

An Ecofeminist Study of Gendered Bodies and Earth in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Abstract

This study presents the ecofeminist analysis of *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie using the approach proposed by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva to explore the relationships between gender, ecology, and power. Though the themes of political, diasporic, and securitisation have taken centre stage in the existing studies, this research prefigures the role played by patriarchal, religious, and state institutions in controlling women and their bodies, grief, and spatial mobility in terms of ecological imagery and ritual denial. Through a qualitative close textual analysis, the study examines the motifs of soil, water, heat, burial, and embodied mourning as arenas of gendered and ecological violence, where they intersect and conflict. It claims that the refusal of burial rights, the criminalisation of grieving, and the infringement of female bodies onto surveillance are mechanisms of ecological disruption that cut body, land, and memory. Simultaneously, the care practices, rites, and perseverances of women are interpreted as ecofeminist ways of resistance relying on relational morality as opposed to juridical power. *Home Fire* can be placed within the context of postcolonial ecofeminist criticism, and placing it within this context, the analysis also rewrites *Home Fire* as urban and diasporic ecofeminist writing, which links intimate trauma to existential injustice, gendered vulnerability, and state power in a globalised world. In a wider sense, the research demonstrates the way literary narratives can be put to light to reveal the ecological injustices that are yet to be identified in the policy-oriented or technocratic discourse. It shows that grief, ritual, and embodiment are significant epistemologies that the marginalised subject uses to express resistance. Through this, the study will assist in projecting the ecofeminist critique outside of the rural or pastoral setting to the context of securitised, transnational urban space.

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Introduction

Ecofeminism has emerged to be a radical theory that points out the dualism of the oppression of women and nature within the regime of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism. It is against mainstream developmental models that have made the labour of women and ecological resources dispensable, invisible, or exhausted, as it has been expressed by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993). Instead of considering environmental degradation and gender disparity as two distinct crises, ecofeminism believes that they are structurally interconnected, particularly in postcolonial and decolonial realms where the extraction, surveillance, and control continue to exist. A modern re-interpretation of *Antigone* by Sophocles is *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie: it is a fairly interesting literary background to explore these entanglements.

The novel is set in Britain and Pakistan, and the three British-Pakistani siblings: Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz Pasha, whose lives are influenced by state surveillance, racialised nationalism, and the right to be buried by the state during the War on Terror. The denial of the British state to allow Parvaiz to be returned to his homeland to be buried is the key moral and political crisis in the novel when the young man joins ISIS. The desire by Aneeka to grieve and bury repeats the rebellion of *Antigone* against the ruler, although in the modern context of securitisation, Islamophobia, and transnational authority.

Although *Home Fire* has been widely discussed in terms of diasporic identity, citizenship, radicalisation, and political loyalty, its ecological and ecofeminist aspects have not been studied thoroughly. This study argues that the novel's exposure to burial, water, heat, and bodily contact constitutes a long-term ecofeminist critique of state power. These are not decorative or metaphoric components but serve as embodied sites where gendered and ecological violence is put into action and fought. Grieving femininity, ritual, and silence become alternative forms of epistemology that oppose institutionalised security, legality, and belonging (Gaard, 1993).

Drawing on ecofeminism as constructed by Mies and Shiva (1993), this article considers how patriarchal, religious, and political forces intersect in *Home Fire*. It analyses how these forces control women's bodies, emotions, and spaces, and how they deny ecological continuity through burial and ritual. The analysis centres on two research questions: (1) How do patriarchal, religious, and political institutions in *Home Fire* shift gendered experiences and ecological meaning?

(2) What are the ways in which the practices of women in grief, care, and ritual are a kind of ecofeminist resistance?

This research makes *Home Fire* an urban, diasporic ecofeminist text by concentrating on embodied experiences, including the experience of mourning, exposure to heat, and loss of burial. It is also a contribution to postcolonial and ecofeminist literary criticism as it shows that ecological injustice may be expressed in the form of intimate, domestic, and ritualised resistance, and not necessarily as overt environmental activism. By so doing, the article brings ecofeminist investigation out of rural or pastoral locations to securitised urban spaces and transnational spaces (Greta Claire Gaard et al., 2015).

Literature Review

Ecofeminism is a critical theory that was developed in the late 20th century to determine the connection between gender repression and environmental destruction. The theory was initially applied in the 1970s by Françoise d'Eaubonne and best developed by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva in their best-selling book *Ecofeminism* (1993). Mies and Shiva claim that capitalist and patriarchal regimes are interconnected. They ensure that women and nature are exploited because they are resources to be manipulated and overexploited. They introduced a few important terminologies, such as “maldevelopment,” a critique of the constructs of Western economic systems that undermine subsistence economies and the work performed by women. The importance of indigenous and ecological knowledge that women possess as a means to resist dominant forces of power was also espoused by them. Their theory has gained considerable attention, especially in the postcolonial

environment, which is easily translated into a crude analysis of environmental exploitation and gender-driven marginalisation, further exacerbated by present and past forms of inequality.

In the last twenty years, Ecofeminism became global and met with intersectional and regionally based approaches. Other scholars, including Gaard (2015) and Salleh (2017) have demanded that Ecofeminism should be made inclusive and consider race, class, and geopolitical factors. Geographers and ecocritics have approached the analysis of the Global South through a feminist tradition and have shown that the environmental labor of women, such as water gathering, farming, and housekeeping, exposes a very gendered scenario concerning environmental crises. These scholars emphasise the necessity of contextualised studies that do not necessarily come at the expense of essentialized or universalised conceptions of womanhood, but that foreground the significance of cultural, religious, and political paradigms in structuring gendered ecological realities (Shokrgozar et al., 2025).

Following a postcolonial approach, Søvik (2024) argues that resonant structures of oppression are repeated through the colonial extraction of natural resources that are similar to the oppression of women. Similarly, Strazzeri (2024) enunciates that they find ecofeminism effective in questioning the Western style of development, which is more focused on economic growth than the earth and people. Ecofeminist scholars support nature, women, and other subjugated subjects in claims for environmental justice. These perspectives are instrumental in discussing the effect of Global Warming, deforestation, and industrialization on the environment and the society in postcolonial and diaspora (Leimbach, 2023).

Ecofeminists, like many literary critics, have also placed emphasis on the representation in fiction of the harmful presentation of gender and the environment, since the two are often intertwined. The concept of slow violence (a slow and often unnoticeable harm set by the degradation of the environment) by Rob Nixon (2011) has changed the perception of the literary world of critics in their understanding of how environmental degradation has been represented in the world of literature, at least in postcolonial

literature. Junejo and Shaikh (2022) extend this work by endorsing postcolonial ecocriticism, which centres on colonisation histories, resource mining, and displacement as its central themes. These frameworks emphasise that literature can reveal the types of environmental and gendered violence not addressed in policy discussions or scientific records (Ali & Ubale, 2023).

There are significant studies on *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie, with its implications about the past and the present. The novel, a reworking of Sophocles' *Antigone*, has been extensively read to make the criticism of British nationalism, the Muslim identity, and state surveillance (Hanif et al., 2022). As Ali (2023) argues, *Home Fire* reshapes *Antigone's* feminist legacy, with Aneeka's dissidence embodying classical and modern feminist resistance. The study reveals how women's bodies are sites of political struggle, contributing to larger conversations in feminist literary criticism. It focuses on how the novel interrogates the themes of loyalty, citizenship and family responsibility, especially in addressing the Muslim characters in the security rhetoric. Most of the feminist analyses of the novel focus on the emotional burden and moral decision-making of the female characters (Bağlama, 2020), yet much of the speculation described is psychological or political in nature. Iyer (2022) analyses the spatial politics of the *Home Fire* without developing an ecofeminist direction of thinking, though they imply that the novel epitomizes the decay of the city and doctrinairism. Scholars like Lau & Mendes studied *Home Fire* in 2021 to explore how *Home Fire* offers criticism of gendered power structures in the post-9/11 world by focusing on Aneeka's resistance to state power. The study suggests that Shamsie's narratives of Muslim women's agency challenge the victimization narratives of Western feminist discourse, which often stereotype Muslim women as powerless, but instead reveal their active resistance to both patriarchal and nationalist oppression. Khokhar and Malik (2022) explores the media construction of Muslim identities and contends that critiques how news narratives entrench Islamophobia stereotypes. Moreover, it demonstrates how Aneeka's effort to restore her brother's humanity is situated within a broader critique of the way of Muslim subjectivities in Western spaces. The study explores how the state of the War on Terror operates in *Home Fire*

is a critique of violence sanctioned by the state and a reading of *Home Fire* as a space of social control.

Although a lot of critical studies exists on *Home Fire*, little has been said on its ecological and spatial politics as approached by a feminist lens. Some of them recognise the symbolic context of burial, heat, and water; however, these motifs are usually reduced to a secondary priority in making the political scheme. To illustrate, although Afzal (2017) refers to the fact that Isma is a “housewifized” subject, she does not relate this to any other ecological or ecofeminist issue. The ritual practice of Aneeka mourning, specifically, the use of water resistance, has been mentioned but not discussed in detail in an environmental framework. Consequently, the eco-symbolic dimensions of the novel remain understudied.

Such a literary inquiry is urgently needed in the real world, as subject to empirical research and human rights reporting. As it is stated by HRCP (2023) and UNFPA (2022), women are disproportionately affected by climate events, including the 2022 floods in Pakistan, which expose them to health risks and displacement, and violence. These crises resemble *Home Fire* in which space limitations and physical vulnerability are the focus of the story. Maqbool (2022) researches the ever-increasing water insecurity and glacial melting, things that are not directly mentioned in the story by Shamsie, but are thematic in the evocation of heat, surveillance, and denied burial in the novel. The following practical circumstances verify the argument that literature is a mirror and a prism of the ecological and gendered injustice in multifaceted and symbolic ways.

Jabeen (2020) has also urged environmental criticism to be decolonized through the incorporation of voices and narratives of the Global South. This involves the examination of gendered and ecological violence as well as the experience of the same not only in rural or natural settings but in cities, diasporas, as well as in postcolonial environments. The novel by Shamsie, which is largely located in London, provides exactly such a landscape, in which the symbols of nature (e.g., heat, water, burial, and ritual) collide with the issues of identity, mobility, and grief. The present work broadens

the area of ecofeminist literary criticism by paying attention to these dimensions in order to extend the ideological framework to the urban and the symbolic, yet keeping it rooted in material realities. To conclude, the literature available now gives valuable information about ecofeminism, postcolonial ecocriticism, and feminist interpretations of *Home Fire*, yet there is also a major gap in it. It lacks a consistent approach to *Home Fire* as a text that does not simply criticize the state and gender power, but dramatizes the issue of environmental and ecological problems in a symbolic and spatial approach.

This study addresses that gap by applying Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva's ecofeminist framework to the novel, focusing on how power operates through bodily control, ritual denial, and environmental imagery. It contributes to the broader field of ecofeminist and postcolonial criticism by showing how literature can function as a site for articulating both resistance and reimagination of the gendered ecological order.

Research Methodology & Theoretical Framework

The present work relies on the ecofeminist theory and utilizes the work of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) as the foundational theory of the qualitative literary methodology. The study is based on the standard procedures of the research in literary studies and close textual analysis of *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie (2017), instead of using empirical qualitative methods. The analysis dwells on some of the chosen narrative episodes and symbols in which gendered and ecological power relations are produced, regulated, and fought out in the postcolonial and diasporic context of the novel.

The conceptualization of ecofeminism, as Mies and Shiva point to it as a tool, can be used to critically analyze the structural relationship between female subjugation and the subjugation of nature within the frameworks of capitalist and patriarchal structures. Their critique of maldevelopment reveals how the prevailing political and economic structures turn women and the environment into passive resources and marginalize the practice of subsistence, care labour and indigenous ecological knowledge. The idea of housewifization that is put forward by Mies also helps to understand

how the reproductive and emotional labour of women is made invisible, even though it is the key to social survival. The ideas are especially applicable to the novel *Home Fire*, where the female characters are constantly placed as caregivers, moral foundations, and emotional stabilizers, but deprived of their autonomy, legitimacy, and spatial freedom in the domestic and state-controlled spaces.

The theoretical framework is used to discuss the totality of the functioning of the patriarchal institutions, religious institutions, and political institutions in the novel to control women's bodies, feelings, and space. Isma and Aneeka Pasha are subjected to divergent yet connected ways of control: Isma by being monitored, by obedience, and by the policing of her body, and Aneeka by the criminalization of grief, of expression of grief, and of physical existence. These control mechanisms are not only examined as gendered but also as ecological, in a way that it deals with denial of burial, control of movement, and interference with ritual practices that relate body, land and memory. These interruptions demonstrate ecofeminist anxieties about the breakage of relational connections in the lives of human beings and the ecological continuity, as well as the cultural tradition.

The methodological tool is textual analysis. Some of the most crucial moments, like the interrogation of Isma at the airport, the weeping by Aneeka in public and the refusal to bury Parvaiz, are analyzed thoroughly to track how the ecological factors like water, heat, soil, and body exposure serve in the story. These are not discussed as abstract metaphors; they are concrete experiences where power is put to work and power is fought against. Close reading makes it possible to maintain the focused attention on the narrative voice, imagery, affect and silence and thus display the way ecological meanings can be created in lived bodily conditions but not in symbolic abstraction.

The contextualization of the literary analysis and clarification of the conceptual basis of essential arguments are achieved by using secondary literature on the ecofeminist, postcolonial, and gender studies. There is also a low mention of the modern discourse of climate vulnerability and gendered violence in

South Asia to emphasize the general applicability of the ecological issues in the novel. These allusions are not sociological evidence, but help to strengthen the interpretive scheme by placing the themes of the novel in the context of a familiar world and postcolonial circumstances that resonate with the symbolic patterns of the text.

On the whole, this methodological strategy allows seeing the *Home Fire* as a literary work in a narrow and theoretically informed way, which expresses ecofeminist resistance in the voice of grief, ritual, care, and embodied experience. Through its emphasis on close textual analysis based on the ecofeminist theory, the study remains literary without having to overdo its methodological assertions.

Analysis and Discussion

In her novel, *Home Fire* (2017), Kamila Shamsie reinterprets Sophocles in the contemporary post-9/11 political environment, which is based on surveillance, anti-terrorism, and nationalism on the basis of race. Although a critical focus has been placed on the novel regarding the political criticism of the British state and its treatment of Muslim citizens, an ecofeminist interpretation brings forward another and less discussed facet of the novel: the systematic control of the female body and the refusal of ecological continuity. This part has attempted to contest the conventional law and ideological assertion of power using the ecofeminist structure by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, and suggests that the stage of *Home Fire* possesses power based on embodied exposure, ritual denial and land, water and burial domination.

The exploitation of nature and the domination of women are products of the same patriarchal and capitalist reason, as expressed by Mies and Shiva (1993) through their ecofeminism. These systems are based on extraction, surveillance and control as they undermine care, subsistence practices, and ethics of relation at the same time. These dynamics are made visible in *Home Fire* through the experiences of Isma and Aneeka Pasha, whose lives are subject to state monitoring, gendered accountability and criminalisation of grief. The novel shows the way ecological processes, the return to the soil, the immersion into the water, the exposure of the body to

heats and its ability to do it, are politicised and deprived, and are turned into a tool of punishment.

A very different aspect of the burial practice in *Home Fire* is that, unlike classical tragedy, burial is placed in a bureaucratic and media regime. This displacement enhances the material effects of denial because the state takes control not only of the citizenship, but also of the earth itself. This relocation allows Shamsie to anticipate one of the major ecofeminist anxieties, namely the fact that once land, bodies, rituals are taken over by political authority, ecological balance as well as the human dignity are put at risk.

This refusal of the burial of Parvaiz Pasha is the ethical and ecological essence of *Home Fire*. The tradition of understanding burial as the giving of the body back to the earth, but it is turned into a conditional right of nationalist ideology. The British state does not define land as a common ecology but rather as a securitised space where some bodies cannot be included even when they have died.

This is the rationale expressed by the public justification of the Home Secretary:

"We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death."
(Shamsie, 2017, p. 113)

The terminology of soil here is essential. The state does not merely use the notions of legality and security to justify it, presenting the moral right to the land itself, making soil the synonym of national innocence. In an ecofeminist view, this is the appropriation of nature as perceived by Mies and Shiva (1993) as patriarchal, where land is viewed as property to be defended instead of a living system, which supports all bodies irrespective of political affiliations.

Burying in ecofeminist ideology is not just a cultural or religious procedure but an ecological process that allows restoration of harmony between body and earth. The denial to allow burial forms a discontinuity of ecological continuity. The body of Parvaiz is refused its renewal into the soil, in an uncertain political state that reflects his inability to be considered a part of the nation. The refusal

makes death an extension of sovereign punishment and shows that sovereignty goes beyond life into ecological processes.

When Shamsie rewrites *Antigone*, he makes this conflict more severe by bringing it to a new space of the 20th century, where the law is in the middle of the media spectacle and bureaucracy. In Sophocles play, *Antigone* calls on the unwritten laws of the gods that surpass the state laws. In *Home Fire*, though, there is no superiority above whom Aneeka can complain. Her plight is played in a secular system which identifies no moral claim other than national security. This lack only increases the violence of burial denial, where not only the earth but also becomes the property of a political entity.

Here, earth democracy by Vandana Shiva is educative. Shiva insists that state or corporate power should not monopolise access to land, water or natural processes, but they should be identified as fundamental ecological rights (Shiva, 2005). The British state contravenes this principle by refusing to bury Parvaiz to demonstrate its exclusive right to the soil and turning it into a weapon of exclusion. The demand for burial, therefore, by Aneeka is an ecofeminist counterpoint to the rights of the state on land, which is that ecological belonging is a moral right and not a political privilege.

When soil is a depiction of repudiated continuity, water in *Home Fire* is a means of embodied defiance. Aneeka constantly demonstrates her sorrow by being immersed, washed, and being in close contact with water, interestingly enough, foreshadowing a close connection between water and body. These performances are not symbolic but corporeal, which are in line with ecofeminist interpretations of water as life-supporting commons and not a resource that can be captured.

Shamsie captures this relationship early in the novel:

"The sky was a rich blue, the water surged like blood leaving a heart... She breathed in the moment, tried to catch her reflection in the water, but it was too quick."

(Shamsie, 2017, p. 17)

Water, in this case, is volatile, mobile and inaccessible just like Aneeka is emotionally. It does not provide contemplation or conservation, but rejects stillness. The eco-feminist theory underlines that this uncertainty provokes the masculine ambitions to control and dominate. According to the arguments of Shiva (1988), water cannot be commoditised because water flows, links and crosses boundaries.

The practices of mourning that Aneeka engages in are also further illustrations of what Maria Mies (1986) refers to as subsistence knowledge: embodied care based on relational ethics, and not on institutional powers. Her practices of washing, looking after and being physically present with the body of Parvaiz declare the fact of dignity with attention rather than law. These actions are in stark contrast with the bureaucracy of such a state dealing with death, which degrades the body as a source of misconduct.

The intensity of Aneeka's grief is rendered in visceral terms:

"It did not envelop her; it leaked into her pores and bloated her beyond recognition."
(Shamsie, 2017, p. 117)

This definition bridges the gap between psyche and the body, making grief an ecological state which occupies the body. With an ecofeminist lens, this embodiment opposes epistemological priorities in which rationality is superior to affect. According to Shiva (1993), this disregard of embodied knowledge is one of the sources of epistemological violence in which emotional and spiritual modes of knowledge are discredited in favour of the technocratic reason.

The state of Aneeka is not personal but is openly evident, distributed by media photographs that position her as overworked, aggrandizant, or threatening. This surveillance reflects the management of natural resources, whereby control is reasoned using narratives of danger and safety. Aneeka acts out in rejecting grief, so her body and her emotions are used as platforms of resistance against these kinds of stories, where the violence is revealed.

Instead of a decorative metaphor, Heat in *Home Fire* is a bodily state of heightened vulnerability, grief, and political

vulnerability. Shamsie consistently contextualises the emotional distress of Aneeka in spaces that are characterised by physical pain, fatigue and thermal overload and smashes down the boundary between the interior psychological landscape and the exterior ecological landscape. This intersection is quite consistent with the ecofeminist and environmental justice paradigms, which point to the fact that the impact of environmental degradation is distributed unevenly and that it is concentrated on marginalised bodies.

The physical reaction of Aneeka toward the heat is gradually more intense:

“At first, and for a long time, it was warmth that spread through her limbs, and then, eventually, heat.”

(Shamsie, 2017, p. 32)

Its wording highlights past tense, time, and amount over the instantaneous, thus the conceptualisation of slow violence that Rob Nixon (2011) discusses: a type of violence that occurs over time and thus cannot be identified as any type of violence at all. The heat of this place is not disastrous or dramatic; it is insidious, incessant, and exhausting. This type of harm is also relevant to an ecofeminist approach since it resembles a way in which the power of patriarchy and the state functions upon the human bodies of women: slow, persistent, and normalised.

Instead of heat being a globalisation of an abstract notion of a heating concept or an environmental figure, *Home Fire* introduces a form of thermal uneasiness to the experienced reality of sadness. Environmental stress affects Aneeka, as she is exposed to heat when experiencing emotional stress, when viewed by other people, and when performing ritual mourning, which implies that the vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the environment. The Ecofeminist theory has long held the view that not all bodies are impacted by environmental degradation; women, especially those whose mobility and social autonomy are limited, are impacted more by ecological stress (Shiva, 1988). The lack of mobility in Aneeka, the fact that she does not abandon the body of her brother, makes her particularly vulnerable to the physical world, which turns the heat into another form of punishment.

This dynamic is also complicated by the transnational setting of the novel. Although most of the story is set in London, Shamsie keeps alluding to heat in a manner that is very familiar to the South Asian climatic conditions. Such a repositioning highlights how the colonial history of environmental exploitation is still perpetuated in the modern ecological vulnerability. Nevertheless, instead of listing climate shocks, the novel incarcerates heat as something personal and sensual, which is also in line with ecofeminist demands on embodied knowledge as a valid place of meaning.

The heat, therefore, becomes a process by which the grief is increased, and the opposition is also made more expensive. The fact that Aneeka still remains where the working conditions are physically demanding shows that she does not want to consider the comfort of the body as an ethical obligation. This denial reveals the ethical sterility of systems which insist upon obedience at the cost of care, stamina and relationship accountability in the ecofeminist sense of the word.

Whereas the opposition of Aneeka is evident, physical, and combative, Isma Pasha is a more subdued form of ecofeminist survival. The position of female characters in the family is a good example of what Maria Mies (2014) refers to as the naturalisation of housewifisation of women: the reproductive, emotional, caring labour of women is feminised and made invisible, even though it is indispensable to social survival.

Reflecting on her early responsibilities, Isma notes:

"I became the adult in the family while still a child myself."
(Shamsie, 2017, p. 9)

This confession foreshadows the untimely decision of the responsibility of care, making Isma the emotional and structural support of the family. Though this labour is not placed in an explicitly environmental context, the ecofeminist theory can be read in connection with ecological exploitation. Similarly to nature that is supposed to regenerate without any reward and without anyone to notice, the care of Isma is presumed, cut off, and forgotten.

Isma is able to withstand the domestic environment in an institutional space, particularly in the instance where the character

is interrogated at the airport. The questioning that she is subjected to frequently turns the usual screening procedure into an intrusive evaluation of faithfulness and place:

"Do you consider yourself British?"

"I am British."

"But do you consider yourself British?"

(Shamsie, 2017, p. 9)

This dialogue depicts the ways the state brands suspicions on racialised female bodies, exposing them to a scrutiny beyond what is mandated in law. Within the ecofeminist approach, this regulation can be compared with the colonial efforts of the land inspection and the assessment of the resources, the value and legitimacy are established by the power of the external authority. The body of Isma, as a disputed territory, is quantified, doubted and considered as constantly ambiguous.

Isma, unlike Aneeka, does not fight back openly. Her opposition is in her survival, continuity and intelligence labour. She does this in a strategic way so that she is able to remain educated and to move around, but undergoes the emotional burden of compliance. Ecofeminist scholarship sees this survival as resistance, especially in the contexts where active resistance involves excessive risk. According to Shiva (1988), resistance is plural and not just singular and is created in a number of practices depending on their context, vulnerability, and relational responsibility.

Collectively, Isma and Aneeka represent the opposite of the feminist ecofeminist struggle: one sacrificial and visible, the other nurturing and silent. They make their coexistence problematic to reductive models of political action, showing that care, patience and survival are as political as confrontation.

One of the main ecofeminist insights expressed in *Home Fire* is that justice must never be juridical to be ethically significant. The action of not giving up the body of her brother by Aneeka claims that there is a moral right of relationality and not law. Her lamentation questions a system that establishes what life is mournable and what death can be washed away without any trace.

Criminalisation of the grief of Aneeka is what Mies and Shiva (1993) censure as rational violence of patriarchal systems, in which emotional expression and care are deemed irrational, excessive or dangerous. On the contrary, ecofeminist ethics focus on relationships, responsibility and continuity more than abstract legality. The reclaiming of death as an ecological shift and not a political ending is manifested through Aneeka's insistence on burial and presence.

This is supported by the unresolved ending of the novel. Shamsie does not provide a closure in the narrative, which reflects the continued existence of ecological and gendered injustice. There is no institutional provision of healing, but of long-term action of care, memory, and resistance. Justice in ecofeminist terms is not created by the state but rather through the restoration of failed relationships among body, earth and community.

Home Fire expresses an ecofeminist view via the endurance of Isma and the sacrifice of Aneeka of having an ideologically purist opposition to embodied practice. Grief is the place of moral clarity; ritual is political practice; and care is a radical intervention that challenges the systems that are treating both women and nature as waste.

Conclusion

This research has explored Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) through the ecofeminist lens of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, illuminating the novel's intersectional engagement with patriarchal, religious, and political powers as they shape female experience and ecological consciousness. The two central research questions, how these structures affect women and the environment, and how characters' negotiations of power reflect broader gendered and ecological issues, have been addressed through a close textual reading that foregrounds grief, ritual, spatial politics, and embodied resistance.

The novel reveals how state power not only surveils but invades the most intimate acts of mourning, love, and burial. Aneeka's struggle for her brother's right to burial and Isma's navigation through institutionalized suspicion both demonstrate

how nationalist ideologies treat both women and nature as objects to be regulated. Through these narratives, Shamsie dramatizes the mechanisms of capitalist patriarchy identified by Mies and Shiva, mechanisms that render women's labor invisible, dismiss spiritual and ecological knowledge, and suppress feminine modes of knowing and remembering.

The ecofeminist contestation of Aneeka, as expressed through water rituals, mourning, and the repossession of public space, signifies that ecology is not just a stage upon which human struggle takes place, but a highly gendered and politicised dimension. Water, heat, land and body are used as control and resistance sites. The mythology of ecological payback through burial and the cult of ritual attention to death in the novel once again confirms the ecofeminist conception of a bridge-like continuity between body, earth, and culture. The themes parallel to the modern crisis in Pakistan and South Asia in general have been climate change, water wars, and gendered violence, all of which impact to creating common areas of vulnerability and resistance.

Water, by contrast, functions as a liberating element in the narrative. Aneeka's repeated return to natural water sources symbolizes a return to purity, to spiritual grounding, and to a place untouched by political intrusion. In Islamic and South Asian traditions, water is not just cleansing but sacred, it connects body and earth, death and renewal. Shiva (1988) describes water as an "ecological commons," a feminine domain of life and continuity. Aneeka's bathing ritual thus becomes an act of reclamation, not just of her brother's memory, but of her own subjectivity. She immerses herself in grief and emerges as a symbol of feminine ecological resistance.

Creating a foreground of ecological and emotional work that women need to undertake, *Home Fire* proposes a new paradigm of involvement in politics, one based on memory, nurturing, and the ethics of relationships. A way in which Shamsie does not idealise or victimise her female characters is by giving them agency, not through finding voices through speech, but through rituals, silence, and mourning. This supports the claim of Mies and Shiva that

subsistence practices and spiritual knowledge challenge the dominant institutions' discourse better as a form of real resistance.

In conclusion, the research presented confirms the potential profundity of ecofeminist inquiry in postcolonial fiction, as exemplified in *Home Fire*. It expands the blank areas of popular climate and political rhetoric, providing it with effective, local, and gendered accounts of resistance and survival. It is crucial that, in the age of authoritarianism and ecological breakdown, such narratives are in dire need. They not only signal injustice, but they also invite us to conceive alternative ways of justice by focusing on relationality, sustainability, and feminist ethics. By combining the individual tragedy with a large-scale loss, *Home Fire* emerges as a statement of the everlasting force of care as a form of resistance, of ritual as a form of resistance, and of literature as a form of ecological and political act.

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Authors' Contributions

H.R. contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, formal analysis, and preparation of the original draft of the manuscript. Z.Q. contributed through supervision, critical review, and substantive editing of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable. This study does not involve human participants, animals, or any form of experimental research.

Consent to Participate

Not applicable. No human participants were involved in this study.

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Consent for Publication

Not applicable. The manuscript does not contain any individual person's data in any form.

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