

# “LIFE WITHOUT THE PROMISE OF STABILITY;” REVISITING TONI MORRISON’S *HOME*

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## ABSTRACT

*Precarity means the lack of social and economic networks; a considerable exposure to danger and harm. Minority groups are precariat for they lack rights and full citizenship. Precarity is related, states Judith Butler, with the individual’s performativity, and his ability to perform his gender role. Toni Morrison continually goes to past to retell the history of African Americans. The issues of race, gender and national identity are recurrent in her work. Reading her book *Home* (2012) evokes the idea of precarity and performativity since the two main characters, Frank and Cee are precarious character who fail to perform their gender role properly, and eventually are exposed to hazard and harm. This research displays how African American people were precariat during the 1950s. It traces Frank and Cee’s attempts to perform their gender roles to gain recognizability. It shows the failure of precarious people to be recognized in the society that denies Blacks’ rights.*

*Keywords: precarity; performativity; Judith Butler; gender; Toni Morrison; African Americans; Home.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The lack of social, cultural and economic resources enforces on certain people the feeling of insecurity because they would live through perpetual instability. Life becomes predominantly precarious when it cannot be predicted or planned. Precarity is “an inelegant neologism coined by English speakers to translate the French *precarité*” (Neilson & Rositter, 2005:p1). It is initially concerned with politics, economy and cultural process, and it is also a social and psychological condition. Precarity refers to large parts of the population that are subjected to adaptable exploitation. It is the lack or weak access to stable employment, income and housing as well as a withdrawal of any social safety. It generally refers to “the uncertainty of employment, recently involving numerous groups of people of different classes, sexes, professions or ethnicities (Rachwał, 2017: v). There are “certain

populations [who] suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differently exposed to injury, violence, and death” (Butler, 2009b: ii). The term precariat is generally applied to the social class that is defined by this condition. One becomes precarious when he is not protected or in a position, likely to fall and end. Precariats are often exposed to displacement, poverty, disease, starvation, and are unprotected against violence. It is a risky state of existence where there is no job security, material or psychological welfare. The concept becomes crucial within the growing body of studies concerned with social marginalization. During (1999) suggests that precarity studies is relevant to subaltern studies, along with postcolonial, poststructuralist, environmentalist, and queer perspectives. Hence, precarity could simply describe the state of minority groups who do not have full citizenship and rights.

Minor groups frequently experience the sense of displacement because they are prevented the rights usually attained by major group. In reference to American political theorist Hannah Arendt's book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966), Judith Butler argues how "the nation-state is structurally linked with the production of stateless," (2009: vi) and how stateless people can hardly exercise rights even when those rights are nowhere guaranteed or protected by positive law. The individual commonly practices his freedom either rightly or with efficacy according to the social condition and the set up social patterns. These social conditions are linked with political belonging and place. This happens because exercising one's rights is grounded in 'pre-legal' rights to belonging and to place. But the individual's right is to have rights and the right to belong to humanity, a notion that should be asserted by humanity itself. Yet, Arendt's assertion of this right is not supplied with "recourse to prior grounds;" hence, her declaration of "the right to have rights," Butler comments, is "a kind of performative exercise." The declaration is fundamental throughout her writing but "there is no ground for this claim outside of the claim itself" (2009:vi). Based on this perception, Butler carries on her argument displaying the link between Performativity and Precarity.

Butler elucidates performativity as "a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense is not the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice' " (1993: 234). Hence, the performer repeats involuntary, monotonous acts through "a process that implies being acted on in ways we do not always fully understand, and of acting, in politically consequential ways" (Butler 2009:xii). The performativity of gender is linked strongly with the state of being considered a life – be understood as a living being or tries to live, on the far side of established modes of intelligibility. Butler explains that some individuals find themselves precarious, due at least in part to the socio-economic and political system. She refers to "the gathering of individuals experiencing precarity demonstrates to the system, and to others, that their situations are shared, laying the building blocks for a common understanding of their experiences (Bushnell, 2016). Gender performativity enables the subject, by different means, "to become eligible for recognition," – though it is hard to fulfil the desire for recognition, however, there are different ways of "allocating recognizability" (Butler, 2009b).

African-American authors always go back to crucial important periods in history to retell the experience of their forefathers' oppression, marginalization, and their struggle to survive. Black woman writer negotiate multiple social locations to secure a place in American culture and literature. Toni Morrison is recognized for her "deep exploration of the black experience in a racist American culture" (Oakes, 2004: 245). Ludwig states that since the "register of permanently unrealizable dream" would allow "racism and intellectual weight to which it has absolutely no claim" (2007:135), it was hard for Morrison to write in a non – racial language. Whereas, Beaulieu states that the language women use "is meant to conquer, but strives to build bridges of understanding, and inclusion in a society where her voice, in order to be heard, must resonate with difference (2003: 13).

Morrison's writing, like James Baldwin's, holds a dynamic and infinite process of creation and re-creation of the idea of ethnic identity. They both sought creative "ways to consider ethnic identity and rewrite the historical process that laid so much stress on the biological conceptions of race" (Omry 2006: 12). They "explore the shifting notions of self in direct relations to the social and physical environment" (Omry 2006:11). Hence, the concepts of race, and ethnicity, and the distinctions between them became central issues to both writers. Morrison's books are regarded "contribution to the civil rights movement," comments Ghansahand, that she is more humanist than nationalistic, more visionary than didactic, but to some extent her editorial work is political (2015:6). Morrison explains that her novels obtain, "the overwhelming presence of black people in the United States," which is central to any understanding of [Americans] national literature (Morrison, 1992: p.5).

The research scrutinizes Morrison's novel *Home* (2012). The novel has an epochal significance of intention, illuminates Vega-Gonzalez. It shows Morrison's desire to "take the scab off the 50s" in the United States. Morrison digs "underneath and bring[s] to the fore the silenced (his)stories concerning African Americans". Thus, Vega-Gonzalez analyzes *Home* using historical records that highlight all the events presented in the story, emphasizing the idea that the 50s was hard time for some Americans. She refers to the remembrance of the Korean War (1950 – 53), racism and segregation in the pre – Civil Rights Movement – the Jim Crow era – and anti-communism" (2015: 1). Morrison discusses in the book two important issues;

“traumatic possibilities of the Korean war and of biological experiments on African-Americans,” states Churchwell (2012), and the two themes came together skillfully – “black soldiers were experimented upon,” and the sister of a soldier became the victim of medical experiments. Prominently, violence against black women is one of Morrison’s recurrent subjects.

Richard Gray states that Morrison intends to achieve two objectives in her books: To record black history and give voice to ‘the silence’ presenting the ‘failure’ of the white Americans to give human rights equally, as well as to display a ‘readjusted perspective’ of American history. It also reflects her attempt “to write several concentric histories of the American experience from a distinctive African American perspective. Her books are “series of fictional interventions in American historiography” (2004: 691). The work reflects a claim to freedom, and display the unfree condition of the Blacks in the United States, ‘the heart of the democratic experiment.’ It shows her attempt “to move away from the unstated but overwhelming and dominant context that was white history and to move it into another one” (Morrison, 1992: 5). Essentially, she retells the history of American from Blacks’ perspective, and states the generally veiled and unspoken issues.

Morrison always writes about domiciles and families – about “home,” hence, the title *Home* is not astonishing to the readers who are familiar with her work. To her, home is “the world in which race does not matter” (Morrison, 1997). As for the use of the term “Home”, Morrison clarifies its importance in making an essential distinction between “the metaphor of house and the metaphor of home.” It helps in illuminating her thoughts on “radical construction.” She believes that the Blacks need “to convert a racist house into a race – specific yet nonracist home” (Morrison, 1997), so they can eliminate racism. She has written similarly about “places of belonging in a more abstract and geopolitical sense” (Valkeakari, 2014: 108). Morrison declares in her essay “Home” that no African-American has lived in a world “free of racial hierarchy” (Morrison, 1997). Correspondingly, Russell indicates that Morrison areas of concern include “the significance of the home, notions of confinement and movement, the relationship between identity and place, the importance of the land, gendered landscapes, and gendered responses to nature” (2005: 14). Hembree declares that *Home* helps in analyzing “standard notions about race, gender, national identity and offers a complex perspective of the black experience” (Hembree, 2012: 1). African Americans

need to feel that they are subjects, equal and recognizable in order to feel at home.

African Americans’ marginalization has promoted a sort of trauma related to the black experience. Morrison’s novels “explores manifestations of self and home, building on each other to retell the story of African American trauma. The mainstream culture continually distinct the Blacks as “other,” clarifies Schreiber; thus, an “access to a positive, individual subjectivity unrelated to race is problematic.” The core cultural trauma of slavery underlies each work” Morrison wrote (2010:1). Schreiber praises Morrison’s greatest accomplishments to display how “individual and communal racial identities could exist without the psychological burden of hatred, scapegoating, or otherness,” (2010:1) and her ability to depict what it means to be black in American society. The debates over the stimulating traumas of American racism and sexism in the novel, is the core discussion of Mary Dudziak “Limits of Empathy” (2012). She displays how the novel compels all readers to embrace the characters as well the collective histories of the marginalized African Americans. *Home* creates a link with the past either personal, or collective proposing an additional positive view on family and community. *Home* contains themes of haunting and belonging, emphasizing the relationship between individual and community (Golimowska et al., 2016). Morrison accurately “illuminates the ‘home’ of the book’s title,” clarifies Eden Wales Freedman in “Come on brother,” (2016) seeing the novel as a study of the limits of understanding. Aitor Ibarrola, in “Challenges of Recovering” (2014), states that *Home* suggests passable grounds to argue topics such as memory, remembrance, mourning, and various representations of trauma and sorrow. It proposes, as well, a vital question about Frank’s journey to rescue his younger sister whether it would assist him to achieve a sort of redemption and would that redemption completely happen in the end of the novel.

The dispute is wide and rich and contains various issues as it is related to many different emergent groups especially within multiculturalism in our world. Accordingly, this paper is limited to Toni Morrison’s *Home* and how she reflects the African-Americans’ precarity and lack of recognizability. The objectives of the study are: To show how African American people were precariat during the 1950s. To trace Frank and Ycidra’s attempts to perform their gender roles in order to gain recognizability. To

highlight the negative result of precarious people's desire to be recognizable.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, refers to Michel Foucault's Juridical notions of power that seem to regulate political life in fairly negative terms; an act done through the regulation, control, limitation, and the protection of individuals in a particular political structure. Juridical systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent. Then the subjects will be formed, defined, and reproduced consonantly to the requirements of the structures that subjected them. Hence, certain legitimate and exclusionary aims proceed effectively and indirectly in the political construction of the subject. This means that "the law produces and then conceals the notion of 'a subject before the law'" (1990:4). This relational or contextual conception of the person endorses that both the person and his/her gender are always related to a determined and constructed relations thus "gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations" (1990:14). Each individual is thus the product of the political, Juridical and cultural interacting notions of his society.

Butler's term 'performativity' focuses mainly on the repetitive nature of gender and applies the term gender performances in order to show how we perform our gender roles (1990:149). Butler, in *Bodies that Matter*, notes that: "performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-representation; nor can it be simply equated with performance" (1990:95). She precisely elucidates the misreading of the two concepts – 'performance' and 'performativity,' clarifying that what she means by 'performativity' is different from theatrical performance. Performativity is totally associated with "who" can become a recognizable living subject; who can be a subject or qualify as a subject of recognition before the law, or in politics. Butler acknowledges that we are "implicated in lives that are not our own" (2004:28). A question will rise here; what should we call those "who do not count as subjects: "those who do not fit in with the norms" that "confer recognizability on subjects," asks Butler. Some individuals do not seem as "subjects" within the hegemonic discourse as there are certain sexual and gender norms that, in a way or another, determines "what and who will be "legible" and what and who will

not" (2009b:iii). This difference in the "allocation of recognizability" is a core issue of debate in this paper. In "Performativity, Precarity," Butler investigates the link between performativity and precarity. She argues that "gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other ... and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power; and finally, there is no gender without this reproduction of norms" (2009b: i). While precarity describes some diverse conditions that are related to individuals whose persistence as beings are not guaranteed because they might lose life willingly or by accident. "Precarious life characterizes such lives who do not qualify as recognizable, readable, or grievable" (2009b: xii-xiii). Precarity also describes a random condition of violence and other practices of aggression that reflects an enlarged exposure and vulnerability for peoples who are exposed to discrimination when the state does not offer them any passable protection. There are certain populations who "suffer from failing social and economic networks ... becoming differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (2009a: 25). Eventually, it means living without the promise of stability. It is the feeling of "not belonging to the place," enforced by the modality of modern daily life that inserts us in places where we live or work (Franklin, 2003: 207). Precarization, according to the conditions of neoliberal, capitalist governance turn out to be the hegemonic mode of governance, states Isabell Lorey (2015). Precariats are exposed to displacement, poverty, disease, starvation, and are unprotected against violence. Hence, precarity is the "rubric" that combines minority groups in the society – poor, stateless, women, queer and transgender people who fail to allocate recognizability.

Gender norms are intensely related to "how and in what way we can appear in public space; how and in what way the public and private are distinguished, and how that distinction is instrumentalized in the service of sexual politics," clarifies Butler (2009b: iii). Sexual politics usually determines the relationships of the sexes; it defines precisely, the one that can live freely as a subject and practice all his rights safely and securely. Butler refers particularly to the subject who "is produced through power, though not the deterministic effect of power." This power depends on "a mechanism of reproduction that can and does go awry, undo the strategies of animating power, and produce new and even subversive effects" (2009b: iii). The subject which Butler perceives in this context is the one that is socially

produced: an “agent” and “deliberator.” The one that has a language which enables him to act and think properly. As there is no deterministic effect of power in the production of the subject, a dilemma would emerge that could always be found in politics: who can be a subject and has the qualities of a subject. Then comes other set of questions: who comes after the subject which is not supposedly another form that emerges from historical time, what name should we give for those who are not recognized as subjects.

Hence, the performativity of gender is linked with the different means that the subject attains to become eligible for recognition, clarifies Butler. The strong link between Performativity and precarity is elucidated through asking the following question “who counts as a subject and who does not,” adds Butler, since “the terms of recognition ... condition in advance who will count as a subject, and who will not” (2009b: iv). Butler sums up the discussion stating; “performativity has everything to do with “who” can become formed as a recognizable subject, a subject who is living, whose life is worth sheltering and whose life, when lost, would be worthy of mourning (2009b: xii-xiii). So, one has to comply with certain terms and a number of gender and sexual norms that governs recognition.

Butler also relies on Arendt’s argument concerning the way the nation-state regularly produces stateless peoples, and Spivak’s argument that the nation-state is often built on the backs of stateless peoples; it is actually the legacy of colonialism in the building and strengthening of the nation state (2009b: vii). Our reference to certain groups as “others” is not our choice because the notion may be an example of “moral exclusion,” and this way of thinking assumes “a disavowal of an irreducible fact of politics: the vulnerability to destruction by others that follows from a condition of precarity in all modes of political and social interdependency,” illuminates Butler (2012:148). It is necessary to “minimize conditions of precarity, especially within the nation-state,” asserts Butler; they are premeditated to address the needs – housing and food in addition to security (2009b: ii). The central task of social and political institutions is to perceive “precarity” as a politically promoted condition on particular populations.

In alignment with Butler, Lorey (2015), Neilson & Rossiter (2005) distinguish between the socioeconomic concept of precarity and the ontological category “precariousness.” They define “precariousness,” as the “general human condition of vulnerability and

interdependence”. Whereas During (1999) does not distinguish between the two terms describing precarity as a “critical, and political, concept that aspires to change these conditions for it invites both judgments against it and reformist efforts at alleviating it” (3). The existential conception of “precariousness” is thus linked with a more specifically political notion of “precarity” (Butler 2009a: 3). Hence, Precariousness “signifies a wide range of power hierarchies defined by a structure of dominance or dependence” (Lemke, 2016: 14).

The previous compelling argument stimulates the debate in *Home*. It exposes how African Americans were persecuted, subjugated, maltreated during a certain phase in American history. Both protagonists, Frank Money and his sister Ycidra attempt to perform gender roles to attain recognisability in a society that ignores African Americans’ rights and humanity.

### 3. THE REPETITIVE NATURE OF GENDER

During the course of the novel, Morrison competently displays the different relationships between male and female. *Home* tells the story of the twenty – four – year old African American Korean War veteran, Frank Money and his sister, Ycidra – called Cee for short. Their family was forced to move from Bandera County, Texas to Louts, Georgia. Most of the families were unable to take a great deal of what they possess. The majority lost the crops and animals they owned. Frank’s parents went to work from early morning until sunset, so he had to take care of his sister all by himself. After three years of hard constant work, the Moneys managed to rent a place. They were relieved and proud for having “their own garden and their own laying hens.” Here, they felt at home “where neighbors could finally offer friendship instead of pity” (*Home*, 2012: 32).

Both Frank and Cee tried to perform the nature of their genders since childhood. As gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other, their biological being forced on them unfree theatrical self-representation – gender performance. Frank performed the role of the caring male protector and saving grace to Cee. She was always the weak, frightened, harmless, female who needed care and custodian. All the grownups were either too busy to care, or too bitter. It was Frank who was the kind and caring brother and protector. Once she felt frightened, he “hugged her shoulders tight and tried to pull her trembling into [his] own bones because, as a brother four years older, [he] thought [he] could handle it” (*Home*, 2012: 6). Cee

always followed Frank's advices; she totally depended on him in everything for she was sure that "he would as always protect her from [any] bad situation" (*Home*, 2012: 35). With the regular absence of their parents, a tide kinship joined them together. Eventually this protection never let her manage to take care of herself independently.

A fairy tale parallel is forcefully drawn in *Home*, declares Visser (2014) that Morrison likens Frank and Cee to "Hansel and Gretel". She interweaves the simple fairy tale story of Hansel and Gretel because of its "theme of the close", and the asexual relationship between brother and sister. The comparison carried through the similarity between the two couples. Hansel and Gretel, in the fairy tale, are deprived of their home and sent into the woods to fall into the treacherous witch hands. Frank and Cee suffer the absence of their parents for they worked sixteen hours a day in the plantation, so the kids were left under the care of their cruel step-grandmother. Hence, both couples find affection and protection with each other, declares Visser.

Frank and Cee conceived a dislike to Lotus within time. Frank abhorred the place as a whole; its "unforgiving population, its isolation, and especially its indifference to the future were tolerable only if his buddies were there within him" (*Home*, 2012: 13). As a young man who sought to build a career, Lotus appeared as the worst place in the world to build a future. Life was quite dull and aimless; just breathing with no goal; he felt like there was nothing worth living for. Evidently, it did not feel like 'home' to him, thus he joined the army to get out of the place for it was "worse than any battlefield" (*Home*, 2012: 171). Since performativity is linked with becoming a recognizable living subject, Frank sought for a recognizability elsewhere away from his town.

Meanwhile, Cee, as a girl, experienced another kind of dilemma. Since the moment of her birth, her step-grandmother, Lenore Money doomed Cee with a "cursed" existence for being born "in the street." It was during the white racists' compulsion of black families to leave their homes and find a home elsewhere. Thus, Cee is maliciously wounded for being "[b]randed early as unlovable, barely tolerated 'gutter child,'" and "she agreed with the label and believed herself worthless". Lenore takes Cee's birth on the road instead of in a bed at home, as a bad sign for the girl's future claiming that being "born in the street – or the gutter ... was prelude to a sinful, worthless life" (*Home*, 2012: 31). Cee's problem was her inability to feel and act as an

independent woman since she wholly depended on Frank's protection and care. Both Frank and Cee failed to construct proper individuality because they were victims of their skin color, society and culture. They sought for a direction and hope in the 1950s America. But none of them managed to act as a subject, perform his/her gender right, or allocate recognizability.

#### 4. PERFORMATIVITY IN SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

Frank goes to war to perform his gender role – masculinity, in order to gain recognizability. He was traumatized like most war veterans because the experience of war was bitter and inhumane. He saw the killing of his friends, the killing of harmless people, and the worst was killing of innocent children. Shame drives him to the state of trauma, and ending up in a mental hospital. Frank's trauma was because of the incident he had with the little Korean girl. She used to seek food on their trash, and Frank was attracted to her. He sexually abused the girl and killed her. He narrates this atrocious action in a very shocking way for the reader. He says.

One day, the girl "smiles, reaches for the soldier's crotch, touches it. It surprises him. Yum – Yum? As soon as I look away from her hand to her face, see the two missing teeth, the fall of black hair above eager eyes, he blows her way". (*Home*, 2012: 64)

Frank narrates the incident pretending the guard was not himself; he does not want to admit the reality: "I think the guard felt more than disgust. I think he felt tempted and that is what he had to kill Yum – Yum" (*Home*, 2012: 64). However, Frank confesses his responsibility of the crime at the end of the novel. The poor girl had nothing to do with him and the war. The action continually disturbs him, its remembrance never let him feel as a man:

How could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn't know was in me? How could I like myself, even be myself if I surrendered to that place where I unzip my fly and let her taste me right then and there? And again the next day and the next as long as she came scavenging. What type of man is that? And what type of man thinks he can ever in life pay the price of that orange? (*Home*, 2012: 90)

Frank did not follow the right path to appear in the public space, nor did he distinguish between the public

and the private. He has no idea about the qualities of the subject or who can be a subject. His trauma affectseven the love relationship between himand Lily, his girlfriend whom he meets after coming back from the war.

Their relationship exposes Frank as a “tilted man.” His love to Lily represents an escape from trauma. He hopes to secure the relationship with Lily because only with her does his intrusive memories vanished: “Only with Lily did the pictures fade” (*Home*,2012:17). Lily isthe cure that “displace[s] his disorder, his rage and his shame” (*Home*,2012:71). She nurses the bewildered Frank, who seems to have no hope in life. Lily shows her compassion in the way she accepts his behaviour; she understands his behaviour to bean outcome of the war, yet it is difficult to live with a tilted man. She acknowledges that “the war still haunted him, so whether annoyed or alarmed, she forgave him much” (*Home*,2012:51-52). However, Frank lacks empathy for Lily, a situation caused by persistent struggles with his past. Frank’s most affective phrase, “you can’t imagine it because you weren’t there,” (*Home*,2012:.62).It evidently reflects his dilemma andexposeshis failure to overcome his terrible past.

Frank’s emotional stress, his mental disturbance and confusion burdens Lily and her plans for the future.She understands him well, but is unable to meet Frank’s demand for a secondary witness, so once again Frank finds himself “homeless”. He is so frustrated for he cannot process his past without a partner committed to working through it. Freedman, in “Come on brother” (2016), comments on Lily saying that she is not a bad partner though she fails to relieve Frank’s trauma. Actually, shefeels annoyed rather than alarmed“at his traumatization and begins to separate herself from Frank by disregarding him, a choice that effectively ends this relationship” (4-5).To Frank, Lily “had no competition in [his] mind except for the horses, a man’s foot, and Ycidra trembling under [his] arm”(Home, 2012:48).Frank escapesfrom the hospital and travels to Georgia to find his little sister. He had received a note saying thatCee is in some kind of trouble, and she will die if he does not rescue her.

Frank joined the army to escape his small world in Louts, leaving the cherished fragile Cee behind. Cee had no acquaintanceship with people outside her family and neighbours. She was not allowed to meet more people or to go to school in the next town. Cee was treated with cruelty and violence. She wanted to overcome her traumas in order to approve herself, but this aim was continually prevented. She had no

experience and becomes a prey for the first stranger that appeared in her life. She met Prince who was a visitor from Atlanta to his aunt’s house, he was a good looking new face. All girls in town were impressed with his big-city accent and, what they believed was, his knowledge and wide experience, especially Cee. Disappointingly, Prince “loved himself so deeply, so completely, it was impossible to doubt his conviction” (*Home*, 2012:33). Frank was away in the war, and the inexperienced, misguided Cee ran away. Cee looked for a shiny life in the city, but soon she discovers Prince’s deception.

Prince was ashamed of Cee and her outlook. He bought her a new dress not out of generosity but because of the embarrassmentcaused by her countrified clothes. When they went out, “they spent most of the time just driving around, even eating, in the Ford; they never met any of his friends or family” (*Home*, 2012:37).Cee lived a personal conflict; her male supporter Prince, provedto beanunworthy. Prince asked her first to borrow Lenore’s car and leave Lotus, later he stole the car and abandoned her. Eventually, she learned that Prince had married her for the automobile. Perceptibly, the car was Prince’srealinterest. Cee was left lonely and frustrated in Atlanta; she was afraid to go back to Lotus and face Lenore’s wrath.Cee “was broken up and down into her separate parts.... Cee’s chase of a companion, with whom to have a romantic foresight and an imagined rescuer was broken down ...Now she stood alone (*Home*, 2012:38).

Nancy Woloch(2009) declares that unlike men, “black women migrants could always find jobs, as cooks, laundresses, scrubwomen, maids, in New York in 1910 ... the African American woman took “the job that the white girl doesn’t want” (*Home*,2012:14).The dishwashing job she got did not cover her expenses. So she searched for another job to be able to live. With the absence of the brother who use to give her advice, she gets a job as an assistant to a doctor. Cee thinks her new employer, DrScott, a herofor having books on eugenics, andtreats the sick, including black and poor. She actually did not know that eugenics involves the manipulation of human breeding, sometimes by sterilizing people without their consent.

Frank and Cee followed obligatory norms to prompt their gender in order to accomplish gender performances, but none of them managed to become a subject. Their separation added more to their crisis, and eventually to lose themselves.

## 5. PRECARITY

African Americans lacked the essential characteristics that qualified their life to be equal to white individuals. They were precarious and lacked the social and economic networks that would support and protect them against violence and death. The political system did not provide precarity to the Moneys and other black families. Actually, the new town was not much welcoming nor promising neither for the parents nor their children. The new life shed gloominess on their life and existence. The impact of the emigration is manifestly reflected on the new generation. They were neglected, isolated and exposed to danger, and they never managed to obtain the characteristics that qualify them as subjects. Precarity describes the diverse condition, the harm and jeopardy Cee goes through while living in Atlanta.

Cee's new job, as "a helper," with Dr Scott puts her in danger. The doctor's office was in the house where she had to live. His inventions are assumed to help people. Cee takes her white employer as a healer for her previous abandonment and abuse. But her trauma increases when the doctor drugs her to perform medical and sexual experiments. The white, male hegemony doctor treats the black female Cee and experiments on her as an unequal, subordinate. Through the doctor's character, Morrison warns against those who take advantage of "privilege to exploit both their individual victims and society as a whole" (Freedman, 2016: 4).

The inexperienced, naïve Cee was fascinated with the comfortable bed afforded to her in the house. She delightedly "giggled at its silk cover... Remembering the thin, bumpy mattress Lenore slept on, she couldn't help herself and laughed with wild glee (Home, 2012: 43, 44). Her happiness blinded her from seeing the awful features of the doctor: Not far from the doctor's office was her room, "spotless, narrow, and without windows" (Home, 2012:43). Morrison's characters seek for individuality free of racial hindrance; they depend on both psychic and physical aspects of "home" to endure their racial trauma. Castor (2014), states that to Cee the place is a "refuge from memories of insult and abandonment, the reader notices an implicit meaning of anti – communism, racism, and hatred of women" (Home, 2012: 127). Castor adds that the doctor's nearby office insures the maintained control over work as well as the whole intimate details of Cee's life. This house is strange in every sense; Castor also refers to the image of the "starved

uniforms salu[ing] from their hungers on the wall" which suggests that Cee even sleeps under the doctor's "militaristic surveillance." So, "[t]he ghostly presence of invisible bodies on the hangers is a haunting allusion to the lynching of blacks in the south, the practice of which we are led to believe Dr. Beau, a "heavy weight confederate," would approve" (Home, 2012: 147). The doctor tries to sustain complete control over his house. His aggression is exposed in the way he will drug and sterilize Cee for the sake of his work as a "scientist". His control is political, racial, and gendered. Cee faces a culture where black identity is marginalized where whiteness is the norm. This culture turns her to a precarious figure.

Sarah, the household worker, helps saving Cee's life through sending a letter to Frank that says "Come fast, she be dead if you tarry" (2012:7). Frank reaches Dr. Beau's house to find Cee "lay still and small in her white uniform. He felt her pulse. Light or none" (Home, 2012:74). There were difficulties in his attempt to rescue Cee, and limits to how he can help her. Cee's tragedy awakens the benevolent notions in Frank; he remembers his earlier heroic action of protecting little Cee. The war did not make him a hero, on the contrary it turned him into a traumatic figure. At that moment, Frank realized the necessity of the amendment of gender role, relinquishing the notions of masculinity through hostility and violence to rescue and saving. Although, he deals with Dr. Scott violently, he gently carries Cee in his arms and take her back home.

The act takes him back in memories to the time. He used to protect and guard Cee. In one of his confessions he utters his genuine feelings:

She was the first person I ever took responsibility for. Down deep inside her lived my secret picture of my self – a strong good me tied to memory of those horses and the burial of a stranger. Guarding her ... not being afraid of anything – snakes or wild old men. I wonder if succeeding at that was the buried seed of all the rest. In my little – boy heart I felt heroic and I knew that if they found us or touched her I would kill. (Home, 2012:69)

Finally, he realizes that there are other ways to achieve heroism; it is protecting one's own family and race. Frank takes unconscious Cee back to Louts. He asks Miss Ethel Fordham to take care of her for he does not know what is wrong with her. Later, Miss Ethel tells her that Dr. Beau's experiment has made her infertile and her "womb can't never bear fruit." Miss Ethel works on

healing Cee physically and spiritually. She helps her to be herself; a strong self-standing person:

“You ain't a mule to be pulling some evil doctor's wagon.”

“You a privy or a woman?”

“Who told you you was a trash?”...“You good enough for Jesus.

That's all you need to know. (*Home*,2012:81)

Cee heals herself with the supporting power of Ethel and the community of women. The living tradition and empathy of the Black women community thrives their healing abilities. First, they secluded her from all men – including her brother. They believed that his maleness would worsen her condition. They healed her in a confined woman space away from any man in order to teach her how to trust herself. Second, they used music of spirituals, gospel hymns, bright sunshine, and knowledge of how to plant flowers that “sported flowers protecting vegetables from disease and predators—marigolds, nasturtiums, dahlias” (*Home*, 2012:78). They nursed her in turn, and each had a special recipe for her cure. Their collective wisdom helps her pass over her crisis; “to be the person who would never again need rescue... to be the one who [would rescue] her own self. Did she have a mind or not? ...If she did not respect herself, why should anybody else” (*Home*, 2012:87)? This helps greatly in healing Cee from her weakness and dependence on male characters.

As Cee heals, the women stop the rebuke and change their tactics. Miss Ethel's house turn to a quilting centre. They train the things their mothers had taught them during the period of Depression. Cee pays them whole attention. Miss Ethel's encouraging words helps Cee to reinforce the healing process:

You free. Nothing and nobody is obliged to save you but you. Seed your own land ... Don't let Lenore or some trifling boyfriend and certainly no evil doctor decide who you are. That's slavery. Somewhere inside you is that free person I'm talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world. ” (*Home*, 2012: 84)

The first quilt Cee makes supplies her with a new sense of independence and empowerment. Cee informs Frank that she cannot have children because of the doctor's experiments “Never”, she sobs. Then she responds “why not? I can be miserable if I want to”. “Then she wiped her cheeks with the heel of her hand” (*Home*, 2012:88). At this stage, she does not need her brother's protection anymore; there is decisive difference

between the security he can provide her, and the state of dependency she no longer needs.

A new strong, and resolute Cee is born, who can stand any bitterness in life. She even inspires and supports Frank to be strong and sturdy. Cee's final suggestion to Frank to go home reveals her power as a self-determining woman. Their “reconciliation becomes like a circle begins with home and ends with it” (Mbalia, 2004: 101). The journey back home helps in saving both Cee and Frank. It is his final attempt to revisit the concrete physical spaces and to memories of their past meanings, comments Hembree (2012).

They find in a new home and social space that expresses their renewed united power. Cee's quilt is a symbol for the community of women past and present. Frank heals himself within the burial of the anonymous man they saw killed and thrown into a ditch in the opening chapter. They honour the dead man by covering him with Cee's quilt and giving him a proper burial within sunset. Frank writes “Here Stands A Man”. This statement indicates that Frank is honouring himself as a man. He manages finally to perform his muscularity without retorting to violence (Castor, 2014: 149). Morrison uses the tree in the final chapter as a metaphor for their recovering and healing. The tree is hurt, however

It looked so strong

So beautiful.

Hurt right down the middle

But alive and well. (*Home*,2012:98)

Both were interiorly wounded but now they are fresh, beautiful and strong. They feel home not as a space of reunion; it is a place where individuals remain disconnected, able to see only the exterior of their most intimate human contacts” (Dudziak, 2012:2). *Home* supplies the notion of belonging and subjectivity. Morrison supplies the reader with the chance to enter to her world of fiction and think. She tells the stories of Black people to show that they are different and complicated. Her work histories their life to create a realistic understanding of black life in America.

Frank and Cee's crisis happened through practicing the performativity of gender role. Frank misapprehended masculinity believing that being a hero is achieved simply through joining army and fighting the enemy. Cee misunderstood femininity to be complete dependence on male partners. Furthermore, their race was determined to be precarious. Their healing came through going back home to the roots and black culture and through the assistance of the old women of town.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Displacement and dislocation were general conditions among African Americans in the past. Their performativity of gender role failed to make them recognizable living subjects in the past, nor precarity afforded them with any protection. They were excluded as subalterns. *Home*, talks about a phase when the Blacks were not mentionable. Frank and Cee are victims to politics, culture, and society norms. They grow up trying to perform normal gender roles but their performativity was incorrect and could not attain eligibility. They paid high costs for their mistakes. When they recognize their true nature, they recover and manage to allocate subjectivity. Morrison enforces the notion of home and belonging to a community. Both Frank and Cee detached themselves from their town and people in order to perform a role that does not reflect their true identity. It was the unity with the family and the collaborative work of the black women team that helped them to know themselves and healed up eventually. The “nonracist home” is the solution to avoid being precarious.

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