**“Falling Down, Falling Apart, and Finding Home in Reservation Blues”**

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### Novel Summary

**Reservation Blues Timeline**

### Objectives

- Examine characters’ movement toward or away from home literally and figuratively
- Track movements along “home” and “unhomed” axes to excavate choices, decisions, and consequences within the colonized space of the blues-laden Spokane Reservation
- Determine if finding a figurative home contains attendant features such as contentment, mutability, and hope
- Determine if an inability to find a figurative home, signals despair, stasis, or death

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### Applied Literature Theory

**Janet Zandy:**

“Home is literal: a place where you struggle together to survive; or a dream: ‘a real home,’ something just out of one’s grasp; or a nightmare: a place in order to survive as an individual. Home is an idea: an inner geography where the ache to belong finally quits, where there is no sense of ‘otherness,’ where there is, at last, a community.” (1)

Zandy’s conception of home illustrates multiple ways that characters experience literal and figurative components of home.

**W.E.B DuBois:**

“[T]his double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity [is] [where] one ever feels his two-ness . . . two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings . . . two warring ideals in one dark body” (3).

DuBois’s notion of double-consciousness offers a way to understand characters’ psychological responses to discrimination.

**Homi Bhabha:**

The figure of the “unhomed” within a colonial context offers insight as to why some characters do not feel at home even in their own home: they are not at home in themselves (Bhabha 13). However, some characters find comfort in hybridity where there is a productive crossroads of cultures (Bhabha 19).

### Results

- An exploration of the contours and textures of home enables us to chart characters’ movements along axes that map their journeys toward wholeness, desperation, or destruction
- Characters represent a range of choices, decisions, and consequences facing American Indians in colonized terrain in the contemporary United States
- Home can be found beyond reservation borders where one may more readily enact individual development while retaining shared ethno-cultural practices
- Leaving the reservation reveals agency in reclaiming traditional land beyond assigned borders

### Characters’ Home Axes

- **CHESS**
  - Chess: Becomes leader and leaves reservation

- **THOMAS**
  - Thomas: Comfortable with hybridity

- **CHECKERS**
  - Checkers: Comes to terms with her father

- **VICTOR**
  - Victor: Remains angry/potentially drinks himself to death

- **JUNIOR**
  - Junior: Falls apart and commits suicide

### Works Cited


