



## INTERROGATING THE FLUIDITY OF HOME IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE*

Dr. JIBAN JYOTI KAKOTI

Associate Professor, Department of English, Golaghat Commerce College

Golaghat, Assam

Email: [jibonjyotikakoti@yahoo.in](mailto:jibonjyotikakoti@yahoo.in)



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### Abstract

Home as a geographical concept highlights interrelations between spatial referents such as space, place and scales, on the one hand, and spatial politics involving identity and power on the other. Home as space points to a place where one lives, and as a concept the notion of home is extended to other spatial scales. It is precisely because of the many-sided notions of home that people have different identities in relation to the locations of their homes. The colonial notion of home, however, obscures the inherent fluidity of home leading to the hegemonic imposition of a standard image of home by the colonizers on the colonized people. The postcolonial representation of colonial home foregrounds the fluid and multiple ways of inhabiting the domestic space depending on the nature of the interface between the private and the public spheres. This paper is an attempt to explore Toni Morrison's representation of the domestic space as a contesting ground for African Americans to negotiate home and identity in *The Bluest Eye*. The language used by African Americans in their home also contribute to deconstructing the biased and restricted image of home presented by the larger white culture as against the fluid and dynamic picture of home foregrounded in their quest for home and identity. The normative ideals of white middle class home, which are the product of "conceived" space, the space of the colonizers, are countered from the "lived" space, the space of the colonized, in the margin. The paper thus interrogates African Americans' endeavour to make home possible by countering the normative idea of white middle class home dominating the psyche of both black and white Americans.

**Keywords:** Home, Space, Concept, Fluidity, Private Sphere, Public Sphere, Language, Conceived Space, Lived Space.

### Introduction

The African American's search for home has multiple dimensions. This journey is so diverse and illusive that a single ideal of home can never arrest all the paraphernalia of this experience. The fluidity of home, presented through the concomitant display of its varied experiences, is obscured in the colonial representations of home. The postcolonial

representations question such biased account of the domestic space by foregrounding its inherent fluidity. The African American Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison captures the varied experiences associated with the African American's quest for home in her novels. In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison presents the normative ideals of the white middle class home and then set them against the diverse

experiences encountered by African Americans in their search for home and identity in America. How these experiences counter the ideals of white home as a secured private space protected from the intrusion of the public sphere, and how the fluidity of home is restored from the lived space of the margin, constitute the outlines of the study.

### Research Problem

The problem underlying this research is the necessity of foregrounding the conflict between the normative ideals of home conceived and practiced in the white middle class home and the alternative experiences of home epitomized by the African American's search for home living in the midst of the supremacist white culture. This study is an attempt to address the problem of restoring the inherent fluidity of home obscured by its colonial representation as exclusively private having no interface with the politics of the public sphere. This problem is further addressed from the often ignored perspective of the politics of language in the domestic space.

### Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to examine how Toni Morrison represents multiple ways of experiencing home by the African American both as a private and a fluid space having interface with the public sphere.

The work further explores the role played by the vitality of the language used by African Americans in their interaction with one another at home towards realization of their homing desire.

### Hypothesis

The study is predicated on the hypothesis that the normative ideals of the white middle class home miserably fail to encompass multiple dimensions of the African American's experience of home; that the 'conceived' ideals or the master narrative of home is countered by African Americans by presenting alternative images of home from the margin and thereby restoring the fluidity of the domestic space necessary for their realization of homing desire in an environment where whiteness is the norm.

### Methodology

The present study is conducted by adopting the analytical and descriptive approach of research.

### Theoretical Framework

Home is both a concept and a space. The feelings associated with the concept of home are at once private and public. Home is private because lives and intimate feelings of inmates are kept secured and protected within the periphery of home. It is also public because, as members of the society, thoughts and feelings of the inmates are influenced by the forces outside home. The colonial home is both private and public and, yet the political dimension so conspicuous in the structure and maintenance of the house is intentionally obscured. The colonial home is projected as exclusively private. It is regarded as a space that provides privacy and security to its inmates. The domestic space of colonial home is thought of as well protected from the intrusion of politics from the public sphere. But this colonial division of private and public sphere is in reality a myth. African-American feminist Patricia Hill Collins argues that "the notion of discrete public and private spheres found in white nuclear families characterized by sex-segregated gender roles are less likely to be found in African-American communities" (47).

For bell hooks the concept of home for the American black is unique in the sense that slavery and its aftermath produced for them a very different home. In *Yearning* she argues that for African-Americans "homeplace" can be a site of resistance because the domestic space can be an agency for self-respect and subjectivity denied to them in the wider public sphere by the supremacist white culture (47).

In their search for a viable home across different spatial scales, African Americans have to negotiate with the demands of the larger culture within the terms and conditions set by that culture. At the same time, they initiate a series of resistance to the demands for blind assimilation on their part. This makes their negotiation meaningful and acceptable to them as well. Recent scholarship in

cultural geography has explored the spatial politics of home—another important dimension of the confluence of home and space so far as the politics associated with these ideas is concerned. For Sara Upstone, spatial politics “is rooted not solely in a politics of the nation, but instead reflects the diverse spaces that construct the postcolonial experience” (1). Spatial politics of home, therefore, refers to the politics within the domestic space of home as well as its interface with the politics of the public sphere. In her research on home and identity for Anglo-Indian women, for instance, Alison Blunt studies home as “a contested site shaped by different axes of power and over a range of scales” (4). This approach also shows how the private spaces of home are closely linked with, rather than separated from, power relations in the wider public sphere.

The fluidity of home can further be interrogated with the help of Henry Lefebvre’s notion of space as comprising of “spatial practice”, “representations of space”, and “spaces of representation” or, what Edward Soja calls “perceived”, “conceived”, and “lived” spaces, which are involved in a dialectical relationship with one another. (65). The “perceived” space refers to physical or material space which is perceived through the senses. The “conceived” space on the other hand, can be referred to as the mental space which, working on “perceived” space, produces knowledge and discourse. This space, according to Lefebvre, “is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production), a storehouse of epistemological power” (qtd. in Soja 67). It is intent on controlling and manipulating Lefebvre’s “lived” space through the exercise of power and ideology. Since the “conceived” space is the representation of “control and surveillance”, “counterspaces” cannot be produced in this space (Soja 67). Nor can it be produced in the “perceived” space, which is devoid of mental orientation. As the space of “inhabitants” and “users”, the “lived” space has the propensity for offering stimuli for the generation of “spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning” (Soja 68).

What is unique about Lefebvre’s third space, i.e. “lived” space, is that it witnesses the fusion and friction of both first and second spaces, i.e. “perceived” and “conceived” spaces, in the lived experience of the people in the margin (Hubbard and Kitchin 6). This fluidity of space experienced in the “lived” space sets the stage for overcoming what Lefebvre calls “double illusion”— “the realistic illusion” and “the illusion of transparency” (Soja 62). The “objectivist-materialist” first illusion is the product of being obsessed with only the materiality of things thereby ignoring the equally important dimension of representation of such things in the form of discourse. The “subjectivist-idealist” second illusion is the result of too much focus on the representation of the material world in the form of discourse and the overlooking of the importance of the materiality of the real world. In order to deconstruct such binaries Lefebvre advocates what Soja calls “a cumulative *trialectics* that is radically open to additional othernesses, to a continuing expansion of spatial knowledge” (Soja 61). Soja uses the term “thirthing-as-othering” to embody the fluidity of Lefebvre’s “lived” social space which encompasses both “perceived” and “conceived” spaces and yet produces something new, which is not an end in itself, but a means to multiple other alternatives (Soja 60).

Language plays a very important role in the conceptualization of materiality and “imaginary” of home. Language also helps to give vent to feelings and emotions associated with the idea of home as a place and a “spatial imaginary” (Blunt and Dowling 2). “Language”, for bell hooks, “is also a place of struggle” (145):

Dare I speak to oppressed and oppressor in the same voice? Dare I speak to you in a language that will move beyond the boundaries of domination – a language that will not bind you, fence you in, or hold you? Language is also a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance (146).

Language also plays a crucial role for African Americans in the production of counter-hegemonic discourses. The racist, hegemonic, and ethnocentric discourses produced by the language of the oppressors never allow alternative and/or multiple worldview to flourish. It has rather been the language of the oppressed which, because of its fluidity, spontaneity and sincerity, is always ready to adapt to the pressing needs of the moment. bell hooks in *Yearning* claims that in order to “stand in political resistance with the oppressed”, African American creative writers, artists, film makers, and theorists must respond to prevailing cultural practice in such a way as to be able to “envision new, alternative, oppositional aesthetic acts’ (145). The language through which these issues are spoken about and counter-hegemonic discourses are made, is of utmost significance for the survival and freedom of the African American. Speaking about the power of language to produce counter-discourses in order to put up a resistance to those who dominate, hooks notes that the presence of the oppressor “changes the nature and direction of [the] words [of the oppressed]” (146). Focusing on the language African Americans use in their interaction with one another, hooks recollects her own experience of talking in a language whose “words [were] thickly accented black Southern speech” (146).

Toni Morrison also focuses on the politics and power of language in her Nobel Lecture and in her fictional work. In her Nobel Lecture in particular she foregrounds the debilitating effect of “dead” language of the white—“the vampiric language of sexism, racism, and theism”—which relies on censorship to perpetuate “an unjust status quo” ( qtd. in Shands and Mikrut 6). She also reveals, at the same time, the inherent polyphony of living language of the African American. For Morrison, language can never fully give vent to individual as well as collective consciousness of trauma and experiences of violence and loss. But what living language can perform is the act of approximating the expression of the “ineffable” to make the victims hopeful about overcoming such barriers. “Dead” language, on the other hand, does not allow the victims to look forward to a better future

as it “euphemizes state-sanctioned violence, silences dissent, and rationalizes dominion of one group over the other”. Morrison asserts that “African-American discourse ‘lives’ because of its ability to adapt and accommodate difference” (qtd. in Shands and Mikrut 6, 8).

Shands and Mikrut maintains that Morrison explicitly identifies racism, both in her “Nobel Lecture” and throughout her works, as a whole, with oppressive forms of language because language has the capacity to produce discourse (24). This language, which she calls dead language, is presented in sharp contrast to the living African American language, which is flexible and open enough to welcome difference and display adaptability even in the most discomfited condition.

The language African-Americans use in their home/‘homeplace’ is different from the language they use in the public sphere, where the freedom as well as free flow of their language is restricted. They can articulate their voices, engage in memory and re-memory, and verbalize their traumas in the living language of the home/‘homeplace’, which generates healing as well as harm. The language of the domestic space thus both maintains and interrupts the separation of the public and the private spheres. It can rather be argued that the living language of the African-American (as against the ‘dead’ language of the dominating group) creates an interface between the private and the public spheres and, in the course of this interaction, produces a third spatial dimension – a space of hybridity – where new identities are made possible.

### Analyses and Discussions

#### Ideals of White Middle Class Home

The image of the house presented at the beginning of *The Bluest Eye* shows how a house can become home by subscribing to the standard ideals of a white middle class home. The ideal home presented in the white family primer dictates the color of the house, the number of family members, kinds of domestic animals, frequency of visit by guests, and the cordial relationship between parents and children. Such an image of home

evokes self-pity and worthlessness in the minds of those whose home is unable to subscribe to the projected ideals. Morrison intentionally disintegrates the language in which it is presented in order to vilify this hegemonic image of home. By distorting the language, Morrison, in fact, foreshadows the inevitable dissolution of such ideals as well as the language that produces such archetypes. The subversion of or resistance to such ideals emerges from the lived space of black home – primarily from McTeers' and Breedloves' home – in a language vitalized by unique experiences of the African American.

### Alternative Images of Home: the Black Experience

By demonstrating the ideals of white home, Morrison seems to reinforce Lefebvre's argument that it is the "conceived" space that produces discourse and that it is the "lived" space that generates counter spaces from which challenges to such discourse come out (Soja68). The ideals of white home, which are the product of "conceived" space of the white, are challenged by Morrison through the counter spaces produced in black home, which offer alternative and diverse experiences of home as against the normative ideals of home.

Claudia describes their house as "old, cold, and green", which is in sharp contrast to the ideals of white home which is warm, "green and white". While Claudia's house is lighted up at night by a kerosene lamp and inhabited by "roaches and mice", the ideal white home is populated by cats, kitties and dogs (*Bluest Eye* 5). Adult members of their family do not make a public display of their concern for the children. Instead of talking to them, they give them instructions. Adults shake their heads in disgust when the children "catch cold" due to their carelessness. They treat their children's illness "with contempt, foul Black Draught, and castor oil" (*Bluest Eye* 5,6). When Claudia caught cough and cold, the family members neither spoke to her nor inquired about her health. When she puked out the "Vicks salve" her mother made her swallow, she received a volley of admonition from her mother. This scolding made her feel guilty and humiliated: "My mother's anger humiliates me, her

words chafe my cheeks and I am crying" (*Bluest Eye* 7). But this display of lack of warmth in a black household is only a superficial manifestation of the negative elements that are supposed to be detrimental to promoting a black "house" to a "home". What Morrison tends to reveal here is that beneath this seeming indifference lies deeper sense of warmth and tender feelings, which Claudia has rightly realized when she recollects:

And in the night, when my coughing was dry and tough, feet padded into the room, hands repinned the flannel, readjusted the quilt and rested a moment on my forehead. So when I think of autumn I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die (*Bluest Eye* 7).

The storefront in which the Breedloves lived is described as "the box of peeling gray" with the furnishings being "anything but describable" (*Bluest Eye* 25). They had to live there because "they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly" (*Bluest Eye* 28). The materiality of the Breedloves' home also provokes a sense of bleakness when compared to the structure of the ideal white home. The storefront house where they lived together had two rooms—the living room and the bed room—with "beaverboard planks" used as partition "that did not reach to the ceiling" (*Bluest Eye* 25). All the family members lived in the bedroom, which accommodated three beds, one coal stove, some trunks and chairs, a small end table, and a closet made from cardboard. The kitchen was a separate room detached from the storefront house and apart from "a toilet bowl", no facilities for bath were available in the house. Such a picture reveals lack of privacy and absence of essential facilities, which are the characteristics of the Breedloves' house. This materiality of their home affects their "imaginary" of home which gets manifested in their "lived" domestic space.

The Breedloves household is the manifestation of chaos with Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly fighting over tiny matters like unavailability of coal in the house for lighting the stove to prepare breakfast. The fight degenerates into

physical abuse that involves hitting on different parts of the body and throwing of kitchenware. The narrator beautifully captures the quintessence and nature of their fighting by highlighting how Cholly put up a cowardly fight against his wife:

He fought her the way a coward fights a man—with feet, the palms of his hands, and teeth. She, in turn, fought back in a purely feminine way—with frying pans and pokers, and occasionally a flat iron would sail toward his head. They did not talk, groan, or curse during these beatings. There was only the muted sound of falling things, and flesh on unsurprised flesh (*Bluest Eye* 32).

The reaction of their children to episodes of this sort ranges from Sammy's cursing, and, sometimes, beating, of his father, to Pecola's "overwhelming desire that one would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die" (*Bluest Eye* 32).

This dismal picture of home stands in sharp contrast to the Fishers' home where Mrs. Breedlove got employed as a servant. In her opinion, she was fortunate enough to get employed in a permanent job in the house of a rich white family whose members were "affectionate, appreciative, and generous". She loved everything that the Fishers used in their home such as the "pink nightie" of the Fisher child, embroidered "white pillow slips", and fashionable bed sheets. She became so much obsessed with these household materials that sometimes she sniffed at "their linen" and felt the softness of "their silk draperies" (*Bluest Eye* 98). The abundance of luxury items in the Fishers' household made her contrast her home with that of the Fishers'. She discovered that while there were a "porcelain tub", hot and clear running water, and "fluffy white towels" at Fishers' household, there were a "zink tub", stove-heated water, and "grayish towels" at her home (*Bluest Eye* 99).

But, in spite of all this, the alternative image of home presented by the Breedloves' home puts a challenge to the ideal white home. The internal politics of Breedloves' home accommodates different material and metaphorical realities of home. It is through her display of violent quarreling

capacity that Mrs. Breedlove could realize her true self. These quarrels brought about a necessary break in their otherwise tiresome and commonplace routine life, through which Mrs. Breedlove "could display the style and imagination of what she believed to be her own true self" (*Bluest Eye* 31). They were indispensable for her because they provided meaning and essence to her otherwise boring and insignificant moments of life lived in uneventful ways. They also helped her overcome the monotony of deprivation and instill a kind of dignity and luster to the dullness of the household.

Home making is such a complex phenomenon for African Americans traumatized by the legacy of slavery that a single normative image of home miserably fails to encompass the diverse spatial dimensions of the "materiality" and "imaginary" of their home. Morrison's representation of the Breedloves' home makes a mockery of the image of white middle class home displayed in the white family primer. This is precisely because such quarrels, which can never even be dreamt of in that ideal home, are so indispensable for Mrs. Breedlove that "[t]o deprive her of these flights was to deprive her of all the zest and reasonableness of life" (*Bluest Eye* 31). For making life tolerable, both Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly needed each other. While Cholly, by drinking regularly and displaying cussedness, provided an environment and material for both of them to pick up a quarrel for making their life tolerable, Mrs. Breedlove capitalized on that material to convert their otherwise dull home into an eventful one.

#### Interface between Domestic Space and Public Sphere

Morrison here appears to have contradicted the ideal image of home as distinguished from the public sphere of life by foregrounding the inevitable intrusion of the politics of public sphere to the domestic space. The Breedloves, for example, could perceive their ugliness from the reaction of the neighbours and gradually they conceived of themselves as inferiors and outlaws, which led them to develop self-hatred. In order to make a balance between the perceived and conceived

images of themselves, Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly Breedlove were regularly engaged in violent quarrels. The way they lived in the domestic space was influenced by other people's reactions to their ugliness. Consequently, their perception and conception of themselves were also determined by such reactions from the public sphere. How others reacted to their ugliness and consequently, how they perceived and conceived about themselves became merged in the way they lived in the domestic space. The "subjectivist-materialist" and "objectivist-idealist" "double illusion" was dispensed with in the lived domestic space, which produced 'hybridity'—neither the perceived nor the conceived but something quite new (Soja 26). The resistance they put up from the domestic space centered on their ability to produce a counter-image of themselves by creating "a sense of belonging" on the basis of the opinions they gathered about themselves from one another to keep their ugliness at bay. By quarreling with each other, the Breedloves could capitalize on the way they found each other to subvert the projected image of themselves from the public sphere. Thus a careful interrogation of the two homes—the ideal white middle-class home and the African American home—reveals the artificial, foppish, showy and devitalizing aspects of the former as against the natural, actual, and vital characters of the latter. It can be "so neat and nasty at the same time" (*Bluest Eye* 2, 8).

The interface between the domestic space and the politics of the public sphere is further demonstrated by Pecola's desire for disappearing within the Breedlove's apartment, which is perhaps a reflection of her invisibility in the white space. During the quarrel between Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly in their storefront apartment one morning over the tiny matter of fetching coal for the stove, Pecola prayed to God to "make her disappear", and "squeez[ing] her eyes shut", she tried to feel how "[l]ittle parts of her body faded away" one by one barring her eyes because "[o]nly her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left" (*Bluest Eye* 33). Pecola's desire for turning herself into a non-entity and making her invisible would have been achieved, had it not been for her eyes, which

refused to disappear. It means that she could be made visible only through and because of her eyes, and this realization later made her yearn for "the blue eyes of a little white girl" (*Bluest Eye* 162). This desire was definitely born out of her experience of being invisible in her encounter with white people in the public sphere such as the store run by Mr. Yacobwsky, "a white immigrant storekeeper", in whose eyes she detected "the total absence of human recognition" for her (*Bluest Eye* 36). The distaste she saw "lurking in the eyes of all white people" was "the distaste ... for her, her blackness" (*Bluest Eye* 36, 37).

Pecola by now was convinced that she could be made visible only by having a pair of blue eyes. The pressure from the wider white culture to accept her insignificance and, therefore, invisibility due to her blackness, could be thwarted only by fulfilling her desire to have blue eyes. Blue eyes in a black body, I would argue, is the symbol of the possibility, in the psychic level, of putting up a resistance to the demand for assimilation within the terms and limits prescribed by the white culture, which, if forced upon the black, would assume such a grotesque and/or absurd character that assimilation in the physical level would almost become impossible. The black body by itself was not enough to get recognized by the supremacist white culture, unless qualified by the incorporation of something white. Pecola's yearning for blue eyes could, therefore, be argued as a kind of resistance to black/white binary because a pair of blue eyes in a black body, though absurd, should be able to make Pecola (both black and white) beautiful and acceptable considering the norms for assimilation sanctioned by the larger culture.

One can also argue that the desire for having blue eyes was in itself an act of resistance. This is precisely because the image of blue eyes in a black body was something unthinkable, undesirable, and unimaginable in the white culture. The black "Other" was recognized in the white society only through his/her blackness which marked the difference between the black and the white. Yacobwsky's hesitancy in touching Pecola's hand while collecting the money from her hand, and his ignoring of her blackness – her invisibility for him –

was the manifestation of the otherness of the Other. Jacobwasky's hesitation to touch Pecola's hand also reminds us of David Sibley's observation that the marginalized (African Americans in this context) are regarded as "dirt" to be kept away from the contact with the dominant white. It can also be argued that a black body with blue eyes is something that cannot be ignored and, therefore, must be recognized. This image of the black body with blue eyes must be placed in the location of hybridity —black + white = black-white-and-more — or, the third space, where alternative and multiple identities can be dreamt of, imagined, and formed.

#### Language as a Tool for Recovering Fluidity of Home

The language used by Mrs. Breedlove at her home, particularly in her interaction with Cholly, was quite different from the language she used in the house of the white woman she had worked for. The foul language that infused vitality to Mrs. Breedlove during her quarrel with Cholly, lost its staccato and whipping character when, in her employer's home, she tried to sooth the crying little white girl. The white girl's "pink sunback dress" was spoiled by the splashing of blueberry juice splattered on the floor by Pecola. Her soothing words -- "Hush, baby, hush. Come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don't cry no more. Polly will change it" -- made a mockery of the vitality of her language she would use inside her own home. When the white girl wanted to know who the three girls—Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda—were, Mrs. Breedlove replied, "Don't worry none, baby" (*Bluest Eye* 85, 84).

The non-entity the black girls were reduced to by Mrs. Breedlove in the white home problematized African Americans' search for home and identity outside the marginal space occupied by them. It demonstrates how the spatial politics of white home was quite different from that of the black one where, unlike the former, private sphere intersected with public sphere in a more conspicuous and comprehensive manner.

The vitality of the living language of African Americans is further demonstrated by the language

used in the MacTeers' home. Claudia's assessment of her mother's irritating and depressing "fussing soliloquies" shows the vitality and effectiveness of the language that African Americans use in their home:

They were interminable, insulting, and although indirect (mama never named anybody – just talked about folks and *some* people), extremely painful in their thrust. She would go on like that for hours, connecting one offense to another until all of the things that chagrined her were spewed out. Then, having told everybody and everything off, she would burst into song and sing the rest of the day (*Bluest Eye* 16).

After volleying such devastating 'fussing soliloquies', which "was like somebody throwing stones", Mrs. MacTeer could immediately shift to singing blues with a voice the melody and emotion of which made Claudia aspire for those hard days that the song evoked:

She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone-and-left-me-times. But her voice was so sweet and her singing-eyes so melty I found myself longing for those hard times . . . Misery colored by the greens and blues in my mother's voice took all of the grief out of the words and left me with a conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet (*Bluest Eye* 18).

Such a shift in emotion, made possible by the vitality of a language evolved out of unique African American experiences intersecting private and public spheres, is possible only in black home. These are intimate moments of home which make home possible in an otherwise suffocating atmosphere within and outside home.

The vitality of the living African American language is also revealed in the conversation between Mrs. MacTeer and her friends regarding Henry Washington and Miss Della Jones relationship which is summed up in the following observation of Claudia:



Their conversation is like a gently wicked dance: sound meets sound, curtsies, shimmies and retires. Another sound enters but is upstaged by still another: the two circle each other and stop. Sometimes their words move in lofty spirals; other times they take strident leaps, and all of it is punctuated with warm-pulsed laughter – like the throb of a heart made of jelly (*Bluest Eye* 9).

### Conclusion

The hypothesis set out at the beginning of this study has been validated by the assertion of the fluidity of home as represented in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Morrison begins her novel by presenting the normative ideals of the white middle class home, which are hegemonic in the sense that both the white and the black are expected to subscribe to such ideals. She, however, intentionally distorts the language which produces such prototypes thereby foreshadowing the inevitable disintegration of such imposing ideals of home. It is the black experience of inhibiting the domestic space that challenges the imposition of such restricted notion of home. Morrison shows that such resistance comes from within and outside home. The unique experiences of African Americans' quest for home are represented in a language exclusively used by them at their homes. The intrusion of the politics of the public sphere into the domestic space also contributes to the complexities of the African American's experience of home.

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