

10-30-2009

# Coffins, Closets, Kitchens, and Convents: Women Writing Of Home In Gendered Spaces

Nicole Spottke  
*University of South Florida*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

---

## Scholar Commons Citation

Spottke, Nicole, "Coffins, Closets, Kitchens, and Convents: Women Writing Of Home In Gendered Spaces" (2009). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.

<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/33>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [scholarcommons@usf.edu](mailto:scholarcommons@usf.edu).

Coffins, Closets, Kitchens, and Convents:  
Women Writing Of Home In Gendered Spaces

by

Nicole Spottke

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Laura L. Runge-Gordon, Ph.D.  
Pat Rogers, Ph.D.  
Gurleen Grewal, Ph.D.  
Shirley D. Toland-Dix, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:  
October 30, 2009

Keywords: Clarissa, Richardson, Leapor, Crumble Hall, Morrison, Bluest Eye, Paradise

© Copyright 2009, Nicole Spottke

To

Mom and Dad,

for introducing me to the idea of home

and to John

for joining me in the adventure of creating our own.

## **Acknowledgments**

My acknowledgments date back to my master's work at the State University of New York College at New Paltz. Sincere thanks to Carley Rees Bogarad whom I greatly miss; I count myself blessed to have had her in my life, for it was she who saw something special in me when I didn't. To Jan Zlotnik Schmidt and H.R. Stoneback for fostering that something special—I would never have gone this far without their believing in my abilities as a teacher, student, and scholar.

To my colleagues at Valencia Community College, West thanks for patiently enduring my endless conversations beginning with, “my dissertation...” and to my deans Kim Long and Karen Borglum for making sure I had time off to take my exams and partial summers off to write.

Thank you to the Aphra Behn Society, The Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS), and the Irving Deer family for your financial gifts and awards.

My dearest friends, thank you for still being my friends even after my disappearance for months at a time. My family in Maine, the Jackson and Edwards families, but especially Chris and Lily, many thanks for sharing their home by the lake, a most perfect place to write.

My professors, colleagues, and staff at the University of South Florida (USF) deserve my utmost respect for their support and guidance. I know I've said “thank you” hundreds of times, but one more to Lee Davidson is most appropriate for her patience

with me throughout my PhD work and the dissertation process. I do apologize for any grief I have caused her along the way. I am grateful to Dr. Lynn Worsham for working with me even when she was no longer teaching at USF. Her guidance during the early stage of my *Paradise* chapter helped place this work in sharper focus and set the foundation for this dissertation.

I extend deep gratitude to my dissertation panelists for giving of their time and supplying me with further thought and insight: Pat Rogers for suggesting various titles for further reading to include in both the Leapor and Richardson chapters, Gurleen Grewal for recommending I work on the *Paradise* chapter for publication, and Shirley D. Toland-Dix for encouraging me to question my arguments more, organize them more methodically, and make sure I have specifics for full development. Lastly, to my mentor, teacher, proofreader/editor, Laura L. Runge-Gordon, I thank her for sharing her “safe haven” with me in the summer, answering my every question, and for giving of her time for the reading over of multiple drafts of each chapter as well as the versions of those chapters for conference presentations. I blame her, especially, for drawing me away from the nineteenth-century and into my now beloved eighteenth-century British literature.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Preface	vi
Introduction	1
The “Temporal Home”	6
The “Social Home”	7
The “Personal Home”	8
The “Physical Home”	12
The Texts	15
Notes	22
Chapter 1 Remodeling the Fragmented Estate: A Study of Home Space in Mary Leapor’s “Crumble Hall”	23
“Life’s Great Blessing”: The Importance of Friendship in Developing a Sense of Home	24
Of Unwanted Creatures...	29
Of Rooms and Furnishings...	37
“Its People First We Sing”: Reclaiming the Community in “Crumble-Hall”	45
Work, Rest, and Play...	53
Of Sir Wary’s Destruction and Mary Leapor’s Construction...	57
Notes	59

Chapter Two Six Foot Seven and a Half by 25 and a Quarter Inches of Physical Space, an Infinity of Personal Space: Constructing Home in Samuel Richardson's <i>Clarissa</i>	67
Of Parlors and Closets: Clarissa's Familial Home Space	68
Boarding House or Brothel? Clarissa's London Residence	86
Of Wombs and Coffins: Clarissa's Final Resting Place	100
Notes	115
Chapter Three Primers, Disinheritance, and the Need for "Ancestral Tradition": Voicing Home in Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	118
Of Storefronts and "Old, Cold, and Green" Houses: Aberrations of Home and Community	119
Rapists and Protectors, Silencers and Singers: Parental Influence in Home Development	128
Psychotic Breakdown versus Narration: Voicing a Home of One's Own	140
Notes	150
Chapter Four The Rapture of Holy Women Dancing in Hot Sweet Rain: A Space for Spiritual Enlightenment at Home in Toni Morrison's <i>Paradise</i>	156
Living the American Dream: The Inequality of the Traditional Home	159
Why the Need for an Alternative Religion?	165
Let the Rituals Begin	168
Dancing with the Goddess	176
<i>Paradise</i> Reconsidered	179

Resurrections and Home Preservations: A Conclusion but not an Ending	182
Notes	185
Conclusion	190
Notes	195
Works Cited	196
About the Author	End Page



**Coffins, Closets, Kitchens, and Convents:  
Women Writing of Home in Gendered Spaces**

**Nicole Spottke**

**ABSTRACT**

*Coffins, Closets, Kitchens, and Convents* uses anthropologist Liz Kenyon's categories of home, Gaston Bachelard's theories on the importance of imagination and metaphor in home building, as well as literary criticism, sociology, and feminist theory to examine values of "home" in various literary works of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. This dissertation's focus on the struggles within traditional home spheres highlights the female characters' need of a protected space. Yet these characters realize they must allow for connections with various individuals to bring about such a safe space. Through the creative act of writing, Mary Leapor's Mira in the poem, "Crumble Hall," Samuel Richardson's title character in *Clarissa*, and Toni Morrison's Claudia MacTeer in *The Bluest Eye* and the convent women in *Paradise*, each oppressed within the home sphere, gain full access to all that the idealized home entails in constructing their individual homes; they rewrite space into a home of their own.

The chapters herein are organized from lower-class to higher-class female characters beginning in the eighteenth century with Leapor's servant narrator and moving up to Richardson's higher-class character, followed by Morrison's twentieth century

impoverished youth in *The Bluest Eye* and variety of women both impoverished and well-off residing together in a convent in *Paradise*.

## Preface

A colleague once said, “I didn’t choose my topic; my topic chose me.” A lot of us scholars, especially women scholars who are moved by and moved to write about what we read, find truth in her words. My topic is a white house with black shutters. A peach tree in the front yard; a pear tree in the back—both cut down by my father when the squirrels were winning the war of the fruit. We lived there, my older sister, younger brother, mom and dad, the dog that wandered in through the back yard gate, a guinea pig, cat, various fish. We lived there in the house at the top of the hill, at the top of Independence Avenue.

The house alone, however, did not make home; neither did just my family, but rather, the house, the family, community, and my neighborhood—they all created for me a sense of home. Growing up there was much like Toni Morrison’s description of her home, the place on which she modeled her first writing, *The Bluest Eye*: “I felt a very strong sense of place, not in terms of the country or the state, but in terms of the details, the feelings, the mood of the community, of the town” (qtd in Taylor-Guthrie 10). Like Morrison, I did not know much about the world around me, about my country. Although independence is an inherent part of what makes us these United States, I knew little about what the word “Independence” meant, aside from the word printed on green street signs at both ends of the hill. Yet, the people around me were a microcosm of the world and country—or, at least, the best our world and country can be. The older folks who lived up

and down the street: our adopted Aunt Annie and Uncle Mel, our frequent babysitters; Mrs. Thobin calling her cat every evening at dusk; The Morse's and their granddaughter, my first friend; Mr. Duncanson passing his beautiful roses over the fence, "careful of the thorns"; The Deckers who drove my mother to the Catskills to pick up my father's car, abandoned when he had his heart attack; and the younger couple, the Lay's, who moved in a few years after my family, with their son, Graham, just my brother's size.

We formed a neighborhood watch before the term was invented. When a peeping Tom was violating Mrs. Clemmer's privacy, we were there to call the police, to identify the criminal. When my dad died, they were all there with food and comfort, and a snow blower to clean out the driveway. When I was moving away from my home there in Middletown, New York to my new place in Orlando, Florida, Aunt Annie was my traveling companion. These people were my world, my country; their influences made me who I am today; their love and support enabled me to discover what independence really meant, what it would become to my life.

Like many of the characters I meet in the fiction that I read, I learned to create my own space in the world—not just a geographical space, but a mental space. I created my space through my creative and educational endeavors. The walls of my space were widened and strengthened with every neighbor that showed for a school play, concert, or talent show, for my induction into the Arts Honors Society. My earliest memory, in fact, is a combination of my love for literature and my love of home. I was sitting in the front yard, sitting "Indian style" under the peach tree (the peach tree still alive, preserved in this memory, saved from my father's chainsaw). I am there in my knitted poncho, the blue one with the pom-poms draped down in the front, with a book in my lap, and I am

reading. It was on this day that I met Heidi, my first friend, as she and her grandmother were taking a walk together. They invited me into their home, a home that would become a second home to me for the next ten or more years of my life.

Heidi and Aunt Annie's granddaughter, Heather, joined me as I embarked in a life of literary creativity and performance art. Each summer, the neighbors gathered into my backyard to witness our most recent creative endeavor. I co-wrote the scripts of plays that were acted out by Heidi, Heather, and me, by my brother and sister, the neighborhood kids. A brown wool blanket, pinned up to the posts of the back porch, acted as a makeshift curtain. On folding chairs and picnic table benches in rows on the back lawn, the neighbors gathered, browsing through the programs I had made with the help of my costars, each program made by hand as the scribes used to do before the time of the printing press or the home computer and printer.

Like Esperanza in Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street*, I am who I am through experiences such as these, a childhood rich with combinations of literature, home, community, and friendship. I am strong and independent because of the help, encouragement, love, and friendship of my family and my community on Independence Avenue. This was my neighborhood; this was my family; this was my home. I grew into it and through it from age five until twenty-five.

I was torn away from my home when my father died and mom had to sell the house. It was then that I moved out on my own and proceeded through various short stays in non-home conditions: the apartment in Massachusetts—my first—with heat that never worked through winter and windows that leaked when the snow began to melt; back to New York and the one room apartment invaded by swarms of flying termites; the

summer when I had no home but stayed with Mom and Pèpère in Maine, my belongings in storage; and finally, the escape to the warmth of Florida with my then boyfriend, my now husband, John. Through the years I discovered that I wanted, indeed, I *needed* a neighborhood that would protect and support me, a family in a house where I felt comfort, safety, security, and love, a home like the one on Independence Avenue. Thus, home became the topic that chose me; from having a home to losing a home, I explored various definitions of home and what it means to have a true sense of place.

Home became my scholarly obsession. I assigned writing exercises to my high school and college students, “Look at yourself in fifteen years; how do you envision your home? Using all of your senses, describe your home in detail.” In most everything I read I saw my obsession played out by various characters: Samuel Richardson’s title character in *Clarissa* who ran away from home and learned to build her own non-traditional home; the poet and servant, Mary Leapor, who found home through writing; Morrison’s Claudia MacTeer narrating her home and Pecola Breedlove finding home solely in her mind in *The Bluest Eye*; and the Convent women in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*, struggling to make community in an untrusting society. These were the female characters who, like me, were either fighting to make or fighting to keep a home. They are a part of me, a part of the home I continuously try to create for myself. We share a common need for the comfort, safety, security, privacy, ownership, and love of not just a house, but a home.

Home may be where the heart is or liver or lung, where one hangs her hat or beret or bonnet, but there is much in life that deprives one of a place where her heart can rest or her hat can hang without fear of theft. Each of the authors presented herein know this fact, perhaps intimately. In these characters and their homes we see how difficult it is to

build and maintain a sense of place, a home, in different times, in various cultures, in many societies, and under varying condition. As Minrose C. Gwin says: "...the term *space* has come to describe ... the swirl of social relations and productions in particular locations, whether these locations be material, cultural, or even psychological" (6). The "swirl" of these obstacles that women and girls struggle through make up the heart of my work. Perhaps in knowing these characters, then, in being allowed to travel with them through time, experience, environment, and struggle, I will, once again and finally, uncover home.

## Introduction

Whether called domestic sphere, utopia, “felicitous space,” or “home,” the physical and metaphorical space in which people dwell has occupied a position of importance in Western literature and thought spanning centuries. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the earliest uses of the word “home” in the tenth century as “a collection of dwellings” (def. 1a) and “a possession” (def. 1b), both definitions now obsolete, as well as the still accepted “dwelling place...one’s own house [... and] in N. America...and increasingly elsewhere [...frequently] used to designate a private house or residence merely as a building” (def. 2a). Over time, however, the word has evolved. No longer merely the physical structure within which one lives, home has come to be, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a more abstract, metaphoric term: “a place, region, or state to which one properly belongs, in which one’s affections centre, or where one finds refuge, rest, or satisfaction” (def. 5). Furthermore, within the 20<sup>th</sup> century the idea of home has taken up new importance among scholars in history (Ariès; Ranum), literary criticism (Wall; How; Fryer; Martin and Mohanty), sociology (Hepworth; Chapman *Gender*, “Spoiled,” and “You’ve Got Him”; Chapman and Hockey) feminist theory (Reagon; Rich; Pratt, “Identity” and “Who Am I”; hooks, “Rethinking” and *Yearning*; Smith, Frye; Weir; Young), philosophy (Bachelard), and anthropology (Kenyon; Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga; Olwig).

Western society is largely responsible for the shift of the domestic sphere as less a physical location and more an ideology based on feelings and emotions—a mental space



of comfort, pride, and community, a haven. Historian Philippe Ariès suggests that the Renaissance marks the beginning of psychological changes in house dwelling as homeowners moved to increase privacy therein: “Private stairways, halls, corridors, and vestibules were provided to allow rooms to be entered without the need to pass through other rooms” (7). Home was transforming into “an emotional center,” a place of privacy and “refuge, to which people fled in order to escape the scrutiny of outsiders” (Ariès 8). Furthermore, room sizes were reduced and residents began to spend more time in smaller spaces such as annexes, offices, and alcoves. Literary critic Cynthia Wall notes the development of the closet during the Restoration Period as a significant mark of this move toward smaller spaces: “the closet—a private room within a private room—marks the cultural interest in spatial interiority. Daily life was increasingly lived in the smaller rooms of the houses” (“Narratives of Private Space” 214). In the Victorian Era, the desire for privacy in the home heightened as Victorians dreamed of possessing the “ideal home,” one that offered “...the kind of private life that individuals hope to achieve” (Hepworth 17). Victorians’ “ideal” home was about maintaining appearances. They wanted the “ideal home” to be one that symbolized their success in both the public and private spheres and showed the public that the owners were normal and respectable (Hepworth 17-18).

In the late twentieth century, feminists began to challenge concepts of the “ideal home” and the romanticizing of space. Within home spaces, the male heads of household felt the romantic “ideal,” a space of pride, privacy, and a haven from a difficult world. In the same house, however, women often experienced oppression as “slaves of other people’s needs” (Chapman, “You’ve Got Him” 167). While many saw a community for

women as the answer, Bernice Johnson Reagon and Adrienne Rich argued against this as the desired destination. Reagon saw a space that excludes as useful for providing a “nurturing space” to “decide who you really are” (345). Rich adds that in such a place “we can draw breath, rest from persecution or harassment, ... feel compassion and love around us rather than hostility or indifference [as with...] a battered-woman’s shelter, the door opened to us when we need a refuge” (336). However, Rich cautions against using any space like an “armored and concluded mind” where “the beleaguered Stranger [is barred from entering...] the walled and guarded crime-proof condominium.” Such a space ceases to be a home, becoming instead “a dead end in the mind and in the mapping of a life or a collective vision” (336).

Historically, the concept of the “ideal” home has been solely for the middle- to upper-class family. Yet the “ideal” was experienced differently by the various residents of the household. Upon returning from traveling or a day at work, the male homeowners experience the comfort of a clean and well-maintained home space, the “ideal”: an “almost spiritual shelter from the outside masculinised world of work” (Bryden and Floyd 104). On the other hand, the female family members and the laboring classes did not feel sheltered from work. Indeed, it was their often physically and emotionally painful work that created and maintained this “spiritual shelter” for the male homeowner. Furthermore, this work has never been “regarded as valuable labor” (hooks, “Rethinking” 104) thereby leaving these individuals not just without a sense of home but also without a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work. Dislodged from feeling a sense of home, these individuals engage in metaphorical home building. Writing space, what James How terms “epistolary space,” becomes for them, an alternate home space.

Various fictional works from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to today represent the oppression within the home space as well as the work that goes into maintaining the home space, both of which lead the central female characters to experience metaphorical and sometimes physical homelessness. This homelessness motivates the female characters to construct an alternative, a non-traditional home space. This dissertation focuses on the various ruling-class societal values that leave Mary Leapor's Mira, Richardson's Clarissa, and Toni Morrison's Pecola, Claudia, and the convent women homeless. I argue how these female characters find a voice and learn to express their wants and desires in the creative imaginings of writing, moving beyond their oppression and building a home of their own.

French philosopher Gaston Bachelard writes of home in his 1958 work *The Poetics of Space*. His philosophies provide concepts of home which I use to analyze fictional representations of home and homelessness experienced by female characters. In his work, Bachelard explores the connection between the human mind and the house as a product of the mind, stressing the role of metaphor in communicating the home experience. He purposefully ignores "hostile space," focusing his attention on "felicitous space" and "images that attract": "the human values of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love, ...eulogized space" (xxxv). Above all, Bachelard notes the significance the imagination plays in transforming an inside space into a place that offers an "immediate well-being," "intimacy" within a place we call "home." Imagination in conjunction with action helps bring the individual out of him or herself and allows the "ousted unconscious" "to make itself at home everywhere" (10). The "ousted unconscious" relevant to this dissertation is

the oppression each character experiences, and the “action” is the creative expression of the imagination in writing. According to Judith Fryer, only once safe within the “felicitous” space, outside the restricted space of the middle-class “model house” can the “imaginative person...indulge in the reverie that leads to creativity” (46) and “frees the imagination” (293). The “imaginative” characters in this study write in order to deal with their oppression, to transform themselves from objects to subjects, and to make themselves “at home everywhere” in innovative ways and in non-traditional spaces.

The succinct categories set forth by anthropologist Liz Kenyon provide a useful structure through which we can evaluate the values female characters commonly express in building their homes. In her article, “A Home from Home: Students’ Transitional Experience of Home,” Kenyon draws on her study of undergraduate students in England, their concepts of home in their family homes, in their present dorm life, and in their imagined future home of their own. Students, like the characters I examine in this dissertation, exist in a precarious position: they are still dependent on their parents but dream of the independence of their future homes. Indeed, their parents’ home becomes, as Bachelard’s theories posit, the “cradle” within which they are “enclosed, protected” before being “cast into the world” (7) and therefore the inspiration for creating their future homes. During the course of her research, Kenyon discovered that these students shared common values for their future homes, values she categorized as the “temporal,” “personal,” “social,” and “physical home.” These four categories offer insight into the values the characters in this dissertation try to make real in their current lives. The categories found in the study of college students in conjunction with Bachelard’s theories on the importance of imagination and metaphor in home building, as well as literary

criticism and multiple fields of research into “home” help to understand how writing/rewriting space allows various characters full access to all that the idealized home entails in constructing their individual homes.

### ***The “Temporal Home”***

Kenyon’s first category, the “temporal home,” “is stable and permanent [and] has the potential to be familiar and lasting” (87) but is not easily attainable either for students or the characters studied in this dissertation. Bachelard’s use of “*illusions of stability*” and the repetition of the words “Oneirism” and “dream” throughout his work suggest that “stable and permanent” and “lasting” are unrealistic, only possible through dreaming. This is part of the problem on which this dissertation focuses. In the texts I study, the female characters face and cope with the instability and impermanence of home as well as varying levels of societal oppression as they dream of a home of their own.

There is no permanence for the “ideal home”—not in fiction, not in reality. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the *instability* in the home, the struggles that the female characters experience in their home spaces, and the lack of a “temporal home.” Much of the oppression focused on in this dissertation is a result of abuse; mental abuse, physical violence, and even rape transform the home sphere from the “ideal home” to an unstable space, a prison. While a home may appear to be the “ideal home,” within the private walls of the home, the “temporal home” which has “the potential to be familiar and lasting” becomes instead a fear that, indeed, this dangerous space will be “lasting.”

### *The “Social Home”*

“I relied on the hopefulness of all women together: what I felt, deep down, was hope that they would join me in my place, which would be the way I wanted it. I didn’t want to have to *limit* myself.”

--Minnie Bruce Pratt (“Identity: Skin Blood Heart” 30)

Kenyon’s “social home” suggests what feminist Minnie Bruce Pratt argues is important to a sense of personal growth and of home, the presence of other people. According to Kenyon, the “social home” requires three components: “a living group of significant others, a supportive atmosphere where social and emotional needs [are] met and a friendly neighbourhood where the individual [believes] they [fit] and [belong]” (90). Likewise, various anthropologists stress the importance of family to home. Karen Fog Olwig says family offers “a notion of belonging, of ‘feeling at home’” (83), and Donna Birdwell-Pheasant and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga identify home as a place where people “engage in a variety of economic, symbolic, and other activities that sustain the people who use it” (1). In addition to Pratt quoted above, other feminists also extol the importance of sharing space with diverse groups of women. Straight, white, middle-class, Christian women who had originally led the women’s movement believed they spoke for all women, about all women’s oppression (Adams 27; Leidner 47). However, as African Americans began to speak out about their contrasting experiences (Lorde; hooks), followed by lesbian women (Frye; Pratt; Gomez), the disabled (Klein), Jewish women (Rich) and other groups and sub-groups, it was clear that diversity and the mutuality of sharing diverse experiences was essential if they were going to experience “a supportive

atmosphere” and tackle the oppression that had kept women from experiencing the positive values of a sense of home.

This is the point where this dissertation veers away from Bachelard’s philosophies. Bachelard focuses on home as a private experience, one of “extreme solitude” where the individual is “*alone* before God” (32). Caren Kaplan argues against writings that romanticize solitude and suppress difference, instead pointing feminist writing toward a new focus on “connections between different parts of the self ... [making] a world of possibilities out of the experience of displacement” (198). While the characters in this study write privately and rely on “solitude,” I argue that these characters need other people for support and guidance in discovering their “different parts of the self.” The importance of people who help one feel “belonging” resonates in Kenyon’s idea of the “social home.” However, society often fails to support the female characters in this study. Therefore the characters seek out friends and family to provide them with the support and therefore the strength and self-confidence they need to build a home of their own. Indeed, I argue that the “social home” becomes the most important category for each character to realize. Without the support of family or friends, these characters would not attain home.

### ***The “Personal Home”***

“The final value of ‘home’ that should be available to everyone ... [is] preservation. Home is the site of the construction and reconstruction of one’s self. Crucial to that

process is the activity of safeguarding the meaningful things in which one sees the stories of one's self embodied, and rituals of remembrance that reiterate those stories.”

--Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience*

Through the telling and retelling of our stories to ourselves and to each other, we combine the conscious assumption of the oppressions and violence that have shaped us with the affirmation of belonging, and the transformation of the future. In doing this, we are not simply affirming our identities of our homes, nor are we rejecting them to leap into the negativity of the future. Nor are we oscillating between affirmation and negativity, or resolving this opposition. We are engaging in a process of transformative identification: through reinterpreive preservation we transform ourselves, and hold ourselves together, through struggle, and without denying any of the suffering and tragedy this entails.

--Allison Weir

Young's and Weir's passages express the importance of preserving the past in structuring identity and home, both for present and future. However Bidy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty caution that to base home and identity on “that old view” would not be progress, would not offer any “developmental notion of [one's] own identity or self.” They recommend “...instead a constant expansion of [the] ‘constricted eye,’ a necessary reevaluation and return to the past in order to move forward to the present” (297). Barbara Smith, Kaplan, and bell hooks all argue in favor of drawing from the past, writing that “...we want very much to retain our blood connections without sacrificing ourselves to rigid and demeaning sex roles” (Smith, Introduction liii),



“[salvage] from the past... what can be made new” (Kaplan 195) rather than “breaking ties” (hooks, *Yearning* 19)—constructing a new space that Kaplan terms “reterritorialization; we reinhabit a world of our making” (195). Indeed, the past home does not become a mirror of one’s present and future home but rather should set the foundation for the work to be done in constructing home.

According to Kenyon, autonomy is at the heart of the “personal home.” Individuals work to realize “a sense of independence and freedom” drawing on their childhood homes in fulfilling Kenyon’s “home as a collection of memories” (89). Bachelard has a similar notion of the importance of the past, noting that the “entire past” dwells in a house (5) and “we comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection” (6). Jewelle Gomez writes that a black lesbian writer needs to create a home that is “unadulterated, unsanitized, specific and not isolated from generations that have nurtured us. This will serve to create a literary record that is placed in a historical perspective so that we, who have been lost in the shadow of the past, can be revealed and appreciated for the powerful legacy we bear” (122).

Part of this task of preserving memory within the home is through housework. hooks speaks out in favor of housework, arguing that this work needs to be seen in a more favorable light, less as an oppressive chore. She recommends that children be taught to appreciate housework, for were they taught such: “...they might approach all work differently. They might see work as an affirmation of one’s identity rather than a negation” (“Rethinking” 105). Young furthers this idea explaining that keeping family items safe—from trinkets to heirlooms—women become the preservers of family histories: “The work of preservation entails not only keeping the physical objects of

particular people intact, but renewing their meaning in their lives” (*On Female Body Experience* 142). And as with hooks who expresses a need for children to be taught the value of housework, Young says: “Over and over the things must be dusted and cleaned. Over and over the special objects must be arranged after a move. ...The stories must be told and retold to each new generation to keep a living, meaningful history” (*On Female Body Experience* 143).

For the characters in this study, their pasts are plagued by oppression induced through their society’s rigid separation of the laboring class and their employers, as well as sexist and racist attitudes. Their societies from eighteenth-century England to late twentieth-century America seek to exclude so as to achieve societal norms: Mary Leapor’s Mira’s superiors scold her for writing because she is not of the class that has the leisure to engage in it; Clarissa is excluded from making her own decisions for her future and not allowed to own property because she is not male; Pecola and Claudia are excluded from societal ideals of beauty because they are not white; the convent women are excluded from Ruby, the town outside the convent, because they are not black enough; not practicing the acceptable organized religion, the traditions of the Christian faith; and not governed by male authority. In creating their “personal home,” therefore, the female characters in this study use their pasts and their past struggles to effect the positive, and they find a voice for their own desires, a voice that speaks out against the societal forces that oppress them. Identity certainly plays a significant role in home making, and as is the case for the women in this study, their identities are based on that which they learned from their past. According to Orest Ranum, “...in the past the individual identified most intimately with certain particular places—an identification

effected by means of emotions, actions, prayers, and dreams” (207). This past is integral to the growing sense of “independence” these characters need to build their own home, for indeed when “people make such an investment in their home, [they do so] because they hope to create a sphere where they have control over their environment—to mould it to their own needs of comfort and security, style and personal morality” (Chapman, “Spoiled Home” 134). Therefore, the individual voices that these characters find grow independent of societal norms as they reflect each of their own personalities, their beliefs, their needs, and personal wishes rather than societally acceptable spiritual and moral beliefs and societal ideals of woman’s place, rights, and ideal beauty.

### *The “Physical Home”*

This task of making homeplace was not simply a matter of black women providing service; it was about the construction of a safe place where black people could affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. ... it was there on the inside, in that ‘homeplace,’ most often created and kept by black women, that we had the opportunity to grow and develop, to nurture our spirits.

--bell hooks, *Yearning*

“It is too much to ask, perhaps, even in the ideal, that everyone can be safe anywhere. The potential for violence and conflict cannot be eradicated from the world. But it is not too much to ask that everyone have a home in which they can feel physically safe and secure.”

--Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience*

bell hooks's idea of "homeplace" and Young's "physically safe and secure" home space, as with Kenyon's final category of home, the "physical home," consists of experiencing "home as a safe haven" (Kenyon 93). With the women's movement and consciousness-raising groups on the rise in the 60s and 70s, communities of women were seen as a solution for constructing a safe home place for women. A community that excludes can provide "a force field ... which sustains and protects" as Marilyn Frye calls for with a community of lesbians, protecting the residents from "the ravages of misogyny and heterosexualism, [and] even, for some in some ways from the violence of racism and poverty" (210). On the other hand, Weir argues against the pessimism that breeds such a need for exclusion, writing "that we [must] move beyond cynicism with respect to the possibility of safety: beyond the conviction that reality is inevitably characterized by oppression and exclusion, and that safety is just a nostalgic dream" (8).

As the number of home invasions grew in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, personal safety in the home became a more pressing and common-place issue. In response, law enforcement agencies issued crime prevention literature detailing specific security measures necessary to secure the home space (Chapman and Hockey 11). Much research focuses on safety as a key component to a sense of home. Researchers now understand that not everyone experiences home the same way: "Too many poor peasants and barrio dwellers in the world cannot sleep peacefully in their homes without fear that paramilitary squads will rouse them, rape them, shoot them, or carry them away in the dark" (Young, *On Female Body Experience* 151). Furthermore, and appropriate to this study, women do not always experience the "ideal home" as a safe haven: "adolescent girls, women wishing to separate from a male partner and older single women are often

advised, either implicitly or explicitly, of the special dangers that face them in public space...” (Chapman and Hockey 11). Fryer calls the closed space of home for women a “battleground” “where woman has been unable to move” (50). These women and children, then, are often bound to the home, fostering a dependence on the very men they are trying to escape, “unable to move” away from the very men who represent “special dangers” of their own within the home sphere.

Sociologist Tony Chapman notes the need for home to be “a secure, private, physical retreat from the outside world” (*Gender* 10). According to Bachelard, the house “protects the dreamer, ... allows one to dream in peace” (6) and is a place we dream of “in search of a real refuge” (31). Against the ideal visions of safety or safe communities based on exclusion, Weir suggests instead an alternate possibility for safety within the home, that of home as a place of “risk”:

...the risk of connection, of sustaining relationship through conflict. Thus, rather than oscillating between the desire for a safe, secure, conflict-free home and the recognition that homes are in fact sites of violence and abuse, predicated on oppression and exclusion, we can recognize and affirm an ideal of home as a space of mutuality and conflict, of love and its risks and struggles, of caring and conflictual connections to others. (8)

This dissertation’s focus on the struggles within traditional home spheres highlights the characters’ need for the protected space found in a “physical home” but incorporating the “risk of connection” to bring about such a safe space. Each character having been oppressed within the domestic sphere recognizes the importance of safety in home building and realizes that this safety is temporary. Despite these realizations, however,

the supportive atmosphere of the “social home” and the confidence of the “personal home” helps each character find the strength to continue her struggle to realize home, to build and rebuild and to write and rewrite her space into a “physical” home of her own.

### ***The Texts***

In 1998, Toni Morrison completed her historical trilogy which began with *Beloved* and *Jazz* and finished with *Paradise*. With *Paradise*, Morrison introduced her reader to a near-utopian community of women living in a convent outside Ruby, Oklahoma. Morrison’s alternative construction of home fascinated me so greatly that I was inspired to return to graduate school to begin my research into the metaphorical concept of home and an examination of the manner by which other authors approach this concept in literature. This dissertation is the culmination of those years of research.

Each chapter in this dissertation focuses specifically on the oppressed female character within the home space. Female characters from a young child to a grown woman, from the working class to the middle-class exist within societally prescribed notions of home. I organize each chapter by first introducing the various societal inequalities and their effects on the character, followed by the ways the character struggles to build her home, doing so ultimately through a creative process, rewriting her home space and transforming it into a “home.” Each of the four chapters argues that with the support of family and friends a female character finds the strength to fight back against the various inequalities that otherwise constrict her home space. With the “supportive atmosphere” of her “social home” in place, each character experiences “a sense of independence and freedom” and confidence with which to rewrite her space,

building new “memories” for her “personal home” and feeling the overall “comfortable environment” of her “physical home” space.

The literature with which I chose to begin this dissertation was based on a desire to examine how a woman with very few rights within society would construct a home, even a metaphorical home. This thought led me to examine the life of servants as depicted in eighteenth-century fiction. Mary Leapor’s poetry was ideal for this, for not only was her poetry fiction, but she herself lived a dual existence as both writer *and* servant. Leapor’s poetry depicts a different dimension to the work that goes into home construction including housework which is important to preserving the “memories” of a “personal home.” Here she did not have family to contend with but society and societal expectations for a woman of her status and the housework she engaged in not for the preservation of memories but for her employers. This brings to mind the question of how one can feel “at home” in a space that is not, in fact, her home. Chapter one, then, focuses on Mary Leapor’s writing as she expresses her struggle to build a home. Leapor’s poems, “An Epistle to Artemisia. On Fame” and “The Epistle of Deborah Dough,” express the grief both Leapor and her fictional representation of herself, Mira, experience, the difficulties of being a lowly servant with keen poetic abilities. Leapor/Mira finds herself up against those who chastise her for writing when her station in life demands a more appropriate outlet for her energy—housework. In addition, in “Crumble-Hall,” Leapor/Mira speaks of the struggle she experiences at the hands of the aristocracy during a critical historical moment in economic transition manifest in landscape architecture. In response to this, Leapor pens her version of the country house poem, thereby creating a “comfortable environment” for “a physical home.”

For chapter two, I turned to an eighteenth-century epistolary novel that had peaked my interest, not merely for the fact that it was written by a male writer, Samuel Richardson, but because of the struggles the title character, Clarissa, worked through to build a surprising home in a coffin, a home fortified by her many letters to her family and friends. Clarissa had everything that Mary Leapor didn't: money, the freedom to write at her leisure, and servants to wait on her. Yet the presence of Clarissa in this dissertation shows how great the familial influence is when it denies the daughter any sense of home, treating her as property, treating her in a manner I consider to be less than that bestowed upon a servant. Richardson's novel portrays sexism in a context of growing capitalism, depicting the lengths a family will go to advance their own circumstances. Of interest here is that the middle-class Clarissa undergoes oppression in the home just as the working class Mira had. Clarissa's oppression, however, results from her family's desire to marry her off to a wealthy man, even resorting to violence to achieve their goals. Clarissa struggles in various dwellings after escaping her childhood home, but her friends, especially Anna Howe, help her to build a "social home" through which she gathers enough mental strength to order her "house," taking great pleasure in the construction of something she has never been allowed, something women in the eighteenth century were not always legally granted—personal property, a space of her own, a place to call her own, and most important, the "independence and freedom" of a "personal home" and "a safe haven" within her "physical home."

With Morrison's *Paradise* still in mind as the final chapter of this dissertation, I decided to examine a text closer to the setting of this novel for my third chapter. Since Morrison set *Paradise* in the mid-70s in the midst of women's consciousness-raising



groups and greater equality for women, for chapter three I chose to look backward to a time in American history when women's rights and rights of African Americans were still young, 1940. With her first novella, *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison depicts adolescent African-American female characters. Pecola Breedlove and Claudia MacTeer become important to this study for they represent the stage where home construction begins—the childhood when the “memories” of the “personal home” are in the process of being collected. Their situations are unique to this dissertation for not only must they struggle against gender and racial inequality but must also deal with the lack of rights they have because of their age. Yet struggle they do.

Since the creation of the first homes, the kitchen's role has been the focal point of the “social home,” the place where family, neighborhood, and community unite. The hearth has retained a symbolic status as the heart of the house.<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison captures the role the kitchen plays in her young characters' developing sense of home. Drawing on various psychological theories regarding the importance of family in a child's intellectual development, this dissertation outlines Morrison's juxtaposition of two childhood homes and especially of the kitchen therein—one healthy and the other destructive (Benjamin and Karen). In Pecola Breedlove, Morrison explores the absence of “a supportive atmosphere” as Pecola lacks an accepting mother and an appropriate father figure and is neglected by both her family and the community. Pecola, like her eighteenth-century counterparts, constructs home out of this oppression, but her home is imagined in the awful space of her broken psyche.

In the MacTeer kitchen, however, Claudia learns the importance of “memories,” for her “personal home,” “a supportive atmosphere” for her “social home,” and “a

comfortable environment” for her “physical home.” Morrison juxtaposes Pecola Breedlove’s experiences in the white family’s and her own family’s kitchens against Claudia’s certainty of what makes a house a home (a complete, three-tiered home environment) so as to highlight the necessity of “a supportive atmosphere” in home construction. Claudia experiences oppression as she deals with the effects of poverty and witnesses society’s treatment of Pecola. However, Claudia has what Pecola has not: “a supportive atmosphere,” positive “memories,” a “safe haven,” and “a comfortable environment” to help her through it. Claudia has the necessary elements of home in place and, as an adult, is able to implement these elements in voicing her anger, writing Pecola’s story, exposing the community’s failure to help one of its younger members achieve home, and thereby writing a home for both Pecola and herself.

Finally, chapter four returns to the origin of this dissertation. In Morrison’s convent women I discovered a spiritual ritual that transformed a space of conflict due to diversity, a space where diverse women bickered and fought became a space of harmony due to diversity, a space of peace and healing. Yet I was more intrigued by the continual work that these women put into building and then maintaining home, the ongoing struggle. And I wondered if Morrison could have created such a strong community of women in a different setting, in a different time and place. This was the thought process that had led me backward in time, to examine the space of home and how female characters in literature experienced it, from eighteenth-century to contemporary, characters representing various ages, socio-economic statuses, and races.

While many critics view *Paradise*’s ending as negative, an ecocritical view reveals the novel’s positive themes: “hope for creating a better future” and a full sense of

home in literature, for instead of telling “a disjointed story of disappointment and destruction,” an ecocritical reading introduces the beauty that is “the interconnectedness of nature, religion, and African American identity...” (Tolman 12). However, while *Paradise* does benefit from an ecocritical approach, the women’s story benefits, likewise, from an understanding of witchcraft studies—an approach heretofore not discussed. Through the practice of spiritual rituals of empowerment, belly dancing, and the hierarchical structure of feminist spirituality, the convent women are enabled to build a paradisiacal sense of community, heal themselves of their various ordeals, *and* experience a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home.” While many traditional religions have not always been a spiritual “home” for women, feminist spirituality, a series of women’s religious groups formed in the 1970s, provides an alternative, empowering religion, one devoted to women. Morrison’s novel, set in the 70s, depicts the convent women engaging in spiritual acts closely resembling those of feminist spiritualism, acts that, I argue, allow them to reach a paradisiacal home even while it sets them at odds with the Christian communities in Ruby, the town outside the convent.

In this last text, the female characters, the convent women, find the support of Consolata Sosa who helps heal their mental pain and build a home of their own. Furthermore, this paradisiacal home contrasts with the other homes examined in this dissertation; as opposed to Mira’s, Clarissa’s, Pecola’s, and Claudia’s home construction, the convent women accomplish each of the following: they find a spiritual home in life rather than death; their physical work *becomes* their home and not that which interferes with home; they create home by healing their mental sufferings and not falling

into complete mental breakdown, and their actions show that “a supportive atmosphere” need not come from blood family but from people of their own choosing.

Having suffered discomfort or violence within the confines of their own more traditional “homes,” Mary Leapor’s Mira, Samuel Richardson’s Clarissa, and Toni Morrison’s Pecola Breedlove, Claudia MacTeer, and the convent women all strive for alternative homes. Each character embraces the three categories of home that Kenyon articulates, “personal,” “social,” and “physical.” They dream of home in a reality where life refuses them a home of their own or even a “room of one’s own.” Yet except for Pecola, each of these characters is able to make real their imagined sense of home through writing. An analysis of these characters shows that despite experiencing distress in the home, with the support of friends and family and by means of creative expression, in writing, these characters persist in their goal of achieving home regardless of whether they are wealthy young women, poor servant girls, or African-American children raised in poverty and racism, in eighteenth-century England or contemporary America.

## Notes

1. When the Dutch settled in New York, they created warmth (both literal and figurative) and togetherness with the fireplace as the catalyst to such feelings. “Dutch fireplaces were really open hearths with a firehood, located against a wall. The mantles projected so far into the room, five or six feet being frequent, that it was easy for people to gather virtually around the fire” (Crowley, John 95). Of course the fire was essential to keeping the residents warm in the cold of winter, but it also brought family and friends to a centralized location encouraging communication and a sense of unity.

More information on the kitchen in the earliest American homes can be found in John E. Crowley’s *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities & Design in Early Modern Britain & Early America*, Alice Morse Earle’s *Home Life in Colonial Days*, and Wendell Garrett, David Larkin, and Michael Webb’s *American Home: From Colonial Simplicity to the Modern Adventure*.

## Chapter 1

### Remodeling the Fragmented Estate:

#### A Study of Home Space in Mary Leapor's "Crumble Hall"

Many people dream of home as sitting in a comfortable space: clean, organized, furnished well, and with signs of family and friends throughout. They welcome friends into their home, throw dinner parties to entertain, invite guests to spend the night, ask outsiders to make themselves "at home." These dreams were not so different to those in the upper-classes in the eighteenth century. If guests dropped in, the homeowners welcomed them inside, led them past the clean and organized entryway, entertained them in the well-furnished parlor, and likely, invited them into the dining room. Certainly today there are servants who cook and clean for families, but this is not as commonplace as it was in the eighteenth century and earlier. Due to an increasing desire for privacy within the home sphere in the last two centuries, even rarer is the live-in servant. In the eighteenth century, however, multiple servants were known to reside in their work space, in the homeowner's "home" space.

Eighteenth-century poet Mary Leapor was one such employee. Hired as a kitchen maid, she would have been responsible for the following duties:

To roast & boil butcher's meat & all manner of fowls.

To clean all the rooms below stairs.

To make the servants beds & to clean all the garrets.

To clean the great & little stairs.

To scour the pewter & brass.

To help wash, soap & buck.

Or to do anything she is ordered (Greene, *Mary Leapor: A Study* 17)

Leapor would have carried out duties such as these for Susanna Jennens's family at Weston Hall and later the Chauncy family at Edgcote (the model for "Crumble Hall") (Greene and Messenger xix-xxiii). While I find Leapor's job description interesting, I question how a live-in servant such as Leapor could feel both pride in her housework and pleasure in a home when the physical house was not her own. Yet Leapor conveys a sense of home in her poem "Crumble Hall." Indeed, her poetry becomes an ideal place to discuss the negotiations people make in conceiving of and bringing home spaces to fruition. Leapor's poetry stands as an excellent source for understanding the pressures that face those who live and work within the same space. I argue that, through writing, Leapor constructs a most unconventional home for herself and her fellow servants.

***"Life's Great Blessing":***

***The Importance of Friendship in Developing a Sense of Home***

"Still give me pleasing Indolence, and Ease;/ A Fire to warm me, and a Friend to please."

--Mary Leapor, "An Essay on Woman"

"Your friendship is, I believe, the only happiness in my life. For the members of my family are in truth my worst enemies: a cruel father, a wretched brother...O Boswell! Believe me, I love you as myself, and when I die I shall thank God above all else for having given me your friendship."

--Reverend William Johnson Temple, 24 June 1767

“Crumble-Hall” begins with a disheartened, disillusioned, and depressed Mira, Leapor’s persona, feeling abandoned by both “Friends” and “Fortune”:

WHEN Friends or Fortune frown on *Mira’s* Lay,  
Or gloomy Vapours hide the Lamp of Day;  
With low’ring Forhead, and with aching Limbs,  
Oppress’d with Head-ach, and eternal Whims,  
Sad *Mira* vows to quit the darling Crime:  
Yet takes her Farewel, and repents, in Rhyme. (1-6)

Mira expresses her feelings at the end of the workday after having completed her menial servant girl tasks. She moves along sluggishly, “Oppress’d” both in body and spirit. Her “aching Limbs” suggest the great physical exertion that goes into the various tasks expected of a servant girl (see Greene’s list above). Mira’s sheer exhaustive state is not, however, caused by her physical labor alone but by being both laborer and poet. Richard Greene argues that like her persona, “Leapor [...] found it extremely difficult to suit her mind to her ‘Condition,’ that is, the imperatives of rank and gender. She wrote poem after poem on the subject of contentment” (“Mary Leapor: The Problem” 223). Mira’s “contentment,” as Leapor expresses through her poetry, seemed but a dream. Mira had to deal with how outsiders received her “Lay”, often unfavorably, expressed by the all powerful facial expression, the “frown.” Mira’s “Fortune,” the negative response combined with her standing as a member of the servant class, leaves her mentally exhausted, “Oppress’d with Head-ach.” William J. Christmas explains the difficulty with which Leapor negotiates her contrary wants and societal expectations: “We have seen Leapor discuss ‘partial fate’ and ‘the chains of want’ which together keep her engaged in



menial labor and stymie her poetic imagination. These are two aspects of her life which render Leapor neither happy nor content” (166). Leapor shows a discontented Mira weighed down by extreme mental pressures. Mira’s “eternal Whims” and her “darling Crime” combine to create a physical pressure upon Mira’s body: the “low’ring [of her] Forhead.” Leapor describes these troubles to her mind further in “The Head-ach. To Aurelia.” Her headache, caused by her writing, troubles her worse than the trifling pains felt by those scorned in love: “Not Cuckolds half my Anguish know” (l. 13) and “Not *Sappho* when her Cap’s awry,/ E’er felt such tort’ring Pangs as I” (ll. 18-19). Mira must find a way out of her lowered state so she may retain her “darling Crime.”

Many deem friendship to be essential to a sense of home. Eighteenth-century fiction and thought, however, suggests conflicting definitions of “friend” and “friendship.” On one hand, friendship means “a kinsman or near relation”<sup>1</sup> (def. 3) or even those residing together within a household (servants included together with the homeowners). On the other hand, friendship can be a more mutual experience, consciously chosen, as expressed in eighteenth-century British philosopher Abraham Tucker’s *Light of Nature Pursued*: “If we observe the common discourses of mankind, we shall find a friend to be one we frequently visit, who is our boon companion, or joins with us in our pleasures and diversions, or [etc.]” (qtd. in “friend,” def. 1a). A friendship, such as Tucker describes, helps one build a sense of home. This home space, in turn, would provide the comfort and peace of mind conducive to writing, that which Liz Kenyon deems necessary to a “physical,” “social,” and “personal home.”<sup>2</sup>

In the eighteenth century, friendships were developed based on societal standing:

Both rural and urban society pretended to ignore or at best to tolerate any peer friendship not sanctioned by society. Conceptualized as a relation of perfect reciprocity, friendship was something ‘extra,’ something distinct from normal social relations. It existed outside the family, often in institutions that replaced the family on a temporary or permanent basis: the school, youth cohorts, the army. The existence of such friendships implies the existence of a sphere of freedom. (Aymard 458)

A friendship born of a platonic union between two companions who choose each other without societal intervention is often an integral part of one’s home. Bridget Freemantle built her friendship with Mary Leapor of her own volition, admiring Leapor’s poetry, then encouraging her to write, and even bestowing upon her a physical gift symbolic of her admiration, encouragement, and overall support: a writing desk. Leapor reciprocated Freemantle’s friendship, honoring her friend in writing, addressing a number of poems to Freemantle (Kord 265). Such symbols of friendship represent Leapor’s independence, her act of *choosing* her friend for the values she represents as well as for Freemantle’s support and guidance. Through friendship freely exchanged, Mary Leapor achieves the “supportive atmosphere” needed for her “social home.”

Through her construction of “Crumble-Hall,” Leapor shows the importance of friendship for establishing “independence” in the “personal home.” Leapor begins the poem with mental exhaustion and depression caused by the types of friends Leapor derides—insincere and not supportive of her poetic gift. In “Essay on Friendship” she says, “The main Ingredient [in friendship] is an honest heart” (l. 36) “[...] And Life’s great Blessing a well-chosen Friend” (l. 125). Leapor knew people who did not fall into

this category. “Ladies sent for her tragedy to while away a dull afternoon. They praised her, and they laughed at her. [...] Gentlemen more than once looked over her verses and returned them in virtual silence. [...] Nothing more; no help proffered. [...] ‘An Epistle to Artemisia. On Fame’] rings the changes on the thoughtless and heartless responses her work evoked [...]” (Rizzo, “Molly” 317). These men and women did not support and encourage Leapor as did Bridget Freemantle. Thus, Leapor writes over the exhaustion and depression in the beginning of “Crumble-Hall” with the introduction of the supportive and encouraging Artemisia (Leapor’s poetic name for Freemantle). Employing synecdoche, Leapor describes Artemisia, focusing on the part of her body that symbolizes approval, support, and friendship:

But see (more charming than *Armida’s* Wiles)

The Sun returns, and *Artemisia* smiles. (ll. 7-8)

Mira finds comfort in the “smile” of a friend—especially as this body language contrasts with the “Frown” which her insincere “Friends” show her; Mira, thereby, finds the strength necessary to believe in herself and her work. She can now carry on with her poetic endeavors despite negative criticism or unfavorable responses from her so-called “Friends.”

Freemantle’s importance to Leapor’s poetry is clear. A great percentage of Leapor’s poems are addressed either to the name Leapor gives her friend in her poetry, Artemisia, or addressed in a polite manner with “Dear Madam.” Betty Rizzo notes that these poems “about her hopes, fears, dreams, and the new events of her life” seek out Freemantle’s understanding of Leapor’s difficult existence. She adds: “For the first time in her life Leapor was experiencing the intoxicating encouragement of whole-hearted

approval” (“Molly” 322). Meeting Freemantle, Leapor found the “supportive atmosphere” essential to the creation of a “social home,” and on this foundation of friendship, Leapor builds her “physical home,” her own “Crumble-Hall.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Of Unwanted Creatures...*

In the eighteenth century, a movement toward privacy was underway within the home sphere, as homeowners removed servants from the view of both the owners and their guests. Servants had traditionally eaten in a main hall but owners later assigned them to “their own ‘little hall’ to eat in” (Girouard, *Life* 136). The homeowners’ need for privacy motivated them to move “Servants’ quarters [...] to the basement from their usual position on the top floors, and servants’ stairs were added at the back of houses” (Dalporto 237). As a result of these changes, servants “[...] became, if not invisible, very much less visible” (Girouard, *Life* 138). Such a move accentuated the servants’ lack of ownership and thereby freedom, and it deprived the servants of home space. In “Crumble-Hall,” however, we see no sign of the homeowners. Leapor rewrites home, usurps the home owner’s power and space, and gives the narrative voice and the role of a higher servant to her Mira instead.

[...] Leapor adopts the guidebook format without imposing on her implied tourist any duty of admiration, offering instead a disenchanting survey which rises at best to faint praise. Furthermore, an adapted medieval house like Edgecote would not have been considered a showplace in her time; and it would have fallen to a housekeeper, not a mere kitchenmaid, to represent the owner in showing visitors round the house. (Rumbold 67)

Leapor invites the reader into the role of house guest with Mira appearing as our guide, first relating the history of the estate, then leading us through various rooms of interest, and ending outside for a tour of the grounds.<sup>4</sup>

Leapor would have been fully aware that experiencing comfort and safety in a “physical home” comes after much toil. In Leapor’s day, the servants were hired to make sure the homeowners saw very little of the work but much of the outcome of the work. Through Mira’s excursion, the reader is privy to a side of the estate that the homeowners would ensure *their* guests never experience. We soon discover that Mira’s tour is atypical of the homeowner with guest. She draws our attention not to views of grandeur and aesthetically pleasing décor but to the dust and the grime and the workforce responsible for removal of such mess. Mira shows us unconventional views of the various decorations and furnishings within the home space as well as various residents hidden from the view of guests. She invites her guests to experience the home space in a different manner than that of the homeowner. The tour is partially or fully devoid of the actual owners’ presence, as well as absent of cleanliness, order, and appropriate furnishings—all that make up the comfort of the owners’ home space.

That *Crumble-Hall*, whose hospitable Door  
Has fed the Stranger, and reliev’d the Poor;  
Whose *Gothic* Towers, and whose rusty Spires,  
Were known of old to Knights, and hungry Squires. (ll.13-16)

Hospitality was essential in maintaining home spaces. In 1794, Robert Fraser described the class of yeomanry in the South Hams region in England as exemplifying such “old English hospitality”:

They live in great comfort, and exercise without parade, that old English hospitality which the refinements of modern manners have banished from many other parts of the Kingdom. I observed with much pleasure the attention they paid to their various dependants around them, and their kindness to the poor. Nothing can evince this more strongly than the agreements they have entered into, in the most parts of this district, to supply the labourers and the neighbouring poor with grain, at ... certain fixed moderate prices, an example well worthy of more general imitation.

(qtd in Fletcher 36)

Leapor's poem suggests that the above description was practiced in Crumble-Hall as well, for the "hospitable Door" had once stood open to the hungry "Stranger," "Knight," or "Squire."<sup>5</sup>

The owners of Crumble-Hall seem to have abandoned hospitality in abandoning their home—readying their house for the improvements to come. Among these improvements, the commons once used by the local community were to be closed off and consolidated so as to enhance the country house's gardens and provide the landowner with increased property (Dalporto 228; Christie 6). According to Jeannie Dalporto, the "[...] past system of economic relations, [...allowed for] the landowner's property [...providing] the basis for stable and harmonious class relations and agricultural abundance" (236). Leapor indirectly criticizes the owners of Crumble-Hall for revoking the hospitality they had once so readily proffered and for closing off land that had once been the location of "small farms and commons." A single place where neighboring families could share land and grow food suggests community and "a friendly

neighbourhood,” part of the dreamed of home space (87). As Ronald Fletcher notes, however, home values were changing from “that old English hospitality” to the “refinements of modern manners.” The importance of private property and luxury in general was of great importance as the landed society sought to increase their wealth through growing capitalism, involving themselves in banking and commerce as well as the building of towns, villages, and cities (Christie 9-11 and 16). Furthermore, of great consternation to Leapor was the act of enclosure as country house owners removed the public grounds from the use of the neighborhood, thus dividing the community in order to increase their wealth. In response to this change, Leapor offers a counter renovation to the estate. In verse, she removes the owners and rebuilds the space left behind. Through her poetic constructions, she supplies a home to the back-stage, or behind-the-scenes residents, all the while playing with the standards of country house poetry.<sup>6</sup>

Christmas describes the country house poem as a “panegyric” based on Ben Jonson’s “To Penshurst” which “is literally addressed to a house, but its purpose is foremost to praise its owners” (171). In a country house poem, poets accomplish “praise” by placing the home owners in their home environment without sign of workers either inside or out. Removing the servants suggests that the home’s beauty needs no outside aid: “nature [...] furnishes forth its riches of its own accord” (Mandell, “Demystifying” 563). However, while Leapor is writing a poem about a country house, and while Mira and her muse are singing of “Crumble-Hall,” this poem is certainly no “Lay” in praise or honor of the homeowners. As scholars point out, Leapor does not remove the servants from the finished product—the polished, clean and charming home. Rather, she flips the traditional country house poem upside down by removing the homeowners and inserting

the servants in their place (Christmas; Mandell, “Demistifying” and “Misogyny and Feminism”; and Dalparto). Mira further shocks our expectations by drawing our attention to the smallest of living creatures within the estate, a spider, soon followed by her introduction of a group of mice. Inclusion of the servants and their work within a country house poem is striking enough, but to point out an arachnid and rodents risks exposing the truth of the estate—that it is not always as perfect as the eye may sense at first glance. Leapor exposes every minute detail, purposefully choosing each creature she introduces, thereby emphasizing a sense of equality for those typically deprived of home.

The Roof—no *Cyclops* e'er could reach so high:

Not *Polypheme*, tho' form'd for dreadful Harms,

The Top could measure with extended Arms.

Here the pleas'd Spider plants her peaceful Looms:

Here weaves secure, nor dreads the hated Broom. (ll. 43-47)

The spider within the poem is a concrete, realistic detail. Any homeowner knows the difficulty of keeping a dwelling completely pest-free. Leapor's use of the spider, however, suggests more than the literal; she presents us with a striking place to continue our discussion of the development of a sense of home. In this passage, Leapor employs the feminine pronoun, “her,” rather than the generic *its*. Leapor focuses on the spider as if *she* is not just an arachnid but rather lives, breathes, and even feels— human-like in “her” existence. Leapor shows the necessity of a “safe haven” even for a small creature, using personification to emphasize the feelings that accompany a sense of home: “pleas'd,” “peaceful,” and “secure.” “[...T]he spider [...] feels at home where the dust accumulates” (Fairer 230). Indeed, Leapor writes a “physical home” in which the spider exists.



Furthermore, Leapor writes a long-term home for her spider, for it cannot be touched by “the hated Broom.” Christmas makes a biographical connection between Leapor’s job as laborer and these lines, saying: “The observation that the spider’s web is safe from ‘the hated Broom’ is possible, we infer, because the poet herself once tried, or was ordered, to remove it” (174). While Christmas’s practical interpretation may be valid, Leapor may also be employing a poetic convention of the time. A spider is not merely an arachnid, but holds greater importance to the writer, for, “The cunning, skill, and industry of the spider, as well as its power of secreting or emitting poison, are frequently alluded to in literature” (def. 1a). Poets saw in the spider the perfect analogy for the poet—skillful and industrious in the creation of his or her texts. Of these poets, Anne Finch wrote “A Fable Imitated from Monsieur de la Fontaine” (41) which she entitled, “The Goute and Spider,” and in 1697 Jonathan Swift wrote his own fable, a story of the Spider and the Bee in “A Full and True Account of the Battel Fought Last Friday, Between the Antient and the Modern Books in St. James’s Library.” Examining Finch’s poem, Paula R. Backscheider argues that Finch plays three roles in her poem: “the spider (a fury ‘from th’Infernal pitt’), [...] the good wife who alertly sweeps the cobwebs away, and [...] Ardelia of the final verse (‘Who by a tender and officious care’ will ease his pain)” (60). Malcolm J. Bosse sums up Swift’s fable: “The modern writer, like the spider, spins out of his own self and mistakes the usefulness of mathematical design for beauty; the writer who respects tradition takes sustenance, like the bee, from a variety of rich sources” (8).<sup>7</sup> Leapor’s spider, too, may be seen as representative of Leapor and her poetic ability especially when we examine Swift’s spider arguing with the bee over both acts of creation. In Swift’s tale, a spider admonishes the bee for lacking what this

dissertation holds dear, a “House or Home” (246). In contrast, the spider extols his own home: “This large Castle [...] all built with my own Hands, and the Materials extracted altogether out of my own Person” (246). However, the bee points out to the spider that the spider does, indeed, rely on “a little forein Assistance” (247). This description of the spider parallels Leapor’s qualities as a working-class poet, in possession of little formal education or training, but drawing from a natural ability enhanced by those texts available to her.

The similarities between the spider in Leapor’s poetry and Swift’s do not stop there, however. In fact, there are similarities in the text of each poet’s works, and, therefore, a chance that Swift’s work was among those texts from which Leapor drew her inspiration. In describing the spider’s web: “upon the highest Corner of a large Window,” Swift’s words correspond with Leapor’s own description: “The Roof—no *Cyclops* e’er could reach so high” (l. 43). The height of both poets’ webs provides each spider with a feeling of safety: Swift’s “without Danger to his Person by Swallows from above, or to his Palace by Brooms from below” (243) and Leapor’s “Here weaves secure, nor dreads the hated Broom” (l. 47). Furthermore, this safety leaves each spider feeling a sense of comfort in “his” (Swift’s chosen pronoun) and “her” (Leapor’s chosen pronoun) individual abodes: Swift’s “In this Mansion, he had for some Time dwelt in Peace and Plenty” (243) and Leapor’s “Here the pleas’d Spider plants her peaceful Looms” (l. 46). Indeed, one cannot fail to see the analogy between these gendered spiders and the individual poets and therefore between Leapor and Mira and the spider. Leapor spins her tale, her poetry; the spider spins her art, her web; and Mira turns the reader’s attention to the spider, her web, the dust, dirt, and various household pests—the unwanted that make

up this home. Overall, Leapor is the spider who weaves her words into poetry, creating a home space for the servants who work in Crumble-Hall as well as for its next residents, the mice.

Mira continues our grand tour, following our introductions to the spider with a sighting of some mice, making Leapor's "Crumble-Hall" seem lively, "a great benign storehouse where many lives [nonhuman and human] can be lived" (Fairer 230).

Safely the Mice through yon dark Passage run,

Where the dim Windows ne'er admit the Sun. (ll. 52-53)

Leapor once again deviates from the traditional style of the country house poem, as she makes room in her home to non-human creatures. Notice the echoing of "peaceful" and "secure" which make up the spider's home, for the mice are able to move about the house "Safely." Leapor builds a "physical home" for the mice among the "spooky, dark passageways" where the mice find "an ideal refuge" (Fairer 230). Leapor's construction of home may not allow the reader, or even Mira's guests, a feeling of being at home. However, as David Fairer explains: "Mira enjoys squeezing the mice and the disoriented visitor into the same space. The 'gothic' character of the house is clearly double-edged. In the mind of the 'Stranger' it may create sublime terror; but for Mira, who knows the place, its elements of wildness and confusion create a mixed economy in which all forms of life, however humble, can find a home" (Fairer 230-1). Furthermore, Leapor's choice of "Mice" works well as a resident of "Crumble-Hall." Certainly "Mice" running around country manors was common, but Greek mythology links the mouse to the Greek god, Apollo, lending support to Leapor and her poetic endeavors: According to Ælian, "In the temple of Apollo Smintheus, mice are nourished, and food is offered to them, at the

public expense, and white mice dwell beneath the altar” (qtd in Lang 80). The connection of the mouse to Apollo is most interesting for Apollo is the god of music and poetry, in charge of the choir of Muses. Mira’s catalogue of occupants suggests she occupies a place with the unwanted creatures of Crumble-Hall but finds support from the gods above.

### *Of Rooms and Furnishings...*

With a partial support system in place in her poetic home, Mira guides us through various rooms in Crumble-Hall, making her way to the scene of activity and the heart of the home, the kitchen. In her depiction of the kitchen, however, Mira does not yet invite us to see the laborers at work in the kitchen. Instead, she describes the kitchen, ripe with imagery.

The sav’ry Kitchen much Attention calls:

*Westphalia* Hams adorn the sable Walls:

The Fires blaze; the greasy Pavements fry;

And steaming Odours from the Kettles fly. (ll. 56-59)

Margaret Anne Doody presents the kitchen as another connection between Leapor and Swift, both fascinated with kitchens (“Swift” 82). Doody comments on Mira’s tour of “Crumble-Hall,” calling it “an excursion which is a way of entertaining the visitor at this place where little happens” (“Swift” 82). Doody’s words may be accurate if one expects to be entertained by human activity alone, perhaps activity consistent with Swift’s object of fascination, the kitchen’s “accidents, squalor, and creativity” (Doody 82). However, as Leapor has shown us, there is plenty “happening” if you look at the smallest of details.

Mira, then, leads us into the kitchen where our senses are immediately engaged by the product of the laborers' business. We envision blackened walls ("sable") where "Hams" are hung; we feel the warmth of "The Fires" but only for a short moment before we are overwhelmed by the heat and griminess of the kitchen floor ("the greasy Pavements fry")<sup>8</sup>; and we experience a blow to both our sense of touch and smell with the "steaming Odours from the Kettles."

In this instance, one could argue that Leapor removes the servants from her poem, conforming to the traditions of the country house poem. However, I argue that Leapor shows the reader that behind the scenes of the clean and organized house (subject of the country house poem) lies chaos. When the homeowners and guests sit down to take part in the Westphalia Hams and the culinary delight brewing in the kettles, they do so in the dining room, enjoying the fully prepared meal. In the kitchen, Leapor shows us a work in process, not a finished product. The servants may not be seen, but we know that they must be there to remove the hams from the wall, to check on the food cooking in the kettles, and once the meal is finished and served, clean up the greasy counters.

The adjectives and action verbs used in this brief view of the kitchen don't prepare us, however, for the dry, bland view of the parlor to follow—a place, indeed, "where little happens". With our senses fully engaged, we are jarred from activity with an exclamation, "See!" (l. 60). "See" is all we are invited to do as Leapor uses basic, lifeless detail:

See! yon brown Parlour on the Left appears,

For nothing famous, but its leathern Chairs,

Whose shining Nails like polish'd Armour glow,  
And the dull Clock beats audible and slow. (ll. 60-63)

Mira's exclamation throws emphasis on what she is about to show us—which, as it turns out, is nothing striking. Leapor describes the parlor with the bland color, "brown," informing us that the room has no noteworthy purpose, for it "appears,/ For nothing famous" (ll. 60-61). In the room we "See!" chairs. We hear a clock. Leapor tells us that the chairs are "leathern" and have "shining Nails." Leapor does not offer us much description or activity here except for the simile comparing the nails to "polish'd Armour" glowing. I find it interesting that Leapor would choose to describe the nails in such detail rather than describing the chairs, themselves. This comparison to clothing worn in battle is mock heroic. The chairs are not being prepared for battle or even being cleaned after battle. They are outdated, and like the spider, the mice, and Mira are not worthy of display, not worthy of the praise that accompanies the traditional country house poem.

As for the clock, we only hear it: a "dull" sound emitted, "audible and slow." Leapor slows the mood of this room with the cacophonous "d," "k," and "b" sounds, "dull Clock beats audible and slow." The disharmony of sounds slows down the movement in this line, effecting a slowing of the passage of time. These lines bring to mind Alexander Pope's "Epistle X To the Same: On Her Leaving the Town after the Coronation." Greene states: "Leapor's regard for Pope ... surpassed by a very long way her feelings for any other writer" and she "repeatedly ... asserts her allegiance to Pope" in her work (*Mary Leapor: A Study* 182). Certainly Pope's poem, like Leapor's, suggests the mundane in the country house, although Pope focuses on country living and Leapor on the house and

labor. In the country, Pope's Zephalinda (Pope's poetic name for Teresa Blount) occupies her time with a slower lifestyle full of reading, praying, and taking walks, as well as finding little things to help pass the time: "Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon/  
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,/ Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire" (ll. 18-20). Here time moves "slow," leaving Zephalinda's attention unfocused, drawn to whatever fleeting thought catches her interest at the moment: the fire, a partial tune, conversing with a local. In the uneventful room of Leapor's poem, as with Zephalinda's experiences, we see no sign of life, no vibrancy, no activity — especially in comparison with the energy of the kitchen imagery.

The reader is surprised within the parlor, not just due to the lifeless mood and inactivity, but also due to the expectations the reader holds in his/her knowledge of the traditions of country house poetry. Clive Edwards' study on furnishings in this era explains the role furnishings plays in the homeowner's life. Edwards points out the fact that: "[...] possessions of furnishings of any quality or meaningful value was not only a representation of wealth but also of position of rank" (16). He goes on to say, "The issue of the 'appropriateness' of domestic decoration and building was an important one, and it remained a theme in house furnishing well into the twentieth century. The individual's status was directly reflected in the home, and this reflection had to be seen to be suitable and in accord with their social position" (21-22). According to Edwards's thoughts, within each of these rooms Mira should see a source of "appropriateness" and a sign of the homeowners' "position of rank" and therefore of the utmost importance to the homeowners. Furthermore, in accordance with the traditions of the country house poem, Leapor should glorify the rooms and their furnishings, describe in great detail their

lavishness and grandeur, in order to “praise” the homeowners and show their social status and great taste. As discussed thus far, however, Leapor’s work is atypical of country house poems, and her version of this estate is not the same as that experienced by the homeowners. Indeed the rooms and furniture are not what Leapor chooses to let the reader to see. As she does with the spider and the mice, Leapor’s view of the rooms within Crumble-Hall are non-traditional. She exposes the homeowners’ secrets, and shifts the point of view to that of the servant who keeps the furnishings tidy.

Mira leads her guests to another parlor, “more fair” than the last (l. 64). Yet Leapor destabilizes the promise of “more fair,” describing this room in the negative: “The Form—‘tis *neither* long, *nor* round, *nor* square” (l. 65, emphasis mine). Leapor refuses to give this space physical dimension; instead she coyly notes: “The Walls how lofty, and the Floor how wide,/ We leave that for learned *Quadrus* to decide” (l. 66). In fact, Mira’s descriptions sound more like questions than definitive detail: “how lofty”? “how wide?” indeed.

In wrapping up her anti-description of the parlor, Leapor alludes to the traditional country house poem and her job as a poet singing of the glories of the country house, “much might of the Tapestry be sung” (70). However, the word “might” suggests this is not the case, and her following “but” transitions in the opposite direction, “But we’re content to say, The Parlour’s hung” (l. 71). Leapor again raises the conflict between poet and servant. Here, however, she sides with the servant, employing for the first time the pronoun “we”—not in reference to Mira and her Muse (line 11), not in reference to Mira and her guests (lines 64 and 67) but Mira/Leapor grouped with her fellow servants. Leapor redirects the power of ownership in her poetic home space. Whereas in the



physical home space, the servants would clean as a job, Leapor's version allows the servants the pride that can come with cleaning a space that one owns. Furthermore, Leapor's use of "we" creates a sense of togetherness. Not only does she build them a poetic space but she writes them a community, a "supportive atmosphere" in their poetic home. They stand at the end of this stanza both united and "content" in their "social home."

At this point, Mira shifts the direction of her tour away from her fellow servants, onward and upward into the rooms above. "We count the Stairs, and to the Right ascend" (l. 72). This line corresponds with Leapor's "Corydon. Phillario. Or, Mira's Picture. A Pastoral." Therein Phillario describes Mira:

But who is she that walks from yonder Hill,  
With studious Brows, and Night-cap Dishabille?  
That looks a Stranger to the Beams of Day;  
And counts her Steps, and mutters all the Way? (ll. 29-32).

Ann Messenger asks an interesting question regarding these lines: "composing poetry as she goes?" (186). Whether Messenger is speaking of "composing poetry" in response to Mira's muttering or her counting of steps, the question inspires me to examine the counting of stairs in "Crumble-Hall" as well. Leapor plays with the idea of poet as builder, constructing her poem as a physical, three dimensional object as seen with the spider web and her poetic version of the country manor, itself. To "count the Stairs" suggests the counting of beats or feet within a line of poetry. Furthermore, consider the basic meter of this poem in iambic pentameter (five iambs or ten syllables) juxtaposed with line 86, "Up ten Stone Steps now please to drag your Toes [...]." Leapor uses "ten"

for her count of steps for Mira and her guests to climb, thereby building the poetic space of “Crumble-Hall.” Each poetic syllable corresponds with (becomes) a stair in the construction of her home. While the homeowners of Crumble-Hall move their servants out of vision, to the back “Stairs,” Leapor builds a poetic stairway, a bit of a “physical home” for each of her residents to traverse in their poetic space.

Mira moves from describing furniture to accessories and other items. First we see Biron’s library: “Here, *Biron* sleeps, with Books encircled round” (l. 90). For an aspiring poet, such as Leapor, books would mean education, a chance to become better learned in the art of writing poetry. On the other hand, owning enough books to “encircle,” Biron *intimates* that he is “a Student most profound” (l. 91). Books for Biron mean mere decoration, for Leapor exposes the truth here: “[...] in Form the dusty Volumes stand;/ There’s few that wear the Mark of *Biron’s* Hand” (ll. 92-93). Not only does Biron “sleep” rather than read, but the books suffer from neglect, “dusty” with little “Mark” of use.

The “dusty Volumes” in Biron’s room correspond well with the room that Mira guides us into next. Mira exposes more useless items in these “amiably” furnished rooms (l. 98): “Old Shoes, and Sheep-ticks bred in Stacks of Wool;/ *Grey Dobbin’s* Gears, and Drenching-Horns enow;/ Wheel-spokes—the Irons of a tatter’d Plough” (ll. 99-101). “Old,” “Grey,” and “tatter’d” suggest that someone has long since discarded these items. However, through these descriptions, the reader senses the servant’s past, “a collection of memories” for a “personal home.” These were once the servants’ tools and belongings: the “Gears” or “accoutrements of a riding horse, or his rider” (def. 3a) would have dressed the horse “*Grey Dobbins*”; the “Drenching-Horns” would have been used “for giving a medicinal drench to animals” (def. 1b); and the “Plough,” now in pieces

("Wheel-spokes" and "Irons"), would have been used to cultivate the soil for planting. Leapor devalues the homeowner's possessions by treating them with the same attention she treats the servant's old equipment. As Leapor moves her Mira and guests closer to the kitchen, she revises and rewrites the poetic tradition of representing the items within the house. The furnishings and accessories as well as unused servants' tools solidify her poetic home. She fills in the rooms with lifeless, inanimate objects that should provide the home owners material comfort but which, instead, allow Leapor to garner together her own power in renovating and constructing a poetic home for the servants.

"Yes, a little higher, pray," says Mira in response to her guest's complaint, "No farther" (l. 102), as she leads her group up to a view of the estate from the highest point in the house. "Here a gay Prospect meets the ravish'd Eye: / Meads, Fields, and Groves, in beauteous Order lie" (l. 105-6). From this rooftop location, Mira shows her guest an unobstructed view of the estate below. Christmas sees this vantage point, however, as an analogy of power: "Though not openly rebellious, Leapor was deeply critical of the social limitations imposed on her from above" (162). Mira usurps control from her employers, those "above" her. Her vantage point provides her with a seat of power as she stands "above" all else physically in the dwelling and metaphorically in her poem. However, some unknown force unexpectedly pulls the Muse and Mira down from their seat of power:

From hence the Muse precipitant is hurl'd,

And drags down *Mira* to the nether World" (ll. 107-8).

Susanne Kord argues: "[...] her muse is hurled precipitously from the highest spire of the palace and, as a punishment for getting 'above herself,' is dragged down into the 'nether

world' of the kitchen and the scullery" (171). However, Valerie Rumbold speaks against the idea of punishment, arguing: "Although enclosure had come early to Northamptonshire, and although her father was a supplier of landscaping services to improving gentry, her preferred viewpoint is invariably the lower angle and more detailed focus of one actually accustomed to working with plants and soil" (71). I concur that Mira's vantage point above would do little to build up her version of home. Leapor needs Mira to return to the "nether World" (the kitchen) so that she can introduce us to her poetic family in their poetic home space.

***"Its People First We Sing":***

***Reclaiming the Community in "Crumble-Hall."***

"Form is not an imposed regularity, but a shaping of the 'pliant' ingredients. This is the message that Leapor's Crumble-Hall has for life and art"

--David Fairer

Finally we come to the point in the poem where human activity replaces all other activity (animal or otherwise), the point where the Muse "is hurl'd" and drags Mira with her to "the nether World," the kitchen. Echoing the activity of labor in the earlier description of the kitchen, Leapor describes the seat of human activity in this 43 line section of the poem, nearly a quarter of the entire poem. Rumbold writes: "Leapor's very obviously signalled pause for choice at this point, with the diversion from customary subjects which follows from it, thus asserts against the tradition the importance of work and workers, not simply as undistinguished menials or personified Labour, but as individuals" (72). Indeed, in this section, Leapor depicts qualities of the utmost

importance in constructing a sense of home: familial “togetherness,” “significant others” and a community for these “individuals,” the servants.

Anthropological scholars find that no one experiences home spaces equally. Patients in institutions, prisoners, and even lodgers, for instance, lack the pride of ownership. “As a middle-aged Colchester spinster noted bitterly, living in lodgings meant never being able to impress a personality on surroundings, intrusions of privacy, restrictions on hospitality and sudden notices to quit” (Davidoff and Hall 358). The same holds true for live-in servants. Their dwellings are “[.] not quiet refuges but busy workplaces, the locus of back-breaking toil for many individuals working from the early hours of the morning to late at night. The realisation of the domestic ideal relied on the labours of servants directed by a mistress whose own labour had to [be] made invisible” (Bryden and Floyd 109). However, Rumbold concludes that in Leapor’s fictional poetic space:

[...] in the end it is 'the menial Train' who are presented as the 'People' of the house which had felt so empty as Mira led the tour. To name them as such is to acknowledge their importance in a very striking way, in the context of a tradition primarily concerned with the tastes and values of landowners; and to characterize them as individuals is, in a sense, further to dignify them, although Leapor's treatment tends more to the satirical than to any idealization of the dignity of labour” (Rumbold 72)

Leapor shifts the balance of home experience from the master to the servant by making the servant’s labor visible and the homeowner “invisible,” thus deconstructing the “domestic ideal” and constructing a poetic home.

[...] Its People first we sing:  
Hear, *Artemisia*, hear the Song we bring.  
*Sophronia* first in Verse shall learn to chime,  
And keep her Station, tho' in *Mira*'s Rhyme;

Leapor's choice to begin her introductions of the "other" residents of Crumble-Hall with *Sophronia* immediately suggests Leapor's difficulties in straddling her dual-existence as servant and poet. Leapor narrates this conflict in a number of poems including "An Epistle to *Artemisia*. On Fame." In this poem, Leapor describes a more forceful *Sophronia* than we witness in "Crumble-Hall."<sup>9</sup> In "An Epistle..." Leapor describes the incident leading up to Leapor's removal from service at Edgcote, a dispute between *Mira* and *Sophronia* over Leapor's free time spent writing instead of engaging in more appropriate activities. In this poem, *Sophronia* possesses strength in character and voice, entering "like a barb'rous Turk" (l. 153) and wielding her power over *Mira* in the servant class hierarchy:

You thoughtless Baggage, when d'ye mind your Work?  
Still o'er a Table leans your bending Neck:  
Your Head will grow prepost'rous, like a Peck.  
Go, ply your Needle: You might earn your Bread;  
Or who must feed you when your Father's dead? (ll. 154-58)

In "Crumble-Hall," on the other hand, Leapor focuses solely on *Sophronia*'s role as labourer—on a level equal with *Mira*—rather than as *Mira*'s superior:

*Sophronia* sage! whose learned Knuckles know  
To form round Cheese-cakes of the pliant Dough;

To bruise the Curd, and thro' her Fingers squeeze  
*Ambrosial* Butter with the temper'd Cheese:  
Sweet Tarts and Pudden, too, her Skill declare;  
And the soft Jellies, hid from baneful Air. (ll. 111-20)

Leapor's use of "sage," "learned," and "skill" suggest mental intelligence, but these words describe Sophronia's kitchen labor instead. In the eighteenth century, society praised specific types of education based on gender and class, and a kitchen servant would, of course, be valued when exhibiting learning consistent with her responsibilities in the kitchen. Employing personification and synecdoche, Leapor places Sophronia in her appropriate station focusing on Sophronia's "knuckles" and not her mind. Her "knuckles" are intelligent, for they are both "learned" and "know" and possess great "skill" for carrying out productive house work. The object of this learning is not information found in books like those in Biron's room, but rather, the culinary arts: "to form round Cheese-cakes...bruise the Curd, and [...] squeeze *Ambrosial* Butter." "Form," "bruise," and "squeeze," express physical labor, details of Sophronia's job responsibilities and the tools of her trade, her hands, but no descriptive detail of Sophronia's character as Mira's superior.

Greene argues: "Leapor's descriptions of cooking, although drawn from her own immediate experience, probably owe something to King's [poem]" (*Mary Leapor* 177). Leapor's lines regarding "Sophronia sage" certainly resemble various passages in William King's *The Art of Cookery* where King writes of knuckles that "form" and "knead" the dough into pies just as Sophronia's knuckles "form" and "squeeze" the dough into cheesecakes (59). The connection between the two works is further

strengthened with an examination of Leapor's lines about "Sophronia sage" and King's words: "'Tis a sage question if the Art of Cooks/ Is lodg'd by Nature or attain'd by books" (123). Leapor writes in Sophronia her answer to this question for "sage" Sophronia cooks, her "knuckles know" and are "learned," without even "a little forien Assistance" upon which Swift's spider relies. Sophronia has no need for a cookbook, for she possesses the natural talent and intelligence of a cook, and society has placed her, unlike Leapor in the role of kitchen-maid rather than poet, in the appropriate position for her natural talents.<sup>10</sup>

Although the kitchen's basic use is for preparing meals, in smaller dwellings (before the advent of central heat and air), people were also drawn to the kitchen area for warmth and human interaction during meal preparations. Homeowners even placed beds in the kitchen or in close proximity to the kitchen to draw warmth from the kitchen fires. Leapor's poetic kitchen has multiple uses as well. Leapor describes the blend of activity with peace, comfort, and overall liveliness in the kitchen. While Leapor places Sophronia in her station, laboring diligently on her "cheese-cakes," "tarts," and "jellies," few of the other servants are actually working. Leapor draws up a variety of activity in the kitchen, creating a feeling of "home" as she blends the varied "'pliant' ingredients" to her home recipe. Leapor combines her "ingredients"—the "warm Kettles" with "the sav'ry Steams"—offering "Grave *Colinettus*" space to relax his temperament enough to dream, albeit for a short moment, until he is awakened by a "starting, anxious for his new-mown Hay" and runs "headlong out to view the doubtful Day" (ll. 121-24). Furthermore, Leapor personifies "Dinner," creating an additional character that lures the residents, calling each "with more prevailing Charms" (125).



Leapor's most striking introduction is that of the servant couple Roger and Ursula. Many scholars find this scene to be most relevant to the poem's meaning and Leapor's poetic purpose. Fairer describes the scene as "a social comedy" and an "anti-pastoral" (233), and Laura Mandell views the couple as part of a parody of "domestic ideology" ("Demystifying" 564; "Misogyny" 95-96). Dalporto argues that Leapor uses the Roger and Ursula exchange "[...] to reveal how the socioeconomic relationship on the country estate keep the servants alienated from the land and their own labor" (239). However, I argue against the portrayal of Roger and Ursula as a parody; instead Leapor creates this couple to people her home with a realistic interaction between a man and woman in a relationship. Roger is the epitome of comfort and security in a home space. He needs nothing, for he has plenty of food, more than he needs: "O'er stuff'd with Beef; with Cabbage much too full,/ And Dumpling too [...]" (ll. 130-31). In this gluttonous state, Roger sleeps on top of the table "With Mouth wide open, but with closing Eyes" and "His able Lungs discharge a rattling Sound" (ll. 132 and 134). He is the epitome of rest and relaxation.

Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd's examination of the relationship between husband/master and wife/servant explain Roger's relationship with Ursula in this scene: "The servants may have been exhausted, the 'mistress' may have had a tiresome and difficult day, but, as far as the 'master' was concerned, he was the only member of the household who had been at work all day. For him, and him only, the house represented the end of work, an opportunity for relaxation and enjoyment" (117). Roger may not be the owner of Crumble-Hall, but Ursula places him in a seat of power by waiting on him in the manner of a servant to her master as well as wife for husband. As the "rattling" of

Roger's snoring suggests, he is carefree at this point; he reaps the comforts of the home space his mate (and Leapor) provides.

As part of Dalporto's argument, she claims: "The relations of [Ursula's] production [...] are subsumed within domestic ideology" (239). Mandell furthers this argument explaining: "Ursula attempts to transform her labor into what female labor will become for growing numbers of middle-class women: 'mere epiphenomena of wifely devotion' ("Demystifying" 563-64; "Misogyny" 95-96).

Ingrateful *Roger!* wilt thou leave me now?

For you these Furrows mark my fading Brow;

For you my Pigs resign their Morning Due:

My hungry Checkens lost their Meat for you:

And, was it no, Ah! Was it not for thee,

No goodly Pottage would be dress'd by me

For thee these Hands wind up the whirling Jack,

Or place the Spit across the sloping Rack.

I baste the Mutton with a cheerful Heart,

Because I know my *Roger* will have Part. (ll. 140-149)

Ursula, however, is not "subsumed within domestic ideology," as Dalporto argues, for Ursula does not make her work "invisible" as wives and servants did for their husbands/masters. Instead of silent "wifely devotion," she voices her discontent, berates her Roger for his sloth and draws attention *to* her hard work. In addition, Mandell may be correct in pointing out the following:

[...] because Ursula and Roger work for the absent owners of Crumble-Hall, because Ursula works in the kitchen with Sophronia to feed not only Roger but “Grave *Colinettus*” and “surly *Graffo*,” Ursula’s lament “render[s] the contradictions of [bourgeois] romantic ideology, and its powerfully imaginary status *as* ideology, particularly obvious”[...]: Ursula’s repetition of “For you” and “for thee” is belied by her statement that she makes a dinner of which Roger will only “have Part”; she labors for pay, not “love” (“Demystifying” 564; “Misogyny” 95-96).

What Mandell elides, however, is the importance of the “absent owners.” Leapor builds her “Crumble-Hall” not for the owners but as a home for the multifarious residents, of which Roger and Ursula are a part. Within this poetic “Crumble-Hall,” the reader glimpses an assortment of these largely ignored residents “at home,” engaging in their daily activities both labor and leisure.

Leapor’s transformation from the extraordinary of the homeowner’s home to the ordinary of the servant’s job/home underscores Leapor’s poetic talent of home building, and the building of an unconventional home—a space where lowly creatures and lowly servants inherit and possess home space. Christmas (175) and Cynthia Wall (“The Rhetoric of Description” 274) use forms of the word “ordinary” to describe Leapor’s version of Crumble-Hall, and Doody notes that Leapor’s description is “relaxed [...and] of a visit neither brilliant nor unpleasant, paid to a place unglamorous [...]” (83). Leapor depicts “ordinary,” everyday experiences in that they are “[...] not above, or somewhat below, the usual level of quality” (def. 5a). However, these experiences are certainly not “ordinary” for a country house poem. Leapor’s description does not belong “[...] to the

regular or usual order or course of things” (def. 2a). Christmas argues that “These details [...] are but the building blocks for the severe ideological critique the poem levels at its conclusion” (177). “Building blocks” is an appropriate term, for Leapor preserves the old customs. The reader sees the values of community and a “supportive atmosphere” through the various servants at work and play in the kitchen. Leapor allots them all a space within her own “Crumble-Hall,” within her “social home.”

### ***Work, Rest, and Play...***

Leapor wraps up her poem with a social critique of enclosure, the homeowner’s improvement of the estate resulting in a loss for the community the estate had once served. In the last lines of the poem, Mira describes the grounds surrounding Crumble-Hall in vivid and brilliant detail consistent with a country house poem. Christmas writes:

From the beginning, the poet relates a nostalgic image of the house teeming with life-sustaining food (112); the house itself seems alive, given the personified carvings in the entryway (113); a spider ‘weaves’ her ‘Loom’ and mice ‘run’ about the passageways (113, 114) [...]. This is not a static poem, and the progression of details that convey a sense of life and activity is central to Leapor’s argument championing Nature. (Christmas 177-78)

Contrasting with the lack of activity and movement in the manmade parlor with its drab “Leathern chairs” and “dull Clock,” Leapor further conveys the “sense of life and activity” she began inside with spiders, mice, and servants, extending it to Crumble-Hall’s grounds:

Where o'er yon Waters nods a pendent Grove;  
In whose clear Waves the pictur'd Boughs are seen,  
With fairer Blossoms, and a brighter Green.  
Soft flow'ry Banks the spreading Lakes divide:  
Sharp-pointed Flags adorn each tender Side. (ll. 156-162)

Leapor creates movement in the outdoors as the trees in the “Grove” “nod” above the Lake, reflecting themselves in the “clear Waves.” She also plays with the idea of writer as illusionist, describing the trees’ reflection as “fairer” and “brighter” than their physical counterpart.

Leapor uses more vibrant adjectives than she had around the parlors to enhance her description of the surrounding lands as a “safe haven” or heavenly refuge. The bank of the lake is “Soft,” “flow’ry” and “tender” with “Flags” growing along the side. Leapor’s “Flags” refers to the goddess Iris, as “Flags,” for we now call this flower Iris (def. 1a). The three petals of the Iris symbolize faith, valor, and wisdom and, thereby, suggest the strength and inspiration Leapor draws from nature below and the gods above.

Leapor’s writing of the beauty of the grounds provides Mira with her own play space: “Now to those Meads let frolick Fancy rove [...]” (l. 156). During Leapor’s day, “Fancy” was “synonymous with imagination” (def. 4a). Within this home space, Mira can feel free to let her imagination “frolick.” Leapor’s own “Fancy” builds a home space where Mira may play, a world outdoors conducive to Mira’s writing, a home space for Mira to feel safe enough to engage in the free play of writing.

Leapor unites Mira’s “play” with every aspect of “Crumble-Hall” in this section: “See! the pleas’d Swans along the Surface play: / Where yon cool Willows meet the

scorching Ray [...]” (163-64). The swans do not work as do Sophronia and Ursula, nor do they sleep like Roger and Colinettus, but they portray extreme comfort and security: as “pleas’d” as they are, they engage in “play.” The swan’s “play” here can certainly be likened to the poet’s “play,” for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets used the swan as a symbol for the poet; for instance, Dryden called Virgil the “Mantuan swan” and Pope called Swift a swan in a letter to Charles Jervas and in jest called John Taylor the “swan of Thames” in two books of *The Dunciad*.<sup>11</sup> The symbolic meaning of the swan further unites this description of the grounds with the interior descriptions of “Crumble-Hall” and to Mary Leapor, the poet, herself. King’s chapter on Apollo in *An Historical Account of Heathen Gods and Heroes* shows a connection between Apollo and the swan who is “endued with Divination, when foreseeing his happiness in death, he dies with singing and pleasure” (56). Indeed, Leapor, like her contemporaries, is aware of Apollo’s role in the life of the poet, for she alludes to Apollo when writing about writing poetry in a number of her poems. In “The Head-ach. To Aurelia,” Leapor notes how fickle Apollo can be, for he “only courts the young” (l. 49). She explains that she must write while she is able, before her “trembling Hand [must] resign its Pen” (l. 47):

Then who wou’d not (*Aurelia*, pray)  
 Enjoy his Favours while they may?  
 Nor Cramps nor Head-achs shall prevail;  
 I’ll still write on, and you shall rail. (ll. 50-53)

Notice the double meaning in “*Aurelia*, pray”: Leapor is not merely being polite in addressing Aurelia with “pray” meaning “beseech” (def. 1) or “beg or entreat” (def. 2), but asking a two-fold question: “who wou’d not...pray” to Apollo? And “who wou’d

not...Enjoy his Favours while they may?" Apollo's role in poetry during the seventeenth century and well until Leapor's day held him responsible for a poet's inspiration or lack thereof. In "Eleonora," Dryden writes: "We, who are priests of Apollo have not the inspiration when we please; but must wait till the God comes rushing on us, and invades us with a fury, which we are not able to resist: which gives us double strength while the fit continues, and leaves us languishing and spent, at its departure" (3). So, too, was Apollo popular in the poetic form the 'session poem' where the author "would place a row of contemporary poets before the throne of Apollo, all competing for the laurel wreath" (Broich 89)<sup>12</sup>, what Leapor calls "his Favours." Apollo thus offering "his Favours" symbolizes a poet's such as Leapor's poetic inspiration, that which feeds her poetic ability. When Leapor writes at the beginning of "Crumble-Hall" of Mira and her Muse singing "of *Crumble-Hall*," the metaphorical presence of Apollo would be their conductor directing them in this song, supporting her desire to write.

Leapor's allusions to Apollo and Iris in the heavens above support Leapor's vision of beauty in her poetic home as she bemoans the renovations of the grounds to come. According to Kord, "Destruction without is matched by decay within: just as opulence and wealth in the traditional country house poem express the lord's generosity and hospitality, Leapor's deconstruction of the genre indirectly shows up the greed and thoughtlessness of the (otherwise unsung) lord of the manor" (170). Mark Girouard labels what Kord writes as "greed and thoughtlessness" (the act of enclosure) as a "Paradise":

In the course of the eighteenth century another image of Paradise, equally powerful in its own way, largely replaced the old one. This was a paradise of Arcadian seclusion, of what appeared to be untouched nature, of

magical demesnes hidden from the outside world by walls or encircling belts of trees and enclosing great Palladian mansions at their heart. (*A Country* 152).

Leapor, however, deconstructs that new “image of Paradise” by building a fairy-tale atmosphere with an ominous feel, where dryads and nymphs scream and howl over “their threaten’d Shades” (ll. 165-6). Additional images of the “Shades” as a place for “the hapless Swain” to rest and the “rev’rend Oaks” to live a long life are soon to “from their Roots be torn” (ll. 170-3). Furthermore, “banish’d Nature leaves a barren Gloom,/ And aukward Art supplies the vacant Room” (ll. 177-8). Sir Wary’s “greed and thoughtlessness” motivate him to renovate his property, thereby causing this destruction. Leapor uses gothic descriptions to haunt Sir Wary’s so-called improvements toward “Arcadian seclusion,” granting the Nymphs the power to “haunt the ravag’d Plain,” and filling in the new “gloomy Green” with “Strange Sounds and Forms” (ll. 180-1).

### *Of Sir Wary’s Destruction and Mary Leapor’s Construction...*

In the end, the real owners of Edgcote, after which Leapor modeled her “Crumble-Hall,” “[...] had pulled down both the medieval house and the adjoining village [...]” (Rumbold 73); the effect of these renovations “[...] was to cut houses off from the real country and the real world” (Girouard, *A Country* 152). Indeed, as Sir Wary renovates his house and land, he thereby destroys not just a building and the surrounding grounds, but also the sense of family and community, a place many had called home. However, while Sir Wary is a destructive force, Leapor gives life. She salvages the home space, builds it up, and maintains a natural and lasting beauty in her poetic walls. The



original Edgcote is no longer, but the walls of “Crumble-Hall” still stand. Leapor writes a poetic space and a “safe haven” for the spiders, mice, swans, and servants, as well as a space for the “memories” of her “personal” and “physical home.” Her poetic space is a dream world, a “safe haven” for the poetic mind to escape the toils of reality. A “supportive atmosphere” protected forever by the gods above and the lover of poetry and the scholar below, Leapor’s “Crumble-Hall” continues to be a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home.”

## Notes

1. In this dissertation, I use the *Oxford English Dictionary* for definitions of words unless specifically cited otherwise.

2. Throughout this chapter, I refer to Liz Kenyon's values of home as she explores them in her article, "A Home from Home: Students' Transitional Experience of Home."

Kenyon denotes four levels of home:

- "Temporal,"
- "Personal" ("a sense of independence and freedom" and "memories")
- "Social" ("made up of significant others," "a supportive atmosphere," and "a friendly neighbourhood")
- "Physical" ("a comfortable environment" and "a safe haven") (87).

3. For an interesting look at the communities of women who embraced women's poetry, read Gillen D'Arcy Wood's "The Female Pensive: Anna Seward, Sociable Poetry, and the Handelian Consensus" and Betty Rizzo's "Two Versions of Community: Montagu and Scott." However, while the former article offers little tie between these communities and Leapor (with the exception of David Garrick who wrote up the "Proposals for Printing by Subscription The Poetical Works, Serious and Humorous, Of Mrs. Leapor, lately Deceased" (Greene, *Mary Leapor* 23) and who also participated in these communities), it does offer insight into this group of women *and* men who regardless of angry responses from the literary world, chose to break free of the "socially poisonous 'sarcasms' of satire or critique" in favor of "sociability" and "community" and "a poetry

defined by public performance and consumption, ... and governed by a poetics of tribute, gratitude, humor, and entertainment” (462 and 464). In the latter, Rizzo examines the list of subscribers to Leapor’s work, pointing out the following: “Mrs. Cutts, Bab Montague [sic], Mrs. Montegue [sic], Miss Roberts [...], Miss Robinson [...], Mrs. Riggs, Mrs. Ravaud, Lady [Frances] Williams [...], and Mrs. Scott” (207). Among these subscribers were a group of women living in Bath who had created a community of and for women, self-supporting and mutually supportive—comparable to the sense of home Leapor builds for Mira and the servants in her poetry.

4. For studying the role of various servants in Leapor’s time period, one might find use in J. Jean Hecht’s *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1956). In this text, Hecht’s description of the gardener’s job shows Mira taking on a second role when she steps outside to offer her tour of the grounds, for according to Hecht, the gardener was expected to give tours of the ground (49).

5. Christopher Christie’s text, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century*, offers further insight into the transformation of country houses into works of art in architecture and landscape. He does offer the following warning against generalizing enclosure as solely a product of the eighteenth century: “It is important to stress [...] that the process of enclosure had been going on since the Middle Ages, and that though the eighteenth century saw a rapid increase in the amount of land enclosed throughout the country, it was not uniform, either in acreage or its effect on the local population” (171).

6. Many scholars utilize a theater metaphor when discussing the house. Donna Birdwell-Pheasant and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga identify “The ‘front stage’ [which] refers to spaces where the family presents or displays itself and entertains outsiders, while the

'back stage' indicates areas of presumably greater individual control where household members prepare, rest and seek solitude" (4). Tony Chapman says that men have often "[...] been regarded as 'off-stage' actors" (*Gender* 2-3) and "[...] homes can be conceptualised as stage sets, upon which men and women attempt to communicate positive messages to the outside world in order to show that they are successful, respectable, fashionable and socially desirable" (*Gender* 13); Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga say: "Those who believe they are in a drama will learn their roles, and if the set is in the script, then it too will be expected to play its part" (235); and Edwards draws on Penelope Eames as she notes "that great medieval households had to be organized to allow furnishings to be moved daily, as within a stage set which used portable props as required to suit the action" (16); and Fletcher describes "the polished performance" that takes place in the dining room "above the stairs" in the home of John and Theresa Parker thanks to "the most elaborate work [...] going on among the menials below" (50).

7. Malcolm J. Bosse's use of the word "mistake" suggests the negative light with which Swift depicts his spider. While Finch shines a negative light on her spider, she does so in response to her own conflict over her responsibilities as a wife/homemaker and writer. Swift, however, chooses the spider as representative of the modern writer he derides as opposed to the writer he prefers, "the writer who respects tradition," the preferred ancient writer (Boss 8). Swift, although using the spider to symbolize the poet, sides himself with his second symbol of a poet of a different kind, the bee. Harold D. Kelling expounds upon Swift's clear preference, writing: "That the Bible and the words of the Ancients together constitute an ideal—works in the written language which combine form and

content, is implicit through the *Tale* volume but it is expressed most clearly in the ‘Battle,’ in the description of the Ancients, a description which fits the Bible as well as Homer” (xxi). And while Leapor’s spider can be seen as engaging in a creative process in its construction of a “physical home” her web (likened to the creative process of writing poetry), Swift’s spider relies upon its natural poison enhanced only by feeding on insects, representative of “worthless or destructive writing” (Kelling xxvi).

8. One can view kitchen pavements in Fletcher’s *The Parkers at Saltram 1769-89: Everyday Life in an Eighteenth-century House*. The caption beneath the image (found between pages 48 and 49) reads: “The spits turning in Saltram kitchen, the fat dripping into the pan beneath.” This picture shows the grease on the concrete tiles in front of the spit, not just within “the pan beneath.”

9. The dialogue between Sophronia and Mira exemplifies the extreme conflict Leapor faced over her “station” versus her spiritual necessity to write. In other of her poems, Leapor further describes similar reactions by various members of society over what was perceived as Leapor’s improper self-elevation above her status by choosing to write.

In “Corydon. Phillario. Or, Mira’s Picture. A Pastoral,” when hearing that Mira “sits whole Ev’nings, reading wicked Plays” (50), Phillario replies with the voice of society, admonishing such an activity, “*She* read!—She’d better milk her brindled Cows” (l. 51). In “The Epistle of Deborah Dough,” Leapor’s narrator, Deborah Dough, denounces her neighbor Mary “who, they say,/ Sits scribble-scribble all the Day” (ll. 11-12). Deborah speaks as Phillario and Sophronia do, reducing Mary’s act of writing to a mere “scribble-scribble.” Deborah perceives writing, to a woman such as herself, as a waste of time, and she can not even consider Mary’s poetic work on the same plane as the

domestic arts. She finds writing non-eventful and unmemorable, saying: “[...] making—what—I can’t remember” (13), and yet she knows well what she needs to know, that which is useful, that “The Price of Oats is greatly fell” and she’s “lost [...] her] brindled Cow” (ll. 3 and 8). Deborah then describes her own daughter, Cicely, who possesses those traits she thinks would better serve one such as Mary:

And better learnt (as People say):  
Can knit a Stocken in a Day:  
Can make a Pudden, plump and rare;  
And boil her Bacon, to an Hair:  
Will coddle Apples nice and green,  
And fry her Pancakes—like a Queen. (ll. 23-28)

Leapor enforces that which society deems important, describing, as with Sophronia’s “learned Knuckles,” Cicely’s learning as appropriately that of sewing and cooking, placing her well within the boundaries of servitude. Mary, on the other hand, is criticized by Deborah who perceives that Mary “lifts her Nose above the Croud” (l. 20), above society and her place at the bottom rungs of the societal ladder, breaking the prescribed boundaries of domestic servitude.

10. Robert Applebaum’s *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections* offers an exploration of the growth of cookbooks as literature, dating back to 1300, a time when the illiteracy of kitchen workers and the high price of printing meant cookbooks were for literate men of means such as master chefs and stewards (73). In addition, the lack of specific “quantities of ingredients and cooking times” or an explanation of techniques in these fourteenth-century books meant that cookbooks were

not meant to provide instruction but were meant for those who already possessed a level of expertise in the kitchen. As for the food itself, meals were not just to appease hunger but were a sense of pride for the homeowner and cook who “may well invest a good deal of ego in the food they are involved with” (73). Indeed, food preparation was seen as an art rather than mere labor.

The late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a change to cookbooks, the instructional cookbook becoming increasingly popular during Leapor’s lifetime and even after her death in November 1746 (in the very next year, Hannah Glasse’s *The Art of Cookery* became a favorite in both England and the Colonies). King’s question regarding the need of a cookbook by those who possess the natural ability to cook applies to these increasingly popular types of books rather than those of the earlier centuries. Of interest here is Applebaum’s conclusions that cookbooks are “an art that is at once exactly reproducible and subject to innovation” (76). This manner of using the cookbook corresponds with the way poets such as Leapor use their predecessor—they possess a level of expertise but use the form and techniques prescribed by their predecessors, embellishing it with their own style and “innovation.”

11. Specific instances of swans symbolic of the writer are found in the following works by Dryden and Pope:

In “To Mr. Dryden on His Play Call’d Truth Found Too Late,” Dryden writes of Virgil:

Had Ilium stood, Homer had ne’re been read,

Nor the sweet Mantuan swan his wings display’d. (*Eleonora* ll. 46-47)

and in “To Mr. Dryden upon His Translation of the Third Book of Virgil’s *Georgicks*: A Pindarick Ode”:

While mounting with expanded wings  
The Mantuan swan unbounded Heav'n explores,  
While with seraphic sounds he Towing Sings,  
Til divinity he soars:/ Mankind stands wond'ring at his flight,  
Charm'd with his music, and his height:  
which both transcend our praise. (*Poems* ll. 1-7)

In a letter "To Mr. Jervas, in Ireland," dated July 9, 1716, Pope writes of Swift: "It would be well in exchange, if Parnelle, and two or three more of your swans, would come hither, especially that swan, who like a true modern one, does not sing at all, Dr. Swift" (*Poems* 227). And in *The Dunciad*, Books II and III respectively, he writes mockingly of John Taylor:

Taylor, sweet swan of Thames, majestic bows (*The Dunciad with Notes Variorum* l. 323)

and

Taylor, their better Charon, lends an oar,  
(Once swan of Thames, tho' now he sings no more.) (*The Dunciad as It is Now Changed* ll. 19-20)

12. The 'session poem,' originated by John Suckling with his seventeenth century poem, "A Session of the Poets," criticized other poets of the time. This poetic form saw popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with poetry such as "The Session of the Poets" by an anonymous author in 1668 and "A Session of the Poets" by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester in 1676. The 'session poem' transitioned from its original intent as "literary criticism" to mock heroic with the "dullness satire" with poems such as



Pope's *The Dunciad* and Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* wherein the foolish were praised and the wise condemned (Broich 89).

## Chapter Two

### **Six Foot Seven and a Half by 25 and a Quarter Inches of Physical Space, an Infinity of Personal Space:**

#### **Constructing Home in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa***

Gaston Bachelard writes that to realize a home in a permanent state “would lead to thoughts—serious, sad thoughts—and not to dreams. It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality” (61). I find truth in the impermanence of home. The chaos of life, continuous traumatic events, and the daily grind that comes with work, study, family, social lives and social expectations drench the dreamer of home with the hose of reality. No one can feel the comfort and safety of home all of the time—except in one instance, death.

Samuel Richardson's title hero in his epistolary novel *Clarissa* is of the age when most blossoming adults look back upon their carefree days of childhood as the basis for constructing their adult home. Yet, at the end of the novel, Clarissa constructs a most unconventional home space as her *chosen* space—a coffin. One may question the limitation of this choice knowing the physical comfort in which she had grown: an expansive familial home where her parents, brother, and sister were still living, servants to tend to the Harlowes' every need and the adoration of her neighbors. Clarissa's childhood was a most ideal environment. Tragically, as with so many young women in the eighteenth century up to our present day, the ideal home did not remain so. In explaining why Clarissa's choices were so limited so as to ultimately choose a coffin as

her home space, I will trace the Clarissa's home space from spacious breathing room to ever-constricting, claustrophobic space. Drawing on Liz Kenyon's categories of home and the values found therein, I begin by examining the drastic change of her peaceful childhood space from the openness of a "personal," "social," and "physical home"<sup>1</sup> to the confines of a prison at the hands of "friends"<sup>2</sup>. This change leads to an escape to the ever more unhealthy conditions of Lovelace's manipulative space in the brothel, finally ending with Clarissa's unconventional housing, her extraordinary "physical home," her coffin.

### *Of Parlors and Closets:*

#### *Clarissa's Familial Home Space*

The extreme change of the Harlowe home from open space to claustrophobic space necessitates Clarissa's future construction of her unconventional home. However, the reader is never offered a full picture of Clarissa's idyllic childhood home. Instead, the epistolary novel begins in the center of conflict. As the novel opens, we witness Clarissa in a state of confusion over her family's ill treatment of her, suggesting that this treatment is not the norm. I conclude, therefore, that prior to this occasion, Clarissa possessed all three of Kenyon's categories of home: the "supportive atmosphere" of a "social home;" "independence" and "memories" of a "personal home;" and a "comfortable environment" and "safe haven" of a "physical home" (87). I argue that Clarissa's possession of these three categories allowed her to experience what Bachelard calls "felicitous space": the "sorts of space that may be grasped, ... [and] defended, ... the space we love ... eulogized space" (xxxv). Unfortunately for Clarissa's personal development, the Harlowes revoke their daughter's "felicitous space" as the novel unfolds.

Kenyon notes the importance of “a supportive atmosphere” in feeling a sense of home. In addition, Graham Allan and Graham Crow offer two views of the interconnectedness of home with family. One view argues that “the home *is* family,” and the other argues that home “is home *while the family are* [sic] *in it*. When the family are out of it it is only a house” (2). Each of these views supports the importance of family toward a sense of home. Clarissa’s home is no different, for within Clarissa’s childhood home, she felt all the requirements of home. Within her “social home,” Clarissa felt the warmth of her extended family and her familial history. She was the favorite of her mother and father, aunts, uncles, cousins and especially her grandfather.

While the reader is never privy to such preferential treatment firsthand, Richardson clearly implies that the Harlowes have a close-knit unit with their “Clary” by emphasizing Clarissa’s disordered state throughout the novel’s opening. Upon Clarissa’s return from visiting with Anna Howe, Clarissa enters the Harlowe home as normal—expecting warmth in her family’s greetings and expostulations by a family who had missed their dear one. Clarissa instead encounters a group of individuals she hardly recognizes, an aberration of what she knew as the Harlowe family:

I was struck all of a heap as soon as I entered, to see a solemnity which I had been so little used to on the like occasion in the countenance of every dear relation. They all kept their seats. I ran to my Father, and kneeled: then to my Mother: and met from both a cold salute: from my Father a blessing but half-pronounced: my Mother indeed called me Child; but embraced me not with her usual indulgent ardour. (1:38-39)

Katharine Kittredge blames Clarissa's gender for her family's treatment of her: "Unfortunately for Clarissa, she was born in a female body, and thus must adhere to the rules for heroines within her society; she is chastely innocent of sexual matters, obedient to the men who dominate her, and strives to control her emotions. Her adherence to the rules of feminine behavior not only identify her as truly feminine, but also guarantee her position within society" (23). Margaret Anne Doody, too, explains this sudden shift in treatment: "Richardson exhibits the flaws of the rising middle class in the Harlowes' greedy and limited behavior. The Harlowes exhibit every negative attribute of Whiggism—contempt and envy of those above them, contempt and suspicion of the poor, a desire to hoard wealth and to use all human relationships as means to a material end" ("Samuel Richardson" 106). The "material end" places Clarissa as a "voucher" in the marriage exchange, as Ruth Perry labels it. The underlying motive behind the Harlowes' actions is "what Solmes has offered to give the Harlowe family in the marriage settlements if there are no children: his considerable property, contiguous to the Harlowe estate" (Perry 157). The transformation of Clarissa's home space is a matter of gender, politics and greed combined. Clarissa is no longer darling little "Clary," loved unconditionally by her parents. Instead, she has become a young woman of marrying age and therefore marketable, a treasure, an object to be bartered by her greedy parents, a "means to material end."

Making up Clarissa's "personal home" is Clarissa's family, with her father, especially, proving to be an interesting character for scholarly analysis. One would expect Richardson to devote much attention to developing the traditional head of the family, Mr. Harlowe. Instead, Mr. Harlowe lacks a physical presence, his appearances "brief" and

“colorless” (Eaves and Kimpel (251). The exertion of his voice becomes Mr. Harlowe’s dominating trait, representing paternal authority: “his ‘big voice,’ his ‘strong voice,’ his ‘hard voice’—the Voice of Authority which insists on being obeyed” (Stuber 560). Arabella tells *of* her father’s voice as she writes to her sister: “My Father, in the first agitations of his mind, on discovering your wicked, your shameful Elopement, imprecated, on his knees, a fearful Curse upon you ‘[...] that you may meet your punishment, both *here* and *hereafter*, by means of the very wretch, in whom you have chosen to place your wicked confidence” (3:258). Florian Stuber argues: “Mr. Harlowe’s anger is in itself merely an affect generated by Clarissa’s challenge to a principle he holds most dear, the principle of parental, or more particularly, paternal authority” (559). Howard D. Weinbrot counters Stuber’s argument of excessive paternal authority as the focus of our attention, instead, deeming that Mr. Harlowe’s presence is a deficiency of parental authority. “[...P]atriarchy,” he writes:

[...] is neither efficient nor powerful enough—James, Jr., replaces and symbolically slays his father as well as his uncles. Had there been proper patriarchy, James and his culpable sister would have been spanked and sent to bed without dinner. Instead, family name becomes the guiding force; James becomes the bearer of the Harlowe standard and ensures that the family destroys itself while seeking to create itself. (289)

I argue, however, that while James’s actions and dialogue overpower that of his father as Clarissa relates them in her letters, it is Mr. Harlowe’s will for money and social elevation that motivates James’s actions. He does not “symbolically slay his father” but rather takes up his father’s voice in kind, motivated by the same greed—as well as an

additional trait of jealousy over his sister's property ownership. Mr. Harlowe is not without voice as Stuber would argue but rather has others who speak on his behalf, strengthening his will by proxy.

I further argue that Mr. Harlowe's will is based on his own vision of home especially as it conflicts with his daughter's. Mr. Harlowe wishes to build a monument, a testament to his wealth and social status as opposed to Clarissa's idea of home as a place of emotional "security," "support," and "freedom." While Mr. Harlowe's home construction consists of a "social home" complete with "a living group of significant others, a supportive atmosphere where social and emotional needs [are] met," meeting his "social...needs" takes precedence over his family's "emotional needs." Furthermore, Mr. Harlowe possesses "a sense of independence and freedom" within his "social home." His is a financial independence, however, and that demands complete obedience, denying Clarissa any "independence and freedom of her own." Finally, his idea of "safety" in his "physical home" is to be financially elevated and the peace of mind of having things done his way, for his pleasures alone. Through Mr. Harlowe's abuse of parental authority, exertion of will, and distorted version of home, Richardson emphasizes the flaws within the classes in their attempts to better themselves often at the loss of family.

Clarissa's treatment by her family within her home space was not uncommon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, certain domestic spaces were used as a tool for training the working class and children to be proper citizens. Lawrence J. Taylor elaborates on this function:

Beyond the domestic, architecture in general was given a conscious role in both 'improving' and controlling—once again, a gendered opposition. In

private spaces, the role of such new rooms as the parlor (like the woman who presided over it) was to influence through the expression of an attractive world of values and decorum into which the initiate would be drawn and transformed. (227)

We witness the parlor as training ground as the Harlowes attempt to manipulate Clarissa into her role as dutiful and submissive daughter. Furthermore, they fight to make her submissive and agreeable to their choice of husband for her. Yet their choice of Mr. Solmes as husband for Clarissa has nothing to do with Christian values or proper social behavior or even love. The Harlowes value Solmes for his money alone: “[*R*]ich Solmes you know they call him” (1:33). One quality, the wealth he will bring to the family, they admire in him. Clarissa’s family, wholly opposed to a match between their daughter and the rake Lovelace, decides on the aforementioned parlor as the locale to approach their daughter, exerting their power over her like they had never done before. Here, Clarissa feels the change, the reduction in the spiritual size of her home space. The Harlowes no longer treat Clarissa as a person but as a marketable object with which they can make money and raise their status in society. Weinbrot goes so far as to equate the Harlowes’ home to that of the house to which Lovelace carries Clarissa: “She has been prostituted by her family, whose home is all too like the bordello to which Lovelace escorts her” (277). The parlor seems to shrink around her as her family asserts their ever-widening control—No Lovelace, Yes Solmes, No choice! No longer is the parlor, or the wider space of the home, a vast space of familial affection and devotion but a constricted space of parental authority and complete submission.



Clarissa knows what she wants from her home and continually fights to uphold the metaphorical boundaries of her personal space. She begs her parents not to force her into a marriage with a man she deems wrong for her. She writes: “I then offered to live single; never to marry at all [...]” (1:107). Orest Ranum argues: “European societies of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries differed markedly from one another, yet when compared to contemporary society they seem alike in at least one respect: individual development was hindered by family, communal, civic, and village ties” (207). The Harlowes “hinder” their daughter’s development in forcing her to marry one beneath their daughter both in mind and spirit. The Harlowes expect Clarissa’s full acquiescence, what Dianne Osland terms “complaisance,” to their wishes, and they suspect that if their daughter does not want to marry Solmes, then she must have some ulterior motive for refusing (the Harlowes presume Clarissa desires Lovelace). According to Osland: “Using complaisance to gain influence, however, is never really an option in the sense of being a tactic Clarissa can consciously employ, since her complaisance should never have her own interests at heart. She can *have* influence, but she cannot legitimately *use* it” (500).

Regardless of all the reductions with which Clarissa’s family attempts to “hinder” her development into anything except a dutiful daughter and obedient wife, Clarissa continually proves herself to be strong in her desire to define and develop her own sense of self, to construct the space around her so that she can feel at home. Clarissa refuses to be “complaisant” to society’s expectations of her within the educating space of the parlor as she refuses to be “complaisant” to her family’s commands for her to marry Mr. Solmes.

At first, Clarissa thinks little of her ability to think and act for herself. She is so bewildered by her family's sudden change in their treatment of her that she writes: "They have begun so cruelly with me, that I have not spirit enough to assert my own Negative" (1:44). Yet, Clarissa finds inner-strength and manages to fight back, "assert [her] own Negative." One morning at breakfast, Mr. Solmes attempts to seat himself next to Clarissa. Clarissa retaliates by removing the seat next to hers to a distance, an effort to prevent him from sitting within her personal space. This, however, does not stop the stubborn Mr. Solmes, for he then places the chair next to hers. Clarissa rises and takes another seat. Later, she writes of her own actions: "I own I had too little command of myself [...] I did it involuntarily, I think. I could not help it.—I knew not what I did" (1:93). Mary Poovey explains Clarissa's actions as a necessary response to:

Solmes's stupidity, her mother's anger, [and] Arabella's dismay, [which] bear in upon Clarissa and force the frantic pleas that contradict duty. The walk, the glances, the gestures, render the scene vivid and manifest the necessity of Clarissa's disobedience. Immersed firmly in the sordid details of economic motivation and physical repulsiveness, Clarissa must revolt and so spring the trap around her. (302)

Poovey's explanation while offering the causes of Clarissa's response, elides the biological mechanisms at work that drive Clarissa to act with little thought. In Clarissa, Richardson captures a typical human stress response to perceived threat, fight or flight. Her body knows what her conscious mind may not or has not enough time to think rationally about, that she must act, and act fast, in order to survive. Mr. Solmes is the danger against whom she must protect herself. During breakfast, Clarissa has the comfort

(however small) of having her family within close proximity. Their presence offers some semblance of safety, gives her an increased strength, and therefore, the ability to fight Solmes in her way—by not allowing him access to her self, her space and, most importantly, to her body. Therefore, upon breakfast's end, when her family makes their excuses one by one (a ruse to leave Clarissa alone with Mr. Solmes), her fight or flight responses kick in. Her security system—the Harlowes—having abandoned her, Clarissa feels the necessity of fleeing Solmes's presence. Therefore, making her own excuses, she readily leaves Solmes as he continues his attempts to gain her attention (1:94).

Doody argues that one of the novel's messages is: "The cultural enslavement of women poisons familial and social life" ("Samuel Richardson" 110). Preventing Clarissa from owning her own space comes to "poison" not just Clarissa but her family as well. Recall the argument from Allan and Crow regarding the home: "When the family are out of it it is only a house" (2). Such a statement need not refer only to the occupation of the family in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense. The Harlowes' control expands making itself felt as an ever increasing burden on Clarissa's spiritual home space. Doody describes the Harlowes' control in terms of constricting space, an inability to breathe and an inability for things to grow as physical doors, walls, and partitions are placed up around Clarissa representing the mental barriers that separate her from her family emotionally (*A Natural Passion* 203). The spirit of family is not a permanent fixture within Clarissa's personal space and time, for beginning March 4<sup>th</sup>, less than two weeks since Clarissa's unwelcome return from visiting Anna, Clarissa loses her family one by one. First her father as her mother refers to him in a formal sense: "Mr. Harlowe talks of dining out today[...]." Clarissa is flustered by her mother's obvious use of semantics in

separating her daughter from the man formerly known as father. She thinks to herself: “Mr. Harlowe!—Not my Father!—Have I not then a Father!” (1:121). Later, her mother, too, pulls herself from the intimate role of mother exclaiming: “I will no more seek *you*, nor *to you*” (1:140). Clarissa’s mother fails to offer her daughter a “supportive atmosphere” typical of the mother figure. As Katharine M. Rogers writes:

The total submissiveness of Clarissa’s mother, especially in view of her superior sensitivity and judgment, is presented as a sign of weakness rather than virtue, and is shown to be self-defeating: instead of influencing through meek expostulations (as wives were exhorted to do), she fails to influence at all; and she does not even buy domestic peace. Her compliance is also immoral, for in obeying her husband she fails in her duty to her daughter. (258)

Furthermore, Clarissa is refused correspondence with her family. Her mother writes: “Write not another Letter to me. I can do nothing for you” (1:162); her father: “Write no more to me, till you can distinguish better” (1:164); and Uncle Antony: “You had better not write to us, or to any of us” (1:216). Those who wish to communicate with Clarissa, on the other hand, are refused by the Harlowes as with her cousin Dolly Hervey: “The dear girl longs to see me, she tells me: But is forbidden till she see me as Mrs. Solmes” (1:288). Clarissa feels her home space reduced and her family removed. “Is it not a sad thing,” writes Clarissa, “beloved as I thought myself so lately by every one, that now I have not one person in the world to plead for me, to stand by me, or who would afford me refuge, were I to be under the necessity of seeking for it?” (2:37-38). Doody writes: “In creating the effect of walls closing in more and more oppressively around the victim,

[Richardson] forces the reader to participate in the sense of nightmarish claustrophobia which his heroine endures” (*A Natural Passion* 214). Indeed, the space that had once been so blissful and “supportive,” becomes claustrophobic, anti-home space. Clarissa writes to Anna of the sudden change to her familial circumstances:

We have been till within these few weeks, every one of us, too happy. No crosses, no vexations, but what we gave ourselves from the *pamper'dness*, as I may call it, of our own wills. Surrounded by our heaps and stores, hoarded up as fast as acquired, we have seemed to think ourselves out of the reach of the bolts of adverse fate. I was the pride of all my friends, proud *myself* of *their* pride, and glorying in my standing. (2:245)

If, indeed, family *is* home, then the detachment of Clarissa from both her family and the “pride” of a “supportive atmosphere” that should come with being a part of that family deprive her of any sense of a “social home.”

The Harlowes further deny Clarissa “a safe haven” within her “physical home” when they begin to physically abuse her. Clarissa undergoes this trauma at the hands of her siblings, leaving her to experience a loss of safety in the one space where she should feel secure. Bella snaps Clarissa on the neck. Clarissa accuses her sister of abuse to which Bella responds: “Do you call this beating you? Only tapping your shoulder *thus*[...]” Bella then taps her sister once again, this time, as Clarissa notes, “tapping again more gently—” (2:45). James’s violence is more severe as he seeks to control her entire body by grasping her hand on two occasions. First: “I would have broken from him; but he held my hand too fast. [...] He tossed my hand from him, with a whirl, that pained my very shoulder. I wept, and held my hand to the part” (2:194-95). And second, that same

evening: “What mean you, Sir (struggling vehemently to get away) to detain me thus against my will?” James responds, “You shall not go, Violence,” and proceeds to control her further, “clasping his unbrotherly arms about” his sister (2:228). Where in this house can Clarissa go to feel even a small semblance of bodily safety in her “physical home”?

Finally, experiencing the value of privacy within the familial home is often a tricky thing. Parents’ desire for their children to be safe and act appropriately often leads parents to invade their children’s privacy, reading diaries and checking through drawers. This behavior is often perceived by the parents as a sign of love. I find difficulty in attributing the lengths to which Clarissa’s family goes in controlling their daughter as a sign of love, but rather, I see a family over-exerting their authority. While her siblings treat her body with contempt, her parents deprive her of a physical, private environment. Clarissa’s parents had once cared about her need for her own space within their house. She was given her own library, parlor, chamber, and closet. Within Clarissa’s closet, she was free to engage in her correspondences with Anna and conduct her charitable business. The word *free*, seems relative here, for Clarissa, as a dependent of her parents, would be under their control, allowed to write, not so much free to do so. Indeed, we see them exert this power as they revoke Clarissa’s sense of privacy, commanding the terms by which Clarissa may use her so-called *private* space:

- February 25<sup>th</sup>: “[...] I must not for a month to come, or till licence obtained, correspond with *any*-body out of the house” (1:46).
- March 4<sup>th</sup>: “This moment the keys of every-thing are taken from me” (1:147).
- March 31<sup>st</sup>: Betty, “a spy so diligent,” snoops through Clarissa’s *private* closet: “Betty had for some time been very curious about my wardrobe, whenever I took

out any of my things before her. Observing this, I once, on taking one of my garden-airings, left my keys in the locks; and on my return surprised the creature with her hand upon the keys, as if shutting the door. She was confounded at my sudden coming back. I took no notice: But, on her retiring, I found my clothes were not in the usual order. I doubted not, upon this, that her curiosity was owing to the orders she had received” (2:148).

- March 31<sup>st</sup>: “In came Miss Dolly Hervey: I am sorry, Madam, to be the messenger—But your Mamma insists upon your sending up all the keys of your cabinet, library, and drawers” (2:207).
- April 5<sup>th</sup>: “I must write as I have opportunity; making use of my concealed stores: For my pens and ink (all of each that they could find) are taken from me” (2:212).

Clarissa’s private space is stripped to the bare essentials. However, it is important to remember that, for women, the word “private” often did not mean what we think of today. Take for instance an example from 17<sup>th</sup> Century diarist Samuel Pepys and his wife: “Pepys and his wife, imitating a fashion borrowed from wealthy Italians, each had a bedroom and closet” (Ranum 228). This sounds at first as if Mrs. Pepys maintains a sense of privacy, sole ownership of her very own bedroom, her very own closet. However, Ranum follows this with a statement that suggests Mrs. Pepys’ private space is constricted: “Once, in return for a favor, Pepys received a cabinet as a gift. After carefully examining the operation of its secret drawers, he had it installed in his wife’s closet.” As Ranum points out: “This story gives us pause. Did possession of furniture that could be locked really mean that privacy had increased? Pepys’s wife could keep no secrets from prying Samuel’s eyes” (228). As with Pepys to his wife, Clarissa’s parents

maintain their right to control their daughter's spaces; they own the house; they own the daughter; they own the daughter's private space.

Finding it increasingly more difficult to feel at home, Clarissa seeks a way to feel some semblance of home. As I discussed in chapter one, one can build a metaphorical home through writing. Mary Leapor constructed a home for herself and other servants like her through writing her poem, "Crumble-Hall," and in Richardson's novel, Clarissa builds a temporary home through writing. Although her parents restrict her writing, Clarissa proceeds to carry on her correspondences secretly, to write her story, to record her life experiences, to interact with others, and to build her identity. Consistent with epistolary writing as opposed to third person narration, Clarissa offers her thoughts and feelings rather than physical description of her surroundings. As Cynthia Wall notes:

The luxuriant details offered by the novel are not those of physical description—of parlor, house, grove, garden, brothel, or city—but mind, and heart, speculation and interpretation, moral principles and plotting stratagem. As with most late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century narratives, space seems oddly, conspicuously *implied*; we have virtually no sense of color, line, shape, dimension, or decoration, but rather, an awareness of direction, relation, change, stasis—the boundaries of space, so to speak, without its details; the implication of image without image.

("The Spaces of Clarissa" 106)

Christina Marsden Gillis explains this lack of description in her discussion of private space and letter writing: "Richardson looks not outside the walls of the entire structure, but rather inside, into the consciousness. The enclosed room suggests that the privacy



necessary to the letter-writing process, as Clarissa experiences it, belongs to the unseen, internal space where the self may get on with its own business of introspection—and composition of the letter” (20). James How calls this metaphorical space in which Clarissa corresponds, “epistolary space” (2). Offering cyberspace as a contemporary analogy to the space created by the development of the postal service in Richardson’s time, How explains: “Within these spaces people of the period were able—at least for a part of the time—to live and to think, and hence to act” (1). Focusing on Clarissa within “epistolary space,” we find she is able to write a space for herself. Clarissa builds a safer space, experiences greater independence, expresses her self-identity in a metaphorical home, and is able to experience a sense of ownership in, as Gillis describes, “the only place that is truly hers: the private space of the letter” (30), and as I argue, by means of the expansive space of her imagination.

Letter-writing with Anna enables Clarissa to build a home. Robert A. Erickson describes Clarissa’s friendship with Anna as being the most heart-felt in the novel: “[...] it is Anna Howe and Clarissa who have the purest heart relationship as defined in terms of ‘consciousness,’ the capacity for mutually shared feeling, for entering deeply into the distresses of the other” (199). Although this friendship is never visited in physical time only in “epistolary space” and time, it exhibits an extraordinary strength which Martha J. Koehler argues does “not suffer from, but rather [is] enriched by, the distance that necessitates correspondence: Clarissa and Anna assume that the language of familiar letters is an instrument of the dictating heart.” Koehler adds:

[...] although the writer and addressee are, in a sense, psychological reflections of one another and figure as voice embodying the same soul,

each woman's individuality is also recognized in the context of their relationship. Important temperamental differences between the two are preserved, which Anna and Clarissa usually depict as adding interest and variety to their correspondence. (78)

When physical presence is not possible for the two women, letters manage to decrease the space that separates their physical selves, keeping their bond strong and bringing their mental space into close proximity.

Furthermore, Clarissa is able to perfect her imaginative home space, for letter-writing "permits re-writing: in the privacy of the boudoir you can control and recuperate meaning, as you cannot so easily in the irregular give-and-take of personal conversation," as Terry Eagleton argues (44). Koehler echoes Eagleton, arguing that letter-writing

[...] assures a more meaningful, purer connection between the impulses of the soul and language, between sender and receiver. The very time that elapses in the deliberation and preparation [creates] a purified medium for perfecting [Anna and Clarissa's] relationship. That perfection can be expressed only in paradoxes, as a relation wholly 'pure' yet entirely 'ardent.' (85).

Friendship is essential to developing one's identity and giving one the strength to create a sense of home for herself. Clarissa's friendship is reminiscent of the support Mary Leapor experienced through her friendship with Bridget Freemantle—the support that gave Leapor the strength and confidence to write, thereby developing a sense of home. Through friendship, Clarissa, too, is able to experience Kenyon's "supportive atmosphere" in the "pure" space of letter-writing by staying in contact with those of her

friends—most notably Anna Howe—who have not abandoned her at the instruction of the Harlowe authority.

Further addressing the importance of metaphorical space, How argues: “[...] such imaginations often engender action and hence real change” (17). Clarissa does act through her letters. She stays in contact with the forbidden Lovelace, carries out her plan of escape from the Harlowe home and the dreaded Solmes, and much later carries out her plans of escape from the brothel and the dreaded Lovelace. But when her parents invade the privacy of her closet, Clarissa seeks out another part of the Harlowe home, the garden, to continue her letter writing and exchanging of letters in a “safe” environment.

Janet Butler examines the symbolic nature of the garden which becomes Clarissa’s expansive space out of reach of her family, her “safe haven.” Of interest to Butler’s argument is the fact that the garden is “the one setting that for centuries has functioned as the symbol of voluntary disobedience” as well as the “quintessential symbol of temptation, disobedience, and death” (528 and 530). Butler expounds on this symbol, claiming that the symbolic meaning of the garden leaves the reader to see Clarissa exerting her authority, acting as willing participant in Lovelace’s act of carrying her away from the Harlowe household (528). At first glance, the wall that encloses the Harlowe home offers a deprivation of Clarissa’s open space. As with Clarissa, nature is effectively closed in/out. Richardson contrasts this enclosure with Sir Charles Grandison’s “spacious house,” to use Lady Grandison’s words (she mentions three times). “The gardens and lawn seem from the windows of this spacious house to be as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance,” writes Lady Grandison (7:44). While not “spacious,” neither is Clarissa’s garden completely

enclosed. In her garden, one finds loose bricks in the garden wall which become the means for Clarissa to carry on her correspondence. These imperfections in her spatial enclosure, then, become a fresh opening to her physical, spiritual, and metaphoric space.

Regardless of Clarissa's ability to carry out her correspondence, her "physical home" continues to be threatened. The stress of unwanted visits with Mr. Solmes, emotional separation from her entire family and friends, physical abuse by her brother and sister, and the removal of her private space are severe emotional trauma affecting Clarissa's body in unhealthy ways. The Harlowes' treatment completely strips her of the security and comfort she should find in her "physical home." In addition to the fight or flight response referred to earlier, she records other physical reactions, common symptoms found in the abused. First, Clarissa's body reacts physically to the stresses: "Indeed, I tremble at the prospect before me" (1:44). This trembling leads to other bodily ailments over time, as on another occasion, Clarissa tells her parents: "I said, I was not well: That the very apprehensions of these trials were already insupportable to me; and would increase upon me, as the time approached; and I was afraid I should be extremely ill" (2:273). Further, in the following passage, we witness Clarissa's inability to think straight, as she desperately attempts to block out her un-Christian-like desire to commit suicide: "I don't know what to do, not I!—God forgive me, but I am very impatient!—I wish—but I don't know what to wish, without a sin!—Yet I wish it would please God to take me to his mercy!—I can meet with none here!—What a world is this!" (2:38). The number of dashes utilized in this passage suggest the severe fragmentation of Clarissa's thoughts, her inability to complete a sentence, her thoughts traveling in multiple directions. Her stress levels are so high that she has difficulty sleeping: "Hardly a wink

have I slept” (2:181), and when Clarissa does sleep: “I [...] awakened not till past Six, and then in great terror, from a dream, which has made such an impression upon me [...]” (2:264). Clarissa is unable to function. She finds herself in a nightmare both as she sleeps and when she awakes. In addition, Lovelace’s manipulations of the Harlowe family and their servants, leaves Clarissa unable to think rationally. She moves according to her emotions, solely fear by this time, as she, like the hunted animal, takes flight, through the symbolic garden gate. Clarissa’s survival instincts take control, as she “voluntarily unbolted the door and stepped out” (Butler 534). She runs from the Harlowe house and Harlowe control to what she perceives as the possibility for safety, Lovelace’s housing and Lovelace’s control. But will she find a home away from home?

### ***Boarding House or Brothel?***

#### ***Clarissa’s London Residence***

In contemporary society, many young adults have difficulty transitioning from the comfort and support of their familial home to a new home away from home. Young men and women living away from home while they attend college, for instance, take up a transitional space between past familial home with parents and siblings and their future home with spouse and children. Although Clarissa is no college student, she experiences this transitional space being away from home for the first time. In her dwelling with Lovelace, she resides in a purgatory of sorts, caught between the Harlowe home and her future home. In this new space, nostalgic memories of belonging associated with the Harlowe home plague her in her exiled condition, necessitating the construction of her future home. In order to arrive at this future home, however, Clarissa encounters mental

and physical abuse, and extreme trauma, always struggling against forces seeking to deprive her of a sense of home.

Joan Higgins's "Homes and Institutions" explores people who "live in prisons, hostels, boarding houses," etc., noting that they live in these conditions "sometimes out of choice but often out of necessity" (159). Although Clarissa believes she leaves the Harlowe house out of necessity and by her own choice, actually Lovelace had arranged the conditions of her necessary departure. He inflicts terror on Clarissa, makes her think she has no choice but to run before her family catches her. Once away from home and securely in Mrs. Sinclair's boarding house, Clarissa's ultimate feelings parallel the institutionalized as Higgins outlines:

For many people removed from their own homes there is a feeling of having lost a sense of belonging and a sense of place. Home is associated with familiarity, both in a physical and an emotional sense. It involves a set of affective relationships, currently or previously, based upon kinship and friendship. It also re-inforces an individual's sense of identity, partly through memories and associations with the past. (171)

Clarissa's loss of a sense of belonging, a value found within the "social home," manifests itself further than that which she suffers through her exile from her family. Clarissa's choices separate her from the residents of the boarding house—in part. However, Lovelace's many contrivances with Mrs. Sinclair and her "nieces" keep Clarissa from developing new friendships and maintaining old ones. Indeed, the boarding house in London can never be a home for Clarissa. Lovelace has seen to it that the seedy truth behind this dwelling and its residents is kept from Clarissa. Lovelace has complete

control over the inhabitants of the house, including Clarissa. Despite Clarissa's attempts to exert her own personal choices, Lovelace maintains the power over Clarissa's "physical" and "social home" space.

Immediately, Clarissa attempts to set boundaries between her self and the women of the boarding house: "Pray, Mr. Lovelace, inform them of all my particularities. If they are obliging, they will allow for them. I come not hither to make new acquaintance" (3:290). Clarissa has no desire to construct a "social home" out of this place. She views this house as a temporary space as she attempts reconciliation with her parents. However, even if Clarissa did wish to foster friendships to make this place more comfortable, she senses there is something odd about Lovelace's supposed relations: "But with these two Nieces of the Widow, I never can be intimate—I don't know why" (3:300). Friendship, like love, is mostly instinctual, a matter of chemistry. Being a woman of high morals and Christian virtue, Clarissa senses the absence of such in others. Although Lovelace speaks of the women's goodness, to Clarissa they do not appear as such. She writes: "[...] instantly, upon her making the request, it came into my thought, that I was in a manner a stranger to every-body in the house: Not much as a servant I could call my own, or of whom I had any great opinion" (3:338). Sadly for Clarissa, this boarding house lacks "familiarity" as Higgins suggests it, "both in a physical and an emotional sense."

Although Lovelace offers Clarissa a servant, Dorcas will never be like Clarissa's own servant, confidant, and friend, Hannah. Clarissa never fully trusts Dorcas, although she feigns such at times in order to affect her escape attempts. Dorcas, as with everyone else residing in and/or visiting the boarding house, is no more than a device in Lovelace's many plots. Dorcas remains faithful to Lovelace thereby canceling out any possibility of

friendship between herself and Clarissa. As long as Clarissa resides in a house provided for her by Lovelace, she will never feel a full sense of belonging. Once Clarissa is able to choose her own dwelling *and* keep Lovelace away, she will be able to sit back and enjoy the comforts of a “social home.”

While a “supportive atmosphere” is essential to a “social home,” part of being supportive is to respect another’s need for privacy. When Clarissa lives at home, she has the privacy of her closet where she was once free to write and read as she pleases. Once she becomes the object of her family’s strive for upward social mobility, however, her family evokes their right to search her closet, and she loses privacy. Once in London, Clarissa is under the mistaken notion that she has privacy within her closet. Although she admits that “Lovelace is certainly a deep and dangerous man; and it is therefore but prudence to be watchful, and to be provided against the worst,” she believes, indeed she is “certain [...her] Letters are safe” (4:151). Recall, however, Samuel Pepys and his wife’s *private* furnishings with *secret* compartments. Clarissa will find no privacy within this house of ill-repute so long as Lovelace contrives to gain complete and total control over all. As Pepys has access to the *secret* compartments, so has Lovelace a “master-key which will open every lock in [Clarissa’s] chest [...]” Furthermore, Lovelace instructs Dorcas to sift through Clarissa’s belongings when she is able, taking “care, when she searches for papers, before she removes any-thing, to observe how it lies, that she may replace all to a hair” (4:45). Lovelace muses on the terror he will instill on Clarissa, “I shall never rest till I have discovered in the first place, where the dear creature puts her Letters” (4:46). Indeed, as Lovelace later tells Belford,



[...] while we were at the Play, Dorcas, who had her orders, and a key to her Lady's chamber, as well as a master-key to her drawers and mahogany chest, closet-key and all, found means to come at some of Miss Howe's last-written letters. [...]S]he assembled three ready writers of the *non-apparents*; and *Sally*, and *she*, and *they* employed themselves with the utmost diligence [...in copying the letters for Lovelace]. (4:173)

Copying Clarissa's letters is not enough to fulfill Lovelace's desire for complete control. In order for him to have his way with her—mind, body, and soul— he also steals Anna's letters to Clarissa, forges his own letters to Clarissa written in Anna's hand, and finally resorts to ceasing all correspondence between Anna and Clarissa. Privacy, Clarissa never knows while under Lovelace's control.

Lovelace's desire to control Clarissa is suggestive of the imbalance of power focused upon in anthropological and feminist studies. Scholars in both fields note that gender plays a large role in who feels at home, who has freedom to come and go and do as *he* pleases, and who (read woman) becomes like a prisoner, trapped, afraid, and dependent on others. Tony Chapman and Jenny Hockey's arguments suggest that domestic safety is often an illusion for women:

Gender also impacts upon another core characteristic of the ideal home—its safety.... The notion that home, in an ideal sense, is a place of safety is shown to be highly gendered. It binds women of all ages into the home and fosters their dependence upon male relatives; adolescent girls, women wishing to separate from a male partner and older single women are often

advised, either implicitly or explicitly, of the special dangers that face them in public space.... (11)

Laura Goldsack's "A Haven in a Heartless World?" echoes this examination of gendered space, as she reveals the difficulty that lies within the idea of home security when the dangers of the outside world force women into the private sphere of the home where they, in turn, are forced to rely on the protection of often dangerous men:

While much of the sociological literature on home emphasizes characteristics of harmony and personal control over their environment, there is now much evidence to demonstrate that the home is a gendered environment where women's options can be seriously restricted. These constraints can include social isolation..., economic dependence...and inequalities in the exercise of domestic labour...Similarly, in the case of women who are abused by men whom they know, the home is a place over which they have little control. (126)

Goldsack adds: "This fear of public abuse can lead to a loss and restriction of public participation and ironically, a greater dependency on those men they know who may be the greatest source of danger" (132). Lovelace embodies the imbalance of power in the gendered home space. He uses rationalizations of the dangers women *should* fear outside of the so-called *safety* of the home to his advantage (as he did with effecting Clarissa's escape from the Harlowes). Lovelace seeks to control Clarissa's movements by making her afraid to leave the house, afraid to wander outside without Lovelace or a male servant. His various plots revolve around Clarissa's fear that her brother will find her and

force her to return to the Harlowe home and, especially, to a future as Mrs. Solmes. Upon Clarissa's announcing that she is going to church one morning, Lovelace exclaims:

To Church! [...] Who could have dreamt of such a whim as this?—  
Without notice, without questions! Her cloths not come! No leave asked!  
[...S]he don't consider, if she go to Church, I must go too!—Yet not to ask  
for my company!" He then adds his version of the truth regarding his  
depriving Clarissa of free movement outside the house: "Her brother and  
Singleton ready to snap her up, as far as she knows! (3:317)

James has certainly abandoned his task by this time, yet, Lovelace has her believing otherwise. "I had, by Dorcas, represented her danger from Singleton [James's man in the search for Clarissa], in order to dissuade her from going at all [to church...]" (4:175). As far as Clarissa knows, information Lovelace supplies her with, James is still a threat to her safety, one of Chapman and Hockey's "special dangers", and she must rely on Lovelace to protect her; she is bound to him and to the physical confines of the boarding house.

For many women in the home space, privacy, as Goldsack notes, comes at a price of safety: "...to be private can signify deprivation as well as advantage. For women in the home, privacy can mean confinement, captivity and isolation" (121). Clarissa feels that her correspondence is safe in her closet and that she is safe behind locked and double-locked doors, but as with so many victims of domestic abuse, Clarissa learns a difficult lesson about privacy and safety. Clarissa is not physically safe within the boundaries of the boarding house. When Clarissa arrives, she immediately "[...] inspected the doors, the windows, the wainscot, the dark closet as well as the light one; and finding very good

fastenings to the door, and to all the windows, I again had recourse to my pen” (3:296). Despite this initial security check and the comfort and safety she imagines she possesses, Clarissa is not safe. Lovelace, himself, is the greatest threat to Clarissa’s safety. Indeed, Lovelace is obsessed with the power he maintains over Clarissa’s movements and Clarissa herself: “Oh no! She is in the next apartment!—Securely mine!—Mine for ever!” (3:4); “And is she not IN MY POWER?” (3:31); and “I do *not* intend to let this matchless creature slide through my fingers” (4:124).

Lovelace is neither satisfied with mere control of Clarissa’s every movement, nor with knowing Clarissa’s most intimate thoughts and feelings. He has his sights set on Clarissa’s body to satisfy his appetite. Lovelace starts small, each time further invading Clarissa’s personal boundaries. On May 20<sup>th</sup> he writes: “I kissed her charming hand. [...] *Fifty*-times kissed her hand, I believe.—Once her cheek, intending her lip, but so rapturously, that she could not help seeming angry” (4:145). Lovelace sees his actions and Clarissa’s response as rapture and feigned anger respectively. He manipulates the truth of the events into a light more favorable to his desires, effectually excusing his depraved behavior. The following day, Lovelace writes to Belford of his physical treatment of Clarissa—treatment bordering on physical abuse: “Pray, Mr. Lovelace, do not grasp my hands so hard (endeavouring to withdraw them). Pray let me go.—[...] Pray be not violent—[...] And I clasped one arm about her, holding one hand in my other” (4:193). Lovelace finds it more and more difficult to keep his hands off her, so much so that despite her pleas to let her go, he reads play in their interaction. The next day: “And a third time I would have taken her repulsing hand” (4:207). Clarissa’s hand is “repulsing” yet this does not deter Lovelace. Two days later he again takes freedoms with Clarissa’s

body, depriving her of any right to her own body: “I kissed her unrepulsing hand no less than five times during this conversation” (4:235). Four days later, Lovelace’s minor allowances with Clarissa’s hand take a more serious turn: “My dearest life, folding my arms about her [...]” (4:286). “And then, clasping my arms about her, I gave her averted cheek (her charming Lip designed) a fervent kiss” (4:302-3). Lovelace restrains Clarissa’s body and engulfs her personal boundaries into that of his own. Clarissa’s personal space is momentarily stripped away as Lovelace’s personal space takes precedence, widens itself. Six days after Lovelace takes these freedoms, he begins to show actions resembling those of a rapist:

My cheek reclined on her shoulder—kissing her hands by turns. Rather bashfully than angrily reluctant, her hands sought to be withdrawn; her shoulder avoiding my reclined cheek [...]. I then gave her struggling hands liberty. I put one arm round her waist: I imprinted a kiss on her sweet lips, [...] and then, with my other hand, drew aside the handkerchief that concealed the Beauty of beauties, and pressed with my burning lips the charming breast that ever my ravished eyes beheld. [...] She struggled out of my encircling arms with indignation. I detained her reluctant hand.

Let me go, said she. (4:332-33)

For every movement Lovelace makes against Clarissa, she counters with repulsion, withdrawing her hands, her shoulder “avoiding” his cheek. Lovelace goes too far with his actions, however, when he aims to touch Clarissa’s breasts. Clarissa’s words, “Let me go,” are chilling. It is only a matter of time before Lovelace grows weary of Clarissa’s

pulling away—what he deems playing coy—and becomes the rapist he increasingly appears to be.

Lovelace's restrictions on Clarissa's free movement from the house and various freedoms taken with her hands, cheeks, and breasts (prior to the rape) cause Clarissa to suffer "fits" and "stronger fits" (3:276), "a fit of passionate despair" (4:197-98), excessive trembling (4:203), and sheer exhaustion and despondency as seen through Lovelace's eyes: "I looked thro' the key-hole at my going by her door, and saw her on her knees, at her bed's feet, her head and bosom on the bed, her arms extended [...] and in an agony she seemed to be, sobbing, as I heard at that distance, as if her heart would break" (5:12) and "I raised her: But down she sunk, as if quite disjointed; her limbs failing her" (5:286). One would think that Clarissa would see the rape as the inevitable conclusion to Lovelace's increasing freedoms. However, as Kittredge makes clear: "The many pages leading up to the rape have shown us that Clarissa's extremely feminine behavior [...] actually makes her more vulnerable to Lovelace's machinations because she is unable to comprehend the wickedness of his intentions or to take direct action to thwart him" (23-24). Therefore, following the rape on June 12<sup>th</sup>, we witness Clarissa's complete mental breakdown. Her inability to know such behavior combined with the various mental and physical terrors Lovelace and his cohorts inflicted on her prior to the rape leave her emotionally unstable, feeling defeated. Three days after the rape, Lovelace records the change in Clarissa's mental faculties:

[...] she is quite stupefied [...] insensibility (shall I call it?) as she has been in ever since Tuesday morning. [...] Excess of grief, excess of terror, has made a person's hair stand on end, and even [...] changed the colour

of it. But that it should stupefy, as to make a person, at times, insensible to those imaginary wrongs [...] is very surprising! [...] For so much has grief stupefied her, that she is at present as destitute of will, as she always seemed to be of desire. (5:297-98)

Clarissa does not remain “stupefied,” for she enters a manic state, unable to think straight. Lovelace describes her as “raving mad” fearing “that her intellects are irreparably hurt” (5:301). Clarissa’s comfort becomes difficult; when she sits down to write, she is unable to focus, “what she writes she tears, and throws the paper in fragments under the table” (5:302). This act symbolizes the complete loss of trust Clarissa has experienced in the boarding house. She now knows there is no such thing as personal privacy for her body and mind, and her papers must be ripped to shreds to avoid invasive perusing by unwelcome eyes. Some of her letters are saved, however, and we witness the change in Clarissa’s state of mind:

I sat down to say a great deal—My heart was full—I did not know what to say first—And thought, and grief, and confusion, and (Oh my poor head!) I cannot tell what—And thought, and grief, and confusion, came crowding so thick upon me; *one* would be first, *another* would be first, *all* would be first; so I can write nothing at all—Only that, whatever they have done to me, I cannot tell; but I am no longer what I was in any one thing. (5:303)

The repetition of “thought, and grief, and confusion” together with the parenthesis underline Clarissa’s extreme duress. Furthermore, Clarissa’s stream of consciousness is jagged as we witness her difficulty in tracking down her purpose for writing Lovelace, “What would I say!—I forget what I was going to say” (5:310) and “But this is nothing to

what I wanted to say. Now I have it! I have lost it again— [...] let me hurry off my thoughts, lest I lose them again—Here I am sensible—And yet I am hardly sensible neither—But I know my head is not as it should be, for all that” (5:311). Once again, the hyphens characterize her fragmented thoughts. Her words, “lost” and “lose” and “sensible” but “hardly sensible” enforce the fact that Clarissa suffers severe loss to her mental faculties. She is, at this time, no longer the clear-headed, determined, independent fighter she once was. The important thing to look at, however, is what Gillis notes, that “though raped and in one sense broken, Clarissa still writes. [...]” (53). Writing kept Clarissa sane at the Harlowes’ home; a cathartic outlet, writing home helps Clarissa at the brothel as well.

Writing sustains existence and affirms existence; these papers are Clarissa, indicating that though the body has been invaded, the moral core has not been altered. Clarissa will survive this final test. Lovelace still has both the heroine and her letters confined at this point, but that Clarissa can emerge from this rape/‘death’ and recognize her own role in it is evidence that the inner being still lives. (53)

With the therapeutic aid of pen and paper to help her through, Clarissa’s mind does not remain broken.

Indeed Richardson could not write a Clarissa forever submerged in psychological confusion and conflict, for this ending would offer no consistency of character and would not fulfill Richardson’s intentions of reforming his reader through Clarissa’s example. Richardson needed his heroine to exude a strength of mind, for his goal throughout is clearly that Clarissa maintain her high moral constitution. Richardson even sought out the



opinions of “several judicious friends” in deciding how he might shorten the novel while preserving the integrity of the text and thereby preserving Clarissa’s integrity. These gentlemen concluded that nothing could be removed:

They were of the opinion that in all works of this, and of the dramatic kind, *story* or *amusement* should be considered as little more than the vehicle to the more necessary *instruction*: that many of the scenes would be rendered languid were they to be made less busy: and that the whole would be thereby deprived of that variety which is deemed the soul of a feast, whether mensal or mental. (Richardson, Preface *Clarissa* 36)

Richardson writes Clarissa as exemplifying strength of mind and moral surety, and therefore, her breakdown must be temporary, enforcing the “necessary instruction” Clarissa’s example sets.

While Lovelace had up to the point of the rape controlled Clarissa’s correspondence and manipulated her very life, Richardson writes a female character completely capable of controlling her own destiny and standing up against the injustices of those who possess power. Clarissa deconstructs Lovelace’s narrative in responding to his offer of marriage: “I too much despise the wretch, who could rob himself of his wife’s virtue” (5:325). Mary Patricia Martin exposes Clarissa’s power here, for as Clarissa uses Lovelace’s own language against him: “By treating herself as Lovelace has treated her, granting his rape the power to name her, Clarissa frustrates his plots and dismantles his fictions” (604). As Martin explains, “the difference between Lovelace’s and Clarissa’s stories come sharply into focus” at this point (603). Doody argues that a feminist perspective becomes the way to properly read Clarissa’s story:

To tell a 'rape story' is a political act. A strong rape story is a story about the necessity for revolution. In *Clarissa*, the 'revolution' pointed towards is not a further movement in the Whig or Tory direction so much as the movement for the liberation of woman. So many people feel that they own Clarissa: her father, her family, Lovelace. Lovelace merely utters a commonplace when he assumes that once he has penetrated Clarissa he must own her, and at the very least she will be only too glad to marry him. Clarissa after the rape utters the revolutionary statement: 'The man who has been the villain you have been shall never make me his wife.'

("Samuel Richardson" 108-9)

Martin writes: "Lovelace's rape of Clarissa marks a narrative disjunction that can never be repaired. Once the difference in their stories is unequivocal, the 'right' way to read *Clarissa* becomes clear" (604). While Lovelace still hopes to write the end of their story in marriage, I argue that Clarissa now knows that she can not experience marriage or any other aspect of an earthly home based on societal norms and expectations of women within the home; she knows that she will only experience home in imagining, writing and knowing fully her own death.

Through Clarissa's choice to not marry Lovelace following the rape, to not allow her story to be retold by Lovelace's hoped for happy ending in marriage, Richardson expresses his criticism of a government that censors the lively exchange of ideas but instead narrates its own reality for the preservation of its own power. Richardson, through his fictional heroine, reimagines a "model society," one that is not governed solely by rich men (Doody, "Samuel Richardson" 96). Indeed, Doody argues that Richardson in his

career as printer “never forgot that the poor should have a voice” and engage in the lively exchange of ideas (“Samuel Richardson” 96). In his writing career, Richardson writes a voice for the poor by means of his now physically destitute Clarissa. He gives her power and a voice through writing. Clarissa’s construction of a metaphorical home through writing exposes the injustices in the home ideal as initiated by those who govern and protests these expectations of home, disclaiming them as the model for all.

“...[T]he loss of secrecy through the act of burglary has a fundamental impact on victims’ sense of place” (Chapman 141). Chapman’s statement from “Spoiled Home Identities: The Experience of Burglary” offers sociological insight into the loss that Clarissa suffers due to Lovelace’s theft of her virtue, privacy, sense of self, and sense of belonging. Clarissa’s deepest secrets fall into the hands of Lovelace, for after the rape, he knows her both mind and body. At the brothel, the presence of Clarissa’s belongings, her clothes and a few books are not enough to offer her the complete comfort of a “physical” and “social home.” Therefore, Clarissa escapes Lovelace and this unhealthy house, ready to recover from her traumatic experiences and write the ending of her story, her death, and a home of her own.

### *Of Wombs and Coffins:*

#### *Clarissa’s Final Resting Place*

“A barn, an outhouse, a garret, will be a palace to me, if it will but afford me a refuge from *this man!*—”

--Clarissa Harlowe (5:120).

During her entrapment in the brothel, Clarissa turns to the one constant in her life, religion—foreshadowing her unconventional home space to come. God, she knows, remains as her “supportive atmosphere” even while her immediate family has abandoned her, exiled her. She writes to Lovelace of reconciliation not with her family but with her spiritual father, “All that can afford you the least shadow of favour from me, arises from the hoped-for Reconciliation with my *real* friends, not my *Judas* protector” (5:10).

Lovelace, she knows, does not resemble her ultimate protector regardless of any obligation she may have to him. The comfort God brings her and the knowledge that her afterlife is secure in God’s presence gives her the confidence to face her fate, death, and allows her to gather her confused thoughts in the penning of the following verse:

Death only can be dreadful to the Bad:  
To innocence ‘tis like a bugbear dress’d  
To frighten children. Pull but off the mask,  
And he’ll appear a friend.  
As well as:  
When Honour’s lost, ‘tis a relief to die:  
Death’s but a sure retreat from infamy. (5:308)<sup>3</sup>

Death is foremost on Clarissa’s mind. Life holds no prospects of happiness for her. Only death will finally hand her the “supportive atmosphere,” “safe haven,” and privacy she once desired from an earthly home. Clarissa’s choice of home space, then, comes to her after her successful escape from Lovelace and the house of ill-repute.

Realizing the impermanence and precariousness of any earthly home, Clarissa fully accepts her “finality” and embraces her future home in the afterlife. Clarissa orders

and purchases her coffin to be built to her specifications so as to house her physical body and offer it the comforts of home. Then Clarissa's soul will continue on to a better place, a place like Bachelard's "felicitous space," a "stable and permanent," "familiar and lasting" home never realized on earth but only in a "temporal home" in heaven.

Wall presents Rachel Trickett's arguments about eighteenth-century novels and the absence of descriptive settings. Novels, Wall summarizes, "developed their own idiosyncratic attention to space, highlighting human actions and relationships against a pictorially and spatially vague background that would not interfere with or unnecessarily color the moral movements of the text" ("Narratives of Private Spaces" 216). Indeed, in the earlier sections we see few furnishings. Chairs catch Clarissa in her failing health, fireplaces catch weapons Clarissa threatens to use on her self, Lovelace uses keyholes to subject his prey to his gaze, and barred windows symbolize Clarissa's captivity within the brothel. One background item, however, finally stands out as a strong presence together with the moral vision of the novel—Clarissa's coffin. The coffin represents the spirituality of Clarissa's earthly and after life, but its concrete presence offers a physical structure for Clarissa to finally realize her desire to possess a "physical home."

Clarissa writes wistfully to Anna of her blessings: "You that can rise in a morning, to be blest, and to bless; and go to rest delighted with your own reflections, and in your unbroken, unstarting slumbers, conversing with saints and angels, the former only more pure than yourself, as they have shaken off the incumbrance of body" (6:106). Clarissa seeks, then, first of all, a "secure, private, physical retreat" like that which Anna possesses in her "physical home." Alive, Clarissa's living breathing body remains unable to feel a perfectly "safe haven," for there remains the threat that Lovelace will find her.

She begs Anna to let “no living creature be apprised where I am to be heard of, or directed to,” explaining, “This is a point that concerns me, more than I can express.—In short, my preservation from further evils may depend upon it” (6:111). There is no rest for the wicked, and neither is there rest for his innocent prey. Therefore, for Clarissa’s earthly comfort, the coffin must supply both a place for her body to rest at last and a place where it may be safe from Lovelace. She desires her coffin to be her “physical home.”

In “Clarissa’s Coffin,” Allan Wendt offers an analysis of the novel in terms of “orthodox” beliefs which “held that man’s nature is vile, that his actions—stimulated by physical passion—are bound to lead to sin, and that virtue, if it may be achieved at all, may be achieved only by a repression of ‘natural’ impulses” (482). Wendt argues that Clarissa is the epitome of these “orthodox” beliefs, for she denies physical passions in favor of a reward in the afterlife. Kittredge, on the other hand, acknowledges Clarissa’s creation of “her own independent household...through the ‘furnishing’ of the coffin she refers to as her ‘house’” (24). I argue that this detail of an “independent household” is important to an analysis of Richardson’s heroic character as she struggles to realize a “natural impulse” for woman, the impulse to nest, the freedom to build a place to call home. While building a house may not be a *sexual* passion, Clarissa’s concise construction of her coffin shows passion, indeed. When Clarissa orders her coffin, she is not repressing “‘natural’ impulses” in favor of a reward in the hereafter as Wendt surmises. Instead, she embraces these impulses, takes great pleasure in the construction of something an eighteenth-century woman was not allowed—personal property, a space of her own, a place to call her own, a “home.” In the passionate creation, decoration, and

setting up the physical boundaries of this house, I argue, Richardson affords Clarissa the symbolic and psychological power associated with home.

“And as to what I want the money for—don’t be surprised: — But suppose I want it to purchase a house?” (7:207). Clarissa speaks these words as she prepares to enter a future uncommon for woman of the eighteenth century. Clarissa joins the ranks of the homeowner by purchasing her home. While prospective homeowners of her time would consider how much property is an appropriate representations of their social standing, Clarissa requires a mere six feet seven inches in length, 25 and a quarter inches in width—enough personal space to house her body.<sup>4</sup>

I find Clarissa’s choice fascinating but not bizarre. Homeowners’ visions of comfort and security and the joy and pride they feel in being a homeowner become tarnished by the everyday maintenance of the home. Anna Letitia Barbauld’s poem “Washing Day,” for example, offers an excellent portrayal of the chaotic atmosphere in the home, for the woman of the house and her staff are busy with “all hands employed to wash, to rinse, to wring,/ To fold, and starch, and clap, and iron, and plait” (146). And in chapter one of this dissertation, I explore how Mary Leapor (although not a homeowner) shows a country house complete with spider webs, mice, and “greasy Pavements.”

Furthermore, in fiction, authors often attempt to express their desires for a space of refuge away from the constant difficulties in life. Wall presents Daniel Defoe as a case in point. Defoe’s *Roxana*, she argues, focuses on the unsuccessful attempts made by Roxana to “find and create a psychologically secure structure within predetermined spaces.” Such attempts, she points out, “conclude Defoe’s own imaginative search for a fictional refuge” (“Narratives of Private Spaces” 204-5). Leapor, too, writes her “fictional

refuge,” a metaphorical home space in her writing, much the way Clarissa maintained a “social home” in letter-writing while living with her family. After her escape, Clarissa realizes the precarious nature of home more fully because she has experienced trauma within the home worse than the daily chores of a typical housewife or servant, worse than she had experienced under her family’s restrictions at home. The drawing of her coffin to her specifications, as with Defoe’s writing, will provide her with the “safe haven” of a “physical home.” However, refuge on earth is a fictional, imaginative process. Much of the feeling of home occurs within the confines of the human mind. We imagine ourselves to be secure, to possess privacy, to be at home. Unfortunately, this feeling of home is precarious in nature, susceptible to destruction and penetration by outside forces.

Judith Fryer argues in *Felicitous Space*: “The appeal of childhood recalled is its simplicity. [...] places recalled seem havens that foster creativity” (228). My argument takes Fryer’s further back before childhood even, for in a state of pre-birth, within the womb, one lives in complete warmth, security, and comfort. Thus, Clarissa’s choice of a coffin as her “house” symbolizes the womb in its darkness and tight enclosures as she seeks to be reborn, given a second chance to feel safe and comfortable. Clarissa’s coffin, therefore, represents a refuge, one that can be found only in the afterlife, in spiritual hominess, in the “permanence” of a “temporal home” with God.

“Good Heaven! what a woman is this! She went into the back-shop, and talked with the master of it about half an hour, and came from him with great serenity; he waiting upon her to her chair with a respectful countenance, but full of curiosity and seriousness [...] *As soon as you can, Sir,* were her words to him as she got into the chair” (7:248). Belford’s description of Clarissa shows her embracing her role of architect, the



creative genius behind the structure. In designing her coffin, Clarissa accomplishes more than merely creating a physical object in which to house her body; she expresses herself and offers a representation of her personal identity. Robert Folkenflik argues:

Clarissa's triumph is...represented in terms of space. Her allegorical letter to Lovelace speaks of her reception into her 'Father's house,' the only place where she can now have a liberated existence. The extreme restrictions of her earthly house will give way to a Christian conception of a place of familial comfort. The flight from her earthly father's house is replaced by her assurance that her heavenly father is prepared to receive her. (595)

The "great serenity" with which Clarissa exits the undertaker's shop emphasizes the void this purchase has filled within her heart. She begins to feel complete as she establishes a sense of self, one that will allow her not only peace and control, but at long last, a place to call *her* home.

According to Doody, Richardson offers two expressions of time, Clarissa's time cut short as she dies young but also Clarissa's "short life [being] long enough to prepare for heaven" (*A Natural Passion* 184). Doody focuses on this recurring image of time in Clarissa's death scene—every last moment recorded in letters, her watch giving the exact time of death, and the engravings she chooses for her coffin all expressions of Clarissa as "an heir of eternity" (*A Natural Passion* 186). Indeed, I argue that the decorative engravings Clarissa adds to her coffin while they are symbolic of the eternity of her time after life, also suggest her mental and spiritual growth as she simultaneously satisfies her

earthly need to build a home while moving closer to rejecting earthly matters, moving toward the more satisfying heavenly home in death. First:

The principal device, neatly etched on a plate of white metal, is a crowned Serpent, with its tail in its mouth, forming a ring, the emblem of Eternity: And in the circle made by it is this inscription: CLARISSA HARLOWE [...] (7:311-12).

Doody writes of the futility of personal property in earthly time: “Dictating, as her grandfather attempted to do, that material objects should be ‘kept *to the end of time*’ is an ironic futility” (*A Natural Passion* 186). As evidenced in Clarissa’s choice of the serpent on her coffin, Richardson allows Clarissa to escape “the prison of time,” as Doody further argues. As Belford notes, the serpent with its tail in its mouth, Ouroboros, is symbolic of eternity, yet as per Genesis, in Christian faith the serpent is also symbolic of Satan and sin. Clarissa expresses her identity through the symbolic manifestation of the serpent as a figure of the evil she has known on earth *and* a promise of eternal life beyond death.

Clarissa knows what being a human entails in all of its horrific and violent detail. Placing this symbol of that evil on her coffin shows that Clarissa acknowledges the existence of evil but does not fear it. She possesses the knowledge of and faith in Christ’s sacrifice for the forgiveness of original sin. She is secure in her belief that God forgives her sins and, upon her death, will welcome her cleansed and reborn soul into heaven for all eternity.

Clarissa’s second symbol is “an Hour-glass winged” (7:312). The hourglass at first seems to contradict the “principal device,” for, unlike the serpent as eternity, the hour-glass with its sands running out in time reminds us that life is finite. However, turn the hour-glass upside down and the sands run anew, thereby suggesting the Christian belief in an

afterlife, that life does begin again, an echoing of the serpent as symbolic of eternity. The serpent combined with the hour-glass metaphorically protects Clarissa from earthly matters while allowing the resurrection of her soul into her future home, a new life after death.

Furthermore, the hourglass was also used to symbolize temperance as she was often depicted holding an hourglass.<sup>5</sup> The Harlowes may use Clarissa to fulfill their earthly desires for an elevated social status, Lovelace may use her to fulfill his sexual needs, yet Clarissa alone controls her spiritual destiny. The hourglass, then, acts as a sign announcing the contents of the coffin: Clarissa Harlowe, temperance embodied, never giving in to her parents' temptations to draw her into a loveless marriage or Lovelace's temptations to draw her into a life of sex and deceit, living beyond these earthly difficulties in the eternity of death.

For her final engraving, Clarissa chooses the lily: "Over this text [a biblical passage from Job] is the head of a white Lily snapt short off, and just falling from the stalk" (7:312). Elizabeth R. Napier analyzes the lily as suggestive of a future dialogue between the deceased Clarissa and Lovelace. She argues: "The image of 'the white lily snapped off short [sic],' now indelibly inscribed on her coffin, defies in its permanence Lovelace's motif of the reaper, of the worm or caterpillar, 'preying' on the leaves and buds of flowers" (220). The lily, however, holds deeper symbolic meaning worthy of Clarissa's Christian beliefs and future heavenly home. Various authors and artists have used the lily in conjunction with purity and virginity and especially with the Virgin Mary.<sup>6</sup> Although Clarissa has been robbed of her chastity, like the "white Lily snapt short off," she retains her purity in a spiritual sense. Never having given in to sexual temptation

by choice, she remains spiritually chaste, repenting not any sexual misconduct on her part, but rather, those choices which led her into danger.

Despite the homey decorative touches of her engravings on the exterior of her coffin, Clarissa's coffin as a home space appears claustrophobic. Clarissa had more physical room while living in the brothel with Lovelace. However, his constant spying, snooping, restrictions on her comings and goings, and mentally and physically abusive behavior placed her into a mentally confining, claustrophobic space. Once outside of Lovelace's manipulative physical space, however, Clarissa's body remains in danger. She writes: "I hope I am safe. All the risque I run, is in going out, and returning from morning-prayers. [...] The wicked wretches I have escaped from, will not I hope come to Church to look for me" (6:193). The repetition of the word "hope" rather than a simple statement "I *am* safe" emphasizes the fact that Clarissa's physical space is not safe so long as Lovelace is free to hunt her. Clarissa is not free to move around town or attend church services without disguising her self.

While Clarissa lives and breathes, her body will not be safe from Lovelace. Neither will her body be safe once she is dead. Therefore, in order to complement the construction of her earthly home, Clarissa writes herself a "safe haven," her last will and testament, a text which sets up a security fence around her last remaining piece of property—her body within her "physical home." Recall the image of the lily engraved upon Clarissa's home as an object of purity. Few men in Clarissa's life prove themselves to be Clarissa's moral or spiritual equal. Mr. Solmes's perverse refusal to give up on her, James's jealousy fueling his abusive behavior toward her, Lovelace's theft of Clarissa's physical space and bodily virtue, and even Mr. Harlowe's using Clarissa to advance his

family's fortune and status, motivate Clarissa to write: "[...] it is my desire, that it [my body] shall not be touched but by those of my own Sex" (8:97). With regards to Lovelace, however, she sets up further restrictions: "And I could wish, if it might be avoided without making ill-will between Mr. Lovelace and my Executor, that the former might not be permitted to see my corpse" (8:98). Alas, Clarissa realizes that in earthly matters, full security may not be maintained permanently. Therefore, she writes an additional instruction:

But if, as he is a man very uncontroulable, and as I am Nobody's, he insist upon viewing *her dead*, whom he ONCE before saw in a manner dead, let his gay curiosity be gratified. Let him behold, and triumph over the wretched Remains of one who has been made a victim to his barbarous perfidy: But let some good person, as by my desire, give him a paper, whilst he is viewing the ghastly spectacle, containing those few words only – "Gay, cruel heart! behold here the Remains of the once ruined, yet now happy, Clarissa Harlowe! — See what thou thyself must quickly be; — and REPENT! — " (8:98)

Here we realize that the coffin as a symbol of future peace does not appear at all claustrophobic to Clarissa.<sup>7</sup> If conditions arise where Clarissa's deceased body are plagued by Lovelace's invasive gaze, she makes sure his trespasses will be for the good with Clarissa controlling Lovelace's experience. Her note, she hopes, will teach him moral lessons from beyond the grave about how fleeting are life and matters of the body, and it will remind him of the importance of repenting to gain spiritual peace. Clarissa's

plan of action shows the power her home space allows her, for she carries with and within her the strength of God.

Clarissa's spiritual space effectively reduces Lovelace's space. Her carefully drawn boundaries enable the reversal of the power dichotomy previously in effect between her self and Lovelace. In varying contrivances, Lovelace donned the part of writer, director, and actor within the theatrics of Clarissa's existence. He set up the scenery, disguising the brothel as a boarding house and placing the props in their proper space—"several pieces of devotion" (3:287) strategically placed in Clarissa's closet; drew up the *dramatis personae* assigning the prostitutes the parts of the widow and her relations; directed his cast through various scenes as with the following: "Mrs. Sinclair began to be afraid of mischief in her house — I was apprehensive that she would overdo the matter, and be out of character" (4:144). He dresses as an old man in order to gain access to Clarissa. He pens his letters to Belford in the manner of stage directions: "ACT II. SCENE, *Hampstead Heath continued. Enter my Rascal*" (5:68). And as I mentioned earlier, Lovelace's invasive eyes were repeatedly found peeking at Clarissa through keyholes like a voyeur at a peep show. Clarissa, like Eliza Haywood's Beauplaisair in *Fantomina*, plays an unwitting role, indeed the main part, in the various acts and scenes authored by Lovelace as he seeks to reach the play's climax, sexual relations with Clarissa. Clarissa, unlike Beauplaisair however, is never a willing participant in Lovelace's sexual escapades, but rather, the victim of his lies, deceit, and abuse. Clarissa finally reverses these roles, placing herself in the seat of power, taking on the job of playwright in the authoring of her own story.<sup>8</sup> She ceases being the object of Lovelace's gaze and becomes, instead, the subject, the watcher by proxy, the storyteller

as well as actor. Her actions parallel those of Lovelace's own as she refers to her own life using theatrical terminology: "[...] I do so earnestly wish for the last closing scene [...]" (6:188). Clarissa is fully aware of the precarious nature of life and joys within life. She realizes now the truth of Shakespeare's *Jacque's* words:

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts... (II, vii)

In taking back her narrative from Lovelace's control, Clarissa draws up her own theatrics, gains control over herself as actor, becomes the director, steps into the role of playwright. Serge Soupel analyzing the "mutually exclusive 'spaces'" (163) taken up by Lovelace and Clarissa, finds the many identities Clarissa takes on to be of interest: "Clarissa, the metaphor of female persecution, amputates herself of her own essential self, her name, in order to give herself a chance to survive the radical amputations imposed upon her or planned for her by the arch image-maker and space-appropriator [Lovelace]" (167). While Lovelace's appropriation of Clarissa's body is violent in nature, Clarissa never resorts to violence against Lovelace in retaliation; her ruses are completely for self-preservation. Kittredge notes Clarissa's decision to not seek revenge: "instead [she] concentrates on creating her own independent household [...] through the 'furnishing' of the coffins she refers to as her 'house'" (24). Clarissa does not take control in a negative manner following in Lovelace's stead, but rather turns to a healthier outlet, creation and imagination. Her unconventional home space gives her pleasure while she thinks ahead and embraces the place where she can give up all desire for control or power, completely

let down her guard in exchange for peace, security, comfort, and even family togetherness and a sense of belonging—her permanent home with God, her father, in the afterlife.

Returning to the quote with which I opened this chapter, when Bachelard wrote his preference for “impermanence” over “finality,” he obviously did not consider the tight mental spaces into which women, represented here by the fictional Clarissa, are often forced within oppressive societies. Within the dark, stuffy, tight and all-too-permanent and final space of Clarissa’s coffin, Richardson presents his heroine with an infinite amount of spiritual and psychological space—and the power that comes with her newfound expansive freedom. Clarissa’s construction of her coffin is, in the words of Minrose C. Gwin, “large and largely pleasurable,” while the large—Lovelace’s power as representative of the oppressive male-dominated, aristocracy—becomes “stunted and insubstantial” (12). Lovelace, James, Mr. Harlowe, Mr. Solmes, indeed all earthly figures themselves, are largely powerless against Clarissa’s fortress of death.

Looking at Clarissa’s increasing strength of mind throughout her story, I realize that death is not, as Martin argues, Clarissa’s “greatest triumph.” I argue instead that Clarissa’s “greatest triumph” is easily found in her construction of a “home” of her own. According to Doody: “What we are meant to see [in Clarissa] is the development of a mind which has passed from innocence to experience. Disguises and partitions have been removed—Clarissa no longer moves in a world of half-heard conversations, and ingenious illusions” (*Natural Passion* 209). Clarissa’s metaphorical house is a triumph because she builds it herself, outside of societal expectations and norms. Clarissa had existed in the illusion of home for which her parents strove and within Lovelace’s illusion



of the brothel as a respectable house. However, within the space of writing and in constructing her coffin as home, Clarissa takes control of her story. She becomes, as Doody writes, “self-sufficient” and “independent” (*Natural Passion* 209).

Richardson may be a male writer writing a woman’s story of home, however his career as a printer with an agenda, as I noted earlier, to “never forgot that the poor should have a voice” (Doody, “Samuel Richardson” 96) gives Richardson the perspective needed to write Clarissa as an outspoken young woman in a society oppressive to women. In his Preface, Richardson’s printing agenda is echoed in his caution to “...parents against the undue exertion of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage” (36). Richardson uses Clarissa’s final resting place as a warning to parents of the outcome of this “undue exertion.” If society continues to allow those in power to maintain their interests to the detriment of the powerless, as exhibited through the Harlowes power over Clarissa, then a home space found in writing and the expression of one’s self will not be possible for all but those in power. Indeed, Clarissa’s triumph is Richardson’s triumph. Clarissa’s story teaches the reader a valuable lesson about providing one’s children with freedom of choice rather than forcing “undue exertion” over them. Richardson expresses Clarissa’s triumph in her replacing the ineffective Harlowe family with friends of her own *choosing*. These friends provide Clarissa with a “supportive atmosphere” in a “social home.” These friends gives Clarissa the strength of mind to see through the societal illusions of home and to achieve the “independence” of a “personal home.” And within the writing of her alternate home space, Richardson’s Clarissa feels home as a “safe haven,” safe within her coffin, safe within her writing space, safe with her heavenly father, safe in her “physical home.”

## Notes

1. In the introduction to this dissertation, I present Liz Kenyon's four categories of home, "Temporal," "Personal," "Social," and "Physical," as central to the development of a complete emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical sense of home. All references to these four categories and the values found therein ("independence and freedom"; "memories"; "supportive atmosphere"; "friendly neighbourhood"; a "comfortable environment"; and "a safe haven") are drawn from Kenyon's study, "A Home from Home: Students' Transitional Experience of Home."
2. In Chapter One of this dissertation, I discuss in greater detail the differences in friendships in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in my examination of 18<sup>th</sup> Century poet, Mary Leapor. The varying definitions of "friends" can range from blood family, to owners of a house and their servants, to a relationship based on personal choice and compatibility. While Clarissa's "friends" addressed here are the members of the Harlowe family, Clarissa's friendship with Anna epitomizes the definition of friendship as we think of it today.
3. Margaret Ann Doody offers a comparison of Richardson's novel, an especially Clarissa's deathbed section, to that of seventeenth-century devotional literature in her chapter entitled "The Deathbed Theme in *Clarissa*" (within *A Natural Passion*). She draws on the following passage from Tillotson's devotional *Sermons* in examining the varying role of repentance in the deaths of Benton, Mrs. Sinclair, Lovelace, and Clarissa: "The difference between good and bad men is never so remarkable in this

world, as when they are upon their death-bed” (168). Doody writes: “The soul and the world are at odds. The world is too small for the spirit; the glorious soul reaches upwards toward the heaven” (152). When Clarissa’s writes in a positive manner of death in her poetry, she exhibits the knowledge of the discord of which Doody writes. Clarissa clearly exhibits that she is of the “good” men, facing death, as Doody says, with “unity and joy” (122).

4. Clarissa’s coffin would have been drawn to order according to her actual size. Not having Clarissa’s proportions, the coffin’s size offered here is according to a generic sizing of the “Sandler Allwood Coffin,” a model offered for purchase at [Casketfurniture.com](http://Casketfurniture.com).
5. Temperance can be seen in this fashion, for instance, in Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fourteenth-century fresco of Good Government and in Cornelis Matsys’s mid-sixteenth-century print “Temperance Holds an Hourglass.”
6. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare use the lily as “applied to persons or things of exceptional whiteness, fairness, or purity” (def. 3a). Indeed, the use of the lily in association with icon of Christian purity, the Virgin Mary, was a common theme in Christian art. Works such as fourteenth-century artists Simone Martini’s, *The Annunciation* and Giotto Di Bondone’s *Ognissanti Madonna* and fifteenth-century’s Fra Filippo Lippi’s *Adoration of the Christ Child* either depict the Virgin Mary receiving lilies or Mary and baby Christ with lilies at Mary’s feet.
7. Quite often women find the smallest spaces offer more room to breathe than the largest houses. In various literary works, women can be found taking shelter within tight spaces rather than suffering trauma outside of their small refuge. Minrose C.

Gwin argues the expansiveness of tight private spaces in *The Woman in the Red Dress: Gender, Space, and Reading*. Analyzing Harriet Jacobs's home space within a garret not much larger than her body in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and the home space of a toilet in Geina Mhlope's "The Toilet" Gwin offers interesting parallels to Clarissa's claustrophobic physical space. Gwin's arguments allow us to revise Clarissa's space in terms of spiritual and mental space as opposed to physical space: "What is small and unpleasant [the garret or the toilet]...becomes large and largely pleasurable through an act of the imagination" (12). Gwin argues further on both situations. Regarding Jacobs, she says: "small space becomes large because, although she suffers physical and mental anguish, she has evaded the more constricted and dangerous social relations of a woman who is a slave in the house of a man intent on raping her" (Gwin 31). And with Geina Mhlope's toilet, "what is large—the brutal and confining landscape of racist colonialism—becomes, at least temporarily, stunted and insubstantial as a result" (12).

8. Here Clarissa's story can be likened to Harriet Jacobs's own reversal of power, for Jacobs bores a hole in the floor of her garret in order to watch the comings and goings of her once oppressor, Dr. Flint. "In doing this," Gwin argues, "she creates a spatial reversal. She has inverted the panoptic situation she had found herself in; she becomes the watcher rather than the watched" (30). Although Clarissa's eye does not spy on Lovelace, she possesses a support team who watch Lovelace for her, informing her of Lovelace's whereabouts, allowing her to take flight when necessary.

## Chapter Three

### Primers, Disinheritance, and the Need for “Ancestral Tradition”:

#### Voicing Home in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*

In this dissertation’s chapter on Mary Leapor’s poetry, I discussed the kitchen as seen from the servant’s perspective—an alternative sense of home enmeshed in the labor that goes into maintaining a sense of home for the homeowners. Indeed, in many of the first homes built in the settlements in the United States, the kitchen stood as the focal point within the dwelling, the place where family, neighborhood, and community unite. The hearth retained a symbolic status as the heart of the house and family.<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison captures the importance of the kitchen within her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*. Her characters undergo a variety of experiences therein which either help or hinder their development of a sense of home. Some characters create an emotionally restrictive home while others recognize a home that offers a space conducive to physical, emotional and intellectual growth. This chapter contrasts Morrison’s presentation of home as seen through the eyes of two young girls, eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove and nine-year-old Claudia MacTeer; these two are both at an age when they begin building their first sense of home. However, the building of their home spaces becomes problematic, for they must face and ultimately come to terms with the societal “ideal” of home. George Yancy defines the “ideal” as a product of those in power, a product of “Whiteness”: “... a universal code of beauty, intelligence, superiority, cleanliness, and purity” (108). I use the term “ideal” in this chapter, drawing from a combination of Yancy’s “Whiteness” and

Barbara Burlison Mooney's description of the ideology of home as: "a middle-class domestic setting characterized by order, health, literacy, and morality" (49). In this "ideal," Mooney distinguishes between the physical and symbolic aspects of home, "order" and "health" relating to the physical dwelling and "literacy" and "morality" to "social attributes" (48). Certainly Morrison juxtaposes the two girls' versions of home both physical and social against this "ideal" as they seek to fulfill what sociologist Liz Kenyon's defines as the three categories of home,<sup>2</sup> a "social," "physical," and "personal home." This study of home in *The Bluest Eye* focuses on Pecola's and Claudia's contrasting home spaces which expose the important role community plays in home-building. In analyzing these contrasting home spaces, I discover that when children are denied the "safe haven" of a "physical home," a "supportive atmosphere" from "a friendly neighbourhood" must step in and offer her a sense of belonging and a "social home." The presence or lack of a community ultimately decides whether Pecola and Claudia have a chance to develop their own identity consisting of a strength of "independence and freedom" in her "personal home."

### ***Of Storefronts and "Old, Cold, and Green" Houses:***

#### ***Aberrations of Home and Community***

"Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty" (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 3). Morrison begins *The Bluest Eye* with an excerpt from the Dick and Jane books, a series of grammar school primers popular in the 1930s. This image of home exemplifies the "ideal" image of home as aspired to by many. The white family presented in this "ideal" is made up of the nuclear family: a mother, father, one

boy, one girl, a cat and a dog—all living within the “very pretty” “green and white” house—picture perfect. Yet, as Shelley Wong suggests, the actions of the characters within the primer form an “atomized condition” and one that does not “express joyful affirmation but, rather, almost scornful repudiation. They [the family] refuse to play [with Jane]” (471). Michael Awkward echoes Wong’s analysis of the primer family as he argues that this home and family is based on “rigid, emotionless figures incapable of deep feeling” (59). Many scholars deem the primer home as materialistic and little more than a “wish” (Wong 472), a “myth” (Awkward 59), a “dream” (Bump 152), or a “dream myth” (Bjork 32) against which society seeks to measure itself. Gurleen Grewal offers a denotative meaning of “prime” that exposes the unrealistic side to the primer’s “ideal” home image: “to cover (a surface) with a preparatory coat or color, as in painting” (125). And Grewal adds, “The reader is meant to see the debilitating effect of priming on black subjects: a consciousness turned against itself” (125).

In contrast to the “ideal,” Morrison presents women in Lorain, Ohio, the “thin brown girls” who hail from places like “Meridian, Mobile, Aiken, and Baton Rouge” (81). These women make it their life goal to achieve the pristine existence of the “ideal” for their families, images of “Whiteness”: “sheets boiled white ... and pressed flat;” the husband’s clothes always mended, starched, and white; and a body ripe for child-bearing (84-85). Geraldine, one of the “thin brown girls” represents “the debilitating effect of priming on black subjects” (Grewal 125). Within her clean and well-organized model home, Geraldine lives with her child Louis Junior, her husband, and her cat, looking all too well like that which Patrick Bryce Bjork labels the “sanitized image” (31) of the family from the Dick and Jane primer. From the point of view of the community’s gaze,

Geraldine's home (like the primer model, itself) is the epitome of the "ideal." The primer's opening words, "Here is the house," is reflected in Geraldine's home, a cookie cutter home: "Where there are porch swings hanging from chains. Where the grass is cut with a scythe, where rooster combs and sunflowers grow in the yards, and pots of bleeding heart, ivy, and mother-in-law tongue line the steps and windowsills" (82). "Mother is very nice" is reflected in Geraldine's behavior toward her son, "He was always brushed, bathed, oiled, and shod" (86).

However, the minimalist description of the "ideal" exhibited in the primer and in Geraldine's home both obscure the fact that there is no play in these "sanitized images," no "funk" ("The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions") (83). No one plays with Jane, not her father, not her brother, and certainly not her mother; the entire family (pets included) displays what Awkward labels "emotional estrangement" (59). Geraldine and her husband, too, are emotionally estranged from their child: "Geraldine did not talk to him, coo to him, or indulge him in kissing bouts, but she saw that every other desire was fulfilled" (86), and when Junior gets beat up, "His father just kept on reading the *Lorain Journal*" (88). Psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin notes, a child must be raised on "Social stimulation, warmth, and affective interchange" (17) in order to maintain a healthy existence and to grow mentally and intellectually, in order to, as I argue, experience the support of a "social home." Geraldine and her husband, however, as part of the community of "thin brown girls," only offer one of the three parts of home, the "physical home." Physically secure and physically comfortable, Geraldine's house does not offer the emotionally "supportive atmosphere" of a "social home" or the "memories" of a "personal home."



Geraldine's family dwelling, therefore, is bereft of that which makes a physical space a home.

An examination of the "ideal" and Geraldine's family reveals the effects these kinds of environments have on the poorer African-American families such as the Breedloves and the MacTeers—and especially on their daughters, Pecola and Claudia. Reginald G. Golledge and Robert J. Stimson define community as consisting "of a population with a shared moral, political, and social environment, and with membership typically based on geography, race, ethnicity, or language" (489). The "thin brown girls" fulfill this concise definition of community, living in their "quiet black neighborhoods where everybody is gainfully employed" (82). However, Morrison's narration suggests there is much more to a community than the stilted definition Golledge and Stimson suggest. A community should be responsible for supporting its members, and especially its youngest members.

Margaret Delashmit discusses the importance of the community on the psychological maturation of young girls as it offers more than mere support but "[...] a network of extended family members to accept them, to nurture, guide, and guard them, and to help them realize their intrinsic worth and beauty" (17). Toni Morrison, herself, explains community thusly: "In a community of black people, one felt safe, you know, fairly happy. The real pain came—even though it was progress—during the movement towards integration" ("An Interview" 50). Iris Marion Young, likewise, notes this pain, the sad result of exclusion (what Morrison labels the "disavowal" in her later novel, *Paradise*, discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation). Young argues that although

community suggests unity, community would actually “tend to suppress differences ... or exclude from their political groups persons with whom they do not identify” (300).

“The village” certainly plays an integral role in the psychological, social, and spiritual growth of a female. Geraldine’s presence in the novel, then, helps the reader understand the damaging effects on individuals who are excluded from the village due to racist attitudes of black toward other blacks. Geraldine and the “thin brown girls” expect other blacks to conform to the “emotional estrangement” and “sanitized image” depicted in the *Dick and Jane* primer. Pauline Breedlove has not, however, the money needed to maintain the “ideal” image these women expect. Therefore, the “thin brown girls” fully reject Pauline. According to Delashmit, as a result of this exclusion, “... the family does not become a part of the extended family of the neighborhood” (12), thereby leaving Pauline without the “supportive atmosphere” of a “social home.”

The “thin brown girls” are “for Morrison [...] antithetical to the village culture she respects” (Furman 14). As Morrison states, in Afro-American culture “Black women had to be real and genuine to each other, there was no one else” (qtd in Russell 45). As Amanda J. Davis notes, Morrison’s work (along with Alice Walker, Gayl Jones, Toni Cade Bambara and others writing in the 1960s and 1970s) exposes the lack of “racial stability and solidarity” (24)—the ostensible goal of the black nationalist movement. Her novel, instead, focuses on the “violence against women and the challenges violence poses to women’s attempts to achieve and maintain wholeness in a society where liberation itself is often gendered” (25). Yet, the “thin brown girls” deny their traditions and reject racial solidarity in their rejection of Pauline based on her hair, her clothes, her lack of makeup; they essentially place her outside their group. Pauline’s “countrified ways, her

need for quietude and privacy, are not in keeping with a paradoxically impersonal yet public urban setting” (Bjork 43). Morrison presents the racist attitudes within the black community as the “thin brown girls” direct themselves toward the white ideal, actively denying darker and poorer blacks like the Breedloves who don’t measure up. Pauline, therefore, “is denied the almost sacred sisterhood of other black women who should take her into their circle and serve as concerned family for her and later for her children” (Delashmit 14). Pauline never feels the strength and “supportive atmosphere” of a sisterhood of women.<sup>3</sup> “Thus the white majority culture is both a direct and indirect suppressor, withholding money, power and prestige to turn blacks against blacks, creating an inverted and aberrant community” (Cormier-Hamilton 118).<sup>4</sup>

Cat Moses, discusses the role materialism, as set forth by this “white majority culture,” plays in Pauline’s life: “The lure of the material supplants [...Pauline’s] *memories* of community, even though she can never hope to possess what she longs for” (italics mine, 628). Morrison depicts Pauline’s attraction to the material when she and her husband Cholly first move to Ohio as newlyweds. Pauline tries to live up to the “ideal” image of self as set forth by the “thin brown girls,” hoping for nothing more than for them to “cast favorable glances her way” (118). She wears high heel shoes and desires makeup and new clothes, even though her bad foot made wearing heels difficult and she didn’t care for clothes and makeup—all because these were what the other women wore. And later, after the birth of her two children, Sammy and Pecola, Pauline moves the family into their second apartment, an abandoned storefront apartment where they decorate a Christmas tree and purchase furniture, attempting to make their “physical home” a “comfortable environment.” Pauline’s attempts, however, seem destined for

failure, for the “thin brown girls” continue to snub Pauline, leaving her alone, lonely, without friend, and without a “supportive atmosphere.” Erik Dussere explains the role money plays in the Breedloves’ downfall: “This lack of bourgeois sensibility is illustrated by the house the Breedloves inhabit, which is in fact not a house but an abandoned store—a spectre of failed capitalism—marked by poverty and anonymity” (31). Sadly, even the furniture within was “anything but describable, having been conceived, manufactured, shipped, and sold in various states of thoughtlessness, greed, and indifference” (Dussere 35) and their brand new sofa is delivered to the Breedloves already ripped. As Jennifer Gillan argues: “The sofa functions as a sign of the Breedloves’ inability to compete in American consumer culture” (291). The moving men’s refusal to take back the damaged furniture also emasculates Cholly. Cholly loses the “independence and freedom” that comes with the autonomy of home decoration. This thereby leads Cholly to lose any possibility of creating fond “memories,” ultimately depriving the Breedloves of a “personal home.” As for the “supportive atmosphere,” the Breedloves might hope for in fulfilling their “social home,” Gillan’s argument suggests that there will be no “supportive atmosphere,” no “social home”: “The ripped sofa is just the outward manifestation of the Breedloves’ all-pervasive alienation from themselves, from any political or personal constituency, and from industrial and consumer culture” (291). Money is so tight that the Breedloves are unable to afford the “ideal” or even the version of the “ideal” set forth by the “thin brown girls”; the Breedloves’ poverty leaves them excluded from the community.

What ultimately leaves Pauline to completely abandon her attempts of building a home space for her family, however, is the extreme contrast she sees between her own

dwelling and that of the white family for whom she works, the Fishers. In Pauline's home, she saw a "zinc tub, ... buckets of stove-heated water, ... flaky, stiff, grayish towels washed in a kitchen sink, dried in a dusty backyard" (127). In the Fisher home, on the other hand, Pauline discovered: "linen, silk draperies, ... stacks of white pillow slips edged with embroidery, the sheets with top hems picked out with blue cornflowers... a porcelain tub with silvery taps running infinite quantities of hot, clear water... fluffy white towels and ... cuddly night clothes" (127). Pauline saw how home, in her eyes, "should" be "and loved all of it" (127). Such a comparison turned any effort Pauline could make into nothing but a wasted effort, "The things she could afford to buy did not last, had no beauty or style, and were absorbed by the dingy storefront." Pauline began to make the Fisher home her home, and "soon she stopped trying to keep her own house" (127).

Like the Breedloves' dwelling, the MacTeers' house contrasts greatly with the "ideal" and the "ideal" houses of the "thin brown girls" and white homes like the Fishers. The MacTeer house is not "very pretty" like the house in the *Dick and Jane* passage, rather it is "old, cold, and green" (10). The MacTeer house is not even the "comfortable, tasty, framed cottage," the desired abode for the African American family in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but rather described as follows: "At night a kerosene lamp lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled by roaches and mice" (10). Here Claudia offers her depiction of the MacTeer house with all its faults. While the primer passage elides much in its surface description, Claudia exposes the truth that her house is not picture perfect; there are insects and rodents and Claudia's bedroom window is cracked with a rag plugging up the hole (11). Mooney argues that Morrison:

rejects the consumerism and classism of the comfortable, tasty, framed cottage, but she is not able to abandon entirely the home as the font of wholeness. Her heroines are nurtured by two parents in a secure though rundown house with cracked windows. In place of material comforts, Morrison imbues her domicile with affection. Her ideal house is enriched and its windows are repaired not because of the Better Homes Campaign, sociological quantification, or modern design, but because “love, thick and dark as Alaga syrup, eased up into that cracked window” (65).

Mooney’s argument focuses nicely on the power of love to metaphorically mend the deficiencies of the MacTeer home. Yet, Claudia’s narration, reminiscent of the vividness with which Mary Leapor’s *Mira* exposes “Crumble-Hall,” also expresses the importance of preserving the memory of that familial love. In fact, just as Leapor’s verbal creation of the fictional “Crumble-Hall” helps her to achieve a sense of the “personal,” “social,” and “physical home,” so, too, Claudia’s inclusion of her own story, along with Pecola’s, offers her an additional outlet to attain a strong sense of home. Indeed, Claudia as Morrison’s spokesperson rejects the material of the “thin brown girls” “ideal” houses as exemplified in Geraldine’s home. Geraldine’s son, Junior, unlike Claudia, receives no nurturing from his mother. Such a home provides only material comfort, a “safe haven” but no “supportive atmosphere” or fostering of “independence” and “memories.” Indeed, Junior gathers no memories of his relationship with his mother except for the difference he so readily perceives “...in his mother’s behavior to himself and the cat” (86). On the other hand, the MacTeer’s nurturing of their daughters help Claudia choose her family and all that her family provides as the foundation for her home. Claudia’s preservation of

her “personal home”—her memories of the love, support, and protection—as well as the passing on of traditions experienced in the MacTeer house, offers her a “supportive atmosphere” for a “social home.” This preservation work helps make up for the physical condition of the MacTeer house in providing Claudia with the “safe haven” of a “physical home.” For Clarissa, a “safe haven” exists despite the cracks in windows and insects throughout, for instead she has an emotionally “safe haven” where she can preserve her “memories” in a “personal home.”

### ***Rapists and Protectors, Silencers and Singers:***

#### ***Parental Influence in Home Development***

When the community fails to be “supportive” and the physical structure of one’s living space fails to provide a “safe” and “comfortable environment,” then the parental figures can step in and provide their children with everything they need in feeling a full sense of “home.” Morrison presents the MacTeer family fulfilling this role. In contrast, Cholly and Pauline Breedlove are dysfunctional parents depriving their daughter of a sense of home.

Much of the scholarship on *The Bluest Eye* focuses on the mothers in the novella, Pauline Breedlove especially. Lacking an appropriate support system of her own, Pauline is unable to provide her children with a support system. In fact, Pauline turns away from the distorted view of the ideal held by her fellow African Americans, to an even more unattainable “whiteness”: the fictional fantasy world of the movies. She educates herself in the power of “physical beauty” as portrayed on the big screen. Only from her position as a member of the audience can Pauline achieve a sense of “independence and freedom”

of a “personal home” through the power of the gaze. Instead of being gazed upon, Pauline escapes into the darkness of the theater and becomes the objectifying gaze. Her behavior leads to an obsessive need to seek a model for proper behavior and physical appearance in the white actresses who graced the big screen. “She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen” (122). Pauline’s identity is debilitated by learning to see white beauty as the “ideal.” Never would black be beautiful to her, certainly not her husband, not even her children. And although Pauline attempts to mimic the hair style of Jean Harlow, the loss of a tooth during one of her theater seminars engenders self-loathing as well. “Look like I just didn’t care no more after that. I let my hair go back, plaited it up, and settled down to just being ugly” (123). Pauline learns to think of herself as categorized under the have nots as opposed to the white “ideal” or the haves, where white is, as Yancy argues, “a master sign” (108) or as Rafael Perez-Torres describes as “a nonrace, a norm, a universal standard [...] not a race but an ideal” (24). And in comparison to the “master sign,” Pauline “comes to know the ‘truth’ of [...herself], as a denigrated *thing* of absence and existential insignificance” (Yancy 108).

As the Breedlove children grow older, Pauline turns away from both the “ideal” set forth by the “thin brown girls” and the images in the movies, but her pleasure in materialism does not dissipate completely. Instead, motivated by poverty, Pauline discovers all she desires in the home of a wealthy white family, in her role as “the ideal servant” (128). In fact, Pauline supplants “absence” and “insignificance” with “superiority” and “cleanliness” as she separates her self in two. One part of her is moral



within a former storefront where the Breedloves reside, where she teaches her family, especially her daughter, to feel fear, “a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life” (128). The other part of her is material (Pauline’s “alternate, fantasy-family” (35) according to Missy Dehn Kubitschek) within the Fisher’s house, a place of beauty, order, and cleanliness, where she teaches nothing, only indulges the Fisher’s daughter, yearning for the white “ideal” the young girl represents.

Mooney describes the life of servitude experienced by many early 20<sup>th</sup> century African Americans. According to Mooney, the “comfortable tasty framed cottage” was difficult for the African American to attain “...because most had to perform someone else’s domestic labor in order to support their families” (64). Likewise, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the working class poet, Mary Leapor, showed how her physical work made writing difficult: “with aching Limbs,/ Oppress’d with Head-ach, and eternal Whims,/ Sad *Mira* vows to quit the darling Crime [writing]” (“Crumble-Hall” ll. 3-5). Mooney notes that this has not changed two centuries later as women found “domestic labor was too oppressing to be understood as noble” (64). However, while Mary Leapor attained power in claiming Crumble-Hall as her home through poetry, Pauline attained power through accepting her role as the Fisher’s servant.

Ruby Dee refers to Pauline’s seat of power in the Fisher’s home as “her kitchen throne” (19). Unfortunately, as Andrea O’Reilly points out, “Pauline’s power is, of course, not real; it is a borrowed power, accorded Pauline only in her capacity as an employee of the Fishers” (54). Furthermore, Dee notes that “From [...Pauline’s] kitchen throne, she comes to view the reality of her own family with disgust and almost hatred” (19). I argue that while Pauline borrows power from the Fishers, such power comes at a

price, for it leaves her to view her family “with disgust and almost hatred” and to actively deny her biological family. Notice that the Fisher girl calls Pauline by an intimate nickname, Polly,<sup>5</sup> while her own daughter must address her in the formal, Mrs. Breedlove.

Further proof of Pauline’s averting of the “supportive atmosphere” occurs in the scene where Pecola drops the cobbler on the Fisher’s kitchen floor. The kitchen is a space that is traditionally meant to be inviting to outsiders, a place where neighbors can enter, warm themselves by the hearth, and perhaps be offered something to eat. Here, however, Pecola is treated as an unwanted outsider, not a “significant other” as necessary to a “social home” but merely an other. Within this space Pauline *plays* the role of the mother in the manner of the *Dick and Jane* primer. The Fisher daughter walks in illuminating Pauline’s fantasy, looking for her surrogate mother: “Where’s Polly?” sounding much like the narrative voice in the primer, “Mother will you play with Jane” (3). Yet in order for this “fantasy family” to exist, Pauline must guard it by denying the existence of her biological daughter, directing nurturing at her surrogate daughter instead. When the little girl cries, Pauline comforts and soothes her: “Hush, baby, hush. Come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don’t cry no more. Polly will change it” (109). Pecola sees her mother’s blatant favoritism of this child while she gets nothing more than words “spit out...like rotten pieces of apple” (109). Mrs. Breedlove consoles this girl who is not her own, while she knocks Pecola to the floor, “yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola directly...” (109). Meanwhile, Pauline screams her mantra, “my floor ... my floor ... my floor” (109). The repetition of the first person possessive pronoun Pauline asserts, “*my floor*” (italics mine), shows sheer

desperation, as if she is praying that her fantasy world may not disappear. In these words, Pauline stresses her need to build “a sense of independence and freedom” and “a comfortable environment” consistent with a “personal” and physical home”—reminiscent of the creativity Leapor puts into creating “Crumble-Hall,” making this floor, this home, and this family her own. Pauline, as a result, leaves her biological daughter homeless, forcing Pecola into the role of outsider, motherless. Pauline’s maintaining of her “fantasy-family” and “fantasy-” deprives Pecola of the nurturing Pecola needs to feel a sense of home.

As opposed to the Fisher’s clean, orderly, and peaceful kitchen, the Breedlove kitchen provides the scene of their familial interaction in all of its anger, violence, and disappointment. Rather than cook in the kitchen, Cholly and Pauline can be found frequently beating each other with pots and pans and stove lids. For Pecola, especially, there is no comfort or nurturing like the comfort and nurture the Fisher’s daughter receives in her kitchen. Instead, ideally the site for nourishment and family togetherness, the kitchen, for Pecola, becomes a site of terror within her own home.<sup>6</sup> “For Morrison, there are no pure spaces, no felicity untouched by danger” (Gwin 78).<sup>7</sup> Danger is a common topic in studies of home. From accidents within the home to break-ins, no space exists in a complete state of “felicity.” Furthermore, researchers found that when fear regarding danger in public spaces is increased, people tend to stay home to keep safe (Goldsack 132). This, in turn, can keep many trapped within a home space that is the locale of physical and/or emotional abuse.

Morrison presents the potential home dangers through her depiction of eleven-year-old Pecola standing, one Saturday in spring, in the kitchen, seemingly safe in her

refuge from the “dangers” outside: the vindictive Junior who killed his cat and blamed Pecola, the uncaring white store owner Mr. Yacobowski who looks right through Pecola, and the children at school who taunt Pecola and use her name to taunt each other. Her movements in the kitchen are uninhibited by fear or discomfort: “[...S]he shifted her weight and stood on one foot scratching the back of her calf with her toe. It was a quiet and pitiful gesture. Her hands were going around and around a frying pan, scraping flecks of black into cold, greasy dishwater” (162). In the ideal, home spaces offer safety, but for Pecola, there is no refuge. Instead, Pecola experiences a common plight for women in the home: the “fear of public abuse [...leading] to a loss and restriction of public participation and ironically, a greater dependency on those men they know who may be the greatest source of danger” (Goldsack 132). Although Pecola engages in a simple, everyday act of housework, this peaceful routine does not sustain. As Minrose C. Gwin writes about the eventual rape of Pecola in the family’s kitchen: “Cholly Breedlove’s rape of his daughter [...] is enacted against the backdrop of what in another house might have been a nurturing domestic space for eating and talking” (75).<sup>8</sup> In addition, Cholly later interrupts his daughter in an act of innocence a second time; this time Pecola lies in a state of relaxation, reading on the living room couch when her father assaults her.

Throughout the novel Pecola is [...] framed in various kinds of claustrophobic spaces—cultural (she is a poor black girl within white-dominated patriarchal capitalism), material (her house, neither pleasant nor safe, is an empty frame of capitalism, an abandoned storefront), emotional and physical (she has been raped by her father and rejected by

mother and community)—their concentricity squeezing her tighter and tighter until finally she goes mad. (Gwin 79)

Indeed, with each time her parents fight, with each time Cholly rapes her, Pecola's home space becomes increasingly "claustrophobic" increasing a need within her to achieve home outside of the traditional home space.

Following the initial rape in the kitchen, Pauline further distances herself from her daughter and her role as a mother and provider of home. When Pecola awakens following the rape she sees "the face of her mother looming over her" (163). "Looming" suggests the tension between Pauline and her daughter and the sheer hatred Pauline has for the young girl as well as an utter lack of nurturing. Furthermore, when Pecola tells her mother what happens, Pauline does not believe Pecola (200). Pauline's distrust of her daughter amplifies the incident further, making the kitchen and their home space in general ever more dangerous for Pecola, for not only must Pecola fear her father's incestual desire but she must also fear her mother's negative reaction to the rape. Pauline's reaction lacks compassion or support. Pauline silences her Pecola, denies her a voice, and ensures that Pecola never know the "independence" that language could offer Pecola in naming her experience. Pauline deprives Pecola the healing power of narrating her experience, and accepting the rape into her "memories" so that she might move on toward healing—with Pauline's support, of course. Pauline's help never comes, however; she denies her daughter the "supportive atmosphere" Pecola needs in building a "social home."

Lucille Fultz blames Pauline for "[...] the destruction of her family by her failure to assume partial responsibility and accountability for her dysfunctional marriage and

socially maladjusted children” (55). From the moment of Pecola’s birth, Pauline looks at her daughter with disappointment, “head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly” (126). Immediately Pauline withdraws her “supportive atmosphere.” “As various psychologists attest, the mother’s gaze is of primary importance in generating a child’s sense of self. Tragically, Pauline looks at her infant daughter and then looks away” (Miner 18). Pauline’s averted gaze falls on the “ideal” child, the Fisher’s daughter, in a manner that Malin LaVon Walther considers distinctly different from the gaze of man in objectifying woman sexually. According to Walther: “Women look at other women to determine social status and to make comparisons to themselves, which is an objectifying act” (779). Pauline, then, goes from objectifying those big-screen white actresses as something she wants to be to objectifying the Fishers as the model home to which she wants to belong. This averted gaze creates a “supportive atmosphere” for the Fishers’ “social home” but denies Pecola the like.

O’Reilly argues that Pauline further disconnected herself from her daughter and from the “motherline” — “the ancestral memory and ancient properties of traditional black culture” also known as “the funk” (47) — by nurturing her surrogate daughter, the Fisher girl, and not her own. According to O’Reilly, the “motherline” which stresses the importance of the maternal line and nurturing therein “would have grounded [Pauline] in the values of her people and enabled her to resist interpellation” (52) meanwhile teaching her children “strategies for survival” (125). Pauline’s separation from “the funk” in favor of the white “ideal” teaches Pecola to hate her self and thereby hate her “ancestral memory,” “ancient properties,” and “the funk” traits consistent with the “memories” she needs to construct a “personal home.”

In contrast to the Breedlove parents, The MacTeers are, as Allen Alexander calls them: “[...] adult role models who place more value on action than image” (301). Although Mr. MacTeer does not appear as often as his wife or daughters in this novel, his presence as an active “adult role model” is strong and his role is of great importance. Whereas Cholly Breedlove does nothing to protect his daughter (indeed he is her predator), Mr. MacTeer fulfills the role of the father in family dynamics and fulfills his responsibilities toward his family. Claudia opens her description with “My daddy’s face is a study” (61). Claudia uses “Wolf killer,” “hawk fighter,” and “Vulcan” to express her father’s strength. There is intimacy here as Claudia refers to her father as “daddy,” but this is a tempered intimacy as Mr. MacTeer does not spoil his girls but teaches them survival skills, teaches them “how to rake, feed, and bank the fire” (61). Unlike Cholly who can’t hold a job as much as he can hold his liquor, Mr. MacTeer fosters a strong work ethic in his daughter. His greatest role however is the way he protects his daughters: “night and day to keep [...]the wolf] from the door and the [...]hawk] from under the windowsills” all while “guarding the flames” (61). The novel shows Mr. MacTeer at his strongest, however, in the manner with which he handles Mr. Henry’s molestation of Frieda. He does not fault his daughter, does not refuse to believe her, but instead takes immediate action against Mr. Henry. “Daddy beat him up,” Frieda says (99), and “he threw our old tricycle at his head and knocked him off the porch” and then “shot at him” (100). No father can prevent all bad things from happening to his daughters, but Mr. MacTeer does everything he can to make sure his daughter will not continue to be abused. Morrison models Mr. MacTeer after her own father who threw a tricycle at a man who followed Morrison and her sister. Morrison describes this incident

as follows: “My father was not a tall man and this man loomed large. All he knew was that this man was behind his girls, and he was, you know, defending the household and all of that” (“An Interview” 50). Mr. MacTeer, like Morrison’s father before him, offers his daughters the safest “haven” in his power.

In stark contrast to the lack of parenting skills seen in the Breedloves, the MacTeers bring up their children so as to develop a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home. Phyllis R. Klotman applauds Morrison’s depiction of The MacTeer family’s role in the novel as possessing “...the inner strength to withstand poverty and discrimination of a racist society and to provide an environment in which their children can grow” (124). While Claudia feels ignored by the adults,<sup>9</sup> she points out various instances where Mrs. MacTeer solidly provides for the health and well-being of her daughters. Mrs. MacTeer shows her daughters what it means to be a part of a community, part of a “supportive atmosphere” and a “social home.” Even though Mrs. MacTeer complains about having to care for Pecola when Pecola’s own parents fail to do so, the fact is she does take in Pecola, feeds her, offers her a place to sleep and “has some concern for Pecola’s plight [...] since she tells Claudia and Frieda ‘to be nice to her and not fight’ (17)” (Fultz 57-8). Most importantly, Mrs. MacTeer welcomes Pecola into womanhood when Pecola has her first menses. And although too late to save Pecola, Mrs. MacTeer’s example results in her daughters’ learning the value of friendship as they befriend Pecola, trying “hard to keep her from feeling outdoors” (19) as well as protecting her from bullies after school. They learned the power of the community to provide emotionally impoverished individuals a “supportive atmosphere.”



Although Mrs. MacTeer teaches her daughters valuable lessons through example, a number of critics suggest that Mrs. MacTeer can not be categorized as a “good” mother. Michael Ryan argues: “The coldness of Claudia’s world is also a metaphor for parent/child relations that barely nurture or provide sustenance” (45). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “nurture” as “to care for and encourage the growth or development of; to foster, cultivate” (def. 1b). And “sustenance”: “Means of living or subsistence” (def. 1) and “The action of sustaining life by food” (def. 3). Mrs. MacTeer offers her daughters “a comfortable environment” of a “physical home,” leaving them crackers upon their return from school. Mrs. MacTeer shows her daughters Christian charity and “a supportive atmosphere” of a “social home” when she takes Pecola in and cares for her. And Mrs. MacTeer provides a “safe haven” of a “physical home” for Claudia when Claudia falls ill. It is, however, Mrs. MacTeer’s interaction with Claudia during Claudia’s illness that critics see as exemplifying poor mothering skills. I argue, however, that this scene shows Mrs. MacTeer offering her daughters a strong sense of home in all its tenets. Jerome Bump describes Mrs. MacTeer’s tending to Claudia as a “phase of the family dance, the love” but notes that “The better label for the McTeers [sic] might be ‘competent but pained’ family” (156). Ryan says: “[...the MacTeers] cannot provide the care and attention that children need” and that Claudia’s falling out of consciousness is evidence of “trauma” due to “the failure of parental care” (46). While Pecola feels no love from her mother and father, Mrs. MacTeer offers her daughter love through her actions: rubbing Claudia’s chest with salve, wrapping Claudia in flannel and quilts, and cleaning Claudia up after she vomits. Even though Mrs. MacTeer complains the entire time, a grown Claudia looking back recognizes her mother’s anger as directed at Claudia’s

sickness rather than at Claudia. The memory of Mrs. MacTeer's healing actions impacts the adult Claudia as she recalls her mother's hands on her forehead: "So when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die" (12). Through these actions, Mrs. MacTeer qualifies as a nurturer, a provider of "sustenance." As for Ryan's claim that Claudia's lapse into unconsciousness was due to "failure of parental care," the more likely reason would be due to her high fever.

Further criticism against Mrs. MacTeer's actions come from Michael Awkward who devalues Mrs. MacTeer's mothering, arguing that only when her actions are "reinterpreted" by the adult Claudia can they be seen as "good mothering." O'Reilly argues against this claim, saying: "[...F]rom the perspective of Morrison's theory of motherwork and her emphasis upon the importance of preservation, the droning voice and scratchy towel are to be seen as real and legitimate gestures of maternal love. [...Awkward] relies on Claudia's perspective because he measures Mrs. MacTeer's mothering against the dominant discourse of 'good mothering'" (121).

In addition to Mrs. MacTeer's "good mothering," her greatest lesson lies in the "memories" that she passes along to her daughter, "memories" that make up a "personal home."

If my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn't so bad. 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, yearning to be grown without "a thin di-i-me to my name." [...] 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. (25-6)

Mrs. MacTeer exhibits "the funk" in singing the blues while Pauline distances herself from "the funk," favoring the white "ideal" over her ancestry and African-American traditions. Mrs. MacTeer teaches her daughters the power of the voice and the power of words in narrating their story through her singing of the blues. Indeed, singing has been a strategy for survival used by African Americans from the days of slavery. This tradition can be compared to Clarissa Harlowe's need to communicate with family and friends through letters and Mary Leapor's need to write poetry; each character seeks their "supportive atmosphere" of a "social home" to provide her with the strength and confidence, the "independence and freedom" to voice her pain through the creative word. Pecola, in contrast, has no means to voice her own pain. Her parents offer her no psychological survival techniques, no coping mechanism. She has no outlet for the shame she feels and therefore no means by which to construct a home. Claudia, on the other hand, learns that "singing proves an act of resistance" and a way "to re-possess one's experience" (Dittmar 151).

### ***Psychotic Breakdown versus Narration:***

#### ***Voicing a Home of One's Own***

According to Benjamin, a child needs "social stimulation, warmth, and affective interchange" in order to maintain a healthy existence and to grow mentally and intellectually (17). The "social stimulation" would show a child the meaning of a "supportive atmosphere" and "a friendly neighbourhood" for her "social home" and the

“safe haven” of her “physical home.” Healthy mental and intellectual growth would then lead to “a sense of independence and freedom” for her “personal home,” fulfilling each of Kenyon’s three categories of home.

Pecola’s feelings of inadequacy and her inability to survive in a white man’s society built on white man’s images of beauty is a product of both her parents’ and her community’s treatment of her. Various assaults on Pecola by members of her community, her father’s physical abuse, the rape, and her mother’s mental abuse, the bestowing of “good mothering” on a blonde-haired white girl all reinforce Pecola’s self-hatred. Pecola feels she is not pretty enough, not white enough, and therefore, not loveable enough for her mother or society, resulting in her developing a sense of shame rather than a sense of self-esteem or self-identity. According to Robert Karen, in his article “Shame,” “a turning away from the child” or a “shunning” by the mother can be extremely harmful.<sup>10</sup> “Many parents, because of their own unresolved anger, bitterness, or unmet needs, are unable to accept the child for who he or she is. They may want a child who’s prettier, bouncier, smarter, more aggressive, more compliant, more charming” (43). Karen’s analysis explains Pecola’s shame. Mrs. Breedlove passes her own shame and guilt on to Pecola, commencing a life of self-doubt, embarrassment, and shame for the young girl, instead of self-love, confidence, and pride. Pecola is unable to grow mentally or intellectually and, in turn, unable to create a healthy “social home” based on support and love.

Referring to Pecola in relation to Claudia and Frieda, Doreatha Drummond Mbalia concludes: “It is she who is most affected by the dominant culture’s beauty standards because it is she who is the poorest and, consequently, the most vulnerable” (32). With Mrs. Breedlove’s shame and without familial support to protect her, Pecola is

“the most vulnerable,” and her chances of functioning in society are greatly decreased. Members of Pecola’s community refuse to offer Pecola a “supportive atmosphere”: her teachers pretend she is not in class, trying “never to glance at her”; her classmates use her name as an insult, chanting: “Bobby loves Pecola Breed love!”(46); and at the grocery store, the white owner, Mr. Yacobowski, treats her to a glance that is “vacuum,” filled with a “total absence of human recognition” (48). Pecola blames this treatment on her skin color with a focus on the color of her eyes as symbolic of everything that she feels is wrong with her, her inadequacies, her shame. Disappointed in her self and her inability to measure up to her idea of beauty, Pecola tries to make herself disappear. However, her eyes always remain, leaving her with the desire to have blue eyes; blue eyes will not need to disappear, for they would make her beautiful, something worth noticing, someone to be loved.

Pecola’s inability to make her eyes disappear combined with her desire to have blue eyes leads to her eventual psychological breakdown. Soaphead Church, a former preacher and a “Reader, Adviser, and Interpreter of Dreams” (165), drives Pecola further into madness. Pecola seeks out Church in response to his business card which reads: “If you are overcome with trouble and conditions that are not natural, I can remove them; Overcome Spells, Bad Luck, and Evil Influences. Remember, I am a true Spiritualist and Psychic Reader, born with power, and I will help you. Satisfaction in one visit...If you are unhappy, discouraged, or in distress, I can help you” (173). Church wants to help Pecola, who comes to him asking for blue eyes, but his actions are not completely selfless; he gets her to unknowingly kill his landlord’s dog—making it seem as if it is God’s will: “If the animal behaves strangely, your wish will be granted on the day

following this one” (175). Essentially, Church uses Pecola’s innocence and strong desire for beauty to his advantage. Pecola comes to Church because he is a former preacher and therefore a representative of God, the ultimate authority figure. Even his card says he is “a true Spiritualist...born with power.” Church’s self-proclaimed credentials, together with the dog’s sudden death, and Pecola’s overwhelming desire to have blue eyes are enough to confirm Pecola’s delusions, enough to make her believe her eyes could change to blue.

A number of critics focus on Pecola’s state of madness, diverging over whether Pecola actively goes mad or passively becomes mad.<sup>11</sup> However, I find Pecola’s achievement through madness of greater interest: Pecola realizes a voice to narrate her experience, a voice to create a home of her own. According to Ágnes Surányi, “Ironically, having been denied a sense of self and a voice to articulate her pain, in the end an insane Pecola has found not one, but two voices” (15). Pecola’s two voices converse with each other:

“You’re just jealous.”

*“I am not.”*

“You are. You wish you had them.”

*“Ha. What would I look like with blue eyes?”*

“Nothing much.” (194)

Jane Caputi argues that here Pecola “peers into her mirror, demanding that her ‘friend’ [...] confirm what she sees—a ‘white girl’; that is, a girl with blue eyes” (713-14). One part of Pecola recognizes the foolishness of having blue eyes, signifying Pecola’s inability to accept the reality of her situation—she could never have blue eyes. This

dissonance between reality and intense desire is what leads to her personalities splitting off into the rational and the irrational. Yet, having two personalities enables Pecola to have what she has always wanted, to be white and to have blue eyes. Furthermore, it also gives Pecola the family she had never had, a sister who will love her and recognize her in her new state of blue-eyed being, “the supportive atmosphere” of a “social home.” As the narrator says, “she...stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us...” (206). Jan Furman writes further on this madness which “protects”: “With the blue eyes of her distorted reality comes the awful safety of oblivion” (19). Indeed, her madness protects her from her family, from the grocer, from her teachers and the kids at school, from society as a whole, offering her within the “safety of oblivion” a “safe haven” of a “physical home.”

Claudia’s desires lead her to a sense of home as well, but her ideal home is based not on psychological trauma but on familial support and guidance. One Christmas, Claudia receives “a big blue-eyed Baby Doll.” “Instead of family interaction—and the touching, playing, and ritual storytelling that might accompany it—Claudia is supposed to pretend to be the mother of this ‘thing’ dressed in ‘starched gauze or lace’ and sporting a ‘bone-cold head’” (Kuenz 20). Claudia, however, rejects this gift and the “ideal” which this doll represents through dismembering the doll. Instead of shame for her difference from the “ideal” as Pecola felt, and instead of displacing their self-hatred on blacks of darker color as Geraldine does, Claudia “gives expression to the anger experienced by the shamed individual, the desire to flair out that signals an attempt to rid the self of shame” (Bouson 30). Instead, Claudia creates an alternative to the “ideal” home, like Pecola, in her mind as she conjures up the perfect Christmas. While both girls rely on their

imaginations to construct images of home, Claudia rejects physical appearance based on the “ideal” in favor of an emotional connection to her family. Claudia says: “I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day” (22). The kitchen looms large in Claudia’s dream of home, the heart that breathes life into her ancestral connections, for she nostalgically dreams of family togetherness,

I want to sit on the low stool in Big Mama’s kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for me alone. The lowness of the stool made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama’s kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of the music, and, since it would be good to have all of my senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterward. (22)

Claudia possesses a love of self and family so that her desires are not based on any material item but rather on family togetherness as evidenced by the presence of her grandfather. In her grandmother’s kitchen Claudia experiences Kenyon’s three categories of home. With all of her senses actively engaged, Claudia constructs “memories” for her “personal home.” Having Big Mama and Big Papa there ensures a “supportive atmosphere” for her “social home.” And the “security and warmth of Big Mama’s kitchen” enable Claudia to feel the “safe haven” of a “physical home.” Claudia’s imagination, thoughts and narration, help Claudia to fight against the self-hatred and shame that plagues her race, allowing her, in turn, to feel a sense of “personal,” “social,” and “physical home.”

Based on an interview with Toni Morrison, Sandi Russel describes Morrison’s relationship to “the tribe”: “For her, roots are less a matter of geography than a sense of



shared history; less to do with place, than with inner space: the freedom to be oneself, and yet a member of the tribe. So she identifies her art as a novelist with the ancestral tradition that is still alive in black music and religion” (44), a statement that shows Morrison’s values depicted in Claudia’s own. At the end of the novel, Claudia and Frieda hear their tribe, the women in the community, reject one of their members, Pecola Breedlove. Regarding the pregnant Pecola, the women exclaim: “The girl was always foolish,” “she carry some of the blame,” and “How come she didn’t fight him?” Yet the biggest rejection was in their claiming, “Don’t nobody know nothing about them anyway...Don’t seem to have no people” (189). These women are unable to see how the Breedlove’s lack of “people” was largely their own fault— as members of their community, they should have gotten to know the Breedloves; they should have been the Breedlove’s “people.”

Feeling guilty for their people’s treatment of Pecola, Claudia and Frieda sacrifice the money they had worked hard for selling seeds, giving up, in turn, the bicycle that was to be their ultimate reward, and planting the seeds from the sale—all as an offering to God in exchange for Pecola’s baby’s life. Claudia says, “All right. Only let me sing this time. You say the magic words” (192). Mrs. MacTeer has passed down her singing of the blues to her daughter, and Claudia calls upon that inheritance, “memories” of her “ancestral tradition,” hoping to salvage the lives of Pecola and her baby, protecting them within a “safe haven” of the girls’ providing, and offering them the “supportive atmosphere” that the community had so vehemently denied them.

While Pecola “ends up searching the garbage, discarded and reviled just as Cholly was, [inheriting] this legacy of disinheritance” (Earle 32), Claudia ends up singing

Pecola's blues, but she sings in her own way, through her narrative storytelling. Claudia creates a strong sense of home much as Clarissa created part of her home and Mary Leapor built her home—through words, through writing, through storytelling. Pecola was silenced by her mother, ignored by various members of her community, and then became the center of neighborhood gossip. However, Claudia gives Pecola a voice, offers Pecola the chance to have her story told and, according to Moses, “Claudia is the voice for the community's blues” (634). Furthermore, Claudia creates “memories” in structuring her “personal home.” However, these memories are not typical nostalgic memories of good times gone by, but the exposing of the traumas that she had witnessed: “We remembered Mrs. Breedlove knocking Pecola down and soothing the pink tears of the frozen doll baby that sounded like the door of our icebox. We remembered the knuckled eyes of schoolchildren under the gaze of Meringue Pie and the eyes of these same children when they looked at Pecola. Or maybe we didn't remember; we just knew” (191). The repetition of “we remembered” suggests the power of “memory” in storytelling and thusly home building.

A number of critics call *The Bluest Eye* a tragedy. Madonne M. Miner, however, argues: “But I cannot read *The Bluest Eye* as a tragedy,” writes Miner. “Claudia, our sometimes-narrator, *speaks*, as does Morrison, our full-time novelist” (20). Morrison, herself, gives voice to common traumas existent in the African-American community. Her first novel testifies to the desires of a girl she once knew who, like Pecola, voiced her own desire to have blue eyes. Writing this novel was for Morrison, as with Claudia, therapy during a time of struggle in her own life when, as she says, “I was in a place where there was nobody I could talk to and have real conversations with. And I think I

was also very unhappy. So I wrote then, for that reason” (“The Seams” 56). Morrison, like her narrator, builds a home in her writing, escaping to a place where she and her characters can find “freedom” and “memories,” “a supportive atmosphere” and “neighbors,” and “a comfortable environment” and a “safe haven.” Gaston Bachelard offers an optimistic analysis of the relationship between poet and reader: “There is no need to have lived through the poet’s sufferings in order to seize the felicity of speech offered by the poet—a felicity that dominates tragedy itself. Sublimation in poetry towers above the psychology of the mundane unhappy soul. For it is a fact that poetry possesses a felicity of its own, however great the tragedy it may be called upon to illustrate” (xxx). Thus, Morrison’s narrative poetry shows us, her reader, the way to strengthen our own identities, struggle against the “ideal,” and most important, find the “felicity” necessary to create a home of our own.

[...] For some daughters, home may be grounded not in place but in the replacement of the displaced self elsewhere, in an aptitude for travel.

What such writing as this—and the type of readerly travel it demands—can do is to point to that other space, that ‘elsewhere,’ in which the daughter can begin to write her own cultural story, create her own felicity.

(Gwin 115)

Claudia’s “physical,” “personal,” and “social home” is a home with which she travels. As long as she has stories to tell, truths to relate, and a voice with which to narrate them, she will have her home. Pecola, on the other hand, never learns her “cultural story,” only the fictional white “ideal.” Therefore, while Pecola’s voice only comes in madness where she mirrors that white “ideal,” Claudia finds a means of expressing herself in a voice built on

her experiences, her culture, her ancestry. The act of creating, in Claudia's case of writing, is therapeutic for Claudia, "In [Claudia's] journal, eventually read by others, she unburdens herself of the family secrets, one of the primary therapies in family systems as in other therapies. Unburdening herself in a similar fashion, becoming the narrator of her own life, Claudia escapes (and shows us how to escape Pecola's fate)" (Bump 163). Creating "her own felicity" and "becoming the narrator of her own life" does more than save Claudia from the fate which Pecola meets, it allows her to create a home of her own.

## Notes

1. For instance, when the Dutch settled in New York, they created warmth (both literal and figurative) and togetherness with the fireplace as the catalyst to such feelings. “Dutch fireplaces were really open hearths with a firehood, located against a wall. The mantles projected so far into the room, five or six feet being frequent, that it was easy for people to gather virtually around the fire” (Crowley, John 95). Of course the fire was essential to keeping the residents warm in the cold of winter, but it also brought family and friends to a centralized location encouraging communication and a sense of unity.

2. In the introduction to this dissertation, I present Liz Kenyon’s four categories of home, Temporal,” “Personal,” “Social,” and “Physical,” as central to the development of a complete emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical sense of home. All references to these categories and the values found therein (“independence and freedom”; “memories”; “supportive atmosphere”; “friendly neighbourhood”; a “comfortable environment”; and “a safe haven”) are drawn from Kenyon’s study, “A Home from Home: Students’ Transitional Experience of Home.”

3. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison only offers such a sisterhood with the community of women who attended Cholly’s Aunt Jimmy’s funeral and with the three prostitutes who live above the Breedloves in the store front. Morrison visits the sisterhood theme in her later novel, *Paradise* (discussed in chapter four), as she focuses on how women can come together to achieve the “independence” of a “personal home”, the “supportive atmosphere” of a “social home”, and the “safe haven” of a “physical home.”

4. Articles by Terry Otten and Andrea O'Reilly focus on the importance of the "home" work with which one needs to engage, especially preserving the traditions, tribal lore and culture. In the classroom, Otten's students discuss Morrison's use of conflict within her novels: "conflict between the tribe and new urban values, the traditional subversion of the white dominant culture by the Afro-American community, the loss of the village, and the writer's job of preserving the lore of the village" (95). O'Reilly takes up the conversation of the "tribe" focusing on the women and "home" work. She argues: "Securing food and shelter, struggling to build and sustain safe neighborhoods, is what defines both the meaning and experience of black women's motherwork and motherlove" (119).

5. A number of scholars examine Pauline's attraction to every aspect of the Fisher's life: their house, their nuclear family, her role as surrogate mother, and especially the manner in which they treat her. This treatment culminates in the intimate expression of renaming Pauline, giving her the nickname, Polly. Trudier Harris explores the role nicknames play in African American communities as they bestow recognition "upon an individual for a feat accomplished, a trait emphasized, or a characteristic noticed" (72). In Pauline's case, the Fisher's claim the "unclaimed" Pauline. Missy Dehn Kubitschek focuses on the lack of emotional intimacy between mother and daughter, writing: "Pecola has been trained to call Pauline by a name that does not make emotional claims. To her daughter, Pauline is not 'Mother' but 'Mrs. Breedlove'" (35). Harris furthers this argument, pointing out the detrimental effects of the distancing Pauline effects between herself and her daughter, for she cannot offer her daughter the kind of intimacy Pauline, herself, receives from the Fishers. "Pecola's formal name," says Harris, "reminiscent of movies and books, suggests distance rather than claiming" (72). Samuels and Weems point out that Pecola

does receive a nickname, however, but from outside of her family, from her own surrogate mothers, the deviant prostitutes who live upstairs from the Breedloves.

“Marie’s names for Pecola—Chittlin’, Puddin’, Chicken, and Honey—further signify her tenderness toward the child; ‘her epithets were fond ones chosen from menus and dishes that were forever uppermost in her mind’ (44)” (np).

6. Although I am focusing on the kitchens of two young girls, another interesting comparison could be made between the Breedlove family kitchen and the kitchen upstairs where the prostitutes live and where Pecola seeks attention. Wilfred Samuels and Clenora Hudson Weems contrast the two in great detail:

Although they, like the Breedloves, live in a storefront, they live above the squalor. Downstairs, Pecola suffocates in a home of displaced and fragmented lives. Upstairs, she finds sanctuary amidst the aroma of Miss Marie’s kitchen, the gut-level laughter of the women, and Poland’s blues song, sung in a voice that is “sweet and hard, like new strawberries” (43). Paradoxically, it is the only place Pecola can find genuine love. Unlike Mrs. Breedlove, who both ignores Pecola and shows preference for her little white charge, Miss Marie takes almost maternal interest in the exiled child. She greets her, “Hi, dumplin’. Where your socks?” (np)

Such a comparison shows that although Pecola had the three categories of home in her life through various surrogate families (the prostitutes and the MacTeers): Pecola had the “memories” of a “personal home” in Poland’s singing the blues; the “supportive atmosphere” of a “social” home in Miss Marie’s worrying over Pecola going barefoot; and a “comfortable environment” amongst “the aroma of Miss Marie’s kitchen” and the

easy-going laughter of women enjoying life and one another. Sadly, although all of this could have provided a solid foundation, her psyche was too terribly damaged by her own parents to proceed toward a healthy creation of a home of her own.

7. One might argue that Gwin's statement contradicts my description of the MacTeer home as a "safe" place. I do not wish to elide the danger that exists in the MacTeer house. Indeed, Frieda is molested by the family's boarder, Mr. Henry, within her own home. Instead, I argue that the manner with which danger is handled within the home sets the danger encountered in the MacTeer home apart from that in the Breedlove home. As I discuss later in this chapter, unlike Pauline Breedlove who accuses her daughter of lying about the rape, Mr. MacTeer never questions his daughter. Instead he reacts swiftly, protecting his daughter, beating up Mr. Henry when he learns of what the man has done to her. Within the MacTeer home, dangers are not caused by the parents as they are in the Breedlove home, they are, instead, rectified, the home returned to a "safe haven."

8. Kathryn Earle offers an interesting approach to the teaching of this scene which allows students to approach Cholly's actions outside of the violent context of rape and incest:

[...The students] need to see that the rape is motivated not by a perverse desire to destroy his daughter but by sweet memories of Pauline and Pecola's fragility—that is, by love, no matter how disturbed. In fact, the actual rape reads more like a love scene [...]. Someone reading this passage out of context would interpret the scene completely erroneously. I have found it useful to show the students excerpts before they read the novel to see if they can tell what is going on. The near impossibility of the



assignment makes them realize in later discussions that the situation is not straightforward as they might want it to be. (31)

9. Ruth Rosenberg explains that which Claudia perceives as her parents ignoring her. Again, rather than spoil their children, the MacTeers set up boundaries for their girls. Thus, “A new boarder’s arrival in the MacTeer household provides another occasion to instruct the children about their place. Their status, it is impressed upon them, is a little lower than that of the furniture: ‘Frieda and I were not introduced to him—merely pointed out. Like, here is the bathroom; the clothes closet is here; and these are my kids’” (437).

10. Society has certainly oppressed Cholly Breedlove, helping to explain the cyclical nature of the abuse he bestows upon his daughter: his mother abandoned him in a trash heap when he was just four days old, three white men with guns forced a young Cholly to finish having sex with a young girl, and his estranged father rejected him upon meeting him. In this dissertation, however, I focus more on the role of mothering as integral to the spiritual, intellectual, and social growth of daughters.

11. Various scholars use the active verb in explaining Pecola’s eventual madness, giving Pecola more autonomy in bringing about her madness. Pecola “*enters* a kind of prison” (emphasis mine, Byerman 450), “*denies* her pregnancy” in madness (emphasis mine, Fick and Gold 59), “*substitutes* her inchoate reality with a better one” (emphasis mine, Furman 19), “[...] *creates* a friend out of her imagination” (emphasis mine, Cormier-Hamilton 122), and “*accepts* as her destiny the destruction of her true being in favor of an insanity-induced self-image that validates in her mind the inherent inferiority of her heritage” (emphasis mine, Alexander 299).

Other critics use passive verbs blaming outside forces for Pecola's breakdown. For instance Malin Walther Pereira who argues that the effects of colonization are responsible for Pecola's madness: "We can say of *The Bluest Eye* that signs of white beauty throughout the culture were internalized by the black community. We can say that, according to the discourse of signs, Pecola was rendered invisible. We can even say that the sign system of beauty (along with the rape by her father) drove her mad" (77).

Finally, there are other critics who are ambivalent about whether Pecola brings about her own madness or is made mad. Patrick Bryce Bjork uses active verbs in describing what he sees as a passive act, first fully blaming Cholly for Pecola's ultimate breakdown, relieving Pecola of any autonomy. "Cholly [...] drives her into madness, and in so doing, frees Pecola from any further need for defense" (49). However, while Bjork maintains the passive in describing Pecola "imprisoned now behind her illusion of blue eyes," he follows with more active verbs, "Pecola *escapes* into schizophrenia and silence" (emphasis mine, 53) and "[...] Pecola in her madness, *has triumphed* over her condition" (emphasis mine, 54).

## Chapter Four

### The Rapture of Holy Women Dancing in Hot Sweet Rain:

#### A Space for Spiritual Enlightenment at Home in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*

“...[C]an’t you even imagine what it must feel like to have a true home? I don’t mean heaven. I mean a real earthly home. Not some fortress you bought and built up and have to keep everybody locked in our out. A real home. Not some place you went to and invaded and slaughtered people to get. Not some place you claimed, snatched because you got the guns. Not some place you stole from the people living there, but your own home...right there where you know your own people were born and lived and died...”

—Richard Misner (Morrison, *Paradise* 213).

In *Paradise*, Toni Morrison introduces us to an eclectic combination of multiple perspectives used to tell a single story about the clash of two dwellings. In Ruby, Oklahoma, residents experience a “supportive atmosphere” and “friendly neighborhood.” However, in Ruby, residency is exclusively for the descendents of the “Disallowing”—a historical moment where the town’s forefathers were rejected by African Americans of lighter skin. The townspeople build Ruby for families to feel welcome, to be considered family, and to call Ruby *home* but only if they are the direct descendents with the necessary birth right, eight-rock blood. Much scholarship on *Paradise* focuses on the overwhelming existence of exclusion in Ruby as well as the patriarchal power structure

(Krumholz; Michael; Friedman, Ellen G; Dalsgard; Jones; Kim; Tally, “Reality and Discourse”; Knapper; Schreiber).<sup>1</sup> The male authority figures in Ruby oppress, deny, harm, and even murder to keep out those who are different. Magali Cornier Michael speaks of the patriarchal power structure as “power over” that is Ruby in its “power over” everyone, especially their women and the younger generations.

The gendered, unbalanced power of Ruby is juxtaposed with a “power with” that is the magic uncovered and shared by those who seek comfort and healing at Morrison’s second dwelling, a place just outside of Ruby called the Convent. The Convent, unlike the exclusionary tactics of Ruby, is founded on inclusion. All are welcomed, although only traumatized women choose to reside therein. The Convent consists of a group of women from various walks of life, social class, and familial backgrounds held together by only one similarity: their varying but common experiences of oppression at the hands of patriarchal society. Ellen G. Friedman argues that the novel is Morrison’s “postpatriarchal beyond,” and the Convent exemplifies a place where “women contest, challenge, [and] destabilize Oedipal assumptions and power, thus providing opportunities for alternatives” (707). In recent years, critics have begun to focus more on these alternatives, especially the alternative spirituality Morrison envisions in *Paradise*. Sharon Jessee lists as such alternatives present in the novel:

slave religion and African American Christian traditions—‘hush harbor’ spirituality, African American identifications with both Old and New Testament narratives, contestations between African American Protestant churches, ‘the black church’ and black and womanist theologies—[...as

well as the focus of her article,] heretical Gnostic texts from the second and third centuries. (130)

Jacqueline Fulmer focuses on the presence of the “Virgin [Mary] in many hues” both within history and the novel (146)<sup>2</sup> while adding African and Afro-Brazilian traditions as well as goddess worship to the growing list of religions from which Morrison draws. While I agree with the presence of multiple spiritualities within the novel, my study focuses on various traditions of goddess worship consistent with feminist spirituality. While patriarchal power and exclusion (also called American exceptionalism and separatism) motivate the Convent women to travel away from their various points of origin, feminist spirituality helps them to transform themselves into a supportive unit and a family. Their abode becomes what anthropologist Liz Kenyon offers as the categories of home: “social,” “physical” and “personal” (87).<sup>3</sup> By tracing Mavis Albright’s journey from her traditional home and family to the Convent and the healing she finds at the Convent via Connie’s spiritual practices, I will show how women’s home spaces based on an ideal set forth by the ruling class may not offer an adequate sense of home. Therefore, travel becomes necessary for appreciating the essence of home. In addition, individuals often need to build unconventional alternatives to traditional home spaces. Finally, I will analyze the spirituality of the healing process as the Convent women draw from the practices of feminist spirituality in building their own home, rewriting their histories, creating their own stories, and finding spirituality in their “physical home.”

*Living the American Dream:*

*The Inequality of the Traditional Home*

In the 1950s and 1960s, individuals used the term “cereal box” to reference home as a space for a white family where the husband’s role was breadwinner, the wife’s role homemaker (Chapman, *Gender* 3). Sociologist Tony Chapman, however, points out the shortcoming of scholars studying the “cereal box” home, for they assumed these family dynamics to be “egalitarian,” eliding the possibility of any member being repressed (read woman): “...until the 1970s, government statisticians and social scientists rarely drew on the idea of gender divisions or differences when studying households and families because it was assumed that the nuclear family was a cohesive and harmonious social unit” (3). He goes on to say that while men could find contentment in family as respite from work, “Women, on the other hand, were expected to find a kind of contentment by supporting their husbands and children while denying their own interests” (207). Such assumptions amounted to the exclusion of women within the metaphorical haven of the home sphere.

Morrison clearly depicts this gender division in the home with Mavis Albright. Although we don’t know Mavis’s race for certain, she possesses all the requirements of this “cookie cutter” home in theory: a husband, children, and a house of her own. Despite the allegorical suggestion of her last name, things are not at all bright for this wife and mother within her lower-class home. Her abusive husband, Frank, drinks heavily and spends money unwisely on a flashy mint green Cadillac rather than providing necessities to make the home comfortable for his family: not buying a lawnmower, not installing screens in the windows of their paint-flaking house, not buying a working TV (28). He

oppresses his wife, finding “ways to prevent [his wife’s] acquaintance from becoming friendship” (27), denying her the chance to experience a “supportive atmosphere” and a “friendly neighborhood.” Furthermore, Mavis’ body and spirit are dominated by her husband, for in the bedroom, Mavis exists as a “life-size Raggedy Ann” (26) for her husband’s sexual pleasure.

Morrison expresses Frank’s controlling behavior and explosive temper indirectly through Mavis’s careful decision-making and frequent seeking of her husband’s approval so as not to incur his wrath. So as not to anger her husband, Mavis diligently prepares “the perfect meat loaf (not too loose, not too tight)...” (25), runs to the store when her husband comes home unexpectedly for supper because “Spam ain’t nothing for a working man to eat” (24), and takes their twins to the grocery to buy “weenies,” locking the infants in the Cadillac while she runs inside. Questioned as to why she brought the babies on her errand, Mavis responds: “You can’t expect a man to come home from that kind of work and have to watch over babies while I go get something decent to put in front of him. I know that ain’t right” (23). As S.J. Kleinberg notes: “Women were to provide a refuge from the outside world where men could rest and relax from their daily toil” (144). In providing said refuge for her husband and curbing his temper, Mavis feels the need to hurry, hurrying that comes at the expense of rational thought processes and leads her to abandon her children on a hot day, in a locked car, windows up. There is no room and no time left for her to consider the health of her children, the possibility of their suffocating in a hot car when her husband’s needs must be met.

Mavis’s relationship with Frank is definitely not egalitarian, and furthermore, her role as mother holds no satisfaction for her either. At the dinner table, Morrison depicts a

disrespectful family where "...Bill James spit Kool-Aid into Mavis' plate" (25), and Sal played with a razor blade that Mavis believed would be used on her later. Furthermore, as her daughter's sinister play with the razor blade suggests, Mavis feels terrorized by her older children. She even suffers physical abuse at her daughter's hand. During an interview with the local newspaper about the death of her babies, Sal pinches her mother's side: "...the pinch grew long, pointed. Sal's fingernails were diving for blood" (21) and again "she clenched the flesh at Mavis' waist" (22). At the end of the interview, "Sal jumped up and screamed, 'Ow! Look! A beetle!' and stomped on her mother's foot" (24). These actions suggest Mavis's lack of control in her home; abused by her husband and children, Mavis exists within the house as an "outsider" lacking the "supportive atmosphere" of a "social home," the "independence" of a "personal home," and the "safe haven" of a "physical home."

Within her home space, Mavis lives in a state of what Elizabeth Grosz calls the "disavowal" (123), a form of exclusion where: "The containment of women within a dwelling that they did not build, nor was even built *for* them, can only amount to a homelessness within the very home itself: it becomes the space of duty...the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and erasure of the self,... the space that harms as much as it isolates women" (122). Mavis experiences this exclusion within the home offering a parallel view of the exclusion, blindly living with the feeling of "homelessness", and never achieving the sense of ownership necessary for one to feel the "independence and freedom" of a "personal home." That is, until the traumatic loss of her babies pushes her to run away, to get in her husband's car and drive.



At this time, Mavis is unsure as to where she is going. She had never been in charge of her own destiny and is unfamiliar with the concept of independence. Mavis is broken in multiple ways. She had been mentally and physically battered by her husband and children, sexually battered by her husband, and intellectually battered by society's ideals and norms. Mavis needs to break free of the societal norms that led to the sacrifice of her identity and the deaths of her babies. According to Min-Jung Kim: "Morrison envisions difference in those who reject socially prescribed male/female roles. Consequently, what Morrison writes against is a capitalist society that valorizes male domination and materialist gain" (1024). Mavis, therefore, must abandon her legal and biological family and *house*, the societally acceptable norm, and become "difference" personified.

The traveling itself becomes essential to Mavis's growth and development, traveling as the first step toward building a home. Morrison's *Beloved* depicts this necessity of travel as Sethe must leave the only home she has known, the ironically named *Sweet Home*. Sethe's description of Sweet Home shows it to be a physically appealing environment with "the most beautiful sycamores in the world" (6). Although this home is not her "personal home," she simulates the "independence and freedom" her mistress has within her home in decorating the kitchen with her own personal touch, reflections of her own identity: "a few yellow flowers on the table, some myrtle tied around the hand of the flatiron holding the door open" (22). Sethe attempts to build a sense of home for herself based on societal norms and the ruling class's views of what home should be. Sethe sews her own "bedding dress" for her first night with Halle, therefore subscribing to the institution of marriage and feeling the embrace of Sweet

Home's borders. However, the institution of slavery deprives the slave of any permanent access to his or her own body, meaning that Sethe can never experience the freedoms of the categories of home long-term. At any moment her body can be taken by schoolteacher, for she is his property, and she or her husband can be sold from one another, for no slave marriage was ever acknowledged by law to be a marriage. As a slave, she is confined to her role as white man's property; she has no access to "independence" within a "personal home;" she has no "safe haven" of a "physical home."

Mavis, as does Sethe, must travel "elsewhere" (as Susan Stanford Friedman terms it)—away from the home as "a distinct constituent of identity and societal systems" (110)—to find a more suitable home of her own. Friedman states that such travel "can defamiliarize 'home,' teaching us that what we take as natural is in fact culturally produced and not inevitable" (110). She further acknowledges the necessity of revisionist feminist work in studying and breaking apart the traditional concepts of home, "As ethnographies of dwelling, such work has usefully troubled the concept of home, denaturalizing domestic space and showing that it is anything but 'stable,' and is frequently a site of intense alterity, oppression, marginalization, and resistance for women" (113). While Sethe desires to hide from her past, working "hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe" (6) to push her past abuse out of mind, Mavis must drive in a direction that will allow her the complexity of "destabilizing" her ideologies regarding (exclusion of) woman within home spaces.

Of course, oppression travels with the oppressed traveler. Therefore, Mavis must not run from her past but face it, deal with her oppression, allow herself to connect with her body and mind and the pain within. Realizing that home is not universal but a product

of society becomes essential for Mavis's building a home of her own rather than modeling it after the dominating culture's ideologies. Mavis had tried to build her family around a societal norm that was unhealthy to her individuality, depriving her of a sense of self. Now, Mavis must traverse a new space, a gap that Minrose C. Gwin calls the "something *else*... [which] resides ... between the journey toward what we want to find, the lost and lovely nest of home, and the memories and wounds that take us on another journey, a hidden quirk in the spiral; destination unknown" (163). To regain control of her body, mind, and spirit so she may experience a home of her own, she must travel away from the only home she has known.

Happily, after running out of gas just outside of Ruby, Mavis gets a ride with a woman headed to the Convent and ends up staying there for years to come. She is later joined by other women also needing to run away from the oppressive nature of a patriarchal society. Each woman has experienced oppression within the home space by people who should be trustworthy and supportive. Young Consolata (Connie) Sosa was taken by a nun and raised the Catholic way: deprived of any sexual expression, self-fulfillment, or a connection with the natural world. Grace's (Gigi) life was ridden with violence and visions of death, and she is haunted by her cowardice during a civil rights protest. At age five, Seneca was abandoned by her mother and later raped by a boy in her first foster family. Pallas (Divine) Truelove was betrayed by her mother (Dee Dee) who slept with Pallas's older boyfriend.<sup>4</sup> Pallas' fate before the Convent is unclear and confusing as Morrison offers fragmented images of boys chasing Pallas and forcing her car off the road. Whether Pallas is raped by these boys or men or no one, mental distress she experiences.<sup>5</sup>

These women desperately need to experience home—especially a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home”— in order to heal themselves of their mental and physical anguish. They need a sense of spirituality within the home that can help them believe in themselves, help them to feel “independence”, help them learn to help others *without* sacrificing the self. However, organized religion seems unable to offer Mavis and her friends free and full access to spirituality and spiritual healing. These women need healing, a special kind of healing that no established, male-dominated religion can offer. What they find in the Convent is, in the words of Linda J. Krumholz, an “open house,” open to any woman regardless of her race, religious belief, or social standing.

### ***Why the Need for an Alternative Religion?***

Five women, despite their differing experiences and backgrounds, all have one thing in common; they are broken, used, abused, lacking self-esteem, desperately needing to attain a deeper understanding of who they are as individuals. In the “open house” of the Convent, the women find a special friendship, a kind of friendship rarely fostered by organized religion, one that opens them up to a greater self-understanding. Furthermore, the Convent becomes representative of the spiritual conflict between male-dominated spirituality and a more nature-based, Goddess celebrated religion which ultimately manifests itself in the violent conflict between the Ruby townsmen who practice Christianity and the women of the Convent who practice the alternate religion, a more feminist spirituality.<sup>6</sup> The Convent will offer them an alternative home space, the three categories of home experienced through the practice of a non-Christian, not male-centered religion, through the rituals of goddess-celebrating, nature-based spirituality.

Here the women and their new-found family will build a mutually “supportive atmosphere,” discover who they are as women, and get to know their outer, inner, and sexual selves without prejudice within a “social home.” The Convent will become a “safe haven” of a “physical home” for these women to escape the patriarchal power that resides in society and within the patriarchal-based homes outside its doors. And here they will experience the “independence and freedom” to attain a non-hierarchical and not male-dominated spirituality. But the women have much work, much to learn, before realizing their paradisiacal home space.

Their work begins once all five women arrive at the Convent, 1975. In the late 60s into the 70s, women were engaging in Consciousness Raising groups, where they came to a stronger understanding of themselves and their place in society. They also became aware of the oppression that existed in hierarchical, male-based religions. They realized that a woman’s spiritual experience through male-based established religion was actually “male-defined” and that there was a definite need for a religion created for women, a feminist spirituality (Eller 27). Indeed, these traditional, organized religions existed based on exclusionary practices and an imbalance of power. *Paradise* offers a critique of Christianity, for a large part of the novel argues against the imbalance of power of men over women in society (most strikingly portrayed in Ruby). Certainly within traditional male-based religions, women occupy a seat of inferiority, subject to the rule of a male hierarchy of power. Channette Romero focuses on the inadequacies of Christianity as it fails to heal trauma in an individual or community’s life as portrayed in Morrison’s text. She argues: “*Paradise* suggests that Christianity works to divide individuals from each other and their world. The text is critical of normative Christian

traditions for contributing to the subjugation of women” as well as “for constructing dualisms that disconnect its practitioners from each other, the world they live in, and their bodies” (416). As with patriarchy, Christianity exists by means of exerting “power over” women. Therefore, the women in the Convent, especially the Catholic-raised Connie, must find an alternative to traditional religions, one that will allow them more control over their own lives and healing of their personal pain.

Connie comes to discover how oppressive her own Catholic beliefs are, depriving her of a spiritual home, “personal,” “social,” or “physical,” but her awareness comes in stages, over time. At age 39, her thirty years of faith is first “cracked like a pullet’s egg when she [meets] the living man,” Deacon Morgan (225). This sexual relationship, however, leaves her spirit damaged when the relationship ends abruptly with a visit from Deacon’s wife. Over ten years later, at nearly 50 years of age, Connie meets Lone Dupres, Ruby’s former midwife and healer, and Connie learns of her own special gifts of healing, even to the point of bringing a boy back from the dead. Connie is, at first, uneasy about Lone’s teachings as they run contrary to her Catholic beliefs, making her feel as if she were worshipping false idols. “In my faith, faith is all I need,” she tells Lone (244). However, Lone, in touch with her spiritual self, replies: “You need what we all need: earth, air, water. Don’t separate God from His elements. He created it all. You stuck on dividing Him from His works. Don’t unbalance His world” (244). Connie’s views differ with Lone’s suggesting the failure of the Catholic religion to offer the spiritual healing she needs, the healing with which she will need to provide the women. Instead, Lone’s practices offer a more natural spirituality and healing. Indeed, Lone’s description suggests a heavenly home on earth where all exist in harmony—man, woman, and that

which male-centered religions fail to include, nature. This connection between nature and human kind leads Connie, at least seven years later, to desire more control over her spirituality, a change that comes overnight. At this point, Connie desires the power to give more to others, to share her spiritual gifts with others who have been oppressed and hurt by men and patriarchal society as she has been. Connie and the others are all “broken girls, frightened girls, weak and lying” (222) and all need spiritual, mental, and sexual repair. Connie, therefore, accepts the role of Consolata, High Priestess, the woman who would show them the way to healing their selves, to better understanding their selves and each other, to realizing their place in the world around them, and ultimately she will help them finally experience spiritual, mental, and sexual enlightenment within their home space.

### ***Let the Rituals Begin...***

Homes do not always consist of legal and/or biological relatives as we saw in Mary Leapor’s metaphorical home described in her poetry. Furthermore, as we have seen in Richardson’s *Clarissa* and Morrison’s *Bluest Eye*, homes where legal relations do reside together are often unsupportive and unsafe environments. Judith Fryer explains how women often seek out societies of their own creation because often “they are confined to domestic activities, cut off from the social world of men and from each other” (130). Women then gain power by either entering the male work world or “creating their own society” ruled by purity rituals and “elaborate norms for ‘strict dress and demeanor, modesty, cleanliness, and prudishness’” (131). Fryer views a convent as “the most extreme example of such a world [...] a world wholly their own in which the very

symbolic and social conceptions that appear to set women apart and to circumscribe their activities may be used by women as a basis for female solidarity and worth” (131). In this space that was once a convent, Connie does not mandate dress code or specific manners of behavior; she does, however, follow rituals essential to each woman in her quest for home space. Through various healing rituals, Connie will offer each of the women in the Convent a chance to feel the “supportive atmosphere” and “neighborhood” of the “social home,” in other words, community, perhaps for the first time in their lives. However, first she must learn to take on the role of teacher, mother, and friend to the women.

Romero attributes Connie’s spiritual practices to “Candomble, a religion from her native Brazil that combines Catholicism with African spirit worship” because Candomble nature gods are associated with the natural elements of which Lone speaks (417). However, her practices also echo Wendy Griffin’s descriptions of “Gaians” in her essay “Crafting the Boundaries.” “Gaians,” a group who are “a part of” Nature, not “apart from” (77), recognize the imbalance created when individuals separate themselves from what they perceive to be “uncivilized”—the natural world. Among the imbalanced stands Catholicism which seeks to treat Nature as exterior and inferior to humanity. On the contrary, Gaians, like feminist spiritualists, seek to connect all things—the heavens, humanity, “earth, air, water.” Therefore, whether Candomble ritual, Gaian practice, or simply as feminist spiritualism—making things up as they went along, Connie comes ever closer to creating a home space unconfined by physical walls but extending well into a heavenly/earthly home, a community of humankind and nature.

Lone teaches Connie the power of “stepping in” or as Wiccans call it, the healing of “etheric energy” (Crowley, Vivianne 152). Wiccans believe that the human body is



surrounded by an aura that suffers damage when the body is damaged. As with Lone and Connie reaching in to heal [an injured] boy, “A skilled magical practitioner believes she or he can detect ... damage, use it to diagnose underlying illness, and repair the damage by transmitting energy to the aura of the person being healed” (Crowley, Vivianne 152). In the case of the dead boy, Scout Morgan, Morrison depicts this “etheric energy” as “a pinpoint of light receding.” Connie manipulates this light: “Pulling up energy that felt like fear, she stared at it until it widened. Then more, more, so air could come seeping, at first, then rushing rushing in,” ultimately widening this “light” or “energy” enough to bring the boy back to life (245).

Connie’s training becomes essential to the work ahead of her and the others in the Convent, healing their individual mental/spiritual trauma so they may feel the peace that should be felt within any home space. Each woman yearns “for a space that is psychically safe” (1026), as Kim deems it, and this informal training becomes the initial stage to healing each other, to creating such a space, a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home.” Once their High Priestess is ready and they can endure the spiritual healing necessary to make them one cohesive group, “a supportive atmosphere” and a family, then Connie begins to teach Mavis, Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas the art of healing through simple acts of nurturing and caring, engaging in the work of healing each other and themselves.

Overnight, Connie transforms herself from her figure as a push-over type of mother, to a strict mother, a High Priestess. As “[t]his sweet, unthreatening old lady who seemed to love each one of them best; who never criticized...; required no emotional investment; who listened...and accepted each as she was...this ideal parent, friend, companion in whose company they were safe from harm” (262), Connie offered these

women nothing but a shelter from their pain. Adrienne Rich argues that such a place, as with a battered-woman's shelter whose "door [is] opened to us when we need a refuge," is ideal for feeling "compassion and love ... rather than hostility or indifference (336). However, the pained individual can not hide in this place, hide from her pain, forever. Connie, then, becomes that which according to High Priestess Trish, high priestesses must become: "...you have to be the bad guy, you have to get people to see things they don't want to see and that is tough ... [and though there are] good results in the end...the toughness is real hard—and that is the same as being a mother" (qtd in Berger 111). Connie becomes exactly what the Convent women need, the person who will force them to "to see things they don't want to see," face their fears, face their pain, and learn to heal themselves.

"Toughness" is the trait needed because maintaining a home space is hard work. Indeed, Chapman in his study of a Christian alternative home space, the monastery, argues that a monastery "demonstrates the kind of discipline and rigorous compliance with rules that is required for such communities to sustain themselves over time" (Chapman, *Gender* 123). He goes on to say, "While different monastic orders applied different rules about, for example, poverty, silence, social isolation, fasting, sleep deprivation and a strict routine of work, celibacy, prayer and scholarship, all monastic orders expected complete obedience [...]" (Chapman, *Gender* 124). "Toughness," "complete obedience," hard work—Connie accepts all of this when she says to the others on their first night, before engaging in ritual: "I call myself Consolata Sosa. If you want to be here you do what I say. Eat how I say. Sleep when I say. And I will teach you what you are hungry for" (262).<sup>7</sup> The "sweet, unthreatening old lady" Connie is no longer;

Consolata Sosa, the High Priestess of the Convent is now in charge. I must stress the point, however, that the control Consolata now exerts is not like the patriarchal power maintained in a position of hierarchy. Sociologist Helen Berger, in her essay “High Priestess: Mother, Leader, Teacher,” echoes Michael’s differentiation between patriarchal power and the power the women in the Convent hold. She examines a “power over” such as established religious institutions maintain versus the power feminist spiritualists aim to achieve—a “power to—that is, the power to gain control of their own lives without the oppression of others” (Berger 108). Consolata may have power, but she is not using it to manipulate anyone, only to “...help others develop spiritually, psychologically, and magically” (Berger 109).

According to Berger, “The [...High Priestess] is expected to help people become aware of their problems and provide social, psychological, or magical exercises to help them grow” (109). At present, the women at the Convent are all battered physically, mentally and sexually. They have little to no power over their own lives. Consolata’s goal, then, is to introduce the women to an exercise “aimed at empowerment of individuals to change their self-perceptions and their lives” (Berger 109). As Timothy Aubry argues, rather than enforcing rules that are repressive as do the men of Ruby, “On the contrary, the rituals and regulations she installs incite new unrestrained modes of artistic creation from the convent’s residents [...]. For Morrison, then, doctrines and protocols are an indispensable feature of paradise, not insofar as they require strict adherence, but insofar as they provoke the constant, creative labor of renegotiation and revision” (366). Consolata then introduces the women to the first of their healing rituals,

the “creative labor or renegotiation and revision” within which they engage as they rewrite their bodies:

In writing the body...women in [feminist spirituality...] are deconstructing the patriarchal religious metanarrative. They transform gender identity by subverting traditional meaning and representation of what it means to be female, simultaneously creating new definitions of appropriate gendered behavior for women. This process redefines the boundaries of what is acceptable. (Griffin, “Crafting” 84-85)

Surrounding the basement in a circle of candles and then undressing (two customs of feminist spirituality ritual) the women are each instructed to lie on the floor. Consolata then traces the floor around their bodies with paint, essentially drawing a boundary around their physical selves. I argue that the drawing of the body represents their former home spaces, that which confines them into society’s ideals. They remain within this boundary, remembering, in darkness lit by a circle of candles, naked like a baby in a womb while Consolata tells them “Of scented cathedrals made of gold where gods and goddesses sat in the pews with the congregation” and tales of other pagan figures: dwarfs, snakes, and a woman she calls “Piedade.” The healing commences as each woman tells her story, the story of shared trauma experienced within their former home spaces. Each story is, indeed, shared as “[t]hey enter the heat in [Mavis’ ...] Cadillac...They kick their legs underwater...Each one blinks and gags from tear gas...Yelps with pain from a stranger’s penis and a mother’s rivalry...” (264).

In this first step, just as “feminist Witches share the feminist ethic of connectedness through shared oppression and the myth of a communal golden age”

(Greenwood 141), so do the women bond together like they have never done before. The anger that existed between Mavis and Gigi is gone; there is no need for Seneca to play the peacemaker; Pallas does not need to hide the truth of her mother's betrayal. They are interconnected through "shared oppression" and their desire to heal themselves and each other. They are becoming one with each other first, as later they will become one with nature. And each of them changes, over the months that follow, as they decorate their redrawn selves. Seneca, for instance, draws her cuts onto her "other" self and thereby saves her new body from harm. The figures on the floor become their "other" selves, their former selves, the selves that have been bruised, cut, scarred, and pushed around, the selves they are free to leave behind as they are born anew. As one unidentified woman from Ruby notes upon witnessing them in their altered states: "the Convent women were no longer haunted" (266).

Regarding this initial stage of the ritual, Shirley Ann Stave writes: "[w]hether the ritual is read in terms of a return to an African religion, to a psychological process of reclaiming the self, to a Candomble initiation, or to a Gnostic-infused take on mainstream Christianity, the result is the same" (70). Through the process of rewriting their bodies, they empower themselves, face their pasts, and remember—just as Leapor does through her poetry, Clarissa does through letter-writing and the decorating of her coffin, and Claudia does in writing Pecola's story. However, the women also experience the "independence and freedom" of a "personal home" as they step out of their drawn selves, an act symbolic of separating themselves from their unhealthy home life, minimizing the control their pasts hold over them but never forgetting, always maintaining the "memories" of their pain.

As the women write their pains onto the cellar floor, they begin to heal, and so, too, does Connie heal through her role as High Priestess, Consolata Sosa. According to Maeve Rhea, high priestess for fifteen years of the MotherChant Coven, being a High Priestess is much more than like being a mother; it is actually self-empowering, and it gives her “a sense of connection, and a better sense of [...herself]” (qtd in Berger 114). Connie would find her own sense of empowerment in leading her congregation. The ritual she leads the others through is not a power-trip, however, but a sense of self-fulfillment as she helps those in need. Michael argues:

Indeed, the novel offers the Convent as ... a locally developed ethos of mutual caregiving, in both a physical and psychic sense. ... Caregiving becomes an active and activist response to the diverse social inequities the women have suffered. Casting aside the conventional Western split between mind and body, the Convent offers a space that recognizes the interconnections of physical and psychic pain or imbalances and that allows experiments in ways to face up to and move past these pains or imbalances. (653)

Connie becomes active in caregiving for the women and with the women, thereby helping herself while helping others. Through her position as high priestess to the Convent women, Connie enables herself to move past the trauma of having been stolen from her homeland and her people, cope with the loss of the woman she had loved and the man she had coveted. She opens herself up to experiencing the mutual exchange and the “supportive atmosphere” a “social home” offers.

### *Dancing with the Goddess*

Through writing the body and exchanging their stories, the women engage in the intensity of their first healing ritual. Once they have accomplished this task, they move out of the basement of the Convent, extending the borders of home space outside into nature. Although the women have achieved a “social” and “personal home,” this move allows them to experience Kenyon’s third category, the “safe haven” and “comfortable environment” of a “physical home” (87). In nature, the physical borders of house and home are erased as the women experience the openness of physical space, an extended “social” home consisting of the support of the residents as well as an extended neighborhood, a heavenly/earthly home. They accomplish this through their final ritual, “dancing in hot sweet rain” (283).

The ritual of belly dancing has been around for centuries, and has more often than not been misconceived. Literary scholar, feminist and instructor of Middle-Eastern dance, Janice Crosby, writes of the power that belly dancing offers a woman as her body connects with her spirit. She says, however, that “... the ways in which the dance increases women’s sense of power and self prove unacceptable to men who prefer their women to be less than they can be” (172). Indeed, in feminist spirituality, the art of dance ignores society’s disapproving eye, raising the dancer’s spirit from the negativity of societal space to a space of nature, a spiritual space, connecting her with the Goddess, making her feel as if she *were* the Goddess (177). Prior to the women’s spiritual transformation, we see the disapproving eye when they dance at K.D. and Arnette’s wedding reception in Ruby. The townspeople stare in awe at what they perceive to be “loose” women—“loose” because of the freedom with which they engage in the dance.

Reverend Pulliam thinks: “He knew about such women...always on the lookout for fun”; and his wife: “She knew, as he did, that fun-obsessed adults were clear signs of already advanced decay”; and “the local girls look over their shoulders and snort” (157). What the townspeople see is a sexual display of the body in the form of dancing, and yet the women “...grin and yip but look at no one. Just their own rocking bodies” (157). Just as the Convent women “look at no one” as they dance, so is dance during feminist spirituality celebrations done not for anyone else but solely for the dancers themselves.

In dance, the body becomes one with nature as with any artistic expression of the body, soul, and mind. Fryer describes Willa Cather’s character, Thea Kronborg from *Song of the Lark*, as she undergoes a transformation, her body becoming one with nature: “...the connection between matter and spirit, between form and desire. Her emergence as an artist comes quite literally from the earth: in contact with the earth/ she leaves once again to know and to delight in her body” (300-301). Thea’s art, as with writing or acting, or any activity where one escapes into an alternative reality allows the artist to abandon societal constructs and become one with nature, the earthly home. Through artistic expression, the artist experiences a “spiritual being within limits that protect” (Fryer 293), “home as a safe haven,” a “physical home.” The art of dance allows this transformation, allows the dancer to exist spiritually “within limits that protect.” The art of dance becomes less fun, as when the convent women dance at the wedding reception, and more a second step toward further healing their emotional, physical, and spiritual pain. Thus, late one August evening, 1976, in the middle of the newly falling rain, the newborn women of the Convent step outdoors to dance.



Being the High Priestess, “Consolata started it; the rest were quick to join her...the rapture of holy women dancing in hot sweet rain. They would have laughed, had enchantment not been so deep” (283). The lack of “laughter” shows that these women are not at play; they are, instead, completely caught up in the “rapture” and “enchantment” of this dance and the feel of the rain. They are already newborns from their “temple” rituals in the basement, “holy women” who have found peace through their alternative religion.

This dance in the rain becomes the second ritual—a kind of baptism, a welcoming of their collective spirits to the natural world. In this dance, they learn to feel comfortable with their sexuality, with their nature-like bodies, and are able to connect with their Goddess, their mother Earth. This second ritual brings the women further from their pain and their oppressive pasts, further from the negativity patriarchal society places on women. Crosby tells a similar tale of her first belly dance teacher, Khawliya, who, although a rape victim, took back control of her life through belly dance: “She could move effortlessly from a gypsy pose on a chair, scissor kicking her legs in a flirtatious way, to a leap and a toss of her long red hair which said ‘You can’t touch this!’ When Khawliya danced, she reclaimed her power. Here was no victim” (176).<sup>8</sup>

Nor were there victims dancing in the garden at the Convent. Consolata’s dance was “furious,” Mavis’ “elegant,” “Seneca and Grace danced together ... [and] Pallas...swayed like a frond” (283). There are no men to pass judgment on them, just women, their bodies, nature, the Goddess, and the dance. Finally, they are whole women again, mind and body as one with nature and each other, like the feminist spiritualist’s “true self” (Greenwood 138). At this moment, they have achieved what few ever

experience, the *paradise* of existing simultaneously within three of Liz Kenyon's four categories of home. Stepping outside the building of the former convent, the women carry with them the "memories" of their trauma, now rewritten, accepted, and even embraced, preserved for life as part of who they are within their "personal home." They are an "inclusive" family, a community, a "neighborhood," a "supportive atmosphere" within their "social home." And embraced by nature's "hot sweet rain," they finally feel in this moment that they have a place they can call comfortable, a "safe haven" in nature, in an earthly "physical home" (87).

### ***Paradise Reconsidered***

Liz Kenyon says the "temporal home" is "stable and permanent" (87). The impermanence of home in literature suggests the precarious nature of home: Mary Leapor finds a permanent home but only through metaphor and fiction, through letters, words, sentences, poetry; Richardson's *Clarissa* finds a permanent home but only in death; Morrison's Pecola Breedlove finds her permanent home in the sad place she creates in her mind, through her abandoning of the real world into the dream space of insanity. Whether the women in the Convent achieve "temporal home" in a healthier manner than those mentioned above, in their newly formed earthly paradise, is debatable.

First, one may wonder how the Convent women could possibly have achieved the "temporal home," let alone a "personal," "social," and "physical home" when there was so much work involved—the templates, the facing of one's demons, even the contemptuous reaction of the Ruby townspeople to the women. But building a sense of home is never easy. The owners of Mary Leapor's "Crumble Hall" experience a haven

only through the servants' toil, at the expense of the servants' sense of home. The traditional head of the "cookie cutter" household returns from a difficult day at the office to find a clean, orderly, and peaceful home space only through his wife's toil, at the expense of her sense of home. However, for the rest of those craving a home of her own, those without servant or wife, creating a home space is an ongoing process entailing much toil. As Gaston Bachelard says, to realize home in a permanent state "would lead to thoughts—serious, sad thoughts—and not to dreams" (61). Many critics note the importance of work in building a home (paradise) within Morrison's novel. Romero argues: "This 'paradise' involves 'endless work' to be done *not* on some transcendent plane, removed from the earth, but instead 'down here' in building more benign communities" (423, emphasis mine). Janice M. Wolff emphasizes the pleasure the women in the Convent actually take in their daily house work routine: "It is a scene of production and women active in the mode of production, not alienated from their work, but in harmony with it" (8). Aubry explains: "Those in search of paradise will, after a long voyage in unfamiliar territory, eventually discover their reward: interminable toil. They should not, however, be dismayed by this realization, since, according to Morrison, such work is not a dreary alternative or an unfortunate but necessary prelude to paradise; such work is itself the essence of paradise [...]" (350). The Convent women ultimately achieve a sense of home only because they are willing to work for it.

In addition to all the work one puts into achieving home, there are other struggles women face in the home experience which interfere with the "temporal home." Home, "paradise," is a dream people work to make real as they build elaborate structures full of pictures of family and friends ("memories") and build relationships with the people next

door or down the street (“neighborhood”). The reality of the world, however, often interrupts the dream, the peace, and more importantly, the “safe haven” of their “physical home”—burglaries and home invasions, murder, rape, and even abuse within the walls of what should be their home space. The Convent women’s religious experience within a feminist spirituality, although temporarily a “paradisiacal home,” can not completely harbor them from the dangers that exist in everyday life. Thus, toward the end of the novel Morrison describes in fuller detail what she opened her novel with, “They shoot the white girl first” (3). Despite their spiritual power, the women are hunted down and shot one by one, less like spiritual Goddesses, more like animals. The Ruby townsmen feel threatened by the women’s ability to exist, even thrive, without men, to live without reverence to their own Christian God. Therefore, these judgmental men perform the execution of the Convent women and bring about the end of the Convent women’s newly formed earthly home at the convent.

However, the Convent women’s work in building their “paradisiacal home” is not all for naught, and certainly this is not the end of their story, not yet the end of the novel. Elizabeth Ely Tolman looks upon the ending of the Convent women’s life at the convent as not telling “a disjointed story of disappointment and destruction” (12). Although the women do not achieve a “temporal home” within the boundaries of the Convent, they do simultaneously achieve a “personal,” “social,” and “physical home” without and outside those boundaries, in the extensiveness of nature. Indeed, this ecocritical view<sup>9</sup> of the novel reveals the positive, the beauty of “the interconnectedness of nature, religion, and African American identity” (12). The novel ends not, therefore, with permanence as the “death” of the Convent women at the hands of the Ruby townsmen suggests it should be.

Instead, the novel transcends this ending, ending instead in resurrection and in the continuation of the work these women have yet to do toward building home. As discussed earlier, Consolata has the power to “step in” or “see in.” If Connie was able to raise a young boy from death, then certainly Lone, Connie’s teacher, can perform the same act on Consolata and the others. Indeed, we see Lone left alone to watch over the bodies after the massacre has taken place, and as the last of the Ruby townspeople get ready to drive away, Lone says that Roger Best, the hearse driver, “got a lot of work to do... A lot of work” (292). Her repetition of “a lot of work” suggest that the “work” to do does not belong to Roger, however, but to herself. Indeed, when Roger arrives at the convent, he finds no dead women anywhere, “No bodies. Nothing. Even the Cadillac was gone” (292). Just as surely as the boy was dead before Connie held him in her arms early in the novel, so were these women dead, but not permanently.

***Resurrections and Home Preservations:***

***A Conclusion but not an Ending***

“By understanding the community they have formed as a paradise, the Convent women create that paradise. Once they accept that there is no perfect place other than the one they can imagine and form, the women cease their wandering and begin to find peace where they are and, most importantly, with whom they are.”

--Carmen Gillespie, “*Paradise*”

On the floor of the convent, the women had faced their pasts through the metaphorical writing of their pain. Morrison’s novel closes with the resurrected women moving through life like warrior women ready for battle as they continue to face their

pasts in a more concrete manner. The attack on the convent has taught them to be prepared to continue their work, continue to fight for their homes, their homes now less a physical place and more a sense of place, “imagine[d] and form[ed].” Mavis, Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas (her newborn baby in tow) carry on the preservation work necessary for maintaining a home as they encounter their biological families. While each seems like chance meetings, they offer each woman a chance to physically face her past, a greater step toward self-healing than the metaphorical writing of her pain. On lunch break as part of a work crew, Gigi’s incarcerated father sees, sunning herself by a lake, the daughter he’d abandoned when she was but eleven. In her guest bedroom, Pallas’s mother sees the daughter she had betrayed (having had sex with her daughter’s boyfriend), digging under the guest bed for a pair of shoes she’d left behind. In a diner, Mavis’s daughter, Sally, sees the mother she had tortured. And in a stadium parking lot, Pallas’s mother, Jean who had been only fourteen when she’d given birth to Pallas, sees the daughter she had abandoned. The visits are each short but allow the women to continue their home work, allow them to continue connecting with and facing their pasts, and finding “peace [...] with whom they are” (Gillespie 136).

The ending of the novel offers hope for women to know that there are alternatives to the established religion that oppresses. There is hope that women can live on beyond life, life after life, existence on a higher spiritual plane. The Convent women survive to build a home of their own, one they can carry with them always, but one they now know they must forever work on. With the help of feminist spirituality and the Goddess they revere, the women appear comfortable as the novel ends, laughing, smiling, and taking care of each other as they go. They are comfortable traveling together, “a supportive

atmosphere” in a “social home.” They are comfortable revisiting their pasts, an act of preservation, as they hold dearly to their pained pasts, “a collection of memories” in a “personal home.” They are comfortable in the “safe haven” they have learned through feminist spirituality and their healing rituals, a haven that they “imagine[d] and form[ed]” (Gillespie 136) in their minds and in their spirits, in a “physical home.” Existing in the open space of their extended earthly home, the women carry on the home work they began in a building called the Convent.

## Notes

1. Scholarship of interest regarding exclusion within Morrison's novel includes Linda J. Krumholz who writes: "The irony of *Paradise* is that repetition without a difference maintains itself through rigidity and exclusion and thus destroys the ideal it seeks to preserve; an unchanging *Paradise* inevitably loses its paradisiacal nature" (21). In "The Eye of the Needle: Morrison's *Paradise*, Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, and the American Jeremiad," Jill C. Jones compares the events in the novel to the Salem witch trials, noting the repetition of the "usual" American sin of "exclusion" (16). And Katrine Dalsgard focuses on "American Exceptionalism" in her article "The One All-Black Town Worth the Pain: (African) American Exceptionalism, Historical Narration, and the Critique of Nationhood in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." Here the "exceptionalism" as an ideal equals exclusion, "for the small community's—and the larger nation's—violent attempt to preserve itself by destroying its other is not in conflict with, but is an inextricable part of, its ideal vision" (241).
2. Jacqueline Fulmer argues: "By depicting the Virgin in many hues, Morrison wants readers to question assumptions that Christianity is a 'white,' 'western European' faith. Many words of material folk culture in Europe, Brazil, and Mexico depict the Virgin Mary as a black or native woman" (146). In these cases, the Virgin Mary visits the oppressed, most strikingly those oppressed by White oppressors (146-147).
3. In the introduction to this dissertation, I present Liz Kenyon's four categories of home, "Temporal," "Personal," "Social," and "Physical," as central to the development of a



complete emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical sense of home. All references to these four categories and the values found therein (“independence and freedom”; “memories”; “supportive atmosphere”; “friendly neighbourhood”; a “comfortable environment”; and “a safe haven”) are drawn from Kenyon’s study, “A Home from Home: Students’ Transitional Experience of Home.”

4. Dee Dee’s betrayal of her daughter (as well as Birdie’s betrayal of her daughter, Mavis, to Mavis’s husband and Seneca’s abandonment as a child in a housing project by her mother) brings to mind the often tense relationship between mothers and daughters in Morrison’s oeuvre. Pauline Breedlove’s favoring of the white girl in *The Bluest Eye* helps push her daughter, Pecola, toward insanity as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation; and Sula puts her mother in a nursing home in *Sula*.

5. Peter Widdowson offers a chronology of the women’s arrival at the Convent in his article, “The American Dream Refashioned.” He further explains the error Morrison makes in her time line in a conscious effort to build irony in the shooting of the women in early July 1976, for this act corresponds with the bicentennial of the adopting of The Declaration of *Independence*.

6. In this dissertation, I focus on the women who seek solace and healing at the Convent from home spaces outside of the immediate area. There are, however, Ruby townswomen who seek healing from the haven of the Convent as well, but they do not engage in the spiritual healing rituals discussed in detail later herein. Instead, these women make the long walk up the road to the Convent (as opposed to the men who all drive), walking the earth toward a spiritual space not provided in their hometown.

In Ruby, the male-based religions—Baptist, Methodists, and Pentecostals—deny the women a voice in any significant decision-making. When K.D. impregnates Arnette and then smacks her in public, the men, led by the Baptist Reverend Misner decide the fate of the young couple, while the women, including Arnette, moved about upstairs, “nowhere in sight” (61). And when the young people of Ruby challenge the deciphering of the damaged engraving of the town’s symbolic monument, “the Oven,” two of the religious heads, Reverends Misner and Pulliam mediate the discussions. The words exchanged, words that would decide the fate of the town’s future in relation to the past, are words between “the fathers” and “the sons,” the women merely looking on quietly, nowhere in sound (83).

Ruby, being a patriarchal society, is not the most nurturing of home spaces for women or men. Having been silenced for so long, therefore, the women turn away from Ruby in times of pain and suffering, seeking out the alternative life at the Convent for physical and spiritual healing. “Back and forth, back and forth: crying women, staring women, scowling, lip-biting women or women just plain lost” (270). Among these women, Billie Delia, beaten nearly to death by her mother both physically—a “split lip” and “swelling under her eye”—and mentally—having “cried alone for what seemed like hours” (152)—seeks help at the Convent. This space becomes a “supportive atmosphere” offering Billie Delia the freedom to stay as long or as short a time as she likes. Once Billie Delia is healed, she returns to life outside the Convent. She does not, however, go away empty-handed: “What she saw and learned there changed her forever” (152). Pregnant and unwed, Arnette comes to the Convent as well. The women do their best to help her, guiding her through the labor of her son, but the child dies because of the

physical abuse Arnette inflicts on her body, punching her stomach and sticking a broomstick up her vagina to crush the baby inside her.

7. Prior to these words, Connie has set the table with a great feast, what Jacqueline Fulmer terms a “last supper” (70) before the women engage in their ritual, for following this feast, their ritual has them eating a diet strictly consisting of the earth and water, “bloodless food and water” (265). According to Fulmer: “[...] Morrison describes [the preparation of this meal] in glorified, succulent detail, evidence of the flesh and the spirit happily connected” (145). Carmen Gillespie further emphasizes the importance of this meal. She notes the biblical allusion of the baked apples to the tree of knowledge: “With her baked apples, Connie rewrites biblical narrative. Rather than prohibiting the acquisition of knowledge, Connie’s nutritional gift of apples encourages the women of the Convent to know” (136).

8. Fulmer sees similarity between the Convent women’s “last supper” and dance with “the Poor Clare nuns of Lilongwe, Malawi.” These women

have a dance and song that they dedicate to the Virgin as part of their morning worship [...]. Their dancing gains in speed, and they ululate, in deep act of worship that springs from the heart of the Malawi folk culture, yet it remains just as deeply Christian as a Catholic tradition. The associations between movement, food, music, joy, and Christian spirituality in this religious folk tradition parallel the inseparability of the flesh and spirit portrayed in the Convent women’s dancing and celebratory feast. (146)

9. As Elizabeth Ely Tolman's "Approaches to Morrison's Work: Ecocritical" explains, ecocriticism "allows both readers and authors to foreground environmental issues in texts so that these themes may be recognized and perhaps even studied scientifically" (7).

## Conclusion

“...there is never an end to housekeeping—its pain, its pleasure, its politics.”

--Minrose C. Gwin

“I hope that for you, as for me, *Home Girls* provides a means to know yourself and to be known, that between its pages you start to feel at home. Because in the end, there is nothing more important to us than home” (lv-lvi).

--Barbara Smith, Introduction

In the United States in 1979, Bob Vila stood alone as the host of the sole home improvement show, *This Old House*. Since then, we can find more variety in home improvement television programs, whether we want to fix our yards, kitchens, bathrooms; really any room can be a job to tackle, making our houses look appropriate and acceptable based on standards set by the show’s producers as defined by the ruling class.<sup>1</sup> The presence alone of television channels completely devoted to improving living spaces, indoors and out, shows this newest television trend toward home improvement. However, is this desire to make one’s house a thing of beauty and turn it into a home worthy of the outsider’s glance something new to society?

Looking back, prior to the invention of television, numbers of magazines offered information about home keeping, fashion, good health, and parenting. The home being the woman’s sphere, women were largely responsible for managing the home according to the magazine editors’ and writers’ standards.<sup>2</sup>

Even further back, however, if we traverse the ocean to England, we find yet another medium focusing on the beauty of the home, specifically the country home, as country house poetry became a popular subgenre in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. William J. Christmas describes these works as a “panegyric,” praising the country house owners for their graciousness in making guests feel at home—comfortable and welcome—by maintaining the house as less a work of art to be admired and more a work of natural beauty, a space to be enjoyed by and shared with the passing visitor and members of the local community alike.<sup>3</sup>

This dissertation examines the effects of this long-time trend, of the media setting forth standards for home. These effects lead individuals to desire a home of their own that is at once based on the ideal and also a place of comfort and security, where the residents experience a sense of belonging. I expose, however, the limitations of the house as home in the ideal as set forth by society, for it is only experienced as “home” by few while a majority will never feel “home” within it because of their gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. When examining these texts from male and female authors, British and American, separated by centuries, we realize the inability of this metaphorical, societally-prescribed ideal home to be much more than a metaphor.

I began this dissertation with the idea that the three authors’, Mary Leapor, Samuel Richardson, and Toni Morrison, offer literary representations of home that expose the dark side of the home elided in poetry, magazine, and television show alike—the inequality, oppression, and sometimes violence within the home. Showing these contrary experiences within the house thereby exposes the difficulties that arise when female characters attempt to live according to such home ideals. Female characters in

“Crumble Hall,” *Clarissa*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Paradise* are without rights not only because they are female but because they are a servant; a young, marriageable woman; an African-American adolescent; and individuals engaging in non-Christian spiritual practices. These women live on the margin of society because they are not of the upper middle classes, not male, not white, and not members of the Christian faith. Society, family, and community deny them the ideal home, and yet they seek home nonetheless, continually struggling through and working to develop alternative ways of building home, turning always to the imagination, the creative process, and fashioning a home of their own, using any means available—placing poetic words on a page, etching symbols and biblical verses on a coffin, writing the story of a friend who can not speak for herself, and drawing the body on the cellar floor.

As the reader of these texts, I discovered that a number of scholars miss an important way of reading them. Our readings would often have us regarding these texts negatively, some as tragedies—Mira must tend to servant duties in another’s house, chastised for writing; Clarissa is figuratively prostituted out by her family in her house only to be raped in Mrs. Sinclair’s house (a space promised to be a haven); Pecola is raped in her apartment, and the convent women are hunted down in their house, the home they built together. These experiences are tragic, indeed, if we read them up against the ideas with which anthropologist Liz Kenyon categorizes home—“a supportive atmosphere” in a “social home,” “independence and freedom” and “a collection of memories” in a “personal home,” and a “safe haven” in a “physical home.”

However, if as readers we expand our idea of home to allow storytelling and narration, the spoken, sung, and written word, and the creative process and expression in

any artistic medium as home, then we see the workings of the imagination reconfigure space, transforming closed, tight, and claustrophobic space into wide open areas of growth, learning, and identity formation. Furthermore, reading these works positively, we open ourselves up to acknowledge that the characters each successfully find home:

Leapor writes Mira a poetic home; Clarissa writes her home in letters and on her coffin; Claudia narrates a space for a homeless and voiceless Pecola, and the convent women write their body, dealing with their past pain, healing, and yet carrying on with the work of home construction even after healing is complete.

Such readings offer a model by which we may view home in our own lives, enabling us to deconstruct that which we take as the norm and instead accepting that we can construct our own versions of home away from societal expectations and ideals. Furthermore, the home becomes a subject with which students can connect. Within the classroom, I find the deconstruction of home spaces to be an eye-opening experience for students. Viewing home in new ways allows them to see beauty in homes that offer Kenyon's categories of home without the price tag of the ideal home. These students can also come to accept their past homes as part of who they are and who they wish to be. Indeed, with new ways of thinking of home, students become open to carrying their memories of home into their future home constructions regardless of whether their childhood home experiences were "acceptable" or "lacking" in relationship to the ideal.

Most important for the reader of these texts—student, teacher, scholar, or pleasure reader—is the strength all can garner from the ways with which each of these characters (aside from Pecola) perseveres despite the odds. With friends and/or family, the characters continue to struggle against society's ways, living their lives the way they



desire, in a home based on their own values, beliefs, and ideals. They offer the reader models of home, alternative to the traditional home as set forth by the ruling classes.

Furthermore, reading this literature is, of course, work, and the work we do as readers, teachers, and scholars emulates the work these characters must continue, for home is not static, not permanent as the ideal suggests. Home is work, housework, preservation, communal work, struggle, and survival. The creative product of home work is what survives. In book clubs, the pleasure readers are discussing; in classrooms, the students are questioning; and in journals and monographs, the scholars are challenging each other, reading texts in new and inventive ways; and even myself, as I write this dissertation, I help ensure the continuation of the work of building home, continuing to carry these stories of home into the future, hopefully well into the centuries ahead.

## Notes

1. In the United States, our current television lineup consists of HGTV's *HGTV Design Star*, *Curb Appeal*, and *Dear Genevieve*; TLC has *Trading Spaces* and *Clean Sweep*, and DIY has *Indoors Out*, *Desperate Landscapes*, *Bathtastic*, *Kitchen Impossible*, and *Yard Crashers*.
2. Deirdre Carmody offers a bit of historical background for the top seven women's magazines in her article, "Identity Crisis for 'Seven Sisters.'" At the time of this article, 1990, *McCall's*—the oldest magazine of the seven (around since 1873 as *The Queen* and then renamed *McCall's* in 1897) was facing a significant drop in readership and having to work on remodeling itself "to attract the better educated and more sophisticated readers that many advertisers desire" (D1+). Furthermore, from 1940 until 1990, *Good Homes and Gardens* (created in 1922) had been among the top seven selling women's magazines. This periodical, considered to be under "the women's home-decorating category," maintained readership while its other six sister magazines all under the category of "women's service" faced significant drops (D12). Over the last century, home magazines have certainly maintained their popularity.
3. See Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House, to My Lord Fairfax," and Thomas Carew's "To Saxham" and "To My Friend G.N. from Wrest."

## Works Cited

- Adams, Mary Louise. "There's No Place Like Home: On the Place of Identity in Feminist Politics." *Feminist Review* 31 (Spring 1989): 22-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 Aug. 2009.
- Alexander, Allen. "The Fourth Face: The Image of God in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *African American Review* 32.2 (Summer 1998): 293-303. *LION*. Web. 20 July 2007.
- Allan, Graham, and Graham Crow, eds. *Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere*. London: Macmillan, 1989. Print.
- Applebaum, Robert. *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food among the Early Moderns*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006. Print.
- Ariès, Phillipe. Introduction of Roger Chartier's *A History of Private Life: III Passions of the Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989. Print.
- Aubry, Timothy. "Beware the Furrow of the Middlebrow: Searching for *Paradise* on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (Summer 2006): 350-73. *Project Muse*. Web. 19 Sept. 2008.
- Awkward, Michael. "Roadblocks and Relatives: Critical Revision in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 57-68. Print.
- Aymard, Maurice. "Friends and Neighbors." *A History of Private Life: III Passions of the Renaissance*. Ed. Roger Chartier. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989. 447-92. Print.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*. 1958. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon, 1994. Print.
- Backscheider, Paula R. *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005. Print.
- Barbault, Anna Letitia. "Washing Day." *Selected Poetry & Prose*. Ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft. Ontario: Broadview, 2002. 143-147. Print.
- Benjamin, Jessica. *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. New York: Pantheon, 1988. 11-50. Print.
- Berger, Helen A. "High Priestess: Mother, Leader, Teacher." Griffin. 103-18.

- Birdwell-Pheasant, Donna, and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga. *House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe*. Oxford: Berg, 1999. Print.
- Bjork, Patrick Bryce. "The Bluest Eye: Selfhood and Community." *The Novels of Toni Morrison: The Search for Self and Place within the Community*. New York: Peter Lang, 1994. Print.
- Bosse, Malcolm J. Introduction. *A Tale of a Tub and An Account of a Battel between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library and A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. By Jonathan Swift. New York: Garland, 1972. 5-9. Print.
- Bouson, J. Brooks. *Quiet As It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Albany: SUNY P, 2000. Print.
- Broich, Ulrich. *The Eighteenth-century Mock-heroic Poem*. Trans. David Henry Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Bryden, Inga, and Janet Floyd. *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-century Interior*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999. Print.
- Bump, Jerome. "Family Systems Therapy and Narrative in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *Reading the Family Dance: Family Systems Therapy and Literary Study*. Ed. John V. Knapp and Kenneth Womack. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2003. 151-170. Print.
- Butler, Janet. "The Garden: Early Symbol of Clarissa's Complicity." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 24.3 (Summer, 1984): 527-544. *JStor*. Web. 17 Aug 2008.
- Byerman, Keith E. "Intense Behaviors: The Use of the Grotesque in *The Bluest Eye* and *Eva's Man*." *CLA Journal* 25.4 (June 1982): 447-57. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 20 July 2007.
- Caputi, Jane. "'Specifying' Fannie Hurst: Langston Hughes's 'Limitations of Life,' Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God*, and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* as 'Answers' to Hurst's *Imitation of Life*." *Black American Literature Forum* 24.4 (Winter 1990): 697-716. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 July 2007.
- Carmody, Deirdre. "Identity Crisis for 'Seven Sisters.'" *New York Times* 6 Aug. 1990: D1+. *The Historical New York Times*. Web. 7 Sept. 2009.
- Chapman, Tony. *Gender and Domestic Life: Changing Practices in Families and Households*. New York: Palgrave, 2004. Print.
- . "Spoiled Home Identities: The Experience of Burglary." Chapman and Hockey. 133-146.

- . "‘You’ve Got Him Well-Trained’: The Negotiation of Roles in the Domestic Sphere." Chapman and Hockey. 163-80.
- Chapman, Tony, and Jenny Hockey, eds. *Ideal Homes? Social Change and Domestic Life*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Christie, Christopher. *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. Print.
- Christmas, William J. "A Rural Maid’s Posthumous Success." *The Lab’ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in English Plebeian Poetry, 1730-1830*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2001. 161-83. Print.
- Cormier-Hamilton, Patrice. "Black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: The Journey away from Self-Love in *The Bluest Eye*." *MELUS* 19.4 (Winter 1994): 109-27. *JSTOR*. 19 Web. July 2007.
- Crosby, Janice. "The Goddess Dances: Spirituality and American Women’s Interpretations of Middle Eastern Dance." Griffin. 166-82.
- Crowley, John E. *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities & Design in Early Modern Britain & Early America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Crowley, Vivianne. "Healing in Wicca." Griffin. 151-65.
- Dalporto, Jeannie. "Landscape, Labor, and the Ideology of Improvement in Mary Leapor’s ‘Crumble-Hall.’" *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 42.3 (2001): 228-45. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 7 Sept. 2005.
- Dalsgard, Katrine. "The One All-Black Town Worth the Pain: (African) American Exceptionalism, Historical Narration, and the Critique of Nationhood in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise*." *African American Review* 35.2 (Summer 2001): 233-48. *LION*. Web. 30 Mar. 2003.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987. Print.
- Davis, Amanda J. "To Build a Nation." *Frontiers* 26.3 (2005): 24-53. *Project MUSE*. Web. 6 June 2008.
- Dee, Ruby. "Black Family Search for Identity." Rev. of *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison. *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 19-20. Print.
- Delashmit, Margaret. "*The Bluest Eye*: An Indictment." *Griot* 20.1 (Spring 2001): 12-17. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 20 July 2007.

- Dittmar, Linda. "Will the Circle be Unbroken? The Politics of Form in *The Bluest Eye*." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 23.2 (Winter 1990): 137-55. Print.
- Doody, Margaret Anne. *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1974.
- . "Samuel Richardson: Fiction and Knowledge." *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-century Novel*. Ed. John J. Richetti. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- . "Swift among the Women." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 18. *Pope, Swift, and Their Circle Special Number*. 1988: 68-92. *JStor*. Web 14 May 2007.
- Dryden, John. *Eleonora: A Panegyric Poem, Dedicated to the Memory of the Late Countess of Abingdon*. London, 1709. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 7 Aug. 2009.
- . *Poems on Various Occasions; and Translations from Several Authors. By Mr. John Dryden. Now First Publish'd Together in One Volume*. London: 1701. *Eighteenth-century Collections Online*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- Dussere, Erik. "Accounting for Slavery: The Narrative of the Ledger." *Balancing the Books: Faulkner, Morrison, and the Economics of Slavery*. *Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory: Outstanding Dissertations*. Ed. William E. Cain. New York: Routledge. 13-36. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982. Print.
- Earle, Kathryn. "Teaching Controversy: *The Bluest Eye* in the Multicultural Classroom." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Kathryn Earle. New York: MLA, 1997. 27-33. Print.
- Eaves, T.C. Duncan, and Ben D. Kimpel. *Samuel Richardson: A Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971. Print.
- Edwards, Clive. *Turning Houses into Homes: A History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishings*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. Print.
- Eller, Cynthia. "The Roots of Feminist Spirituality." Griffin. 25-41.
- Erickson, Robert A. "The Written Heart: Clarissa, Lovelace, and Scripture." *The Language of the Heart, 1600-1750*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1997. 183-228. Print.
- Fairer, David. "Mary Leapor, 'Crumble-Hall.'" *A Companion to Eighteenth-century Poetry*. Ed. Christine Gerrard. Malden: Blackwell, 2006. 223-36. Print.

- Fick, Thomas H. and Eva Gold. "Authority, Literacy, and Modernism in *The Bluest Eye*." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Kathryn Earle. New York: MLA, 1997. 56-62. Print.
- Folkenflik, Robert. "A Room of Pamela's Own." *ELH* 39.4 (Dec 1972): 585-96. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Fletcher, Ronald. *The Parkers at Saltram 1769-89: Everyday Life in an Eighteenth-century House*. London: BBC, 1971. Print.
- Friedman, Ellen G. "Postpatriarchal Endings in Recent U.S. Fiction." *Modern Fiction Studies* 48.3 (Winter 2002): 693-712. *Project Muse*. Web 8 Aug. 2009.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998. Print.
- Frye, Marilyn. "Lesbian Community: Heterodox Congregation." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 208-10. Print.
- Fryer, Judith. *Felicitous Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather*. Chapel Hill: U of N Carolina P, 1986. Print.
- Fulmer, Jacqueline. "Paradise—Morrison's Folk 'Marys.'" *Folk Women and Indirection in Morrison, Ni Dhuibhne, Hurston, and Lavin*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Fultz, Lucille P. *Toni Morrison: Playing with Difference*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2003. Print.
- Furman, Jan. "Black Girlhood and Black Womanhood: *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*." *Toni Morrison's Fiction*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1996. 12-33. Print.
- Gillan, Jennifer. "Focusing on the Wrong Front: Historical Displacement, the Maginot Line, and *The Bluest Eye*." *African American Review* 36.2 (Summer 2002): 283-98. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 July 2007.
- Gillespie, Carmen. "Paradise." *Critical Companion to Toni Morrison: A Literary Reference to Her Life and Work*. New York: Facts on File, 2007. Print.
- Gillis, Christina Marsden. *The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in Clarissa*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1984. Print.
- Girouard, Mark. *A Country House Companion*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1987. Print.
- . *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*. New Haven, Yale UP, 1978. Print.

- Goldsack, Laura. "A Haven in a Heartless World?" *Ideal Homes? Social Change and Domestic Life*. Ed. Tony Chapman and Jenny Hockey. London: Routledge, 1999. 121-32. Print.
- Golledge, Reginald G., and Robert J. Stimson. *Spatial Behavior: A Geographic Perspective*. New York: Guilford, 1997. Print.
- Gomez, Jewelle. "A Cultural Legacy Denied and Discovered: Black Lesbians in Fiction by Women." *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Ed. Barbara Smith. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000. 110-23. Print.
- Greene, Richard. *Mary Leapor: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993. Print.
- . "Mary Leapor: The Problem of Personal Identity." *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 42.3 (Fall 2001): 218-29. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 7 Sept. 2005.
- Greene, Richard, and Ann Messenger, eds. *The Works of Mary Leapor*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. Print.
- Greenwood, Susan. "Feminist Witchcraft: A Transformatory Politics." Griffin. 136-50.
- Griffin, Wendy. "Crafting the Boundaries: Goddess Narrative as Incantation." Griffin. 73-88.
- . *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira, 2000. Print.
- Grewal, Gurleen. "'Laundering the Head of Whitewash': Mimicry and Resistance in *The Bluest Eye*." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Kathryn Earle. New York: MLA, 1997. 118-26. Print.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time, and Perversion*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Gwin, Minrose C. *The Woman in the Red Dress: Gender, Space, and Reading*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2002. Print.
- Harris, Trudier. "Reconnecting Fragments: Afro-American Folk Tradition in *The Bluest Eye*." *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 68-76. Print.
- Hepworth, Mike. "Privacy, Security and Respectability: The Ideal Victorian Home." Chapman and Hockey. 17-29.
- Higgins, Joan. "Homes and Institutions." Allan and Crow. 159-173. Print.



- How, James. *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. Print.
- hooks, bell. "Rethinking the Nature of Work." *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Cambridge: South End, 2000. 96-107. Print.
- . *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End, 1990. Print.
- How, James. *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. Print.
- Jessee, Sharon. "The 'Female Revealer' in *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise*: Syncretic Spirituality in Toni Morrison's Trilogy." *Toni Morrison and the Bible: Contested Intertextualities*. Ed. Shirley A. Stave. New York: Peter Lang, 2006. 130-58. Print.
- Jones, Jill C. "The Eye of a Needle: Morrison's *Paradise*, Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, and the American *Jeremiad*." *Faulkner Journal* 17.2 (Spring 2002): 3-23. *LION*. Web. 22 Mar. 2003.
- Kaplan, Caren. "Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring 1987): 187-98. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Aug. 2009.
- Karen, Robert. "Shame." *The Atlantic Monthly* Feb. 1992: 40-69. Print.
- Kelling, Harold D. Introduction. *A Kwic Concordance to Jonathan Swift's A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and A Discourse concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, a Fragment*. Ed. Harold D. Kelling and Cathy Lynn Preston. New York: Garland, 1984. xix-xxxv. Print.
- Kenyon, Liz. "A Home from Home: Students' Transitional Experience of Home." *Chapman and Hockey*. 84-95.
- Kim, Min-Jung. "Expanding the Parameters of Literary Studies: Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *English Language and Literature* 47.4 (2001): 1017-40. Print.
- King, William. *The Art of Cookery in Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry: With Some Letters to Dr. Lister, and Others: Occasioned Principally by the Title of a Book Published by the Doctor, Being the Works of Apicius Loelius, Concerning the Soups and Sauces of the Ancients*. London, 1708. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Web. 8 Aug. 2009.
- . *An Historical Account of Heathen Gods and Heroes Necessary for the Understanding of the Ancient Poets: Being an Improvement of Whatever Has Been Hitherto Written, by the Greek, Latin, French, and English Authors, upon that Subject*. London, 1711. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Web. 8 Aug. 2009.

- Kittredge, Katharine. "Men-Women and Womanish Men: Androgyny in Richardson's 'Clarissa.'" *Modern Language Studies* 24.2 (Spring, 1994): 20-26. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Klein, Bonnie Sherr. "'We Are Who You Are' Feminism and Disability." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 71-77. Print.
- Kleinberg, S.J. "Gendered Space: Housing, Privacy and Domesticity in the Nineteenth-Century United States." *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*. Ed. Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999. Print.
- Klotman, Phyllis R. "Dick-and-Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye*." *Black American Literature Forum* 13.4 (Winter 1979): 123-25. *JStor* Web. 19 July 2007.
- Knapper, Traci M. "*Paradise* as Paradigm: Exploring the Critical Geography of Race and Gender in the Novels of Toni Morrison." Diss. U of Toledo, 2002: 1-17. *Dissertation Abstracts*. Web. 8 Apr. 2003.
- Koehler, Martha J. *Models of Reading: Paragons and Parasites in Richardson, Burney, and Laclos*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2005. Print.
- Kord, Susanne. *Women Peasant Poets in Eighteenth-Century England, Scotland, and Germany*. Rochester: Camden House, 2003. Print.
- Krumholz, Linda J. "Reading and Insight in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *African American Review* 36.1 (2002): 21-34. Print.
- Kubitschek, Missy Dehn. *Toni Morrison: A Critical Companion*. Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers. Ed. Kathleen Gregory Klein. Westport: Greenwood, 1998. Print.
- Kuenz, Jane. "'The Bluest Eye': Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity." *African American Review* 27.3 (Fall 1993): 421-31. Print.
- Lang, Andrew. *Custom and Myth*. Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2006. Print.
- Leapor, Mary. "Corydon. Phillario. Or, Mira's Picture. A Pastoral." *Greene and Messenger* 224-27. Print.
- . "Crumble-Hall." *Greene and Messenger* 206-11. Print.
- . "The Epistle of Deborah Dough." *Greene and Messenger* 186-88. Print.
- . "An Epistle to Artemisia. On Fame." *Greene and Messenger* 175-80. Print.

- . "Essay on Friendship." *Greene and Messenger* 44-47. Print.
- . "The Head-ach. To Aurelia." *Greene and Messenger* 58-59. Print.
- Leidner, Robin. "On Whose Behalf? Feminist Ideology and Dilemmas of Constituency." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 47-56. Print.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 81-86. Print.
- Mandell, Laura. "Demystifying (with) the Repugnant Female Body: Mary Leapor and Feminist History." *Criticism* 38.4 (Fall 1996): 551-83. *Literature Online*. Web. 7 Sept. 2005.
- . "Misogyny and Feminism: Mary Leapor." *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1999. 84-106. Print.
- Martin, Bidy, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Feminist Politics: What's Home got to do with It?" 1986. *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1997. 293- 310. Print.
- Martin, Mary Patricia. "Reading Reform in Richardson's *Clarissa*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 37.3 (Summer 1997): 595-614. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Mbalia, Doreatha Drummond. "*The Bluest Eye*: The Need for Racial Approbation." *Toni Morrison's Developing Class Consciousness*. 1991. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 2004. 32-41. Print.
- Messenger, Ann. "Mary Leapor (1722-1746)." *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent: Studies in Augustan Poetry*. New York: AMS, 2001. 173-93. Print.
- Michael, Magali Cornier. "Re-imagining Agency: Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *African American Review* 36.4 (2002). *IAC Expanded Academic Index, 1988-*. Web. 22 March 2003.
- Miner, Madonne M. "Lady No Longer Sings the Blues: Rape, Madness, and Silence in *The Bluest Eye*." *Toni Morrison*. Bloom's Modern Critical Views. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea, 2005. 7-22. Print.
- Mooney, Barbara Burlison. "The Comfortable Tasty Framed Cottage: An African American Architectural Iconography." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 61.1 (Mar. 2002): 48-67. *JStor*. Web. 29 Mar. 2008.

- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. 1987. New York: Plume, 1988. Print.
- . *The Bluest Eye*. 1970. New York: Plume, 1994. Print.
- . "An Interview with Toni Morrison, Hessian Radio Network, Frankfurt, West Germany." Rosemarie K. Lester. *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 47-54. Print.
- . *Paradise*. New York: Knopf, 1998. Print.
- . "The Seams Can't Show: An Interview with Toni Morrison." Jane Bakerman. *Black American Literature Forum* 12.2 (Summer 1978): 56-60. *JStor*. Web. 19 July 2007.
- Moses, Cat. "The Blues Aesthetic in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *African American Review* 33.4 (Winter 1999): 623-37. *JStor*. Web. 19 July 2007.
- Napier, Elizabeth R. "'Tremble and Reform': The Inversion of Power in Richardson's *Clarissa*." *ELH* 42.2 (Summer 1975): 214-223. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Olwig, Karen Fog. "Travelling Makes a Home: Mobility and Identity among West Indians." Chapman and Hockey. 73-83.
- O'Reilly, Andrea. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart*. Albany: SUNY P, 2004. Print.
- Osland, Dianne. "Complaisance and Complacency, and the Perils of Pleasing in *Clarissa*." *SEL* 40.3 (Summer 2000): 491-499. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 Aug 2008
- Otten, Terry. "Morrison on Morrison: Using Interviews to Teach Morrison." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Kathryn Earle. New York: MLA, 1997. 93-98. Print.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2001. Print.
- Pereira, Malin Walther. "Periodizing Toni Morrison's Work from *The Bluest Eye* to *Jazz*: The Importance of *Tar Baby*." *MELUS* 22.3 (Autumn 1997): 71-82. *JStor*. Web. 19 July 2007.
- Perez-Torres, Rafael. "Tracing and Erasing: Race and Pedagogy in *The Bluest Eye*." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay and Kathryn Earle. New York: MLA, 1997. 21-26. Print.
- Perry, Ruth. "Kinship in *Clarissa*." *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Samuel Richardson*. Ed. Lisa Zunshine and Jocelyn Harris. New York: MLA, 2006. 156-161. Print.

- Poovey, Mary. "Journeys from this World to the Next: The Providential Promise in *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*." *ELH* 43.3 (Autumn 1976): 300-315. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Pope, Alexander. *The Dunciad as It Is Now Changed by Mr. Pope. In Four Books*. Dublin, 1744. *Eighteenth-century Collections Online*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- . *The Dunciad with Notes Variorum, and the Prolegomena of Scriblerus*. London, 1727. *Eighteenth-century Collections Online*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- . "Epistle X To the Same: On Her Leaving the Town after the Coronation." *The Works of Alexander Pope*. London: Murray, 1881. 225-27. *Eighteenth-century Collections Online*. Web. 17 June 2009.
- Pratt, Minnie Bruce. "Identity: Skin Blood Heart." *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*. 1984. Ithaca: Firebrand, 1988. 11-63. Print.
- . "Who Am I If I'm Not My Father's Daughter? A Southerner Confronts Racism and Anti-Semitism." *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 67-70. Print.
- Ranum, Orest. "The Refuges of Intimacy." *A History of Private Life: III Passions of the Renaissance*. Ed. Roger Chartier. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989. Print.
- Reagon, Bernice Johnson. "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century." *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Ed. Barbara Smith. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000. 343-55. Print.
- Rich, Adrienne. "If Not with Others, How?" *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*. Ed. Barbara Ryan. New York: NYUP, 2001. 334-38. Print.
- Richardson, Samuel. *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady*. 1747. London: Penguin, 2004. Print.
- . *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*. Vol 7. *The Novels of Samuel Richardson*. New York: Croscup & Sterling, 1901. Print.
- Rizzo, Betty. "Molly Leapor: An Anxiety for Influence." *The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual*. 4. Ed. Paul J. Korshin. New York: AMS, 1991. 313-43. Print.
- . "Two Versions of Community: Montagu and Scott." *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 65 (2002): 193-214. *Literature Online*. Web. 2 Aug 2008.
- Rogers, Katharine M. "Sensitive Feminism vs. Conventional Sympathy: Richardson and Fielding on Women." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 9.3 (Spring 1976): 256-270. Print.

- Romero, Channette. "Creating the Beloved Community: Religion, Race, and Nation in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *African American Review* 39.3 (2005): 415-30. Print.
- Rosenberg, Ruth. "Seeds in Hard Ground: Black Girlhood in *The Bluest Eye*." *MELUS* 21.4 (Winter 1987): 435-45. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 22 July 2007.
- Rumbold, Valerie. "The Alienated Insider: Mary Leapor in 'Crumble Hall.'" *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19.1 (Spring 1996): 63-76. Print.
- Russell, Sandi. "It's OK to say OK." *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Ed. Nellie Y. McKay. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1988. 43-47. Print.
- Ryan, Michael. "A Psychoanalytic Reading of *The Bluest Eye*." *Literary Theory: A Practical Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 1999. 44-49. Print.
- Samuels, Wilfred, and Clenora Hudson Weems. "The Damaging Look: The Search for Authentic Existence in *The Bluest Eye*." *Twayne's United States Authors Series Online*. 1990. New York: G.K. Hall, 1999. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 20 July 2007.
- Schreiber, Evelyn Jaffe. "The Disallowed and the Redeemed: The Power of the Gaze in *Paradise*." *Subversive Voices: Eroticizing the Other in William Faulkner and Toni Morrison*. Ed. Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber. Knoxville: U of Tenn P, 2001. 133-53. Print.
- Smith, Barbara. Introduction. Smith. Xxi-lviii.
- Smith, Barbara, ed. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. 1983. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000. Print.
- Soupel, Serge. "Clarissa versus Lovelace: The Appropriation of Space, and Clashing Rhetorics." *Clarissa and Her Readers: New Essays for the Clarissa Project*. Ed. Carol Houlihan Flynn and Edward Copeland. New York: AMS, 1999. 163-173. Print.
- Stave, Shirley Ann. "Jazz and *Paradise*: Pivotal Moments in Black History." Tally. 59-74.
- Stuber, Florian. "On Fathers and Authority in Clarissa." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 25.3 (Summer 1985): 557-574. *JStor*. Web. 5 May 2005.
- Suckling, John. "A Session of the Poets." *The Poems, Plays, and Other Remains of Sir John Suckling: With a Copious Account of the Author, Notes, and an Appendix of Illustrative Pieces*. Vol. 1. Ed. W. Carew Hazlitt. London: Reeves and Turner, 1892. Print.

- Surányi, Ágnes. "The Bluest Eye and Sula: Black Female Experience from Childhood to Womanhood." Tally. 11-25.
- Swift, Jonathan. *A Tale of a Tub and An Account of a Battel between the Ancient and Modern Books in St. James's Library and A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. New York: Garland, 1972. Print.
- Tally, Justine. "The Morrison Trilogy." *The Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison*. Ed. Justine Tally. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 75-91. Print.
- . "Reality and Discourse in Toni Morrison's Trilogy: Testing the Limits." *Literature and Ethnicity in the Cultural Borderlands*. Ed. Jesus Benito and Ana Maria Manzanos. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002. 35-49. Print.
- Taylor, Lawrence. J. "Re-entering the West Room: On the Power of Domestic Spaces." Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga. 223-238. Print.
- Tolman, Elizabeth Ely. "Approaches to Morrison's Work: Ecocritical." *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia*. Ed. Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu. Westport: Greenwood, 2003. 7-12. Print.
- Wall, Cynthia. "Narratives of Private Spaces: Churches, Houses, and Novels." *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.
- . "The Rhetoric of Description and the Spaces of Things." *Eighteenth-Century Genre and Culture: Serious Reflections on Occasional Forms, Essays in Honor of J. Paul Hunter*. Ed. Dennis Todd and Cynthia Wall. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2001. 261-79. Print.
- . "The Spaces of *Clarissa* in Text and Film." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction on Screen*. Ed. Robert Mayer. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 106-22. Print.
- Walther, Malin LaVon. "Out of Sight: Toni Morrison's Revision of Beauty." *Black American Literature Forum* 24.4 (Winter 1990): 775-89. Print.
- Weinbrot, Howard D. "Clarissa, Elias Brand, and Death by Parentheses." *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005. Print.
- Weir, Allison. "Home and Identity: In Memory of Iris Marion Young." *Hypatia* 23.3 (July-Sept. 2008): 5-21. *Project Muse*. Web. 12 Aug. 2009.
- Wendt, Allan. "Clarissa's Coffin." *Philological Quarterly* 39 (1960): 481-95. Print.

- Widdowson, Peter. "The American Dream Refashioned: History, Politics and Gender in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." *Journal of American Studies* 35.2 (Aug. 2001): 313-35. *FirstSearch* Web. 31 Mar. 2003.
- Wolff, Janice M. "Redefining Boundaries: Slack Women, Loose Girls, and Compulsory Heterosexuality in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*." Michigan Academy of Arts Sciences and Letters. Mar. 2002. Reading.
- Wong, Shelley. "Transgression as Poesis in *The Bluest Eye*." *Callaloo* 13.3 (Summer 1990): 471-481. Print.
- Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. "The Female Pensive: Anna Seward, Sociable Poetry, and the Handelian Consensus." *Modern Language Quarterly* 67.4 (2006): 451-77. Print.
- Yancy, George. "A Foucauldian (Genealogical) Reading of Whiteness: The Production of the Black Body/Self and the Racial Deformation of Pecola Breedlove in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *What White Looks Like*. Ed. George Yancy. New York: Routledge, 2004. 107-42. Print.
- Young, Iris Marion. "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference." *Feminism/Postmodernism*. Ed. Linda J. Nicholson. New York: Routledge, 1990. 300-23. Print.
- . *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. *Netlibrary*. Web. 12 Aug. 2009.



### **About the Author**

Nicole Boucher Spottke received a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in English Literature from SUNY New Paltz in 1990, 1996. She started teaching composition courses while in the Master's program, and continued her teaching at the University of South Florida while working on her Ph.D. Upon completing her coursework, she was hired as an English instructor at Valencia County Community College in Orlando, FL, where she is in place to earn tenure in Spring 2010.

She has presented papers on eighteenth-century English topics such as Samuel Richardson and Mary Leapor at conferences hosted by the Aphra Behn Society Celebrating Women in the Arts, 1660-1830 and the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. She has also earned a number of awards for her writing including the Aphra Behn Graduate Student Essay Award and the Irving Deer Memorial Award for Excellence in Literature and Culture.