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Space, Trauma, and Identity in Toni Morrison's *Paradise.*

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Space, Trauma, and Identity in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*,” is our own work, and all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Our master's journey has been varicolored, with the best of times, the worst, and the hardest. However, we have held the faith that carried us to the greatest times of our lives. First and foremost, we thank Allah, the greatest, for giving us the power on this journey and helping us to realize this work.

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This thesis is heartily dedicated to my parents for their endless support, sacrifice, and love throughout my life.

To my source of affection, my angel mother, Fadila.

To my source of strength and model of success, my father, Elmabrouk.

To my kind grandmother, Zohra

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To my precious. To my sweetest ring of life. To my favorite season all-year.

May Allah bless you all.

NAWAL

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"To the wise souls speak loudly in the silence."

DJIHAD

List of Abbreviations

PSTD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

APA: American Psychological Association**.**

OCD: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

Abstract

The current study examines the role of space and trauma in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* (1997) and its impact on different African American societies. In addition, it represents the way space and trauma influence both collective and individual identities. It also explores the symbolic meaning of black space. Hence, the main aim of this study is to develop a strong understanding of how social and psychological features influence characters' identity both as group and individual and to provide a deeper meaning for African American homes. To achieve this, the study is carried out by employing historical trauma, social identity, psychoanalytical, and space theories, thus, to examine blacks' experience of harsh struggle in different societies and spaces. Therefore, the first chapter explores African Americans' struggles against racism and slavery by providing an overview of Toni Morrison's literary work. The second chapter analyzes Toni Morrison's representation of space and trauma in shaping characters' identity formation and destruction.

Keywords: Space, Home, Trauma, Identity, African Americans, Slavery, Racism, History, Memory.

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CHAPTER TWO: Space, Trauma, and Identity in *Paradise*

General Introduction

Over the years, Literature has been a fictional space that reveals all human issues and realities, mainly black ones. In this regard, all the harsh circumstances that were experienced by people of color were both a way for African American writers to create, to imagine, and to draw a space that would protect them from real injustice, as well as preserve their history and tradition, and also a way to show their struggle by identifying black identities that are influenced by various traumas in specific spaces.

Trauma and space have always been part of the American collective experience, but after the two global wars, African Americans became the most victims of pain and suffering resulted from those two aspects. It has been acknowledged that most people will experience some form of trauma during their lifetime, but in black American society and culture, it is often understood as a permanent problem that impacts their identities entirely. Because the cumulative effect of their experiences of racism, slavery, and then wars led them to have a seriously damaging impact on their mental and physical health.

African Americans find their way through literature that has influenced the lives of human beings. Many writers, such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, have empowered language to show the inner lives of black minorities who were seen as people with no history and culture. Also, one of these writers is the Noble Prize-winning author Toni Morrison, who is one of the most famous figures in contemporary African American fiction, has written several acclaimed fictional works: *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and her trilogy *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1997). Her works are well-known for re-exploring the history of traumatized bodies and spirits of African Americans and their struggle through racial, social, and psychological persecution. She is also the author of numerous non-fictional works.

Paradise tells the story of nine men from Ruby, Oklahoma, in this group, the twins, Deek and Steward Morgan, the founders of Ruby, who assault the five women living in the nearby convent. But before the town of Ruby, there was Haven, which was established in1890 in Oklahoma. Therefore, they left Haven and established Ruby to protect themselves from the whites' racism. They get the Oven, which was established by their fathers, as a symbol of paradise. Ruby is a community of African Americans who have built the town to create their version of Paradise or a Utopia. An old convent a few miles away is a haven where the five women have taken refuge over the years and currently live. Strange things have been happening in and around Ruby in the year before the story starts. Thereby, the nine men believed that the women were responsible for the scandalous events.

Throughout the novel, the women who arrive at the Convent one by one, Mavis, Grace/Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas/Divine, Consolata/Connie have all experienced pain and trauma as a result of living in a society that rigidly controls them. The five traumatized women wind themselves up at the Convent after stumbling around in a world that has no place for them. Oppressed by men, abandoned by mothers, and deceived by an unfair world, they find a place for themselves in the Convent, claiming a place for themselves and discovering their inner being freed from the restrictions and injustice of the patriarchal sphere.

Toni Morrison, as an eyewitness, gives a voice to the voiceless by addressing blacks' suffering in her literary work *Paradise*, where there is a space for memories, anxiety, fear, immorality, and black identity that are colored by pain and trauma in a particular space. Incorporating such themes into black literary studies is more than just a way of displaying African Americans' struggle for acceptance in their homelands to the rest of the world. Instead, it is a major goal for blacks themselves as a means of gaining awareness and knowledge about such issues.

African American suffering and pain are major issues that impact their behaviors, reactions, and identities as a whole. Morrison attributes all blacks' struggles to trauma and space, which are current and central themes in her vibrating novel *Paradise*. However, Morrison considered the idea of creating space for minorities as a way of escaping trauma and as a healing power for their souls. Trauma's symptoms, especially painful memories, give rise to other social and psychological conflicts which affect individuals' identity formation and destruction. Hence, this thesis attempts to provide answers to the following main questions: How does Toni Morrison symbolize the spaces mentioned in this novel? How does she portray the influence of space and trauma on blacks' identity construction and destruction? Additionally, it attempts to answer the following sub-question: How does trauma lead to space?

The objective of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of Morrison's views on space and trauma. Moreover, one of the main objectives of this research is to provide a specific meaning to the spaces mentioned in this novel and to develop a detailed view of the influence of space and trauma on the characters' identities, both as individuals and as groups.

Literature Review:

Rarely have researchers tackled the topic of space and trauma in different ways. Dale Pattison, in his dissertation "Space and Trauma in Contemporary American Literature" (2013), focuses on analyzing the interplay between lived space, institutional power, and trauma. It looked at how writers have depicted traumatic events in recent American history through literature and investigated the political and psychological aspects of space. Also, his Ph.D. dissertation aimed to explore trauma through space and political dimensions. Further, Sylviane Finck, in a study entitled "Reading Trauma in Postmodern and Postcolonial Literature Charlotte Delbo, Toni Morrison, and the Literary Imagination of the Aftermath"

(2006), examines the influence of trauma on minorities after colonialism, with a focus on Charlotte Delbo and Toni Morrison's representation of trauma. Hence, this dissertation aimed to provide an overview of trauma by relating all terrible events to it. However, the previous studies lack main aspects that would provide the reader with adequate knowledge on the target subject.

Research Design and Methodology:

This research is conducted through different theories psychoanalytical, social identity, historical trauma, and space theories to analyze how characters' identities are impacted by different psychological and social problems and how they develop their personalities through the space they occupy. Additionally, to describe the influence of trauma on African American groups' identities, and also to examine the symbolic meaning of those three places "Ruby, the Convent, and the Oven." Hence, the methodology used in this dissertation is the analytical and the descriptive method.

The work will be divided into an introduction, two main chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter is dedicated to the socio-historical context and the theoretical framework. First, the first section tackles the socio-historical background of African Americans. In addition, it explores African Americans' issues and experiences, such as racism, slavery, and the civil war. Secondly, this section deals with the historical context of African American literature. The third part of this chapter examines the theoretical framework of this study along with space theories and the interpretation of Sigmund Freud's trauma symptoms. Also, it explores the historical trauma and social interaction that would go back to the terrible history, the traumatic experiences, and social pain.

The second chapter is entitled "Space, Trauma, and Identity in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*", with the help of views and concepts from different theories. First, it starts with an

explanatory part about the author and the novel. The second section provides an analysis of the role of trauma in creating their space. Next, the third part of this chapter tackles the different effects of spaces and places in the novel while focusing on space as a place of Paradise or a Utopia. The following part of this chapter deals with the impact of space and trauma in constructing and destructing characters' identities. The chapter concludes with a discussion of painful memories, anxiety, and fear of the characters in the novel.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Framework.

"The future belongs to the impure. The future belongs to those who are ready to take in a bit of the other, as well as being what they themselves are."

- Stuart Hall.

This chapter is invested in exploring the socio-historical background and the theoretical framework of this study. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to the discussion of African American historical background. Additionally, it tackles African American issues such as slavery, segregation, racism, and the civil rights movement. Next, the second part of the chapter proceeds with the historical background of African American literature. Also, it deals with the historical background of contemporary African American literature. Thereafter, the third part of the chapter deals with the exploration of the relationship between space and trauma and how these two concepts have an impact on destroying and constructing self-identity.

1. African American Historical Background (from past to future):

African Americans are one of the biggest of the many ethnic groups in the U.S. At the turn of the 21st century, there were more than thirty-six million African Americans in the south, with multiple million in New York City and over one million in Chicago. Also, around 500,000 to one million Black population living in Detroit, Philadelphia, and Houston. The history of the United States started in 1619 when twenty Africans were landed in the English state of Virginia and served as contracted slaves for a certain period of time. Their number

continued to rise, reaching 760,000 in 1790, with the majority of them being directly brought from Africa or the offspring of slave women, representing one-fifth of the United States' population.

Slavery was documented in Virginia in 1661 and across the English colonies by 1750. Furthermore, Blacks were deemed an "inferior" race with "heathen" at the time, making it easier for whites to rationalize Black Slavery.

Slavery was only the beginning of the afro-American story. Slaves from Africa were dispersed across the New World during the 17th and 18th centuries. Though the majority of the slaves were brought to work on tropical plantations, particularly in the region straining from what is now the United States south to Brazil, along the Atlantic ocean, and in the Caribbean islands, a large number of slaves also reached the southern hemisphere, while many others were distributed across North America and into Canada. Thus, the patterns of interactions between Africans and non-Africans, as well as slaves and freemen, were extremely varied and complicated, despite the natural desire to think of them solely in terms of the plantation regimen. In 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation to abolish the slave trade in the United States. However, it only served to increase the country's domestic slave trade.

Slavery's economics are inextricably related to its institution. Blacks were purchased and sold as pieces of property for inexpensive agricultural labor throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Husbands and wives, parents, and children were removed from Black families in both America and Africa. The dominant philosophy of that time (derived from the Renaissance, which developed industry, capitalism, and urbanization) was that everyone was free to pursue their own aspirations or cravings without fear of being subordinated or betrayed. All this meant for the Black American slaves was that they were just a means to the White master's final goal of riches, success, and power. The objectification of work activities,

or products, was a significant method in which Black slaves affirmed their identity in the context of the majority because the system had reduced Black Americans to a kind of pure object with no human identity.

Between 1840 and 1860, abolitionists in the United Kingdom and the United States launched large-scale, sophisticated anti-slavery propaganda operations. Emerging African-American leaders in several states, including Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City, were among the free blacks in the north. In the early 1830s, they convened national and state conventions. On the other hand, these folks had differing viewpoints on how to cope with slavery and segregation. Slaves were urged to revolt and destroy their owners by certain leaders, while others believed it was unnecessary to improve the economy and build a modern black republic in Africa. Thus, African-Americans established Liberia in West Africa, foreshadowing the rise of pan-African nationalism.

Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States in 1860, on the anti-slavery platform of the new Republican Party. The civil war began in 1861 when a movement to free all of the country's slaves was begun. Lincoln's first objective was not to abolish slavery, but to gradually liberate slaves, with the federal government paying former slaves for the loss of their property. Yet, in September 1862, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that all slaves would be set free, making the civil war a war to abolish slavery.

After the Civil War, four million African slaves were emancipated, but during the South's rebuilding phase, they were enslaved again. The black codes were developed by the new solvent states to regulate the behavior of former slaves and to limit their desire for emancipation. For the first time, newly enfranchised blacks had a voice in government owing to dramatic rebuilding. However, the Ku Klux Klan was founded at the same time to restore

white supremacy in the south, so blacks were oppressed for a long time, especially in former Confederate states in the south. In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was created its mission of eradicating racial discrimination. Then, in 1917, when the United States required men for the war, the American civil war broke out.

In 1900, about eight million African Americans lived in the south. However, due to the economic depression, more African-Americans went north, becoming involved in World War I. Thousands of black officers were commissioned during the war, and many of them fought overseas in labor battalions and military regiments. Marcus Garvey, a black nationalist born in Jamaica, founded the Universal Negro improvement association in the Harlem area of New York City in 1919, with several hundred thousand members. It is widely regarded as the country's largest mass movement of African-Americans. After being imprisoned and expelled to his own country, Garvey's movement came to an end. A huge number of African-Americans lost their employment as a result of the Great Depression of the 1930s, which was accompanied by segregation. Black voters, mostly disregarded by republican governments in the 1920s, shifted to the Democratic Party, particularly in the northern cities. Additionally, they supported democratic candidate Franklin D Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election due to the New Deal reforms.

With President Roosevelt's encouragement, the beginning of WWII along with the industrial expansion put an end to the depression in 1939. African Americans were able to gain more employment at greater salaries throughout the war. The Great Migration saw an influx of black people from the rural South to the industrial centers of the north. Race riots erupted in numerous locations as a result of increasing employment rivalry and severe housing shortages, the worst of which happened in Detroit in June 1943. During the war, a considerable number of African-American soldiers served in foreign units, and military forces

remained segregated. However, in 1949, four years after WWII ended, the armed forces finally embraced a policy of full integration.

In the 1950s and 1960s, African-Americans revolted against the social system's institutionalized practices of segregation and brutality. The solidarity, unity, and pride of commonality that Black Americans were feeling amounted to a challenge to Whites' presumed supremacy. The basic premise of the Civil Rights movement was Blacks' unwillingness to accept the White power structure's justifications for treating Blacks and the poor as "inferior."; for instance, civil rights leader and former Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund Arthur A. Fletcher testified before a House subcommittee that:

> [A] Whole host of light-skinned Black Americans [will run] for the door the minute they have another choice. And it won't necessarily be because their immediate parents are Black, White, or whatever, but all of a sudden they have a way of saying, "I am something other than Black." . . . I am ready to bet that if that category were added you would see a significant diminution in the number of Black Americans who under the present set of circumstances are identified as Black. (273)

To put it another way, merely having the choice of self-identifying as "anything other than Black" would have certainly pushed some "light-skinned" people out of the race, resulting in a mass exodus from blackness—an escape to the "multiracial" promised land.

African-Americans started the post-civil rights era. Douglas Wilder was the first African-American governor elected in the United States. Carol Mosley Braun of Illinois was the first black woman elected to the United States Senate in 1992. In the United States, there were 8,936 black officeholders in 2000, a net gain of 7467 from 1970. There were 484 black

mayors in 2001. The legislative black caucus was founded by 39 African-American members of Congress to act as a political bloc on problems affecting African-Americans. Nomination of blacks to prominent government positions, such as General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States Armed Forces (1989-1993), and United States Secretary of State (2001-2005).

Moreover, Condoleezza Rice served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 2001 to 2004 and as Secretary of State from 2005 to 2009. U.S Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown (1993-1996), and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Clarence Thomas. It also illustrates how black people are becoming more visible in politics. The dramatic political breakthrough came in the 2008 election, when Barak Obama, the son of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, was elected president of the United States. He received overwhelming support from African-American voters in the Democratic primaries, despite Hillary Clinton's support from many black politicians. Also, the post-civil rights era is notable for the new great migration in which millions of African-Americans have returned to the south including Texas, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina.

The cream industry is flourishing throughout India, Asia, and Africa. Since the beginning of time, people's perceptions of color have been deeply ingrained in their thoughts. Besides, people still believe that white people are good, wealthy, and trustworthy, while black people are poor, evil, and criminals. Thus, white skin is valued more than black skin. The mentality of human beings is sown with this color difference. This erroneous concept must be eradicated from people's thoughts, as the first African American U.S. Supreme Court member, Thurgood Marshall said: "In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute." Even during the post-colonial era, Third-world countries are more inclined to follow or to imitate whites than to follow originality.

2. African-American Literature:

"African-American literature is a living dialogue of ideas; contemporary African American literature is a lively discussion."

- King & Moody-Tunner.

African American literature has become strongly related to American literature and society. The large representation of African American literature will be the only way to clean up American culture's racial discrimination problem. Hence, the issue of racial discrimination in African American literature has been examined in all of its philosophical, ontological, and epistemological aspects. In addition, it has progressed from slave narratives in the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, with all of its socio-literary exuberance initiating a literary and cultural shift in American society.

2.1. The Historical Background of African-American Literature (from 17th century till 20th century):

The issue of race and color conflicts led African Americans to engage in literature to carve out a space for themselves in society. The English played a role in the segregation issue. They had created the notion of inferiority and differentiation based on preconceptions about blackness and physical distinctions between the two peoples (Bruce, 02). Africans have been regarded as harsh, nasty, and even ugly. They were referred to as "colored," "Negros," "black," and "African-Americans." In fact, African-American literature includes novels, poetry, and plays that depict the state of the race as a whole. The works of the authors are a reflection of their identities.

From the colonial time to the present, African American literature includes a diverse spectrum of works. It is related to several literary periods, including the colonial period

(1746-1800), the antebellum period (1800-1865), the reconstruction period (1865-1900), the protest movement (1960-1969), and the contemporary period (1970-present). Moreover, African American literature began as a cry for aid from Africans who had suffered, struggled, been harmed, was permanently terrified, sad, and wrote just to get their message out to a white audience to triumph for an elegant and lively society. Novelists, short story writers, poets, and playwrights are all represented by African American writers. They are portrayed in literary trends such as realism, naturalism, and modernism in the United States.

Poetry and slave narratives are two types of African American literature. In the evolution of African American literature, The Civil Rights and Black Arts Movements had major roles. Their poetry and letters depict the plight of African Americans. Also, the Harlem Renaissance is said to be the "golden age" of African American literature. "It is a movement in music, art, literature, and politics from the early 1900s to 1840s emphasized the importance of freedom, political, economic, social and artistic for African Americans." (Smith& Jones, 163). Nowadays, African American literature serves as a foundation for American literature.

2.2. The Historical Background of Contemporary African American Literature:

African American literature is produced by Black Americans of African heritage. Its themes involve the exploration of black identity, the rejection of racism, and the appreciation of African American culture’s distinctive characteristics. The first published African American literature, which was comparable in content to slave autobiographies, came in the mid-1800s. The earliest significant African American fiction authors are considered to be William Wells Brown and Charles Waddell Chesnutt.

The most significant fiction writers of the period include Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. Ralph Ellison was the first African-American to receive the National Book

Award for *Invisible Man* in 1953. Then, in 1983, Alice Walker won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple*, a novel about her struggles (including being forcibly separated from her children) and persecution because of her skin color and slavery's history. Also, California Cooper, Eric Dickey, Lynn Harris, Terry McMillan, Omar Tyree, and Zane are among the most popular writers. Today's African-American authors have won the National Book Award and the Pushcart Prize.

Toni Morrison became the first African-American to win the Noble Prize in literature (1993). Her literary oeuvre has been primarily concerned with questions of black history, memory, and trauma. Toni Morrison's fiction contains powerful, emotionally stirring testimonials of Trauma governing the lives of Blacks during slavery, reconstruction up to the present day. The trilogy of Toni Morrison's novels *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise* constitute a powerful re-imagination of African American place in America's historical map.

African Americans had a significant role in American history, culture, and society. The art and literature of the Negro people in the United States have an economic background. Much of what is original in black American culture, such as "Negro spirituals" and blues, may be traced back to the economic system of slavery and its impact on the soul of the Negro. The slave narrative was the Negro's main literary expression. Traditional genres such as prose, poetry, drama, cinema, and music are included in literature. Furthermore, autobiography is still a well-known genre in the contemporary period.

African American literature begins with slave narratives from the pre-revolutionary period emphasize liberation and the end of slavery. The rebuilding phase runs from the end of the civil war to 1919. Segregation, lynching, migration, and the women's suffragette movement all inspired the film's themes. The Harlem Renaissance and the "blossoming of Negro literature," as James Weldon Johnson put it, occurred in the 1920s. The "indelible

stain" of slavery on American soil was the theme of the first African-American writing. Slaves who had fled to freedom wrote the majority of them. Frederick Douglass' *"Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave"* and Harriet Jacobs' *"Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl"* are two classic slave tales. Slavery and the slave narrative are reoccurring themes in African-American literature, which writers like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker have appropriated in modern times. Themes of African American culture, racism and equality, and the presence of African Americans in society are all prominent in current writing.

All in all, slave narratives are the beginning of Afro-American literature. The Civil Rights and Black Arts Movements have had a significant impact on the development of African American literature. Today, African American literature is regarded as one of the foundations of American literature. W.E.B. DuBois, Maya Angelou, and others were introduced to Afro-American literature during the post-slavery era. During the twentieth century, African American writers focused on the history of slavery to understand the present.

3. Space, Trauma, and Identity:

3.1. Space:

"No being exists or can exist which is not related to space in some way."

-Isaac Newton.

Space has been used differently in many literary works, including Toni Morrison's novels. It has been a difficult term to define by many scientists, scholars, and philosophers due to its complicated history. Space as a simple word means a continuous area devoid of any living organism. However, for many writers is the home that gathered us, the place that holds the aggregate of joy and suffering memories, and the time that things changed through. As Carl Sagan asserted, in *pale blue dot: a vision of the human future in space*, "Look again at

that dot, that’s here, that’s the home, that's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives".

In fact, philosophers and scientists have many views on the concept of space. The word 'space’ is derived from *spatium*, which in Latin meant a distance, and its metaphysical meaning is space-time and place. Where space is a three-dimensional extent or body (length, breadth, and depth), and this gives fundamental importance to the determination of the physical universe (Elden, 262). Also, Immanuel Kant discusses the idea of space and time in his *critique of pure reason*, he says: "what, then, are space and time? Are they real existences? Are they only determinations or relations of things, yet such as would belong to things even if they were not intuited?" (Kant A23, B73).

3.1.1. Space and Time:

Kant, before celebrating his dissertation supported Leibniz’s views on space, which center on the concept that space and time are just determinations or relations of objects. Leibniz claims, in his third letter to Samuel Clarke that, "I have said more than once, that I hold space to be something merely relative, as Time is; that I hold it to be an Order of Coexistences, as Time is an Order of Successions." According to Leibniz’s relational theory, space is only the relationships between bodies, which are virtual relationships and mathematical concepts rather than real entities. He also believes that space is something relative that reflects the distance among bodies that are made and remade over time (Evanglidis, 09). Furthermore, when writing his dissertation, Kant abandoned the Leibnizian perspective in favor of the Newtonian view, which is founded on the concept of absolute space and time. Isaac Newton says in his Principia Mathematica (1687) that "Absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature flows equably without regard to anything external, and by another name is called duration: [Absolute time is to be contrasted

with] relative, apparent, and common time, [which] is some sensible and external (whether accurate or unequable) measure of duration by the means of motion, which is commonly used instead of true time; such as an hour, a day, a month, a year." Thus, space is something fixed, and it can't be changeable over time.

However, Immanuel Kant subsequently divided his own view of space and time into two expositions: "the metaphysical" and "transcendental." He argued that space is merely the form of "outer sense." So, through the representation of space, we may differentiate the outside objects. As Kant says:

> For in order for certain sensations to be related to something outside me (i.e., to something in another space from that in which I find myself), thus in order for me to represent them as outside and next to one another, thus not merely as different but as in different places, the representation of space must be their ground (175).

He also believes that time is a kind of inner intuition; it is also the kind (with space) of outer sense.

3.1.2. Space and Place:

Philosophers have also identified the concept of space in geography and highlight the categories that formulated space. Thus, space is nature, society, culture, history, economic, and political distance. Each category is a symbol of a place where people live, communicate, experience, and share information. Space and place seem to be synonymous words. Yet, in fact, scientists differentiate between them. Philosopher Yi Fu Tuan and geographer Edward Ralph, who seek to know the distinction between space and place, provide us with sufficient information regarding the subject. In addition, Edward Ralph tries to describe space and place by maintaining the relationship between them. According to him, "place is identity, meaning,

feeling, etc." he claims that space is not a void, an isometric plane, or any other type of container that holds things together. Instead, he claims that to investigate the relationship between space and a more experimentally based concept of place, space must be examined in terms of how people experience it (Ralph, 09).

As one of the founding fathers of the subject known as "human geography," Yi-Fu Tuan has had a significant impact on defining concepts of space. 'Space' can be a place only when there is human existence. "In a direct and intimate way, for example through the senses such as vision, smell, sense, and hearing. In an indirect and conceptual way mediated by symbols, arts, etc" (Tuan, 06). So, a location with no social links and human existence is referred to as "space". In opposition, "place" is more than just a location, it can also be defined as a location shaped by human experiences. Such as culture, history, economics, politics, etc. The size of this location is irrelevant, it is limitless. It could be a city, a neighborhood, and so on. In fact, "place" is a type of "space" that is filled with meaning and aims as a result of human interactions in that space. (Tuan, 04).

However, the concept of space is not only numerous in philosophy. Yet, space in the world of literature has different uses including, space as a setting, as a symbol, as a theme, and fictional spaces. According to the new research, space and setting are more than just a place for characters to move around since they usually provide additional significance to the story background, particularly to the atmosphere, characters, and plot. For example, an atmosphere of freedom is created by wide open or bright spaces. Setting can also contribute to the development of plot lines. A distinct setting for each subplot can serve as a way of orienting the reader (Stefanie &Mildore, 47).

Moreover, a symbol is a tangible object (such as a place, a statue, or something else) that communities an ethereal concept (an idea, a value, or an emotion). Therefore, space can

also functions as a symbol that has a different meaning. For most people, "America", for example, is a symbol of freedom, liberty, and peace. But, for others, it may represent torture. So, the symbolic meaning of space is culturally determined.

Many scholars have been interested in the subject of how space is portrayed in literary works. Consequently, spatial literary criticism recognized two types of space in narratives "fictional space", and "real space". According to Robert T. Tally Jr., in his article "Spatial Literary Studies versus Literary Geography?", scholars focus on the portrayal of space and place in the real world, imagined universes, or hybrid zones, where fiction meets reality through spatial literary studies. Additionally, when it comes to investigating geographical works, spatially oriented criticism has frequently drawn on transdisciplinary approaches, establishing fruitful linkages to architecture, geopolitics, and other fields (Robert T. Tally Jr. 2014).

Furthermore, Michel Foucault, in his article "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" gives two general instances "Utopias & Heterotopias locations." First, "Utopia" is a name derived from Greek roots that mean "no place," but it has a broad similarity to society’s real space, either directly or inversely (Foucault, 03). While, "Heterotopias," are genuine and effective spaces that are outlined in society’s institutions such as schools, houses, gardens, etc. Foucault used the mirror as a suitable example to model both ideas. In the mirror, you see yourself as if you don’t exist. Behind the surface, there is an unreal space, and this is utopia. On the other hand, the mirror is real, and it symbolizes the physical space that one occupies. Therefore, the mirror also is a symbol of "Heterotopias" (Foucault, 04). The authors succeeded in creating an imaginary space in the reader’s mind. By which this unreal space is considered as a home for many writers to depict and express their ideas, as well as to provide an identity and sense of belonging free from traumatic problems for marginalized societies who have been repressed by the mainstream.

3.2.Trauma:

When you are very frightened as a result of an event, or you get very anxious at the time of your speech on the stage and in front of an audience, or even you lose someone you love and being depressed. All these qualities are called trauma symptoms. Trauma is any painful event or experience that affects one's ability to cope and function. Trauma is strongly related to the science of psychology that was the focus and the interest of many scholars and philosophers at the time of its discovery. Until the mid --the 1800s, psychology was mostly a branch of philosophy, but in Germany and United States, it emerged as a separate and scientific discipline. The field's evolution was heavily influenced by its philosophical underpinnings.

The 17th century was a powerful time that adds a significant influence to modern psychology. Rene Descartes is one of the philosophers that contribute to that field due to his dualism concept. According to Baker, "Descartes held that: there are two worlds one of the mental objects, and one of the material things. The mental objects are state of consciousness (e.g. pains, experience, visual, fear, enjoy) the material objects are more, or less complex bits of "clockwork" (Baker, 01). Thus, dualism is a double-sided coin "mind and body" or "mental and physical". Questioning the relationship between these two separate entities and their function developed and still evaluating psychology. On the other hand, Darwin's theories and thoughts also had a significant impact on psychology as a whole, because most psychologists today, in their research, focus on biological principles to explain psychological terms.

3.2.1. Trauma and Psychology:

Psychology is considered a method to analyze and understand human traumatic experiences. Because it is the scientific study of the human mind and behavior, including conscious and unconscious phenomena, feelings, ideas, and thoughts. According to Brazier,

"APA" lists various types of psychology, each with its own set of goals (Brazier, "what is psychology and what does it involve?"). Thus, psychology's branches, especially social and personal ones, help to understand all people's behavior, emotional states, thoughts, and reactions.

Freud's psychodynamic theory is one of the most important approaches to understand trauma. He argues that the mind is divided into three components: "Id, Ego, and Superego". The interactions and conflicts between them identify human behavior (Freud, 1923/1943). Accordingly, the Id is the personality that underpins our fundamental instincts (the unconscious), the ego function according to reality principles. Opposite to the ego, the superego functions according to morality. According to research "Author Removed at Request of the original publisher," the Freudian thoughts also believed that psychological problems, notably anxiety, arise when the Id, ego, and superego's goals are in conflict or are out of balance. When the ego notice that the Id is pushing too hard for instant pleasure, it tries to fix the problem by employing defense mechanism, which are unconscious psychological strategies for dealing with stress. (Author Removed at Request of the original publisher). Therefore, what the personality Id, ego, and superego, faces and experiences fear, anxiety, joy, stress, and other psychological issues, usually becomes Trauma, or what we called post-traumatic stress disorder.

Trauma was the most celebrated theme in contemporary literature. Because trauma studies and its development was a technique for modern writers to illustrate human lives during that time. Many authors portrayed real examples in their narratives about people who suffer traumatic problems; taking WWI and WWII experiences as a strong example for depicting people's suffering. According to Amanda Onion, the literary response to world war one was to depict not just the atrocities on the battlefield, but also the war's psychological problems and effects on society. Virginia Woolf's celebrated novel Mrs. Dalloway, for

example, the war has finished, but everyone is still impacted by it, including one of the story's key characters, a soldier who suffers from severe shell shock; now it is known as PTSD (Onion, "How World War I Changed Literature"). Thus, the wars' psychological outcomes and people's experiences effectively helped modern writers to break the traditional way of expressing literature and change their sights into modern thoughts.

The modernism and post-modernism period was a powerful area for the development of psychology in literature, especially African American literary works. Because the involvement of psychological issues was not only found in British literature such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce's narratives; others precisely describe character's psychology problems. Joseph White was one of the most famous African American psychologists who wrote "the psychology of Blacks," which urged academic psychologists to understand how the African American experience differs from the white experience. He also helped in the creating of the tapestry of ethnically diverse psychologies. Joseph says "it is vitally important that we developed, out of the authentic experience of black people in this country, and accurate workable theory of black psychology" (Cokley et al, 118).

Toni Morrison's novels deal with depicting African American experiences such as (rape, racism, slavery, segregation, etc.) and their psychological influence on both individuals and society as a whole. Beloved is one of the most novels that portrayed the devastating effects of race, racism, and slavery's historical trauma on blacks. In an interview with Charlie Rose Toni Morrison answers: "If I take your race away, and there you are, all strung out. And all you got is your little self, and what is that? What are you without racism? Are you any good? Are you still strong? Are you still smart? Do you still like yourself? I mean, these are the questions. Part of it is, 'yes, the victim. I refuse to be one" (Kirkland).

3.2.2. Trauma and Memory:

Traumatic memories are often stored in a separate part of the mind from the rest of personal memory, rather than being repressed: “Dissociation reflects a horizontally layered model of the mind: when a subject does not remember a trauma, its ‘memory’ is contained in an alternate stream of consciousness, which may be subconscious or dominate consciousness, e.g., during traumatic reenactments” (van der Kolk and van der Hart, 168). Because the traumatic event is stored in an "alternate stream of consciousness," the victim may not be able to access the entire traumatic event. As a result, memory gaps in the sufferer are a sign of this type of dissociative disorder. Most of the time, the person is completely unaware that these memories exist. The traumatic experience exists “outside the parameters of ‘normal reality, such as causality, sequence, place and time” (Laub, 69). The traumatic experience defies explanation, retelling, and mastery because it is so fundamentally different from the experiential framework of "normal" life. “Massive trauma precludes its registration,” (Laub, 57), implying that traumatic experiences are not registered as such by the dominant, conscious mind. Trauma enters the victim’s awareness through the narrative process; it can only exist because of a witness: “The emergence of the narrative which is being listened to – and heard – is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the ‘knowing’ of the event is given birth to. The listener, therefore, is a party to the creation of knowledge *de novo*” (Laub, 57).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is another set of symptoms associated with the aftermath of a traumatic event (PTSD). Among these symptoms are the random reexperiencing of the event, the avoidance of reminders of the event, extreme alertness, and nervousness, as well as the experience of severe problems in social, occupational, or other everyday functioning (Schauer et al., 8). The characters in Morrison’s works are perfect examples of this type of mental disorder since they suffer from social isolation and random

flashbacks. One of the most essential aspects of trauma is the repetition of the painful experience until it is understood, which Morrison also emphasizes. “To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event” (Caruth, 4/5), and it is the role of telling and seeing the experience to reverse that order, allowing the victim to regain control of his terrible history. I order to own the traumatic event; the victim has to “re-externalize” (Laub, 69) by articulating the story surrounding it. Only then can the victim break the vicious cycle of replay and repetition of the traumatic experience, absorb it, integrate it into his current mental framework, and go on. Morrison recognizes the quiet nature of trauma and turns her novels into places of witnessing, allowing her readers to participate in the creation of knowledge of previously unknown personal and social pain.

3.3. Identity:

"There is no identity—national, cultural, or individual—which does not imply both a place and a time. There is no identity that is not both mise-en-scène and narrative—in personal memory and common history."

-Victor Burgin**.**

The concept of identity is regarded as one of the most important concepts in African American culture and literature. The predominance of this topic is mostly owing to the historical segregation and oppression practiced against the black race. The idea of rootlessness and not belonging, which is an authentic testimony to identity crises, expresses itself in the lack of a clearly defined frame of identity. Thereupon, African Americans devote their achievements to promote a sense of belonging and deep-rootedness of the black identity. As Prograis Jr., Lawrence J. & Edmund D. Pellegrino (eds) points out in their book *African American Bioethics: Culture, Race, and Identity*, Such feeling of belonging may be seen ‘‘as a correlative activity to the constructing of one‘s racial identity attitudes” of what has been “labeled a process of psychological nigrescence” (114).

Moreover, the concept of identity basically used to explain self-identity due to the most fundamental question “who am I”? (Erikson, 145; Sokefeld, 527; Weigert, 165; Woodward, 6-8). While the core of identity is based on the definition "is the sameness that a group of people has in a community." So, it tends to focus on the one-way direction to see the identity of people. Meanwhile, in defining people, we do not see the sameness between a person and also the difference from the others. So, identity is not only talked about, but the sameness also emphasizes the differences. It is about belonging, about what people have in common with some people and what differentiates them from others. At its most basic, it gives us a sense of personal location, the stable core to our individuality, social relationships, and the complex involvement with others. Thus, individuals and societies always search for an identity that gives meaning to their existence.

Identity refers to personal and collective identifications from a psychological perspective. Maurice E. Evans states in his book *Troubling Beginnings: Trans (per) forming African American History and Identity* “Identity, as Stuart Hall asserts, is shaped at the unstable point where the „unspeakable“ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture” (03). Furthermore, identity is preoccupied with self-definition, and the self is viewed as a rather stable, internal entity that is rarely altered to match the context. In fact, “the self is a core sense of who one is. That is, you are who you are; shifting is indicative of a problematic, deficient or disengaged identity” (48). As Michael L. Hecht points out in his book *African American Communication: Exploring Identity and Culture*.

The construction of African American identity to sustain white supremacy in the United States was celebrated in the production of literary and popular culture. Many writers such as Nelson, Bogle, and Dan Dubin, attempted to examine the construction of African American identity in American literature and popular culture. By beginning to celebrate their ethnic and cultural identities, the identity construction that placed whiteness in superiority

began to crumble. The slogan ‘Black is beautiful' (Eyerman, 2003; Mercer, 1990) developed a consciousness movement to celebrate and respect their racial and cultural identities. This slogan represents a genuine consciousness movement aimed at expressing a vision and goal for achieving equality in the fabric of American society. To combat the colonial stereotype associated with African Americans, African American authors used this phrase to depict African American characters in their fiction.

African American characteristics are not regarded as flaws, but rather as assets. Even though otherness is linked with all that is undesired, actually gives a significant advantage. Being the other is a manner of existing that allows for changes and distinctions. Another purpose of being the other is that, despite its association with something considered alien and marginalized, it may be turned into something distinct and visible, serving as a distinguishing marker of identity from the dominant ones.

Memory is a useful tool for comprehending the passionate search for black identity. The continuing recall of previous events, best expressed by the terrain, is latent in African cultural identity.

> This desire to represent memory through the marking of place is a feature of all modern societies and is prevalent after every conflict or tragic event. Places, as Kuusisto notes, constitute significant sites that have been invested with meaning (1999, 15), often representing the heritage of a particular individual, group, or community (38).

The violence perpetrated against African Americans throughout history is etched in the collective memory. Black people are unable to forget what happened to their identity as a result of racial exclusion, oppression, segregation, and other forms of erasure. In post-memory, “memories are passed down through generations to be represented by people who

have no personal attachment to the memory. Subsequently, they seek to re-use, re-enact and re-represent those memories to feel closer to their ancestors" (41).

Broadly, language is subjectivity. It is the subjective aspect of human identity, because "The form in which language expresses itself in and of itself defines subjectivity." It depicts man's activities, history, and perspectives. Therefore, language is at the center of identity construction. It has a significant influence on how a man's identity is formed. Language has gotten a lot of attention from African Americans since it's an effective way to think about identity issues. They go to great lengths to use language that supports the desire for Africanized self-knowledge to demonstrate their commitment to identity. Zora Neale Hurston starts her essay "Characteristics of Negro Expression" by discussing the dramatic dimension of the Negro language:

> The Negro's universal mimicry is not so much a thing in itself as an evidence of something that permeates his entire self. And that thing is drama. His words are action words. His interpretation of the English language is in terms of pictures. One act is described in terms of another. Hence, the rich metaphor and simile (Huggins, 224).

A variety of methods have been developed to distinguish between different types of identities. Many writers divide identity into social roles and individual attributes, although they provide different labels or terms for each (Giles & Robinson, 2001). All of these perspectives agree that the self is made up of identities linked with roles, groups, and categories (e.g., group memberships) on the one hand, and personal or individual qualities (e.g., personality traits) on the other, or both. In the United States culture, the locus of identity has increasingly emphasized the individual rather than society, thereby rendering the development of a sense of self more problematic (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipson,; Philipsen, 168) and situationally emergent.

3.3.1. Identity and Social Interaction:

Identity is inextricably linked to interaction and vice versa. Social interaction builds, sustains, and develops one's identity. Identity then begins to shape expectations, motivate conduct, and influencing interaction. Also, identity is enacted through social interactions as well, and the circumstances of such encounters have an impact on the enactments. As a result, identity is both a personal and a social phenomenon. The self can be thought of as an organized system of meanings created through social interaction (Samp, 2000). Samp (2000) asserted, "The self is an introspective, yet reflexive cognitive structure that contains all of the information that defines an individual and informs behavior" (330).

Carbaugh points out, in his book "*Situating Selves: The Communication of Social Identities in American Scenes*," that identities also are formed through naming or locating the self in socially recognizable categories (Carbaugh, 1996). We create an identity through applying these categorical labels to ourselves (e.g., woman, middle class, yuppie), and these identities are confirmed and validated (or disconfirmed and invalidated) through social interaction (Hecht & Baldwin, 57-84). Thus, social interaction shapes and forms identity. Once established, identity has an impact on the flow of social behavior and is impacted by social interaction.

All in all, the theoretical framework, thus, has attempted to clarify the most prominent themes in Toni Morrison's literary works, where she focuses on blacks' experience of slavery, racism, trauma, identity, and racial abuse on the land of freedom and ideals. All the themes discussed above can help us understand how such viewpoints and theories are used in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, which will be explored in the second chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Space, Trauma, and Identity in *Paradise.*

"How exquisitely human was the wish for permanent happiness, and how thin human imagination became trying to achieve it."

-Toni Morrison, *Paradise*

This chapter analyzes Toni Morrison's *Paradise,* with the help of views and concepts from space, psychoanalysis, historical trauma, and social identity theories. First, it starts with an explanatory part about the author and the novel. The second part introduces an analysis about the impact of trauma in leaving the black history by creating their space. Then, the third part of this chapter depicts an analysis about the narratives of 'home' and 'houses'. In addition, it tackles the different effects of spaces and places in the novel while focusing on space as a place of paradise. The following part of this chapter explores the influence of trauma and space, and how these two concepts help the characters develop and deconstruct their identities, or even form new ones. Also, it deals with the painful memories, anxiety, and fear of the characters in the novel.

1. About the Author and the Novel:

The Nobel Prize-winning author is known to the world as Toni Morrison, the original name Chloe Anthony Wofford, born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio, U.S. She noted for her examination of Black experience within the Black community. She grew up in the American Midwest in a family that had a profound influence on her development as a writer. She attended Howard University and Cornell University. She taught at many universities, including the Texas southern university, Howard University. In 1965 Morrison became a

fiction editor at Random House, where she worked for many years. She starts teaching writing at the State University of New York at Albany, and the faculty of Princeton University.

Morrison‘s first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), details the story of Pecola Breedlove, who is marginalized by her race, gender, and class. Her second novel *Sula* (1973), examines the good and evil of the friendship between two women that begins in childhood. The novel was nominated for a National Book Award in the U.S. Then, in 1979 she published her third novel *Song of Solomon*, based loosely on the stories Morrison learned from listening to her maternal grandfather, John Solomon Willis. The work received the National Book Critics Circle Award. *Tar Baby* (1981), explores conflicts of race, class, and sex on a Caribbean Island.

Moreover, Morrison‘s fame reached new levels through her trilogy. The first in her trilogy is her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved* (1987), based on the true story of a slave woman who killed one of her children to protect her from slavery. *Jazz* (1992) is the second novel of her trilogy, which explores the concept of love and its various forms. The novel became a *New York Times* best-selling novel.

Paradise is the final novel of her trilogy (1997). Morrison published her eighth novel, *love*, in 2003, followed by *A Mercy* in 2008 and *Home* in 2012. She published her eleventh novel, *God Help the Child*, in 2015, which tells the story of a young girl with blue-black skin who is born to a light-skinned parent.

Morrison is also the writer of several significant essays and non-fiction works: *Playing in Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* published in 1992, *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction* (2008), *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations* (2019). Also, she has written many children’s books, including Who’s Got Game?, and *Please, Louise* (2014). She also penned *Remember* in 2004, which won the

Coretta Scott King Award in 2005. Her fictional works are known for their depictions of family and relationships, racial issues, and rural life, including themes such as Black American experience, Home Space, Trauma, Femininity, Love, Family, and Identity. Besides, her non-fiction works have included many subjects, such as the importance of fighting censorship, race, fear, and mass migration.

Toni Morrison's *Paradise* tells the story of the fictional town of Ruby, in Oklahoma, in the 1970s, in which nine men assault the five women living in the nearby convent, which is seventeen miles from Ruby. But, before the town of Ruby, there was Haven, which was established in Oklahoma in the 1890s. Therefore, they left Haven and established Ruby to protect themselves from the whites' racism. They get the Oven, which was established by their fathers, as a symbol of paradise. Ruby is a community of African Americans who have built the town to create their version of paradise or a utopia. An old convent a few miles away is a haven where the five women have taken refuge over the years and currently live. Strange things have been happening in and around Ruby in the year before the story starts.

Thereby, nine men, in this group the twins Deek (Deacon) and Steward Morgan, the founders of Ruby's town, assaulted the women of the convent, believing that the women were responsible for the scandalous events. "They shoot the white girl first. With the rest they can take their time" (01). Throughout the novel, the women who arrive at the Convent one by one have all experienced pain and trauma as a result of living in a society that rigidly controls them. These women are stuck in a world where they are abused by men and abandoned by their parents. Mavis Albright, the first arrival woman to the convent whose infants have died of asphyxiation after being left in a vehicle, travels to the convent from her home in Maryland, where she is taken in by Connie, later identified in the novel as "Consolata." Connie is the matriarch of the convent and is believed to have special powers.

The next arrival woman to the convent, Gigi/Grace, used to be an ambitious woman with a warrior spirit. She was a participant in the black power movement, she took part in a demonstration when she witnessed a little child getting shot by the police. Hence, she abandons her political beliefs and reverts to an overt sensuality, living on the yearning gazes of men, disillusioned by her experiences. Led to the Convent on her journey to find a rock formation in the form of a man and a woman. Arnette, a young girl who is pregnant with K.D. Morgan's kid describes Gigi as "looking like a tramp." Throughout the chapter, K.D. tries to pin Arnette's pregnancy on her. Because she "seduced" him, he believes he is blameless. Reverend Misner, a young pastor whose progressive viewpoints pose questions, is also featured in this chapter. Misner helps the Morgan's and Arnette's relatives reach an agreement to deal with Arnette's unexpected pregnancy.

Seneca is a young woman who is the third to arrive at the convent. Her identity is affected by her fear of abandonment since she was five years old when her mother Jean abandoned her. Seneca believed Jean was her sister that left her in a space full of poverty and darkness, spills over into the development of serious psychological issues with her identity. Another girl arrived at the convent, Pallas/Divine, who was abandoned by her mother, grows up with her wealthy but uncaring father. Pallas and a man she met in high school escape to New Mexico, where they stay with Pallas' mother, Dee Dee, and Pallas sees Carlos and Dee Dee having sex. This traumatic experience affects her, keeping her quiet for fear of the horror that could spill out of her mouth: "This was her second day at the Convent and the third day of having said not one word to anybody" (162).

Mavis, Grace/Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas/Divine, the traumatized women, wind themselves at the Convent after stumbling around in a world that has no place for them. Oppressed by men, abandoned by mothers, and deceived by an unfair world, they find a place

for themselves in the Convent, claiming a place for themselves and discovering their inner being freed from the restrictions and injustice of the patriarchal sphere:

> The whole house felt permeated with a blessed malelessness, like a protected domain, free of hunters but exciting too. As though she might meet herself here – an unbridled, authentic self, but which she thought of as a 'cool' self – in one of this houses many rooms (177).

Consolata/Connie, who serves as a healer and a medium who moves between the realms of the living and the dead, initiates the women's self-discovery in a collective scene of noisy dreaming. Consolata creates a place of remembering and sorrow in which the women may express their pain and move through their painful memories with one another. It's a typical Morrisonean moment of remembering, wherein the previous unspoken trauma histories are spoken and narrated in order to be transcended.

2. Trauma as a Motive To Leave the Past and Create Space:

In Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, the town of Ruby is considered as an identity for blacks that developed from a history of traumatic events that served as a major motive for cutting the black history and establishing a new life in a new space. Hence, people must develop a sense of their shared history since the past has formed us into the people we are now; the way people identify and interact with each other is largely a result of history, which affects both individuals and society. Moreover, people can tolerate a wide range of undesirable behaviors, but when injustice accumulates on them; their subconscious psyche pushes them to react in various ways. In *Paradise,* African American characters faced several hardships that served as the main motive for establishing their own group's identity and space. They experienced several injustices and racism from both white and black people, resulting in a historical trauma that continues to affect their lives.

According to the administration for children and families, historical trauma is defined as ''various traumas experienced by certain cultural, racial, or ethnic groups over many generations, such as slavery, racism, violent colonization, and forced migration," because of their oppression status ("the administration for children and families"). Laura S. Brown asserts, in her book *Cultural Competence in Trauma Therapy: Beyond the Flashback*, ''a person whose culture of origin has a history of oppression or genocide may be living with effects of trauma exposure that occurred not to the individual but their forebears.'' In *Paradise*, Patricia's narrative of the forced migration of haven's founders, who are the ancestors of Ruby's residents and are symbolized by ''Eight-rock'', revealed the psychological impact of historical trauma on African American characters as they build ''Ruby''. Blacks' interactions with whites, which culminated in a variety of harsh experiences for them, gave rise to the idea of social isolation. Therefore, discrimination and expulsion from Fairley, Oklahoma, pushed nine black families to create Haven to eliminate the injustice and racism they experience in white society.

Racism, slavery, and segregation are among the most difficult challenges that African American characters in *Paradise* have faced, and they have left a lasting psychological impact on them. However, the ancestors of Ruby's residents established a space that protected them from discrimination and racial abuse. Ruby's founders remember the wide variety of racism they faced from people of color when they returned from WWII. Their fleeing from hard labor and white oppression, they were forced to live in a harsh environment with fewer black people. Because of their skin darker coloring than everyone else, they are shunned by people of color. ''Us free like them; was a slave like them. What for is this difference?'' (14).

Furthermore, rumors that damaged their reputation after World War II are a major reason for making them an outcast and forcing them to leave Haven. People of color's

dominance over a city and strangers spread fear and weakness in black souls, making them depressed and oppressed with the inability to defend themselves.

> ''One of the passengers has opened the front of his trousers and hung himself out the window to scare the girls. But the townsmen do look at it, see the wish in this most militant of gestures, and smile. Smile reluctantly and in spite of themselves because they know that from this moment on, if not before, this man, till his final illness, will do as much serious damage to colored folks as he can'' (13).

Thus, the creation of a new space for the ''Eight-rock''was not only motivated by racism. In contrast, injustice is another major cause of their isolation; the abuse and violence directed against Ruby residents have resulted in many psychological issues during PTSD such as depression, anxiety, fear, and traumatic memories. ''They were nevertheless unprepared for the aggressive discouragement they received from Negro towns already being built'' (13).

All black characters' suffering in *Paradise* begins with slavery. Since it was the source of oppression in the first state. The Ruby's founders, on the other hand, did not experience slavery; rather, their fathers' history and the horrific stories about it exposed them to experience all the past events, which become a motive for their separateness. Consequently, the engraved history in Deek's and Steward's memories made them live and experience all their fathers'ancient events, which were full of harsh traumas; ''The twins have powerful memories. Between them they remember the details of everything that ever happened_things they witnessed and things they have not'' (13). Accordingly, these traumas that black people lived pushed them to manage and create their own space.

> [F]ifteen families moved out of haven_headed not for Muskogee or California as some had, or Saint Louis, Houston, Langston or Chicago, but deeper into Oklahoma, as far

as they could climb from the grovel contaminating the town their grandfathers had made (16).

Social identity refers to how people‘s self-concepts are based on their membership in social groups, such as sports teams, religions, nationalities, jobs, sexual orientation, ethnic groups, and gender. It pointed out the idea of incompatibility, which emerges from different mindsets, and how these differences affect individuals and groups (Tajfel & Turner, "Social Identity Theory"). In *Paradise*, Ruby‘s space consists of fifteen families with different religious backgrounds and assumptions, such as Roger‘s family history. Hence, to protect this new group identity, Ruby‘s founders brought with them the oven that their fathers built, which symbolizes a set of laws and principles that guide them as one social identity on the land of paradise.

Finally, trauma does not only affects individuals, but rather it impacts society as a whole. However, historical trauma, which includes segregation, racism, and slavery trauma, is considered as an opening door for all African Americans‘ physical and psychological suffering, as well as a healing power for them to create their own groups‘ identity and space and move from the world of heterotopias to the world of utopias. ’’That was twenty-five years ago, when all their dreams outstretched the men who had them. A road straight as a die has been cleared through the center of the town and lined on one side by a paved walk” (10).

3. Space as a Place of Paradise

Toni Morrison’s *Paradise* is a literary examination and critique of the notion of “paradise.” Additionally, explores the real locations, Ruby and the Convent, which are dreamt of as paradisiacal utopias, as well as the triggers and motives behind their conception: “In this novel, Morrison is interested in what the dreams of paradise tell about the dreamer. She shows how much is revealed about a people, its history and culture, by what kind of paradise it envisions, whom that paradise includes and excludes, and where it is to be found” (Matus,

156). Morrison accomplishes this by starkly contrasting the novel's two utopias. Both Ruby and the Convent have histories of persecution and relocation, as well as attempts to overcome them, "attempts to find and found a sanctuary, a refuge, and thus a true home" (Page, 646).

Ruby's inhabitants, like the Convent's women, have been pulled from their homes and histories, making them "spatially and temporarily dispossessed" (ibid). They're all searching for a place to call home, a place for safety, a haven from discrimination. However, the Rubyites' and Convent women's visions of a perfect house are drastically different. Ruby's ideal is one of protection from the outside world and the Other, shielding its people from danger, chaos, and the unfamiliar:

> "Unique and isolated, his was a town justifiably pleased with itself. It neither had nor needed a jail. No criminals had ever come from his town. And the one or two people who acted up, humiliated their families or threatened the town's view of itself were taken good care of. Certainly there wasn't a slack or sloven woman anywhere in town and the reasons, he thought, were clear. From the beginning its people were free and protected" (8).

The Rubyites' need for protection, as well as their desire to experience place devoid of racial hierarchies and racist abuse, led to their expulsion.

Therefore, the assault on the Convent women is not representative of "a tragic inversion of America's ideals," "but is an inextricable part of, its ideal vision" (241). Because the concept of the ideal society is founded on the rejection of "the unsaved, the unworthy and the strange" (306), the case of Ruby demonstrates that every endeavor to build the perfect place necessarily includes violence and persecution. Morrison asserts in an interview with Elizabeth Farnsworth that: "The isolation, the separateness, is always a part of any utopia. And it was my meditation if you will, and interrogation of the whole idea of paradise, the safe place, the place full of bounty, where no one can harm you. But, in addition to that, it's based

on the notion of exclusivity. All paradises, all utopias are designed by who is not there, by the people who are not allowed in."

Dalsgård contends "one of the first things Morrison shows to happen at the place is the death of Consolata's beloved adoptive mother," and this "To underline the Convent's non-utopian position" (247). The Convent, despite Ruby, is a time capsule that does not strive for perfection in terms of unity, security, or harmony. It's a tumultuous, dynamic environment, a crossroads of numerous, competing periods, locations, and identities. It is neither harmonic nor 'pure,' but instead "occasionally governed by chaos, conflict, and 'sisterly' animosity" (Dalsgård, 247). The inside of the Convent structure, the many uniquely made rooms, and the many comings and goings of its residents and guests all witness to the Convent's conflictive, open, and transitory nature. The Convent is a livable place rather than a 'noplace' because of its transitionality. The fact that the location never performed the function suggested by its name, the word being an empty signifier that does not refer to any basic or ideal meaning of the place, adds to its open and dynamic nature. In an ironic twist, the Convent, although suggesting the monastic ideal associated with conventional utopia, really refers to a society that subverts that ideal and exposes its restricted and unchanging character.

Ruby supports an ideology of border erection and "displacement," that is, restriction and discrimination, whereas the Convent is founded on an ethics of boundary crossing and "replacement." While the Convent values diversity and change, Ruby works against them to retain perfection. In opposition to Ruby, where indications of difference are obliterated and the voices of change are forcibly silenced (87), the convent is a location where the traces of transition and time are evident and even audible. At the convent, different temporal and geographical levels cross and interact. As its palimpsestic interior and the children's voices imply, the Convent's past as a pleasure palace, "a place of colonization and indoctrination"

(Schröder, 154), and a shelter are all present at the same time. It is a place that tolerates neither the ghosts of the past nor the differences of the present.

The Convent's wide, transitional, dynamic character is what sets it apart from Ruby and makes it a "home," in Morrison's words. Morrison describes "Home" as "a-world-in-which-race-does-not-matter," in which difference is "prized but unprivileged" (Morrison, 03). Ruby, unlike the Convent, is not a "true home," but instead a "fortress [the Rubyites] bought and built and have to keep everybody locked in or out," (213). Hence, Ruby epitomizes Morrison's idea of a "closed space," a "thick-walled, impenetrable container," a "windowless prison" (Morrison, 04). The 'house' is hierarchically structured along the lines of race, gender, and age, and is ruled by the "all-knowing law of the white father" (Morrison, 04). It is a society whose concept of identity is based on the concept of similarity, and thus on the exclusion of the (racial) "other."

3.1.Ruby, the Convent, and the Oven as a Symbol of Paradise:

In *Paradise,* The goal of building the perfect location is the cornerstone of Ruby's town. Ruby was founded by a group of World War II soldiers and their families in an attempt to recreate their forefathers' destroyed "dreamtown" of Haven (5), which quickly transforms into an oppressive society. Ruby's reality has little to do with Haven's sharing and caring principles or its initial promise of a free and safe place where a "sleepless woman" could walk around town at night alone since "[n]othing for ninety miles around [thinks] she [is] prey" (8). The Morgan twins, descendants of the town's founding fathers and prominent patriarchs and rulers, maintain a rigid hierarchy of race, gender, and age, which is kept in the "powerful memories" (13) of the town's ruling history.

In its narrative, which is set in biblical terms and mimics (white) America's national myths of exceptionalism, manifest destiny, and the American dream (Dalsgrd; Schröder 161-64), Ruby is described as an outstanding society based on a "deal, no less, with God" (113);

as an ethnically homogenous society kept by an unspoken "blood rule" (195), an ethnic code based on the marginalization of all those whose skin color is not "Eight-rock" black (193); as a patriarchal society where the old fathers 'protect' the women by exercising strict control over their sexuality and reproduction to maintain ethnic superiority and the bloodlines of the founding families. All activities and relationships in this town are subject to the patriarchs' supervision and discipline, as evidenced by the patriarchs' bargaining on Arnette's behalf (54-61). Those who "threate[n] the town's view of itself [are] taken good care of" (8). The Ruby leaders portray a Manichean vision contrasting "self" against "other," "black" against "white," and "good" against "evil" in their fanatical emphasis on one God, one History, one Strength, i.e. male dominance, and one Legitimate People, i.e. Eight-rock blacks.

The town's properly controlled social order and practices of oppression and prejudice are justified by the community's experience of the "Disallowing (189). The migrants' denial by Fairly, a city of thriving, fair-skinned blacks, of "[b]lue-eyed, gray-eyed yellowmen in good suits" (195) is at the heart of Ruby's overarching fundamental story about a group of freed slaves fleeing the Post-Reconstruction South to escape racial prejudice and find liberty and equality of opportunity in the West. This encounter with racism (and class discrimination) gives the incentive behind the creating of their community, Haven, built on a rigid racial code. Indeed, it is Fair's rejection that Haven and its twentieth-century doppelgänger Ruby carry "like a bullet in the brain" (109) and that helps to explain "why neither the founders of Haven nor their descendants [can] tolerate anybody but themselves" (13). Nevertheless, there are significant variations in Haven and Ruby's reactions to rejection. Rubyites dwell behind "closed doors and shut windows" (109), whereas "Haven residents refused each other nothing, were vigilant to any need or shortage" (68).

The usage of the Oven, the town's primary monument, is a good example of the contrasts between Haven and Ruby. While it serves as a meeting place in Haven, it transforms

into a “shrine” in Ruby (103), a site of surveillance (110) and death, where some local men plan to murder (11). The town‘s renaming from Haven to Ruby represents the shift from an egalitarian to an authoritarian community. Ruby represents the community‘s obsession with their victimhood, their inability to transform their experience of refusal into a better, more positive self-definition, and their incapacity to move past discrimination.

The change in name from Haven to Ruby signifies a transformation in their perception of themselves. Ruby is a continuous reminder of the society‘s rejection, isolation, and peril, and represents its paranoid self-perception, while Haven explicitly stresses the qualities of redemption and safety. The Rubyites, on the other hand, perpetuate "the world they had escaped" (292), reinscribing the very hierarchical and authoritarian constructions they sought to leave behind by replicating the trends that led to their own rejection and Ruby‘s death, that is, by excluding all those who do not conform to their self-defined standards. These practices of exclusion also extend to some of Ruby‘s own residents, particularly those who break the unspoken blood rule, resulting in a type of "internal disallowing" that manifests itself in a variety of ways (Schröder, 168, 174, 176-77).

Ruby is temporally and geographically separated as a result of the Disallowing‘s effects. It persists as a location where “nobody [...] has ever died,” (199) while being “[d]eafened by the roar of its history” (306). The inhabitants “turn their own life into a static and unchanging myth” (Schröder, 169), by perpetually repeating and reenacting their basic story. Reverend Misner observes, “[R]ather than children, they wanted duplicates” (161). Ruby‘s patriarchs repress difference and resist change, which they see as causes of corruption and evil, to maintain perfection expressed in terms of purity, homogeneity, and integrity. The elders‘ angry reaction to the younger generation‘s request to alter the Oven‘s inscription is an example (83-87). Since Ruby, ‘immortally‘ is perfect and it cannot change because it is perfect.

Ruby‘s utopian ideal, ethnic purity, and moral superiority are mirrored in her near-total isolation from the rest of the world. The town‘s exclusive philosophy is reflected in its geographical seclusion and antagonistic attitude toward visitors, who are considered adversaries (212). Its hostility against outsiders is mirrored in its physical architecture, which is devoid of any visitor-accommodation facilities (Schröder, 173-74).Ruby is clearly defined by a physical border, even though it is not surrounded by walls: “What the locals called Central Avenue just stopped, and Gigi was at Ruby‘s edge at the same moment she had reached its center. “What the locals called Central Avenue just stopped, and Gigi was at Ruby’s edge at the same time she had reached its center. […] One minute her heels clicked, the next they were mute in swirling dirt” (67). The abrupt termination of the main road marks the town‘s boundaries and emphasizes its separation. This geographical isolation is seen as a safeguard against the corruption and imperfection of the “Out There,” which is portrayed as a frightening “void where random and organized evil erupted when and where it chose” (16).

Also, it is “Out There” that the townspeople ultimately find the Convent and the women who live there, whom they blame for their own “catastrophes” (11). They deliberately build the Convent as a dirty and wicked space, as a source of immorality and moral hazard posing a threat to the town’s purity, by dehumanizing and demonizing the women as “throwaway people” and “witches” (4, 276) and via the rhetoric of filth and contamination (3-4). By shutting out the difference and transferring it onto the ‘other,’ the Rubyites psychologically withdraw into a secure and united identity. The men externalize corruption and maintain internal purity through these processes of ‘othering,’ in which they project their bad inclinations, inadequacies, and failings onto the Convent women (McKee, 200-01). These paranoid “practices of avoidance,” which have the dual impact of “displacing other people into a moral void” and “void[ing] the insiders of their internal complexity” (McKee, 201), culminating in the murder of the women by nine Ruby males.

The Convent offers a stark counterpoint to Ruby‘s utopianism and its idealized version of paradise. The Convent, which began as an embezzler‘s house constructed to meet his owner‘s extravagant tastes and lustful dreams, was turned into a catholic reform school for the integration of Native American girls and now serves as a retreat for a small group of women in the novel‘s present. The five women that make up the Convent society‘s changing core—Connie/Consolata, Mavis, Gigi/Grace, Seneca, and Pallas—come from a wide range of personal, social, sexual, and ethnic differences. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they all share a history of discrimination and trauma. Mavis is responsible for the deaths of her twin kids, Gigi saw the murder of a black young male at a Civil Rights rally, Seneca was abandoned by her adolescent mother when she was five years old, and Pallas was gang-raped. They all seek safety and find shelter at the Convent after being raped and ostracized in some way. The women start to work through their own repressive past at this location of former female (and ethnic) persecution.

The other women eventually heal and rediscover self-esteem with Consolata as their spiritual leader. Consolata, unlike the Ruby men, understands that “[s]cary things not always outside. Most scary things is inside” (39). She demonstrates the connection of their bodily and spiritual anguish in a healing ceremony that includes elements of both physical and psychic care.“Eve is Mary’s mother. Mary is the daughter of Eve” (263), he emphasizes. Consolata makes women analyze their feminine self in terms of the body and the mind, the sexual and the spiritual, good and evil, and encourages them to unite elements of an identity split separated in the dominant society‘s dualistic viewpoint and Ruby. The women express their traumatic experiences, listen to, enter, and relive the traumas of others during the “loud dreaming” (264) part of the ritual, producing a “multivocal, dialogic space” (Michael, 173) in which various, equally legitimate (hi)stories (e)merge concurrently.

Furthermore, every one of the women learns to put herself in the place of the others, to think and feel a bit differently, and to “imagine and make [herself] other for [herself],” as Julia Kristeva puts it (13). In the end, the women‘s recovery is facilitated by their acceptance of their own "otherness." The women become complete when the divide between inside/outside and self/other dissolves. The women can get past their own and others‘ traumatic experiences by addressing them. The women re-member, face, and transcend their traumas via this collective and participatory "rememory" (Morrison, 36).

Although the rare quarrel among the women, the Convent serves as a physically and psychologically secure shelter, a “regenerative haven” (Michael, 167) more like to Haven than Ruby. Women gradually evolve as they learn to manage their desires and accept the needs, aspirations, and concerns of others. The Convent develops as a space that is both safe and free, “both snug and wide-open” (Morrison, 12). Since their society is founded on “an ethics of care, nurturance, and love,” linked “with notions of equality and fairness” (Michael, 153). In a variety of ways, this extreme openness expresses itself. Literally and symbolically, the Convent‘s doors are never locked. The women embrace anybody seeking shelter under their home without reservation, especially Rubyites like Arnette, Sweetie, and Menus who are burdened by horrible secrets. The Convent is constantly under construction in the sense that it is susceptible to re-signification and redefinition as each new resident or visitor adds significance to the site. It depicts a profoundly diverse space in which diversity and uniqueness are appreciated and shared.

Critically, the Convent is a world that is free of racial and sexist barriers and hierarchies. The location, though, is not blind to its repressive past: the remains of the embezzler‘s misogynistic fantasies and the nuns‘ racist project are still visible and are being artistically repurposed. The 'other' is not ejected but rather remains within the Convent, transforming it into a multifaceted place that is fundamentally inhabited. The Convent‘s

dramatic past and many identities, as well as its numerous residents and visitors, are reflected in the structure, which serves as a symbol for the women‘s open, inclusive, diverse, and dynamic society. The Convent‘s palimpsestic interior, flaking paint revealing earlier layers of its history (285), and the children‘s voices Mavis hears at the Convent (41) imply the presence of the past in the present, rendering the Convent an unsettling, eerie location, several times crossed. The genuine freedom of the Convent is found in "its ability to accommodate differences" and change (Schröder, 190).

Ruby‘s philosophy of ‘disallowing’ and ‘othering’ is in direct opposition to the Convent‘s “procedures of allowance” and “many occupations.” Ruby‘s leaders are irritated by its ideology of “borderlessness” and “transitionality.” The difference generally, and the Convent‘s difference specifically, is recognized as deviation and a threat as a result of the permanent “state of emergency” (Davidson, 365) created by the Disallowing. The Convent seems to the Ruby men as a place of disorder and decay, controlled by a disparate collection of women who dispute every one of Ruby‘s perfection standards and the fundamental basis of its identity: its patriarchal structure, as well as its gender and ethnic purity.

The women represent a challenge to male authority and control, as well as Ruby‘s exceptionalist self-image, because “they don’t need men and they don’t need God” (276). They are seen as “bodacious black Eves unredeemed by Mary” (18), a form of Ruby‘s female patriarchs that cannot accept because it violates their image of “real femininity” and eludes their control. Most significantly, they are a racially diverse community, including black, mixed-race, and white, breaking Ruby‘s law of descent. Endangering “the town’s view of itself” (8), the women are held accountable for the “intolerable ways” wherein Ruby is evolving (275), for the “crack[s]” and “chink[s]” in its allegedly unbroken structure (112), such as the youthful generation‘s “backtalk” (85). The Ruby men eventually assault and kill the Convent women to reestablish perfection in terms of priority, integrity, and

immutability. To eradicate the women‘s corrupting influence and maintain the status quo, they turn to violence as a last resort.

The assault on the Convent figures is the result of racist and gendered violence, as well as a failing of Ruby‘s utopian vision. Significantly, the assault does not ultimately solidify Ruby but rather causes it to disintegrate and “break up the old, encrusted structures of the town” (Schröder, 189). As Ruby becomes irreversibly split by the slaughter, as shown by the rift that develops between the Morgan twins (291), restoration to its former condition of perfection becomes improbable.

4. The Influence of Space and Trauma in Constructing and Destroying Characters‘ Identities:

Toni Morrison‘s *Paradise* explores two important aspects in destroying and constructing characters‘ identities. First, since *Paradise* was written after the two global wars, where the rate of psychological diseases and their symptoms increased for most people, Morrison implies all these realities and war‘s traumatic impacts on individuals‘ personalities through her characters. Thereafter, blacks‘ existence in new places as slaves and then as citizens caused them to suffer various physical and psychological problems. Accordingly, Morrison used space as another feature that affects people‘s identities, illustrating this idea with the town of Ruby, Oklahoma, and the convent.

Although there is a clear link between traumatic exposure and post-traumatic stress disorder, only recently have researchers begun to investigate the moderating effects of event centrality, the degree to which the traumatic incident is important to one‘s identity, or sense of self is referred to as event centrality. For instance, being in a bad vehicle accident can be traumatic, but it may have nothing to do with a person‘s beliefs and feeling about himself, who he is, or what he wants out of life (Berman, 01). Morrison deliberately wrote *Paradise* with different characters‘ points of view to make the reader understand and realize an

overwhelming experience suffered by the individuals, especially women living in the convent, and how this experience impacts their identity formation and destruction.

4.1. Mavis and Connie‘s Painful Memories and Experiences:

The women who arrive at the Convent one by one throughout the novel have all suffered pain and trauma as a result of living in a society that strictly governs them. These women are lost in a world where they are abused by males and abandoned by their parents. Mavis, the first arrival woman who lives with Connie at the Convent, is first portrayed as a mistreated and beaten woman. Frank, her husband, is a thug who regularly abuses and beats her. One day, while she runs to buy dinner for him, she leaves her infant twins Merle and Pearl in the car in the summer heat, where they die of asphyxiation. Mavis escapes after being labeled criminally crazy by the media and believing her own family is plotting to murder her for her horrible crime. She had planned to travel to California, but she ran out of petrol and ended up staying at the Convent. When she receives the “sensation that the kitchen was crowded with children – laughing? singing? – two of whom were Merle and Pearl” (41), While trying to escape the painful memories of killing her children, she is met by the ghosts of their souls. The fact that Mavis considered herself responsible for her children‘s death because of Sal‘s unwelcome behavior and the journalist‘s questions that made her guilty "Mrs. Albright. In a hot car with the windows closed. No air. It‘s hard to see that happening in five minutes" (23).

Moreover, most of the surroundings‘ danger contributes greatly to identity‘s complexity, which further isolates us with imaginative thoughts. In *Paradise*, Sal‘s horrifying attitudes and the husband‘s abusive actions create a complex personality for Mavis. Her vision of the razor blade on the dining table, her daughter‘s seemingly awkward questions, and even their happiness at the breakfast has pushed Mavis to live in OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), thinking that her family would kill her. "[A]s soon as he had not

smothered or strangled her," "[s]he was sure Sal squatted there_Ready to pounce or grab her legs" (26). According to Sigmund Freud, unconscious thoughts, beliefs, and feelings can cause a variety of issues, including compulsive behavior and difficult social interactions (Cherry, "What Is the Unconscious?"). That is, in *Paradise*, Mavis‘s unconscious created the reality that pushed her to escape. Her escape from her family wasn‘t because of their misbehavior. Her inability to cope with the deadly accident of her infant twins in the green Cadillac car, as well as her paranoid mind, are the major causes of her reaction. "They are going to kill me, Ma," "[t]hey already tried but I got away" (31).

Therefore, the traumatic event that shaped Mavis‘s identity pushed her to leave her life role as a mother and a wife. Once Mavis changed her life context, which is full of fears, and moved to a new space that killed her silence and made her stronger than she had ever been. "It was more proof that the old Mavis was dead. The one who couldn't defend herself from an eleven-year-old girl" (171). Eventually, she started to reconcile with her fears and returned home. Thus, lovely context and space help and contribute to developing one‘s self-identity.

Connie, also known as Consolata, was adopted by the nuns living in the convent. She was one of the most characters in the novel who experienced the psychological effects of love. The construction of Connie‘s identity is related to several psychological and social factors, she, as a child and even as an adult, needs affection, care, kindness, and love from others. "It was worth getting sick, dying, even to see that kind concern in an adult‘s eyes" (224). Connie lived lonely without her mother‘s care for thirty years at the service of the convent and Maria Magna without looking for her personal life. According to Sigmund Freud, the ego functions according to the reality principle, seeking out practical ways to fulfill the id‘s wants, often compromising or deferring gratification to avoid undesirable consequences of society. Thus, social facts, conventions, etiquette, and rules play a role in determining how to behave (McLeod, "Id, Ego, and Superego"). Accordingly, Connie‘s sacrifice is motivated

by two reasons: "society‘s views towards her and her personal needs". First, her gratitude towards Maria Magna for not leaving her when she was a nine-years-old pushed her to conform to community standards. "For thirty years Consolata worked hard to become and remain Mary Magna's pride" (224). Second, because she has no other option than to live at the convent. "was the fear of being asked to step outside" (227). Thus, her feelings of gratitude and fear are a prelude to her developing a low sense of self-esteem in her identity.

Space influence played an important role in driving the sexual needs of the Id. Dixon argues that the rising body of multidisciplinary research, which includes important contributions from environmental psychology and human geography, emphasizes the importance of place, or the relevant physical settings of people‘s daily lives, as active contributors to self-identity (Dixon &Durrbein, 200). Once Connie and Mary Magna went to Ruby to buy some supplies for the convent, she realized a sense of belonging to that place. "And although they were living here in a hamlet, not in a loud city full of glittering black people, Consolata knew she knew them" (226). Thereby, Ruby‘s atmosphere and the interactions between people working, enjoying, and watching K-D‘s horse racing, especially Deek‘s physical appearance, were a turning point for Connie‘s personality to shift from her ego to her id‘s sexual needs. "They could hear loud cheering, and instead of thirty or so energetic people going quietly about the business of making a town" (226).

Connie‘s id compelled her to engage in an illegal relationship with a married man who was younger than her. He, unlike her, didn‘t have to deal with the problem of his age. Because his relationship with her was just a passing fancy, he wanted to fill the emotional void left by his wife's sadness at their children's death. Deek‘s physical appearance is not the only reason for being in love with him, and yet his sympathy, kindness, and flirtation towards Connie reduced her fear of being out of the convent and grew a sense of self-confidence in her identity, which was affected by many psychological and social pressures. "I‘ve traveled. All

over. I‘ve never seen anything like you." "Do you know how beautiful you are?" (231). In addition, her permanent work in the convent was the primary motive for her to establish a secret, illegal relation that would protect and provide her a place to get rid of the work responsibility of the convent. Connie‘s id was also the main reason for her having PTSD. Her identity, which is a mixture of fear, weaknesses, and helplessness, took its way of constructing, and yet her sexual needs destroyed everything and pushed her beloved away. "She did not know it then, but the second time was the last" (236).

Connie‘s separation experience led her to several psychological issues, such as anxiety, stress, and depression which resulted in her being trapped in a space full of painful memories. "[T]hey watched Consolata just as they always did: her days of excitement, of manic energy; her slow change to nail-biting distraction" (237). According to Fraga, a breakup may be extremely painful; they are similar to other traumatic occurrences such as the loss of a loved one, which can result in overwhelming and long_lasting depression (Fraga, "Breakup Grief: Did Your Worst Breakup Change You?"). Hence, Connie‘s identity formation and destruction are impacted by the internal and external environment "her society and her painful memories." John argues that reactions to social interaction, "e.g. are interactions with in-group members more positive than interactions with non-members?" (John& veronica, 242). Years after Connie‘s traumatic event, especially with Mavis‘s arrival, her interaction with women living in the convent, and her preoccupation with trade, which she acquired from Maria Magna, gave her a new identity far away from her painful memories. "It was an all-right life for Consolata. Better than all right" (242). In progress, Connie‘s identity went down due to space impact.

People frequently have flashbacks to old, seemingly forgotten memories, such as memories about childhood, a home that brings a feeling of nostalgia. Researchers called this process "contextual-binding theory," by which a context is both a "physical location" and a

"mental state" that includes thoughts, emotions, and other mental activity ("Here‘s why memories come flooding back when you visit places from your past"). The basement room that Connie suggested to Deek for their secret meeting was the most affecting factor on her psyche which brings her into nostalgia. Therefore, Toni Morrison has not only portrayed the impact of trauma and space on adult identities, but she has also depicted the development of human personality through children‘s traumatic experiences.

4.2. Seneca and Billie Delia‘s Experiences:

Morrison uses Billie Delia and Seneca as suitable examples to illustrate children‘s traumatic experiences. Billie Delia is a teenage girl who is Arnett‘s friend and Patricia‘s daughter, and she did not form her personality structure as a child. So, her id is the only driver for her primitive actions and desires; when she was three years old, her reputation was tarnished by taking off her underwear to ride a horse. "It was she whose life had been maimed by it. Hard Goods, the winning horse that K.D. had ridden" (150). As a result, this terrible accident affects both her identity formation and her social image.

Indeed, Billie Delia‘s identity went through various psychological and social difficulties during her adolescence. Socially, she was neglected by her mother and society because they considered her an outcast due to the horse riding event that she encountered in Ruby. And also, as an unrespectful girl who caused Arnette‘s rebellion and pregnancy. "She got an unintelligible whipping from her mother and a dose of shame it took her years to understand. Only Mrs. Dovey Morgan and her sister, Soane, treated her with easy kindness" (151). Psychologically, societys views and pressures create an aggressive identity for Billie Delia, which affects her relationship with others, especially her mother. The different traumas she had experienced, such as neglection and contempt following the most overwhelming traumatic event, pushed her to leave the space in which she was born.

Seneca is a young woman who is the third to arrive at the convent. Her identity is affected by her fear of abandonment since she was five years old when her teenage mother Jean, whom Seneca believes is her sister, abandons her at the public housing complex where they had been living. Leaving nothing for her except a letter, Seneca waits four days and nights for Jean to return, checking every door in the building for her. Seneca observes a sobbing woman pass her window on the fourth day, and because this vision corresponds with Seneca's realization that Jean would not return to her, the sobbing woman is eternally associated with Jean's loss: "She thought about the crying woman briefly then, more later, until the sight of her became an occasional heartbreaking dream" (128). Thus, Seneca spills over into the development of serious psychological issues with her identity.

Low socio-economic situation and the physical environment where people live play an important role in constructing and destroying an individual's personality. Seneca's poverty and the overwhelming traumatic event of abandonment that she had experienced created a weak and submissive identity for her. Because her distrust and fear of abandonment pushed her to become an obedient and introverted person, she considered herself responsible for her mother's behavior towards her. And thus, she committed to carrying out people's orders to avoid the loss's pain. "The one who said yes or I don't mind or I'll go. Otherwise_what? They not like her. Might cry. Might leave" (131). Also, low self-esteem is another psychological problem, which impacted her identity. When she arrived at the convent and received some care, she felt unworthy of being treated carefully. The low self-esteem problem has resulted from her boyfriend Eddie. "She had slept on floors, on cardboard, on nightmare-producing water beds and, for weeks at a time, in the back seat of Eddie's car. But she could not fall asleep on this clean, narrow childish bed" (131).

4.3. Steward‘s Anxiety and Fear:

Paradise is also a typical illustration of trauma‘s influence on men‘s identity. Morrison, through her characters, depicts all forms of stress, anger, anxiety, and fear. Deek‘s twin and one of Ruby‘s founding fathers, Steward Morgan, faced several pressures, which increases his anxiety and destroyed his identity. Anxiety may come and go, but for others, it can linger for a long time and have a significant impact on their daily life, by which feelings and thoughts of worries are indications of this psychological problem.

Steward‘s worries negatively influence his identity formation, which has become a center of violence, anxiety, and fear for other people. Young generation behaviors, especially K.D.‘s attitudes towards Arnette and the wrong assumptions about the women of the convent, are considered as a danger that threatens Ruby‘s space and tradition, evaluate steward‘s over-thinning process towards Ruby‘s atmosphere. His painful memories about his brother‘s death and blacks‘ suffering were a starting point for all his worries and anxiety. ’’Steward linked that story, but it unnerved him to know it was based on the defense of and prayers for a whore. He did not sympathize with the Whiteman, but he could see their point, could even feel the adrenaline, imagining the fist was his own‘‘ (95). Accordingly, a high level of anxiety and continual painful memories explain Steward‘s aggressive identity and violent actions towards Connie that ended her life. However, after Connie‘s death steward‘s identity reaches a kind of reformation.

Conclusion

Toni Morrison‘s *Paradise*, has explored the symbolic meaning of black space, as well as the impact of trauma and space on both individual and communal identity. In addition, it examines the effects of trauma and space on numerous identities in the novel and also the influence of trauma on black minorities as a whole, using psychoanalytic, social identity, historical trauma, and space theories. Therefore, applying these theories to Toni Morrison‘s literary work provides a current insight into black people‘s psychological issues and experiences in different spaces and societies, as well as defines the most significant features that impact the formation of blacks' identities.

The current research has provided insights and depictions of the subject matter. The first chapter, entitled "Theoretical Framework," deals with the theoretical background of this work. It is divided into three linked parts: African American Soci-Historical Background from past to the future; African American Literature; and Space, Trauma, and Identity. Consequently, the first section has attempted to explore African American issues and experiences from past to the present, such as slavery, segregation, color differences, the civil war, and the civil rights movements. Secondly, this chapter has proceeded with the historical background of blacks and also of contemporary African American literature. The following part has tackled the examination of the relationship between space and trauma and how these two concepts have an impact on destroying and constructing self-identity.

The second chapter has analyzed Toni Morrison‘s *Paradise* in the selected corpus. Hence, this thesis has explored novel views and portrayed them in the work. Morrison has presented blacks‘ struggle against white Americans and other people of color. *Paradise* has represented the experiences of mainly African Americans in white societies, as well as their psychological influence on cultural and ethnic identities. Thus, Morrison‘s work on black

issues such as racism, segregation, and slavery has revealed the true dimensions of African American psychological struggle against other racial groups, which leads to isolation and the creation of space.

The novel has explored the concept of "Paradise" as a place where its existence is based on the rejection of the Other. In addition, she has discussed the real locations of Ruby and the convent, which are dreamt of as paradisiacal Utopias. And also, the Oven, which was established by the old fathers, as a symbol of paradise. Ruby is determined to keep its status quo by rejecting and then destroying the other who threatens its balance. This Other is the women of the convent, a place that is opposed to Ruby, includes and embraces otherness and the various histories of its residents. Morrison has accomplished this by contrasting the novel‘s two Utopias. Both Ruby and the Convent have histories of persecution and relocation, as well as attempted to overcome them, to find a free and safe shelter, and thus a real home.

Moreover, this chapter has portrayed the significant factors that affect the formation and destruction of black identity. It presents African Americans as the most oppressed and marginalized people, who experience several overwhelming traumatic events in a particular space where their identity is shaped by both external and internal factors. Morrison has classified trauma and space as social and psychological pressures that shaped characters‘ self-identity and pushed their psyches to misbehave. She has provided readers with five notable characters, Mavis, Connie, Seneca, Bellie Delia, and Steward Morgan, who were all driven by their ids which had various effects on their personalities. The social and psychological circumstances they experienced in which they lived were a valid reason for allowing the id to be the only controller and driver of their decisions and behaviors. That is to say, each character‘s identity stated in this paragraph is either constructed or destructed by their id.

Additionally, the characters‘ id is both a healing and a destruction power for their self-identities. For example, Mavis and Seneca‘s escaping to a new space was a new beginning that helped them overcome their PTSD and reconcile with themselves. On the other hand, although Steward‘s id drove him to commit a criminal action towards Connie, it also reconstructs his identity, which was destroyed by his painful memories and freed from his psychological struggle. Unlike the three previous characters, Connie and Billie Delia‘s ids were a major cause of the destruction of their identities, which were affected by several psychological and social problems in a space full of painful memories. Thus, one decides to flee Ruby while the other one chooses to die.

Through the novel, Morrison has also shown that space and trauma are related in many ways. First, all the traumatic events that happened to the characters were engraved in their minds as painful memories that shaped their lives. Trauma takes a certain amount of time and then disappears, but what impacts characters‘ identities is their symptoms and the space where the trauma happened; many characters did not get over their trauma until they moved to another place. Because the painful memories come back when the traumatized person is engaged in a space that reveals all his overwhelming traumatic experiences. Thereby, Mavis could cope with her trauma only when she moved to Oklahoma and lived in the convent. But unfortunately, Connie destroyed herself when she committed to living in a space full of painful memories.

Furthermore, the collaboration of psychology and social science has created a strong link between space and trauma and has explained how they are related to each other. Since analyzing and studying trauma can be related to various dimensions, such as social identity theory, which is a social psychological analysis of self-concept in a society that is a key term for identifying human space. Thus, if there is no space, there is no human interaction, and if there is no human interaction, that means there is trauma and no place for people‘s suffering.

Accordingly, Morrison has attempted to show the relationship between them only through characters‘ interactions in society, in which their interconnections in white spaces and societies gain them several psychological issues such as anxiety, fear, history, and traumatic memories.

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Résumé

L’étude actuelle examine le rôle de l'espace et du traumatisme dans *Paradis* (1997) de Toni Morrison et son impact sur différentes sociétés afro-américaines. De plus, il représente la façon dont l'espace et le traumatisme influencent à la fois les identités de groupe et individuelles. Il explore également la signification symbolique de l'espace noir. Par conséquent, l'objectif principal de cette étude est de développer une solide compréhension de la façon dont les caractéristiques sociales et psychologiques influencent l'identité des personnages à la fois en tant que groupe et en tant qu'individu et de donner un sens plus profond aux foyers afro-américains. Pour y parvenir, l'étude est réalisée en utilisant les théories du traumatisme historique, de l'identité sociale, de la psychanalyse et de l'espace, afin d'examiner ainsi l'expérience des Noirs de la lutte acharnée dans différentes sociétés et espaces. Par conséquent, le premier chapitre explore les luttes des Afro-Américains contre le racisme et l'esclavage en offrant un aperçu de l'œuvre littéraire de Toni Morrison. Le deuxième chapitre analyse la représentation de l'espace et du traumatisme par Toni Morrison dans la formation et la destruction de l'identité des personnages.

Mots clés : Espace, foyer, Traumatisme, Identité, Afro-Américains, Esclavage, Racisme, Histoire, Mémoire.

ملخص

يتطرق هذا البحث لدراسة دور الفضاء والصدمة في رواية فِردوس (1997) لتوني موريسون، وكذلك تأثيرها على مختلف المجتمعات الأفروأمريكية. بالاضافة الى ذلك, يمثل هذا البحث طريقة تأثير الفضاء والصدمة على الهويات الفردية وكذلك الجماعية. كما يتطرق هذا البحث أيضا لاستكشاف المعنى الرمزي لفضاء السود. وبالتالي، فإن الهدف الاساسي لهذه الدراسة هو تطوير مفهوم قوي لكيفية تأثير السمات الاجتماعية والنفسية على هوية الشخصيات كمجموعة وكأفراد على حد سواء، وكذلك لتوفير معنى أعمق لمنازل الأمريكيين ذو الأصول الإفريقية. ولتحقيق هذا، تم إجراء هذه الدراسة من خلال تطبيق نظريات الصدمة التاريخية، الهوية الاجتماعية، التحليل النفسي، وكذلك نظريات الفضاء والمكان، وبالتالي، فحص تجربة السود في نضالهم القاسي في مختلف المجتمعات والاماكن. لذلك، يتطرق الفصل الاول لهذه الاطروحة لصراعات الأفروأمريكيين ضد العنصرية والعبودية من خلال تقديم لمحة عامة عن عمل توني موريسون الأدبي. كما يحلل الفصل الثاني تمثيل توني موريسون للفضاء والصدمة في بناء هوية الشخصيات وكذلك تدميرها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفضاء، المنزل، الصدمة، الهوية، الأفروأمريكيين، العبودية، العنصرية، التاريخ، الذاكرة.