

UNHOMELY WORLDS: EXPLORING HOMI BHABHA'S "UNHOMELINESS" IN TAYARI JONES'S *SILVER SPARROW*

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Abstract: Tayari Jones published her third novel, Silver Sparrow, in 2011. Her novels depict themes of race and identity, which include postcolonial elements. Silver Sparrow portrays the struggle of African Americans in Atlanta and their experience of systemic injustices. This study examines Homi K. Bhabha's "unhomeliness" concept associated with Tayari Jones's Silver Sparrow. It centers on the themes of displacement that echo the characters' experiences of postcolonial displacement. In the framework of Homi Bhabha's "unhomeliness," Silver Sparrow experiences difficulties in maintaining a balance between their family demands, social standards, and belonging. All characters suffer from psychological displacement, invisibility, and alienation. This paper analyzes Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness" in the novel Silver Sparrow to illustrate the fractured family structure and complexities of identity formation where the characters are both insiders and outsiders within the social pattern. Through this concept of "unhomeliness," Jones expressed the multiplex dynamics of family bonding, secrecy, and displacement in Silver Sparrow.

Homi K. Bhabha, as a critical theorist, is a prominent figure in contemporary postcolonial studies and has developed key concepts, such as hybridity, mimicry, difference, and ambivalence. He is a key figure in postcolonial theory, known for his focus on the complex dynamics between colonizers and the colonized. In his influential book, *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha presents concepts that challenge clear-cut distinctions between the "Self" and "Other." Bhabha expounded on the contention for power, the construction of hybridity, stereotypes and mimicry, duality and triangularization, the third space, and otherness through post-colonialism. Of the discussions, "unhomeliness" seems more relevant to Tayari Jones's novel *Silver Sparrow*. For Bhabha, unhomeliness or unhomely feelings mean a state of confusion that occurs in an individual's life during cultural transformation. This notion may define the uncomfortable feeling in the middle of two cultures, the home and the self. Bhabha establishes that such a condition produces the encounter between the private and the public spheres and leads to a split, disoriented subjectivity of the unhomely. This is a recurring theme among many diasporic communities, where people are constantly in cultural contact. Bhabha uses the notion of unhomeliness to stress that psychological problems are inherent to the diaspora and have a significant impact on people's lives and personalities.

Tayari Jones explores the emotional and psychological consequences of growing up in a polygamous, secret family structure, focusing on the effects of illegitimacy, social status, and the desire for belonging through the critical theoretical framework. This study discussed the components of Homi Bhabha's theory of "unhomeliness" in *Silver Sparrow*. James Witherspoon is one of the main characters with a dual identity, whose bigamy is at the core of the novel's conflict. Jones inverted the American dream: public and secret lives of James Witherspoon's two families. Thus, James may be considered an embodiment of the unhomely, or postcolonial, in-between subjectivities that Bhabha develops through the Middle Eastern man in his discourse. Homi Bhabha's framing of the unhomely is an idea of feeling out of place or uncomfortable, associated with people dwelling in the dominant or colonial societies. It reflects a destabilized orientation to the self and a persistent feeling of "in-betweenness" as people do not entirely fit into the home culture and cannot assimilate into the dominant

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culture. The unsettling that is so frequently experienced, the stresses of existing in liminal realms, lead to a state of ontological insecurity.

It shall suffice here to assert that James Witherspoon's existence as a bigamist is a perfect example of unhomely. He leads two lives: one with Laverne, his legal wife, and their child, Chaurisse, and the second with Gwen, his mistress, and their child, Dana. These two homes are studied in duality with each other, situated side by side. James isolates them as much from one another as physically possible, creating an unwanted and split self. James himself represents a man who is a stranger in both of his families. He shuttles between them, keeping a part of life from the other; thus, he feels alienated from both families. He builds an equilibrium; however, this ambiguity weakens his ability to integrate into either family. In Bhabha's terms, James is in an "unhomely" state because he occupies a liminal space that resists clear definitions. He exists in a state of partial presence, never fully involved in the lives of either side of the family. For example, in chapter one, Dana reflects on her father's dual life, and her existence as the "secret" daughter aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness. "My father, James Witherspoon, is a bigamist. He was married to my mother and to my father's other wife at the same time. This is not a secret. It is just that my sister, Chaurisse, did not know about me. The thing about lying is that it is hard to keep it up. You have to remember who you told and what you said. Moreover, who might tell?" (Jones, 2012, 1) It reflects the fractured nature of James Witherspoon's life, embodying Bhabha's idea of unhomeliness, caught between two worlds and belonging fully to neither. The act compels his secrecy, deception, and division to build a fragmented feeling of home that neither his "public" nor "private" family can be complete.

For James, the issue of his cultural predicament is apparent in the marriage secret in that it defies social and moral standards. On the one hand, he demonstrates the behavior that can be explained by the patriarchal model when a man may have two or more families and lives. However, his internal confrontation and his external concealment reveal the tension between custom and individual and public expectations of sexual monogamy, truth, and authenticity. This ethical conflict consequently contributes to his sense of alienation in his actions; he is barred from the standards of the society in which he resides. This constant fear of exposure leads to an existential unhomeliness, into which he cannot safely retreat into a role and truly be comfortable. As in Bhabha's idea of living in the interstice, James is a man of two worlds but fits into none completely. Guilt and deceit bring him inconsistency and discomfort, which prompts the realization of unhomeliness as an affective and psychical concept. "I took care of both of them. I had to run and get what my other girl needed, but you cannot be two places at once. 'You can only sleep in one bed'" (Bhabha, 1994, 45). It approximates James's unhomely experience as he tries to belong to two different worlds, feeling out of place in both worlds. Even though he valiantly endeavors to keep up the appearance of two happy married couples, he is alienated by his life experience. This metaphor, "sleeping in one bed," points to his fragmented self and the instability of a home.

This process reveals the thematic concerns in the novel, consisting of identity, secrecy, and family displacement, which were well intertwined in the story of two half-sisters, Dana and Chaurisse, who both have the same father but live very different lives. The subject is focused on James's illegitimate daughter, Dana Lynn Yarboro. In the perspective of this paper, Jones raises the question of cultural alienation and Dana's desire for sponsorship and recognition from her father. The main character, Dana, is a creature of unhomeliness as described by Homi Bhabha. "Unhomeliness" is defined in the context of existential displacement in which a person may be in-between places or between different personas without truly belonging to either wholly. Such is the case with Dana being the hidden child of James Witherspoon – the girl is socially shut out from the world and exists as an outsider in both of her father's lives. The fact that Dana is born with her father's secret puts her in a transitional status right from the beginning. Even when she is young, she understands what has happened to her: that she cannot be a part of her father's public family and that she must live in the dark. This knowledge creates a state of profound unhomeliness for Dana because

she is in the bourgeois sphere, but in the same breath, she is completely invisible as a Black woman. She lacks a rightful home and always knows that the facade she lives in is for her father's haven.

Heterotopia means that 'one is never there' is, in Dana's case, not feeling at home. She cannot identify her father publicly nor possess the same rights and freedoms as Chaurisse, her half-sister. This situation presented to her that she is involved with her father, but remains outside and feels like she is in a situation where she cannot be fully a part of either side. This dissonance aligns with Bhabha's notion of living in an in-between state, where identity is constantly in flux and never fully anchored. The very concept of "home" for Dana is unstable. While she has a physical home with her mother, Gwen, the knowledge of her father's other life makes her home feel incomplete and uncanny. The home is supposed to be a sense of security, but for Dana, it becomes a place of secrecy, where she learns to conceal her identity. This displacement creates a sense of unhomeliness, where even the familiar (her father's presence) becomes unfamiliar due to the secrecy and division between her private and public lives. "My father, James Witherspoon, is a bigamist. He was married to my mother, and he had another wife, who was unaware of my existence." (Ibid., 5) This opening line reflects Dana's dislocation from the very start of the novel. Her existence is marginalized, and she is trapped in the liminal space between being a part of her father's life and being hidden away. The concept of unhomeliness here is evident in the way Dana feels alienated from her father's public life and society, as her identity is shaped by secrecy.

Dana's status as an illegitimate daughter centers on the theme of emotional and cultural displacement in the novel. Her identity is kept as a secret by her father, and that makes her character experience displacement and existential crisis within herself. Her exclusion from public life creates a persistent feeling of being unwanted, and so she feels marginalized by her father both physically and emotionally. She was forced to follow specific rules and restricted from avoiding situations that may reveal her true identity as James's illegitimate daughter. She always longs to be a part of James's public life like her half-sister Chaurisse. However, she was forced to live without recognition or legitimacy, like Chaurisse, which displaced her life.

Dana's father, James, gave her everything Dana needed materially, but she had no emotional connection with him because of his disregard for Dana's public validation. Her constant use of the name "James" for her father indicates how distant she is from him and how she does not acknowledge him as her father. Dana's ongoing comparison of Chaurisse's public existence with her private one fosters her feeling of alienation and illustrates her emotional uprooting and struggle with belonging. As a result of this, Dana feels alone and cut off from her father. To preserve her father's name, her mother, Gwen, reminds her of their secret identity and forbids her from participating in any activities involving her father's prominent family. This enforced secrecy prevents Dana from forming a stable sense of self, as her identity is tied to the limitations imposed by her father's choices. "I was his secret. The girl he kept in the shadows. Not his real family." (Ibid., 84) Dana's sense of unhomeliness is clear in this quote, as she defines herself as the "secret" daughter. She is physically part of her father's life but emotionally and socially removed, unable to fully claim her place in his world. This reflects Bhabha's description of psychological displacement, as Dana exists in an in-between space, neither fully belonging nor entirely excluded.

Dana's internal turmoil is described as she feels privileged to be James' daughter, but constant reminders about her hidden self diminish her sense of identity. She lives a double life because her true identity is hidden behind concealment. Dana believes that Chaurisse's life embodies everything Dana lacks. Because Chaurisse, as a genuine daughter, enjoys her life to the fullest, including her father's presence in public, whereas Dana is not permitted to mention James' name to anybody. These circumstances cause Dana to live as an outsider without public recognition or approval. Dana surreptitiously observes Chaurisse, who is publicly recognized, lauded, and loved by her father, which causes both jealousy and intrigue. This jealousy fuels Dana's exile and yearning to belong. Dana's relationship with her half-

sister, Chaurisse, further underscores her unhomeliness. While Chaurisse lives a life of legitimacy, utterly unaware of Dana's existence, Dana is acutely aware of Chaurisse and her privileges. Despite the social reality of the world into which Chaurisse is moving, accepted by her father, given a type of stability and recognition that Dana can never have, the move is also effectively the outcome of her father's actions; the world that Chaurisse is entering is, in fact, an arena of legitimacy, of family, of conformity, encapsulated in the relocation. On the level of uncovering the protagonist's psychological doubleness, Dana's unhomeliness is most explicit in the way she fails to have a unity of the private and the public. Dana appeared to be the sort of person whose identity is between being affiliated with her father and yet desperately trying for people not to know she exists. Her interaction with Chaurisse is a fantasy of a life that she wants for herself and a reality of the life she despises.

Besides, repression also supposes displacement at the subject level; thus, Dana's experience in *Silver Sparrow* is one of a series of questions about the effects of erasure, silencing, and marginalization on one's subjectivity. Thus, Jones, using the outline of Dana's story, serves as an enthralling representation of the theme of the work as a reflection of a complex and versatile concept of family, identity, and the personal need for identification and acceptance. The conflicts of being observed and invisible, belonging and not belonging, make Dana's life a tragedy. This is in tune with the psychosocial or emotional alienation that Bhabha associates with the term "unhomeliness." Dana desires to belong to a group, while she has an intrusive idea of belonging to no group. Such dualism only highlights the general predicament of her character, wherein her desire to forge interpersonal connections is constantly being met with feelings of loneliness. All aspects of Dana's journey reflect Bhabha's idea of cultural conflict, which, as discussed earlier, entails inner struggle.

Polygamy was a way to transmit the feeling of displacement; unnatural birth belongs to cultural and social discrimination. Jones used these themes to express emotional, cultural, and social displacement in *Silver Sparrow* characters. The novel's subject lies in Dana and her mother, Gwen, and Jones, and shows the effects of living in the shadow of James' legal family. To stay invisible from this man's public life, being legally married to him as Gwen, the entire emotional reality of the couple remains deeply complicated by the fact that James is her husband, but only the second one. Dana and Gwen fight for the social recognition they never received, leading to their removal in both emotional and social realms. James's refusal to publicly acknowledge Dana and Gwen erased both Dana and Gwen's presence in the familial unit, resulting in their exclusion and perceived invisibility. Many features of Gwen describe Homi Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness. As distinct from abundant scholarship, Bhabha describes unhomeliness as a condition where the person is rooted neither here nor there and therefore feels like a stranger in their society. For Gwen, this state of unhomeliness has a lot to do with James, her invisibility as the second wife, and the decisions that she has made to ensure that her daughter fends for herself in the future. Effectively, Gwen's whole experience as a character can be described as an emotional and social alienation that is representative of Bhabha's fractured subjectivity and splitting of the social or self-belongingness.

Dana's mother, Gwen, also loses a significant role in James' life, which is not accepted by societal norms. Her alienation is boosted by the fact that she tries to shield Dana from the suffering associated with being on the periphery. Even when Gwen is involved with James, she is structurally occupying the grey area of being the other woman, without being completely outside the marriage, "as society constructs. While she officially becomes a wife, James undergoes a formal wedding earlier in the day; she has to bear the psychological and societal implications of remaining a well-protected secret. Dana's secret persona makes her an unhomely wife or mother," meaning her identity as a wife and mother cannot be legitimized or recognized. She plays out her expected role wherever social expectations and parental acceptance are undefined, triggering a strong sense of alienation concerning approval that often goes together with roles. It lays bare her conflict between conformity and individuality due to society's expectations and her existence. The story of Dana is about a woman in a

system that does not recognize her by providing her with the appropriate place after marriage. This element of unhomeliness can be linked to the involvement of the characters named Gwen and James. Despite her care for him and her view of a future where they will get together with her and Dana, she is constantly overshadowed by his primary loyalty to Laverne and Chaurisse. Gwen's emotional life is obsessed with waiting for the moments when James will spend it with her and Dana, waiting for the future when both women will stop being hidden from the world. These two parallel lives shatter Gwen's emotional space related to concepts of home and family as much as they do James's.

Gwen's unhomeliness is also manifested in her inability to offer Dana a legitimate family, stability, and cohesiveness. Although she wants Dana to have everything that makes Chaurisse have a father, security, and the right to be legally married, the woman understands that they cannot achieve this due to their secret family status. Gwen continuously tries to give Dana stability and a place in her life. However, she is hindered by unchangeable circumstances, which strengthens the theme of homelessness and the fragmented nature of her character. Of all these aspects, Gwen's is emotional but also socially unhomely. Due to her invisibility, she feels outside society and people's perception of society. She cannot build a community of friends around her family, let alone freely talk to others about her affair with James. It widens the gap and erases her sense of belonging to the social networks she needs to function as a society.

Jones offers a slick and wound-up female figure, as Gwen's figure excludes her from the social world of marriage and motherhood, so she is unhomed. Contrary to Laverne, she cannot declare herself as a wife or a mother, and this erasure from social reality deepens her feeling of isolation. The fact that Gwen lives on the periphery of society and is forced to lack shelter is a typical illustration of Bhabha's unhomely state. Half of the time, Gwen's unhomeliness stems from her knowledge of Laverne's social standing. Laverne is legitimate and publicly recognized, while Gwen is in a world of unauthorized, illegitimate acknowledgment. Gwen collected memories of Laverne's life, and this constant reproduction of memories of inclusion that Laverne never experienced exacerbates her sense of loneliness and displacement. In *Silver Sparrow*, Gwen is one of the best examples of Bhabha's unhomed subject. That she is a bigamously married woman, her broken relationship with James, and her difficult attempts to give credibility to Dana all develop social isolation and loneliness. Tayari Jones portrays this through Gwen and remains a testimony of the social, psychological, and emotional impact of leading a life in the shadows of marginalization and the constant liminality of identity.

As the "legitimate" daughter in Tayari Jones's *Silver Sparrow*, Chaurisse Witherspoon might seem far more stable and comfortable than the "illegitimate" child, Dana. By applying the formulation of "unhomeliness" by Homi Bhabha, Chaurisse's character undergoes the portrayal of stability, yet is shown to be out of place. Unhomeliness is being in-between, where the close and the nearby become strange, and people undergo psychological or social displacement. Despite the major depressive focus on belonging, Chaurisse's life is just as much filled with secrets, unfulfilled anxiety, and the inevitable clash with the truth that dismantles the constructed self. "All my life, I've felt like there was a door closed somewhere. Like a part of the world was shut off to me, and I didn't have the key" (Ibid., 85). This quote perfectly encapsulates Chaurisse's unconscious experience of unhomeliness. Even though she is the recognized daughter, she senses something missing or hidden from her. The image of the closed door represents the secret family she is unaware of, and her feeling of exclusion from this hidden world mirrors the psychological displacement Bhabha describes, where the familiar world is subtly alien.

Chaurisse's outwardly secure position as James's legitimate daughter creates an illusion of stability. She believes she knows her family and her place in the world, unaware that her father leads a second, secret life with Dana and Gwen. This unawareness reflects a kind of unhomeliness, as Chaurisse operates within an incomplete reality. The secrets she does not yet know but can sense fracture her sense of belonging in her secure home. This gap between her beliefs and the hidden truths destabilizes her, creating an undercurrent of displacement that

manifests in small insecurities about her family and identity. Throughout her life, Chaurisse experiences a vague sense of unease, an intuition that something is missing or incomplete about her life. As she puts it: "All my life, I've felt like there was a door closed somewhere. Like a part of the world was shut off to me, and I didn't have the key" (Ibid., 240). This quote encapsulates the essence of Bhabha's unhomeliness that Chaurisse feels she is cut off from something crucial, though she does not yet know what it is. Her sense of displacement stems from the reality that she does not have the whole truth about her family. The familiar world she inhabits is unknowingly fragmented, giving her an underlying sense of alienation that reflects Bhabha's notion of feeling unmoored or caught between identities.

Friendship and recognition are a part of Chaurisse's feeling of being out of place, a desire for acceptance into the world where she and her mother always seem to be second-class citizens. However, she is legitimate in her rights as a wife and mother; she often has moments of being "other," feelings of low self-worth, or being excluded from the community that Bhabha discusses. As James's legitimate daughter, Chaurisse is still a practically noticeable figure, and although she can occupy a legitimate place, she is not sure she belongs. The Oedipal complex, manifested through the thirst for recognition and the feeling frustrated by her inability to get it, results in a kind of dislocation, pushing aside the accepted reality as it is done in the case of unhomeliness. The feeling of being unhomed is well expressed through the insecure aspect that underlines Chaurisse's relationships. He seeks love and appreciation, but every time, she feels inadequate. Such views are intensified when she has a friend in Dana, who looks like a charismatic and confident girl. While Chaurisse genuinely thinks she is building a friendship with Dana. However, Dana knows all this while her half-sister's fact vitiates the shared rapport by design. This dynamic is symptomatic of Chaurisse being, quite literally, 'unhousing' herself as she is not fully engaged with the friendship at the heart of the show since she is unaware of its falsity.

Chaurisse's life is shocked when she learns that James is a bigamist. Once a familiar and stable place transforms into a house unfamiliar to her, she understands she is living a fake life. This moment remains a clear illustration of Bhabha's unhomely space where home turns into a non-place. The resultant reality is that Chaurisse has to realize that her father's love was not wholly hers alone; the family she thought was real is just half the truth. This feeling of betrayal means she is no longer in a familiar position, meaning her former stable personality is shattered. Chaurisse only gets to face the two sides of her father after the revelation is made to the audience. It therefore reveals more fragmented feelings about home, which was once complete but is now fragmented between two families. This is analogous to Bhabha's concept of the 'in-between,' where people are stuck between two opposing truths. Due to her father being a man of two worlds, Chaurisse is forced into an "unhomeliness" and feels uncomfortable in her skin and her family. In the house once safe and comforting, the new light pierces through and turns everything upside down – secrets and feelings. This transition, in which the mundane and safe become dangerous, reflects the internal struggle as she faces the darker side of the family's reality. The complexities are the facts that a young Black woman has to undergo while challenging herself to seek identity amidst the confusion.

Chaurisse's unhomeliness is not only within her family but also within her general being in the world. In penetrating her sexual status, she is forced to question her status in society following the discovery of the secret life of her father. The discovery of Dana and Gwen's existence also makes Chaurisse feel left out of a part of his life that she never knew existed. The protagonist is now forced to accept that, unlike in the movies where she was the star and all of Earth's events revolved around her, there was another universe parallel to hers. This apprehension to fit in society and to feel that she is an outcast from a "home" echoes the realization that Chaurisse is no longer the most important person to her father. Its place in the world has become chaotic, and the heroine's role is unclear.

However, as readers follow the plot in *Silver Sparrow*, Chaurisse, introduced as James' authentic daughter, also becomes an example of an unhomely experience. The discovery of her father as a bigamist and, therefore, her father being a bigamist destabilizes her

psychologically. Chaurisse experiences inadequacy, invisibility, and a general sense of the vague fear that Bhabha describes as the state of unhomeliness. Her characters and environment appear regular and predictable, but there are carefully hidden spoilers; when uncovered, they bring an unrecognizable world incompatible with her understanding. For this reason, Tayari Jones, in presenting Chaurisse, underscores how the concept of “the well-off Black” also feels others, even immigrants in the United States, within the quandary spaces of identities and family.

It is not hard to notice that Laverne, the lawful wife of James Witherspoon in Tayari Jones’s *Silver Sparrow*, is a figure of the norm. By being the public wife and the mother of Chaurisse, Laverne is a paragon of post-racial multiplicity, yet the unhomely space she represents, following Homi Bhabha, is deeply unsettling. The Bhabha studies a psychological and social condition called “unhomeliness,” which defines a state when people witness a familiar environment becoming strange. As for Laverne, she has an entirely flawed perception of her married life, her entire personality, and so-called security systems are disarranged because of secrets not known to her. However, she has privileges in this marriage. While Laverne’s life might look quite ordinary to most people, they are dead wrong. Laverne is the wife of James Witherspoon, the mother of his legitimate daughter, and the woman who acknowledged her common-law husband. However, there is a frailty that suggests she is uncomfortable, or “unhomelike.” The premise of her existence is that she has a consummate, bona fide marriage, but the unseen appearance of Gwen and Dana undermines this conception.

Laverne’s security stems, however, from the fact that she has correctly and rightfully reckoned as the wife, while Randall’s other woman is his appendage. However, the reality that James secretly has another woman and child compromises the legitimacy of her marriage. She has no idea that the man is playing a part, and the ambiance, small, unnoticeable cues, point towards the fact that something is not quite right in her home, and hence, there is a sense of unhomeliness. This lack of security is reminiscent of Bhabha’s accursed state of liminality, as the comfortable domestic sphere is constructed on a veneer of falsehood and thus becomes wholly other. Laverne cannot be privy to the existence of James’s second family, but there are times in the novel when she feels that everything is not alright. That is why during James’s absence, and when she feels emotionally detached from him, she has implicit doubt within herself. He says this feeling represents Bhabha’s unhomeliness, meaning the character’s safety and stability in the marriage are undermined by the unspoken truth of the separation. While Laverne is presented as the wife, society acknowledges that her home is sharply divided by secrets, which increases the tension in the family and the feeling of being a stranger in her home.

In a way, Laverne’s social relations with James and others depicted in the novel describe the nature of her emotional displacement, partly due to her inner insecurities. It is apparent that Laverne, as the “public” wife, experiences moments of insignificance or neglect by James. This insecurity is un-home-like because she cannot reconcile what she wants or expects in a marriage, given her alienation from her husband. Following Bhabha’s idea of unhomeliness, it is important to appreciate that Laverne is not as securely or stably ‘placed’ as her home environment might have us believe. It causes a separation of the emotions between the two, and Laverne finds herself drifting in the middle of her marriage to James.

The distance between Laverne and James represents her ambiguous position, where she is not entirely accepted or rejected, leading to a liminal space where she feels insecure and alienated. Laverne’s yearning for emotional connection with James is related to Bhabha’s concept of “unhomeliness.” Though she is recognized as his wife, her emotional needs are not met, causing her to feel estranged in her own home. As a result, her marriage becomes a source of dislocation rather than comfort. Laverne’s unfulfilled desire for love and attention causes her to question her role as a wife, despite it being socially recognized. Her feeling of something being missing in her marriage highlights her insecurity and foreshadows her

unhomeliness. Even though she has a stable home, it is fractured beneath the surface due to her subtle emotional displacement.

Laverne's bond with her daughter, particularly with Chaurisse, fuels her feeling of unhomeliness because it is rather instrumental under the constraints of social aesthetics. Laverne puts effort towards creating a stable and legal home for Chaurisse, but this habit is always out of the picture due to unsaid fractures within their family. Chaurisse's performance levels become Laverne's reflections of her unfulfilled desires since she wants her child to have a sense of security that she does not get. But when Laverne invests her energies in protecting her daughter's world, which is bad, she forgets that James's world of secrets also breaks her daughter's world. This creates a vicious circle of unhomeliness since when Laverne tries to perfect a house, she is constantly bothered by the incompleteness she tries to overcome. Laverne's lack of ability to provide Chaurisse with authentic security distorts Bhabha's concept of her as a 'being in this world': a world where the home has invisible scars from what is not said and felt.

Learning about James's other family would have been the most painful of all the moments of unhomeliness for Laverne, as it undermines her self-image, sense of belonging, and stability. The home she aspires to becomes a betrayal, and she has no choice but to face the consequences of her husband's betrayal. Laverne has a different view of her life when she learns the truth about Gwen and Dana. The home she thought was a haven is exposed as a place of lies and betrayal, leaving her feeling alienated. The matrimonial space she is used to abruptly becomes odd and foreign as it dawns on Laverne that her spouse has been leading a separate life. This moment strikes at the core of Bhabha's unhomeliness as the familiar is no longer familiar and the self is in constant quest for where she belongs. It's a mess of Laverne's reality, ruthless, and drawing a line between what she had and what she's just discovered about James. "I know my husband. I know him better than anyone. At least, I thought I did" (Ibid., 324). This is quite concerning for Laverne because it is the moment she understands this awful moment of unhomeliness for the very first time. She had built her world on a fantasy of knowing her husband too well until James's unexpected double life, of which she was unaware, shattered this illusion. The very home she adored at first becomes alienated as it becomes increasingly painful to her, and trust is eroded.

With the exposure of James's treachery, Laverne suffered profound alienation and disturbance in her sense of safety and belonging. She had viewed her life and her relationships in a particular way, which has now been altered, making a reassessment of herself and her status in the family essential. Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness is also illustrated in Laverne's experiences, as she rediscovers the meanings of these roles in a fractured reality: wife and mother do not mean the same things as before. In Tayari Jones's *Silver Sparrow*, Laverne is a tool for portraying the pains of existence when the home is a mess, rather than the core purpose of existence, happiness.

In conclusion, Tayari Jones's *Silver Sparrow* tends to resonate with Bhabha's theory of unhomeliness in a manner in which characters suffer from a split sense of self and geography. The fact that James Witherspoon was a polygamist creates a void not only for himself but also for the two women who form a part of his life. Dana, as the concealed child, has to grow up in the periphery without really being able to embrace either of her father's worlds. Gwen, the concealed wife, exists unseen, unavailable for social recognition. Even Chaurisse, whom the family recognizes as bona fide, suffers this curse, albeit in the moderate form – she is never ashamed but feels she has lost something, which should not have been, and is always associated with a vow and divided duty. All of them have to deal with the concept of don every time the character appears on stage, with a focus on the proper framework, the right one, which makes every preparation feel out of place. Individual aspects of how familiar life fragments the concept of home, creating the feeling of disconnection, become consistent throughout the narrative, strengthening Bhabha's theory. Through *Silver Sparrow*, Tayari Jones leaves the audience concerned about the importance of not feeling too rooted in their communities and how self-aligning conflicts group up again as returns.

All these exist in different forms of unhomeliness, influenced by the secrecy and deception that characterize their family bonds. James feels alienated from his family because his life is split into two parts. Dana is homeless and a near-spinster, living in the penumbra of normalcy. Even before discovering the truth, Chaurisse senses something is wrong, and her emotions are adrift. For her part, Laverne can feel the ground shift beneath her marriage, and once her secret is out, her world has become unrecognizable. Through these characters, Tayari Jones interrogates the fracture of identity and belonging created by family secrets, aligning with Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness, in which the familiar becomes strange and the home becomes a place of alienation.

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