

# Home-Making Practices and White Ideals in the Contemporary British and Nigerian Novel

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The family home is a focal point for a whole array of intersecting identity categories, some of which are gender, ethnicity, age, class, or (dis)ability. These identities are acted out in shared practices of 'doing home', and they are shaped by the normative position that whiteness has taken up in Western discourses. Especially domestic ideals can be interpreted as being inflected by scripts of whiteness: if my home is an exclusive space for the enactment of whitely family ideals, then it needs to be protected from alternative practices of doing family, doing parenting, or doing intimacy.

In my paper, I proceed from the assumption that whiteness is not a fixed identity but rather something we do and perform. I will connect this sense of whiteness with practices of 'doing home': Like whiteness, home is a process in flux that does not simply exist but is provisional and always (necessarily) in the making. Literary texts can represent whitely practices of doing home, and they can affirm or question these practices and unveil the contingency of home spaces and practices.

I will compare two literary examples: The British novel *Saturday* by Ian McEwan (2005) presents an upper-class white male protagonist whose home is violently invaded. The Nigerian novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2003) deals with a black girl from a privileged family who experiences domestic violence. Both texts are about practices and whitely ideals of doing home, but their effect is completely opposite. While McEwan's novel ultimately (and problematically) corroborates Henry Perowne's white privilege and idealised home space in the denigration of the un-white intruders, Adichie's text points out the damaging effects of white ideals in the terrifying but also tragic story of Papa Eugene and his family.