that Muslims sacrifice without charge for the happiness of their family members.

Concerning *Home Fire* (2017), Shamsie depicts two very different families to highlight the importance and challenges of family life. Family members in *Home Fire* have a strong bond with one another and frequently go to great lengths to protect their loved ones. From the beginning, the Pasha family is portrayed as a close family. In fact, Isma is the first character introduced by Shamsie as the mother-figure in her story. Isma has to protect and raise her younger siblings since they were 12 years old after their parent's death. Instead of living her own life, Isma as the eldest decides to take care of Aneeka and Parvaiz. She abandons her studies and begins working in a laundry shop to support her family. Isma struggles all her life to make the lives of her siblings better, in addition she did not return to her academic life until she felt the twins were adult enough. Even when she was away, she tries to follow Aneeka, while worrying about her brother Parvaiz on whom Aneeka always took care. Isma frequently describes how strong the bond was between her and her sister, in particular, and how it allows them to take care of one another after the death of their parents and grand mother. Thus, it is this intense relationship with her twin that drives Aneeka to the extreme to protect her loved ones.

Isma and Aneeka have always shared the intention to protect their family, despite the

fact that they have a very close relationship, their different actions for protecting their family create a deep rift between them that remains unresolved by the end of the novel. Aneeka, on the other hand, feels a deep love for Isma, but an even deeper love for Parvaiz. In this regard, Eamonn notes : “In her tales of growing up he was her ever-present partner in crime, the shadow who sometimes strode ahead, sometimes followed behind, without ever becoming detached from their twinness”(Shamsie, 2017, P.43). When Parvaiz abandons their family to join ISIS, Isma denounces him to the British police, in order to protect what remains of her family. On her side, Aneeka entirely devoted to her twin, struggles to find a way to get him home. In order to bring his brother’s body back to Britan, Aneeka decides to seduce Eamonn Lone as she is in a desperated need of his father and his political power as Home Secretary .

I was with him because I thought he could help.. I wanted him to want to do anything for me before I asked him to do something for my brother. Why shouldn't I admit it ? What would you stop at to help the people you love most ? (Shamsie, 2017, P.102).

However, Karamat Lone has no mercy for those who join ISIS and he decides to revoke Parvaiz’s British passport. In this perspectives, he says to her political correspondent: “ I’m going tu cut off there.. As you know, the day I assumed office I revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals who have left Britain to join our enemies”(Shamsie, 2017, P.97). In the meantime, when he tried to escape Parvaiz is shot by the ISIS member who recruited him. After that, Aneeka packs a suitcase and leaves her house in order to tavel to Pakistan and retrieve the body of his twin. She faces the police and the cameras. A journalist calls out to her, asking her why she is going to Pakistan ‘for justice’, she replies. Next to that, Karamat Lone tries to protect his son from Aneeka because he believes that she was using Eamonn and his decision to revoke Parvaiz’s citizenship was part of her strategy to protect his son.

The theme of family value emerges as a fundamental concern in *Minaret* (2005) and *Home Fire* (2017). For Aboulela and Shamsie, they focus on representing the moral value of

the family, they also affirm that family is sacred. In addition, both authors employ female characters to perform sacrificial role. Najwa in *Minaret* and Aneeka in *Home Fire* emphasize the need to preserve family and spread love and cooperation. For Aboulela and Shamsie, they seek to show the beautiful and upscale side of Muslims which is to protect the family from dispersal, as they choose to employ Muslim sisters who defend their brothers and this indicates the qualities that Muslim individuals possess. Accordingly, in order to draw the appropriate connection between the two novels, we apply Kristeva's theory of intertextuality which refers to the existence of one text with another.

In the same context, the concept of female sacrifice and loyalty is present in both *Minaret* and *Home Fire* which means the two novels intersect each other in themes. To emphasize this similarity, Najwa put up with the deviant behaviors of her brother Omar, despite his incarceration, she remained responsible for him because she is afraid that something bad would happen to him. The same for Aneeka, she loves her brother Parvaiz and defends him in addition to protecting him even after his death. It should be noted that the qualities of love and tenderness that Najwa has for her brother Tamer and that Aneeka has for her brother Parvaiz are equal, despite the different conditions experienced by Najwa and Aneeka, but the fear for their brothers and the effort to protect them is considered the same. Indeed, both novels also demonstrate the power of familial bonds to provide comfort and support in difficult times.

Finally, The intertextual connections between these two works highlight the ways in which literature can illuminate the complexities of family relationships and the impact that cultural and societal pressures can have on individuals and their families. Thus, Kristeva's theory of intertextuality can be applied to the complex relationships between family members in these novels, as family is not simply a biological or social construct, but a product of cultural and historical contexts. Intertextuality involves the interaction of different texts

within a particular cultural and historical context and these interactions can lead to the creation of new meanings.

According to Kristeva, texts are not created in isolation, but rather are shaped by the cultural and literary contexts in which they are produced. In this sense, Kristeva argues that “any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Allen, 2000, P.39). This does not mean that a text is simply a copy or imitation of another, but rather that it draws on a wide range of literary and cultural references in order to create something new and unique. Furthermore, Kristeva's theory of intertextuality recognizes the important role that context plays in shaping the interpretation of a text. Every text is produced within a specific historical, social, cultural context and its meaning is shaped by the various references and allusions that it makes to other works within this context. Overall, Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which texts are created and interpreted by emphasizing the importance of the cultural and literary contexts in which they are produced.

3-Islamophobia

The issue of Islamophobia is the third important theme that is raised in a targeted manner by both narrators Aboulela and Shamsie. As for *Minaret* (2005), it promotes the problem of Islamophobia and racism, as it bears a very sensitive social reality. Returning to Aboulela, she seeks to describe the problem of confrontation between Islam and the West. To clarify more about the concept of Islamophobia, the author employs the character of Najwa to describe the ethnic slurs and negative comments that Muslim expatriates suffer from. Because Najwa is a Muslim and veiled, she wants to impose her personality and respect in her new society that bears hostility to those who are Muslims. Concerning Hijab, it represents the central axis in the novel, it is also known as the legal dress for women in Islam. In this sense, it is possible to imagine what Najwa looks like after she wore the Hijab, which exposes her to

some harassment that can be described as despised. Like Anwar when he claims : “covering their hair and acting coy, but all that is hypocrisy”(Aboulela, 2005, P.122).

In addition, Aboulela appoints two important characters in *Minaret* not to represent the image of Muslims, but rather the secularists. These two roles are represented by Anwar and Dr.Zeinab who express an anti-Islam ideas, especially when it concerns Hijab. Although both are considered to be of Muslim origin because they are not religious and they do not apply what is stated in the Qur'an, that is why Aboulela describes them as secularists and Islamophobics. It is known that a secular person does not have to be a hater of Islam, but he carries ideologies that are contrary to the laws of religion. Just like Anwa who is a Sudanese refugee in London because of his communist and extremist positions and despite being a Muslim by religion, he harbors strong hostility towards Islam. Anwar is characterized by a kind of racism, contempt and all his positions in the story indicates that he is secular. Moreover, it is mentioned that he insults the clergy and describes them as hypocrites. He says : “arab society is hypocritical, he would say with trouble standards for men and women”(Aboulela, 2005, P.123).

Additionally, Anwar mocks worship and his lack of faith in Islam, he has always criticized the customs of ancestors and describes them as backwardness. In fact, Anwar represents Arab secularists who do not recognize the necessity of religion and they describe Muslim peoples as ignorant. As for the West, they see it as the most suitable world thanks to its progress and the enjoyment of complete freedom. Najwa in one of her conversations with Anwar says :“He smoked every day but drank occasionally. He smoked only cigarettes and didn't pray. He never fasted in Ramadan; he did not see the point of it”(Aboulela, 2005, P.71). In addition to proving the truth of Anwar's secularism, Najwa also describes the extent of his contempt for Muslims, while his views on the West differ completely. She admits:

“I said to Anwar, It's interesting about converts isn't it? What would make a Westerner become a Muslim? He made a face... I think they're brave... You say that because as Muslims our self-esteem is so low that we're desperate for approval. And what greater stamp of approval can there be than a white man's? He had fixed ideas about religion. The Islamist government in Khartoum was his enemy. He liked to point out its faults and contradictions (Aboulela, 2005, P.88).

It becomes clear that Anwar is secular and his intellectual inclinations do not coincide with religion, as it can be said that Islam for him remains just ink on paper. It might be argued that Aboulela deliberately brings up the issue of Islamophobia to challenge the secular society, in addition to correct the image of Islam that is distorted by the West. Aboulela does not stop at Anwar, but she appoints Dr.Zeinab as another face to represent the Islamophobes. Dr.Zeinab's problem does not lie in Islam, because she is originally an Arab Muslim who lives with her family in London. She, therefore, does not care about the importance of identity as much as she fears Muslims extremists. The reason is due to her involvement in Western society and her influence with the terrible ideas they create against Islam. It is clear that Dr.Zeinab's beliefs are far from racial discrimination. Nevertheless, she does not accept Najwa as the wife of her son Tamer due to the unsuited intellectual standards between Najwa and Anwar. Indeed, it appears once again that Hijab in general represents a major issue for Islamophobes whether citizens or immigrants. Regarding the West's complex on the veil, it causes hatred and an attempt to insult the veiled Muslim women. This is what happens to Najwa.

Another reflection of Dr.Zeinab's Islamophobia appears when she opposes her son Anwar regarding his decision to study Islamic sciences for fear of ruining his future. This concern is due to her belief that religious teachings may destroy her son's life, as well as make his thinking limited and intolerant. Aboulela represents the issue of Islamophobia in the novel *Minaret* (2005). She also portrays the harsh reality that Muslims suffer from and how secular ideas distort the image of Islam because hating and defaming Muslims are the goal of secularists. Aboulela in the story of *Minaret* conveys the suffering of Muslims from

Islamophobes while she seeks to correct their misconceptions regarding religion especially the veil.

Shamsie in her part examines how Islamophobia manifests in the lives of Muslims in Britain. European societies particularly in the aftermath of the events of 9/11 and the bombings in Madrid and London have struggled with the persistent issue of Islamophobia. In fact, the events have a negative impact on relations between Muslims who live in Britain and other British, creating the impression that all Muslims are terrorists. Therefore, Shamsie explores the clash between family, society and religion through the narration of two British families of Pakistani descent. Despite the fact that both families have ties to Pakistan and both identify as wholly British, the Pashas follow more conservative Muslim practices and because of that they feel like outsiders, while the Lones are more assimilated into non-Muslim British society. In *Home Fire* (2017), Shamsie uses the Pashas to illustrate how devout Muslims are often targeted in Britain despite their efforts to be accepted by Western society.

In addition, the media has consistently stereotyped Muslim by obfuscating Islam's concepts and identity. Particularly, the US and British media unjustly sowed racism and hatred seeds by portraying and farming an inaccurate image of Islam in the minds of westerners. Muslims are frequently characterized as terrorists, retrogrades and patriarchal oppressors of veiled women. These images often come from television, newspapers and news programs that misrepresented and disregarded the diversity of Muslim communities as well as Islamic teaching and practices. For instance, Parvaiz in *Home Fire* is depicted as a young Muslim man who has abandoned his own nation and turned to terrorism. But it turns out that he has personal reasons for joining ISIS rather than a desire to overthrow British democracy. When British news first reported Parvaiz's death, he is immediately placed into a category of people rather than being understood as an individual story.

The Turkish government confirmed this morning that the man killed in a drive-by shooting outside the British consulate in Istanbul yesterday was Wembley-born Pervys Pasha, the latest name in the string of Muslims from Britain who have joined ISIS (Shamsie, 2017, P.21).

Thus, Shamsie illustrates how the the media accumulates and supports the idea that Parvaiz is a terrorist. Moreover, she shows how her characters are frequently perceived by the British not as individuals but as representatives of their race, gender, nationality and religion. Eventually, this leads to frequent incidents of the Pasha experiencing oppression due to their visible Muslim identity such as when Isma is questioned at the airport. When Isma boards a plane to the U.S, she makes sure not to pack anything that would invite comment or questions—no Quran, no family pictures, no books on her area of academic interest (Shamsie,2017,P.9).However, because of her hijab, she is still interrogated for two hours and misses her flight. One of the security officer's specific questions is :“ Do you consider yourself British?”(Shamsie, 2017, P.9). He asks the same question again until Isma confirms that she is British.

The extensive and Islamophobic interrogation continued for nearly two hours. “He wanted to know her thoughts on Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, The Great British Bake Of , the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, dating websites” (Shamsie, 2017, P.10). Even though Isma is a British citizen, the officer's questions imply that something about her faith makes her less British than a non-Muslim person. This scene perfectly describes the careful life that Isma had to lead and the situations that British Muslims are facing everyday. Therefore, this interration shows that despite Isma being born in Britain and having a British passport, she must still prove that she is British and more importantly prove that she has British values.

To recapitulate, the issue of Islamophobia is a crucial theme that is discussed in Aboulela's *Minaret* and Shamsie's *Home Fire*. Aboulela and Shamsie present the confrontation between Islam and the West and they show the reality of what Muslims live in

terms of discrimination, hostility and hatred on the part of the West. Therefore, we rely on Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality to establish the connection between both novels. As for the novel *Minaret*, Aboulela focuses on the social and political side, employing different characters as Najwa to represent the image of the Muslim woman who suffers from slander and contempt by Westerners. The characters of Anwar and Dr. Zeinab play a role in representing these secularists and Islam haters. The same content of the novel *Home Fire* which raises the problem of Islamophobia by employing the character of Aneeka to portray a Muslim woman who lives in the West. It seems that the two narratives deal with the same issue, as the Hijab appears like the first enemy of the West, especially religion because both Najwa and Isma suffer from the look of contempt. In addition to the misconceptions that Islam is a religion of extremism that spoils human life, not only that, but the description of Muslims as terrorism by secularists. To complete with the similarities concerning the theme of Islamophobia in *Minaret* and *Home Fire*, Aboulela and Shamsie aim to show a kind of defiance and confrontation as a response against the secularists who seek to frame Muslims' image.

In conclusion, the intertextual and thematic connections between both novels demonstrate the ways in which different cultural and historical contexts shape our experiences and perceptions of the world. Aboulela and Shamsie create narratives that challenge dominant cultural narratives about Islam and Muslims, they also invite readers to engage with complex and nuanced portrayals of Muslim experiences. Both *Minaret* (2005) and *Home Fire* (2017) draw from intertexts and cultural contexts to explore the experiences of Muslim individuals living in the West. Thus, both novels can not be separated from the cultural context of their societies and fit Kristeva's notion of cultural textuality in which the 'individual text and the cultural text are made from the same textual material and can not be separated from each other' (Allen, 2000, P.36). In this sense, individual texts are not only reflections of the cultural norms and values of the time, but they also help shape those norms

and values through the messages they contain. For example, a novel may not only reflect the attitudes and beliefs of a particular society, but also challenge those attitudes or contribute to their evolution. This notion of cultural textuality means that an individual text can not be understood in isolation from the larger cultural context. The cultural text or collective body of cultural artifacts provides the context for interpretation and understanding of an individual text. In this sense, the cultural text and the individual text are made from the same textual material, as they both participate in the creation and dissemination of cultural meanings.

All texts, therefore, contain within them the ideological structures expressed in society through discourse. In the case of *Minaret* and *Home Fire*, both novels can be seen as expressions of the ideological struggles that exist in their respective societies, particularly with regard to questions of identity and belonging for Muslim immigrants. In this way, the texts contain within them the ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse, and they can be read as a means of reflecting and shaping these discourses. By engaging with these texts, readers can gain insight into the cultural and historical contexts that shape our experiences and perceptions of the world as it can challenge and transform dominant discourses in the process.

V. General Conclusion

Throughout this masters dissertation whose title is *Identity and Exile in Leila Aboulela's Minaret and Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*, an attempt is made to provide the reader with a possibility to bring together two authors from two distinct countries who have dealt with the same issues. We have relied on Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality which allowed us to examine the ways in which texts engage with other texts. It has also let us to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between texts and the broader cultural, historical and literary contexts in which they are situated. By doing so, we concluded that both *Minaret* and *Home Fire* explore the complexities of identity and exile in the context of Muslim immigrants in the UK, highlighting the challenges that individuals and communities face in maintaining their cultural and religious identities while also integrating into Western societies, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11 and the subsequent rise of Islamophobia. Furthermore, it has been proven that the two novels express the realities of the social, cultural and even ideological differences. Through the experiences of their respective protagonists, Aboulela and Shamsie offer nuanced and complex portrayals of what it means to be a Muslim in the West.

In the first chapter, we have drawn parallels between the main characters through an intertextual analysis of the two novels. The female protagonists experienced similar events which give them similar roles in their society, their journey in both novels can be apprehended as an experience that express the challenges faced by many Muslim expatriates. Moreover, their experience show the extent to which identity is considered as an important aspect in restoring the sense of the original belonging to the expatriate in exile. By exploring the experiences of these characters, both Aboulela and Shamsie present a complex representation of Muslim immigrants to show the ways in which these expatriates are confronted to the issues of identity and belonging in a new cultural context.

In the second chapter, we have analyzed the events taking place in both novels that explore similar themes of identity, family and Islamophobia. The thematic connections between the two novels can be seen in the shared experiences of their protagonists who grapple with questions of identity and belonging, as well as the impact of societal forces on their lives. By exploring the complex intersections of identity, family and Islamophobia, both novels offer insightful and thought-provoking reflections on the challenges facing Muslim communities today. While the two novels differ in terms of their plots, Aboulela and Shamsie explore realistic events so their two works represent the world. We deduce that the two authors expose the impact of political and social events on the lives of ordinary people and the ways in which these events shape our understanding of the world around us.

From what has been written above and from this comparative approach, we may deduce that Aboulela and Shamsie explore and illuminate the social and cultural contexts in which they live, presenting their readers with a complex and nuanced understanding of the world around them. They also highlight the complexities of identity, belonging and challenge stereotypes about Muslim communities. As revealed by the analysis, both Aboulela's *Minaret* and Shamsie's *Home Fire* are situated within both a horizontal and vertical axis connecting the authors and readers, as well as the texts to their broader socio-cultural and historical context. Overall, the intertextual connections between *Minaret* and *Home Fire* highlight the ways in which authors draw on shared cultural contexts and themes to create meaning in their works.

In the scope of this research, we could not explore all the issues in relation to Aboulela's and Shamsie's novels under study. Hence, we encourage other students interested in this kind of literature to explore and analyze the two novels further as it is filled with research issues that deserve to be explored. For instance, a research can be undertaken to study the issues of politics and power in the two narratives.

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