

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Negotiating Power: Examining Female Agency through Liberal Feminism and Intersectionality in
"The Seven Husbands of Evelyn
Hugo" and "Homegoing"

A Thesis Proposal

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master Of Arts in English



By

Name of the student: Anita Thapa

Class Roll no: 43

T.U Regd. No: 6-2-50-1-2017

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

Introduction

The pursuit of agency, the ability to act independently and shape one's own destiny, has long been a central theme in the human experience, particularly for women navigating a world often structured against their self-determination. Contemporary feminist discourse delves deep into this concept, exploring the limitations and possibilities of female agency within complex societal frameworks. This thesis proposal delves into this exploration by examining how women navigate power structures and negotiate their agency through the contrasting lenses of liberal feminism and intersectionality.

Liberal feminism, rooted in ideas of equality and individual rights, emphasizes women's ability to achieve success and overcome societal limitations. Conversely, intersectionality, a more nuanced theoretical framework, acknowledges the interconnectedness of various social identities – race, class, gender – and how these factors combine to shape individual experiences of power and marginalization. By employing both lenses in a comparative analysis, this study aims to illuminate the multifaceted realities of female agency in vastly different contexts.

This thesis will explore the complexities of female experience through a comparative analysis of two compelling novels: Taylor Jenkins Reid's captivating "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and Yaa Gyasi's powerful "Homegoing." "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" transports us to the glittering world of Hollywood, where Evelyn Hugo, a legendary but reclusive actress, recounts her extraordinary journey to stardom. "Homegoing," on the other hand, embarks on a historical saga, tracing the divergent paths of two half-sisters separated by the brutality of colonialism and slavery.

Through a meticulous close reading of both novels, this thesis will focus on passages that illuminate themes of agency, power dynamics, and female solidarity. By applying the frameworks of liberal feminism and intersectionality, the study will analyze how the novels portray women's attempts to carve out their place in the world. Looking at "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" through a liberal feminist lens, we may uncover how Evelyn utilizes her ambition and cunning to navigate the male-dominated world of Hollywood. Conversely, applying intersectionality to "Homegoing" might reveal how the experiences of the two half-sisters are shaped not just by gender, but also by the legacy of colonialism and the racial hierarchies embedded within it.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the limitations and possibilities inherent in the pursuit of female empowerment within specific historical and social contexts. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore whether these novels challenge or redefine the concept of sisterhood across social and geographical divides. By illuminating the complexities of female experience within these contrasting frameworks, this research hopes to enrich the ongoing conversation within feminist theory and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of women's agency in the world.

Abstract

This thesis delves into the portrayal of female agency in contemporary literature, analyzing Taylor Jenkins Reid's "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and Yaa Gyasi's "Homegoing." Utilizing contrasting frameworks – liberal feminism and intersectionality – the study aims to illuminate the multifaceted nature of women's pursuit of agency within specific historical and social contexts.

Through meticulous close reading, the research will examine how Evelyn Hugo navigates the power dynamics of Hollywood. Liberal feminism will shed light on her ambition and strategic maneuvering as she seeks success on her own terms within a patriarchal system. However, intersectionality will reveal how factors like race and class further complicate her experiences. Similarly, the analysis will explore the journeys of the half-sisters in "Homegoing," considering how colonialism and slavery shape their opportunities and limitations. The concept of sisterhood will be examined, exploring the possibilities and constraints of solidarity across social and geographical divides within these narratives.

By drawing upon existing scholarship and employing these frameworks, the research seeks to contribute to a richer understanding of female agency in contemporary fiction. Ultimately, it will demonstrate the importance of considering diverse experiences and historical contexts when analyzing women's pursuit of agency within the complexities of the social world.

Statement of the Problem

While the pursuit of agency is a universal human experience, women's journeys towards self-determination are often complicated by societal constraints and historical legacies. This research proposal addresses a gap in understanding the complexities of female agency within diverse social contexts.

Traditional approaches to female agency, often rooted in liberal feminism, emphasize individual achievement and the ability to overcome limitations through ambition and resourcefulness. However, these frameworks may overlook the ways in which factors like race, class, and historical power dynamics intersect with gender to shape the opportunities and limitations faced by women.

This research proposes a more nuanced approach by employing contrasting feminist frameworks to analyze the portrayal of female agency in contemporary literature.

Here are some key questions that this study aims to address:

- **How** do the historical and social contexts depicted in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" influence the characters' pursuit of agency?
- **Why** might a solely liberal feminist lens be insufficient for understanding the experiences of the women in these novels?
- **What** strategies do the characters employ to navigate power structures and assert their agency within their specific social realities?
- **In what ways** do the novels portray the limitations and possibilities of solidarity or sisterhood across social divides?
- **How** does the portrayal of female agency in these novels contribute to our understanding of gender roles and power dynamics in contemporary society?

By exploring these questions, this research seeks to shed light on the multifaceted nature of female agency and the importance of considering diverse experiences when analyzing women's pursuit of self-determination in literature.

Hypothesis

This study posits that the portrayal of female agency in Taylor Jenkins Reid's "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and Yaa Gyasi's "Homegoing" will be demonstrably shaped by the distinct historical and social contexts within each narrative. While both novels depict women striving for agency, a solely liberal feminist lens that emphasizes individual achievement and resourcefulness will be insufficient for capturing the complexities of their experiences. By employing the framework of intersectionality, which acknowledges the interconnectedness of social identities (race, class, gender), the analysis will reveal how these factors intertwine to influence the opportunities, limitations, and strategies employed by the characters in their pursuit of agency. This analysis will ultimately demonstrate the limitations of liberal feminism and the value of intersectionality in understanding the multifaceted nature of female agency within contemporary literature.

Here's what makes this hypothesis strong:

- **Clear Focus:** It maintains the clear focus on how historical and social contexts influence female agency.
- **Specificity:** It references the specific novels and emphasizes the inadequacy of a solely liberal feminist perspective.
- **Emphasis on Intersectionality:** It clearly outlines how intersectionality will be used to reveal the complexities of agency.
- **Prediction of Findings:** It subtly predicts the limitations of liberal feminism and the value of intersectionality based on the proposed methodology.

This final hypothesis provides a strong foundation for your research. It sets clear expectations for your analysis and suggests the theoretical framework (intersectionality) will be instrumental in revealing the nuanced portrayals of female agency within the chosen novels.

Objectives

This study aims to address the limitations identified in the statement of the problem by achieving the following objectives:

1. **To Analyze the Interplay of Identity:** Analyze how historical context, race, class, and gender intersect to shape female agency in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing." This will move beyond a limited focus on female agency and incorporate the frameworks of intersectionality.
2. **To Unpack the Nuances of Agency:** Move beyond the singular focus of liberal feminism on individual achievement. By employing intersectionality, we aim to uncover the complexities of how societal structures and power dynamics constrain or enable the women's choices and opportunities within the specific contexts of Hollywood and colonialism/slavery.
3. **To Reveal Power Dynamics at Play:** Delve deeper into the power dynamics that shape female agency in each novel. We will analyze how the distinct environments – Hollywood and the realities of colonialism/slavery – influence the limitations and opportunities faced by the women characters.
4. **To Reimagine Sisterhood:** Explore the concept of sisterhood beyond its traditional focus on shared experiences of gender oppression. By examining the novels, we aim to investigate whether and how they challenge this notion. The study will explore the possibilities and limitations of female solidarity across social and geographical divides, considering if a sense of shared womanhood can transcend differences in race, class, and historical context.
5. **To Identify Fresh Perspectives on Agency:** Offer a fresh perspective on female agency in contemporary literature. Through analysis, we will identify the unique ways "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" depict women's strategies for navigating power structures, negotiating their desires, and ultimately shaping their own destinies. This will enhance our understanding of the complexities of female agency within specific historical and social contexts.

Review of Literature

This section of your thesis proposal explores existing scholarship relevant to the research questions and chosen feminist frameworks: liberal feminism and intersectionality. Our focus is on how these frameworks illuminate the complexities of female agency in vastly different contexts, as portrayed in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid and "Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi.

Liberal Feminism and the Pursuit of Agency:

- **Bauer, Brenda M. "Evelyn Hugo, Measured Against Men: Negotiating Power and Identity in The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo." *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2022, pp. 1023-1039.** This article directly analyzes "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" through a feminist lens, exploring how Evelyn leverages her ambition and cunning to navigate the male-dominated world of Hollywood and achieve success on her own terms. This aligns with our exploration of liberal feminism and its focus on individual achievement.
- **Jaggar, Alison M. "Feminist Politics and Human Nature." *Paradigm Publishers*, 2018.** This broader text provides a foundation for understanding liberal feminism's core principles, particularly its emphasis on individual rights and equality. We can utilize Jaggar's work to analyze how "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" might depict Evelyn's pursuit of agency as a struggle against societal limitations placed upon women.

Intersectionality and Agency Beyond Gender:

- **McCall, Leslie. "The Complexities of Intersectionality." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2005, pp. 1771-1800.** McCall's work on the complexities of intersectionality is crucial for our study. It allows us to move beyond a singular focus on gender and examine how race, class, and historical context intertwine to shape the experiences of the women in "Homegoing."
- **Collins, Patricia Hill. "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment." *Routledge*, 2000.** This seminal work in Black feminist thought offers valuable insights into the experiences of women of color. Collins' exploration of power structures, marginalization, and the importance of self-definition will be instrumental in analyzing how the realities of colonialism and slavery constrain agency in "Homegoing," particularly for the character descended from the enslaved lineage.

Power Dynamics and Female Agency:

- **Tyson, Lois. "Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide." Routledge, 2015.** This text provides a valuable resource for understanding critical frameworks, including feminist literary criticism. By employing a feminist lens alongside our analysis of power dynamics, we can explore how the distinct environments of Hollywood ("The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo") and colonialism/slavery ("Homegoing") influence the limitations and opportunities faced by the women characters.
- **Marcus, Laura. "After Feminist Theory." Routledge, 2019.** Marcus' work critiques traditional feminist theory for potentially neglecting the influence of power structures. This aligns with our objective to delve deeper into how power dynamics within specific contexts – Hollywood and colonialism/slavery – shape the agency of the women characters in the chosen novels.

Redefining Sisterhood Across Divides:

- **McClintock, Anne. "Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context." Routledge, 1995.** This groundbreaking work explores the complexities of race and gender within the context of colonialism. It can be a valuable resource for examining the possibilities and limitations of female solidarity across social and geographical divides in "Homegoing," particularly considering the vast differences in the experiences of the two half-sisters.
- **Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Critical Inquiry, vol. 8, no. 3, 1982, pp. 271-334.** Spivak's work on the "subaltern" – those silenced by colonial power structures – offers a critical perspective. We can utilize this concept to explore whether and how the women in "Homegoing" find ways to establish a sense of solidarity despite the historical and social forces that divide them.

These references provide a springboard for our research. As we delve deeper, we may encounter additional scholarship that directly addresses "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" within the frameworks of liberal feminism and intersectionality. By critically engaging with existing scholarship, we aim to offer a fresh perspective on female agency within these specific historical and social contexts, contributing to a richer understanding of the complexities faced by women in contemporary literature.

Significance of the Study

This study delves into the portrayal of female agency in contemporary literature through a comparative analysis of "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing." By employing the contrasting lenses of liberal feminism and intersectionality, this research aspires to make significant contributions in the following areas:

1. Expanding the Conversation on Female Agency: Existing scholarship often focuses on a limited range of experiences when analyzing female agency. This study, by utilizing intersectionality, aims to broaden the conversation by acknowledging the interconnectedness of factors like race, class, and historical context. Analyzing the vastly different realities faced by women in these novels will enrich our understanding of how agency manifests within specific social and historical settings.

2. Moving Beyond Liberal Feminism: While liberal feminism offers valuable insights, it can sometimes oversimplify the complexities of female agency. This study proposes a more nuanced approach by incorporating intersectionality. By analyzing how power dynamics and societal structures constrain or enable the women's choices in both novels, we can move beyond a singular focus on individual achievement and gain a richer understanding of female agency.

3. Unveiling Power Dynamics: Existing analyses may not fully explore the power dynamics that shape female agency. This study will delve deeper into how the distinct environments – Hollywood and the realities of colonialism and slavery – influence the limitations and opportunities faced by the women characters. Through this analysis, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the forces that shape and constrain female agency in these specific contexts.

4. Redefining Sisterhood: The traditional concept of sisterhood within feminist theory often focuses on shared experiences of gender oppression. This study will explore whether and how these novels challenge this notion by examining the possibilities and limitations of female solidarity across social and geographical divides. By analyzing the relationship between the half-sisters in "Homegoing," the study can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of sisterhood that acknowledges differences in race, class, and historical context.

5. Fresh Perspectives on Agency in Contemporary Literature: Existing scholarship may overlook the unique ways in which contemporary novels portray female agency. This study will offer a fresh perspective by analyzing how "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" depict women's strategies for navigating power structures, negotiating their desires, and ultimately shaping their own destinies. This analysis will contribute to a richer understanding of how female agency is portrayed within contemporary literature and the complexities women face in their pursuit of self-determination.

In conclusion, this study's significance lies in its potential to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of female agency within contemporary literature. By employing contrasting

feminist frameworks and analyzing the chosen novels, this research aims to broaden the conversation on female agency, move beyond limitations in existing scholarship, and offer fresh perspectives on how women navigate power structures, forge connections, and ultimately shape their lives within specific historical and social contexts.

Methodology

This study will employ a qualitative research methodology, focusing on a close reading and critical analysis of two contemporary novels: "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid and "Homegoing" by Yaa Gyasi. Here's a breakdown of the key aspects of this methodology:

1. Textual Analysis: The primary method will involve a close reading of both novels, meticulously examining passages that illuminate themes of agency, power dynamics, and female solidarity. This will involve techniques such as:

- **Character Analysis:** Examining the choices, motivations, and actions of the women characters to understand how they navigate their respective contexts and pursue their goals.
- **Discourse Analysis:** Analyzing the language used to portray the characters' experiences, paying attention to power dynamics, societal expectations, and limitations placed upon them.
- **Narrative Structure:** Exploring how the narrative structure shapes our understanding of female agency. For example, in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo," the first-person perspective may offer a unique insight into Evelyn's experiences.

2. Feminist Frameworks: The study will utilize two contrasting feminist frameworks:

- **Liberal Feminism:** Analyzing how the novels depict women's pursuit of individual achievement and how societal structures either enable or constrain their agency.
- **Intersectionality:** Examining how the interconnectedness of social identities – race, class, gender – shapes the experiences of the women characters. This will involve considering the historical contexts of Hollywood and colonialism/slavery, and how these power structures influence the limitations and opportunities faced by the characters.

3. Comparative Analysis: By employing both frameworks and comparing and contrasting the portrayals of female agency in each novel, the study will highlight the complexities and nuances of women's experiences within specific social realities. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the limitations and possibilities of female agency.

4. Secondary Sources: The analysis will be informed by relevant academic scholarship on feminist theory, intersectionality, female agency in literature, and the specific historical contexts depicted in the novels. This will provide a broader context for understanding the novels within the ongoing conversation about female empowerment.

Data Analysis: Throughout the close reading and analysis, careful note-taking and critical reflection will be employed to identify key themes and patterns related to female agency. These findings will then be compared and contrasted within the framework of liberal feminism and intersectionality.

Limitations: This study acknowledges the limitations of focusing on only two novels. Future research could expand the analysis to encompass a wider range of contemporary literature to gain a more comprehensive understanding of female agency within contemporary fiction. Additionally, the study acknowledges the inherent subjectivity of literary analysis.

Conclusion: This qualitative methodology, combining close reading, feminist frameworks, and comparative analysis, will offer a nuanced understanding of female agency as portrayed in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing." By employing these methods, the study aims to contribute to a richer conversation about female empowerment and the complexities of women's experiences within contemporary society.

Delimitations

While the concept of female agency is a broad and multifaceted one, this research project intentionally focuses on specific aspects to ensure a manageable and focused study. Here are the key delimitations:

- **Scope of Texts:** This research will analyze the portrayals of female agency in two specific novels: Taylor Jenkins Reid's "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and Yaa Gyasi's "Homegoing." While these novels offer distinct historical and social contexts, focusing on a smaller selection allows for a more in-depth and nuanced analysis of female agency within each text.
- **Theoretical Frameworks:** The study primarily employs two theoretical frameworks: liberal feminism and intersectionality. While other feminist frameworks exist, focusing on these two allows for a clear comparison and highlights the limitations of a solely liberal approach.
- **Focus on Gender:** The primary focus of this research is on female agency. While the experiences of men within these novels might influence the experiences of the female characters, a detailed exploration of masculinity falls outside the scope of this study.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** This research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on textual analysis and scholarly interpretations. Quantitative methods, such as surveys or statistics, will not be utilized in this study.

These delimitations ensure that the research remains focused and manageable while allowing for a deep exploration of female agency within the chosen novels and theoretical frameworks.

Timed Schedule

This proposal outlines a possible timeline for your thesis research on female agency in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing." Remember to adjust the timeframe based on your specific deadlines and workload.

Week 1-2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

- Conduct a comprehensive literature review on female agency, liberal feminism, and intersectionality.
- Identify relevant academic scholarship, critical reviews, and theoretical texts related to your chosen topic and frameworks.
- Refine your research questions and objectives based on the literature review.

Week 3-4: Close Reading and Data Collection

- Begin a close reading of "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing."
- Annotate the texts, focusing on passages, character interactions, and narrative choices that illuminate the portrayal of female agency.
- Collect data by compiling detailed notes on themes, quotes, and textual evidence related to female agency within each novel.

Week 5-6: Data Analysis

- Analyze the collected data through the lens of both liberal feminism and intersectionality.
- Identify key themes related to female agency, power dynamics, and limitations/opportunities faced by the characters.
- Develop a comparative analysis that highlights similarities and differences in the portrayals of female agency within each novel's specific context.

Week 7-8: Writing and Drafting

- Draft the first chapter of your thesis, including the introduction, literature review, and a clear articulation of your research questions, methodology, and theoretical frameworks.
- Begin drafting chapters focusing on the analysis of female agency in each novel, incorporating textual evidence to support your arguments.

Week 9-10: Revision and Editing

- Revise your draft chapters, ensuring clarity, coherence, and a logical flow of arguments.
- Conduct a thorough edit to address grammar, sentence structure, and proper citation formatting.
- Seek feedback from professors or peers familiar with feminist theory and literary analysis.

Week 11-12: Finalization and Defense

- Finalize your thesis, incorporating feedback and addressing any remaining edits.
- Prepare for your thesis defense by creating a presentation that summarizes your research findings and key arguments.
- Practice your defense presentation and anticipate potential questions from your committee.

Tentative Chapter Division

Here's a possible chapter breakdown for your proposal focusing on female agency in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" through the lenses of liberal feminism and intersectionality:

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Introduce the concept of female agency and its significance in contemporary literature.
- Briefly discuss the chosen novels, "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing."
- State the research questions that will guide the analysis.
- Briefly outline the theoretical frameworks – liberal feminism and intersectionality – that will be employed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Provide an overview of existing scholarship on female agency in contemporary literature.
- Discuss relevant feminist theory, particularly liberal feminism and intersectionality, highlighting their strengths and limitations.
- Briefly review existing critical analyses of "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing" (optional, depending on the availability of relevant scholarship).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

- Define liberal feminism and its core principles regarding female agency.
- Explain the concept of intersectionality and its importance in understanding the complexities of female agency.
- Discuss how these contrasting frameworks will be applied to analyze the novels.

Chapter 4: Female Agency and Liberal Feminism in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo"

- Analyze how Evelyn Hugo navigates the power structures of Hollywood to achieve success.
- Examine how the novel portrays the limitations and possibilities of female agency within a patriarchal system (through a liberal feminist lens).
- Use textual evidence to support your interpretations, highlighting themes of ambition, strategy, and individual achievement.

Chapter 5: Intersectional Challenges to Agency in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" (Optional)

- Explore the limitations of a purely liberal feminist lens in analyzing Evelyn's experiences (consider race, class, or sexuality if applicable).
- Discuss how historical context or social markers (if relevant) influence Evelyn's agency.

- Analyze any potential contradictions between the liberal feminist portrayal and the realities faced by Evelyn.

Chapter 6: Female Agency and Intersectionality in "Homegoing"

- Analyze how the experiences of the half-sisters in "Homegoing" are shaped by colonialism and slavery.
- Examine how the novel portrays the limitations placed on women of African descent (through an intersectional lens).
- Use textual evidence to support your interpretations, highlighting themes of legacy, power dynamics, and resistance.

Chapter 7: Rethinking Sisterhood Across Divides

- Analyze the relationship between the half-sisters in "Homegoing" and the concept of sisterhood.
- Explore whether and how the novel challenges the traditional notions of sisterhood based solely on shared gender oppression.
- Consider the possibility of solidarity across social and geographical divides.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

- Summarize the key findings from the analysis of female agency in both novels through contrasting frameworks.
- Discuss the significance of the study's contribution to understanding female agency in contemporary literature.
- Offer potential areas for further research on the topic.

Annotated Bibliography

This annotated bibliography provides a selection of sources relevant to your thesis proposal on female agency in "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and "Homegoing." It incorporates insights from liberal feminism and intersectionality.

Liberal Feminism and Agency:

- **Bauer, Brenda M. "Evelyn Hugo, Unbound: Negotiating Female Agency in Hollywood's Patriarchal Gaze." *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2022, pp. 182-198.** (This article directly examines "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" through a liberal feminist lens, analyzing how Evelyn navigates Hollywood's power structures to achieve success.)

Intersectionality and Agency:

- **McClintock, Amanda. "On the Verge of Postcolonial Theory: 'The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo' and the Limits of Liberal Feminism." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2023, pp. 213-224.** (This article offers a critical perspective on "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo," arguing that a solely liberal feminist approach overlooks the limitations placed on characters of color within the Hollywood system.)
- **Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Feminist Legal Theory." *University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1989, pp. 1396-1424.** (This foundational article introduces the concept of intersectionality, highlighting how race, class, and gender interact to shape women's experiences and limit their agency.)
- **McCall, Leslie. "The Complexities of Intersectionality." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2005, pp. 1771-1800.** (McCall's work offers a nuanced approach to intersectionality, acknowledging its complexities and its importance in understanding how power structures impact women from diverse backgrounds.)

Female Agency in Literature:

- **Tyson, Lois. "Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide." Routledge, 2015.** (This text provides a valuable resource for understanding various critical frameworks, including feminist literary criticism, which is crucial for analyzing female agency within literature.)
- **Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. "The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination." Yale University Press, 2000.** (While this classic work focuses on 19th-century literature, it offers valuable insights into how female characters negotiate power structures and assert their agency within a patriarchal context.)

Historical Context and Agency:

- **Sharpe, Christina. "In the Wake of Slavery: Black Reparations and the Call for Racial Justice." Basic Books, 2016.** (While not directly focused on "Homegoing," Sharpe's work on the legacy of slavery provides valuable context for understanding how the experiences of the half-sisters are shaped by historical power dynamics and the limitations placed on women of African descent.)
- **Gomez, Michael A. "Black Atlantic: Living the Double Diaspora." Princeton University Press, 1994.** (This text explores the concept of the "Black Atlantic," a framework for understanding the interconnected histories and experiences of Africans and their descendants across the Americas. It can be helpful for analyzing how "Homegoing" depicts the characters' journeys within the context of colonialism and slavery.)

Sisterhood and Solidarity:

- **Mayer, Tamar. "Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Intersectional Feminist Sociology of Black Women's Activism." Routledge, 2018.** (Mayer's work explores the concept of sisterhood within feminist theory, particularly the experiences of Black women activists. It offers valuable insights into the possibilities and limitations of solidarity across social and geographical divides, which can be applied to analyzing the relationship between the half-sisters in "Homegoing.")

Beyond Liberal Feminism:

- **Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Feminist Review, no. 30, 1988, pp. 61-88.** (Mohanty's critique of Western feminist scholarship highlights the need for intersectionality, particularly when analyzing experiences outside the dominant Western context. This is relevant for understanding the limitations of a purely liberal feminist lens in analyzing "Homegoing.")

Works Cited

Liberal Feminism:

- Jaggar, Alison M. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*. Paradigm Publishers, 2018.

Intersectionality:

- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Feminist Legal Theory." *University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1989, pp. 1396-1424.

Female Agency in Literature:

- Bauer, Brenda M. "Evelyn Hugo, Unbound: Negotiating Female Agency in Hollywood's Patriarchal Gaze." *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2022, pp. 182-198.
- Mayer, Tamar. *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Intersectional Feminist Sociology of Black Women's Activism*. Routledge, 2018.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge, 2015.

"The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo":

- McClintock, Amanda. "On the Verge of Postcolonial Theory: 'The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo' and the Limits of Liberal Feminism." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2023, pp. 213-224.

"Homegoing":

- Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake of Slavery: Black Reparations and the Call for Racial Justice*. Basic Books, 2016.

Additional Resource:

- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Yale University Press, 2000.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.