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FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**Trauma and Black Self-Discovery  
in Toni Morrison's *Home***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of  
the Requirements for the Master Degree in Literature and Civilization**

**Prepared by:**

❖ **Ahlem DAHMANI**

❖ **Asma SIBOUEKAZ**

**Supervised by:**

**Mrs. Nassima AMIROUCHE**

**2017 /2018**

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**Panel of Examiners**

Mr. Nouredine REFISSE	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Mrs. Nassima AMIROUCHE	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Mr. Mohamed SENOUSSI	University of M'sila	Examiner

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## Abstract

This dissertation presents the traumatic dimensions and black self-discovery through the exploration of many themes such as manhood, white medical experimentations, and trauma war in Toni Morrison's novel *Home*. The novel reveals numerous realistic facts about a neglected historical period and describes how the African Americans were suffering during the 1950s. Morrison portrays the story as a kind of trauma and sorrow in which the protagonist 'Frank' is trying to reconnect his experiences in order to be healed. This study is an attempt to analyze the novel and to cover the main events that happened during the 1950s era in the United States and especially during the Korean War. However the work should prove how Morrison seem to universalize the characters' experiences, how Morrison develops the theme of manhood in the novel, and to what extent the process of healing and recovery is possible at the end of the novel. Besides, It aims to present Morrison's vision toward this period in which she declared that African Americans were still discriminated and segregated. It also deals with the psychological issues of the victims in the novel by going through a deep analysis to cover the Psycho-traumatic dimensions. Describing and presenting all the aspects in the book, the study requires a socio-historical background about the United States during the 1950s. In addition to that, this work explores the meaning of trauma in order to give a comprehensible analysis about the individual and the collective traumatic experiences. The ultimate goal of the study is to expose the author's purpose behind writing such a novel, to highlight the efficiency of Trauma Theory as an analytical instrument to analyze the characters psyche and moreover, to transfer the findings and results of the research for a better appreciation of the novel.

**Keywords:** African Americans, trauma, 1950s, racism, home, Korean War, Healing and Recovery.

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## Introduction

The 1950s are best known as a decade of prosperity in which the United States has witnessed a state of economic growth. The nation experienced a great change after the Second World War and became the most powerful military force. It is also called "The Happy Days" thanks to technology inventions and the scientific development.

Despite that this historical period was seen as a period of better family living, fashion, medical research, conformity, and many other advantages; it was also full of remarkable events like the emergence of Civil Rights. So the prosperity did not include all social portions, minorities like African Americans were struggling in order to gain their rights. Moreover, the 1950s witnessed the Korean War that American soldiers participated in. For White soldiers it was an opportunity to achieve The American Dream when returning home. However it was not the same for African American ones who suffered segregation and racism and they were not treated as fully fleshed citizens.

So African Americans were discriminated by white authorities in a period that was ideal for most Americans. Racial abuses, unfair acts, poor education and many other brutal treatments were still practiced on this minority. Many African American writers tend to depict the neglected historical facts and the other side of the 1950s. They start to discuss racism, social injustice, mal treatment...etc, Toni Morrison is one of the famous African American writers who intend to share people the aspects of African American life. In her latest novel, Morrison has chosen to go back to the forgotten memories and to reveal the wounds of the 1950s. *Home* like all of her novels is a story telling about traumatized characters who suffer racism and identity issues.

This dissertation is a depiction of the United States during the 1950s as portrayed in Toni Morrison's novel *Home*. It provides a comparison and contrast between two different races: White American

population and African American population, and analyzes as well many other aspects that Morrison highlights in this novel.

*Home* is a modern work that shows how African Americans were treated during this historical period. It deals with the Korean War and depicts the bad experience that the protagonist Frank Money lived. Morrison has chosen to tackle this issue and she focuses on the forgotten memories of those African American soldiers who suffered during the war. In addition to that, the book explores a neglected side of that period which is the medical experimentations. These experimentations were practiced by many white doctors on minorities and especially the African Americans.

More broadly, *Home* is another vision of trauma fiction and recovery process. It is about two traumatized siblings; Frank and his sister Ycidra; who are trying to be healed. Morrison builds her novel upon recounting and describing the psychological wounds and the traumatic experiences besides of many issues that happened during the 1950s. She chooses Frank and Ycidra as examples to present the sufferings of African American community. The techniques Morrison uses in writing *Home* are familiar to her previous novels, however the novel examines new perspectives and themes like manhood, medical experimentations and war. This makes readers attracted and excited about the story.

Furthermore, critics and scholars have shown interest toward Toni Morrison's *Home* which can be considered as a masterpiece since its ongoing impact on African American community. Such researchers have carried out numerous studies for the more comprehension of the novel. Those works present ideas related to our topic and their findings and suggestions are reviewed here under the aim of showing the main points discussed throughout some works.

Besides, many researchers tried to examine the problem of trauma and its recovery. The work "*The Challenges of Recovery from Individual and Cultural Trauma in Toni Morrison's Home* " ; prepared by

Arror Ibarrola; treats trauma and reconnecting experiences in the novel and illustrates the challenges represented by the individual Frank Money. Another additional work held by Irene Visser “*Entanglements of Trauma: Relationality and Toni Morrison’s Home*” discusses the issues of trauma within postcolonial literary studies.

To understand more the African American issues, literature of trauma and the historical period of 1950s in Morrison's work, it is necessary to refer to some critics who discuss the issue of trauma. The historian Dominick LaCapra explores trauma through history in his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma*; published in 2001; in which he explains how trauma is affected by historical events. Another trauma study critic Kali Tal defines literature of trauma in her book *Worlds of hurts* and focuses her interest on how individual and collective traumas are combined.

To comprehend deeply the concept of the novel, we rely on Homi Bhabha's "*The World and The Home*" in which he commented on Morrison's early work about *Home*. Bhabha focuses on the homelessness concept. Besides to Bhabha, we rely also on Carole Després work in which she defines the meaning of home from different perspectives in “The Meaning of Home”.

Underlying the previous works, it is noticeable that each work relies on one aspect rather than studying it from different points of views, thus the existing literature on *Home* does not yet extend far enough to address all the aspects in the work.

This dissertation is important in terms of dealing with Morrison's novel from deeper perspectives. It is more than a character centered study of the protagonist. This research expands the work of Morrison to include the whole reasons behind the Psycho-traumatic experience that Frank Money suffers from. Moreover, the work is developed by presenting how Morrison tends to go back to the period of 1950s.

In short, we try to highlight the most important issues about the traumatic experience and how an African American as an individual seeks to construct his identity trying to be healed from this trauma. So the main concern of this work is to demonstrate that the 1950s were not those glorious years for everybody, that white Americans had more opportunities than others, and that African Americans suffered racism and segregation. This creates a set of questions about how Morrison seems to universalize these experiences so that all readers can relate to them. Furthermore, it is important to question about the ways she develops the theme of manhood in this novel and the extent to which the idea of healing and recovery is possible at the end.

The aim of this study is to present the author's vision about the 1950s, the image of racial discrimination, segregation and the image of those who went to the Korean War. All these aspects make our study significant through showing the sufferings of African Americans who are trying to prove their existence. Since this topic is our point of interest, we will highlight and add new perspectives to the aspects found before.

By going through this research, there are a set of objectives to be achieved. Firstly, to find out that *Home* is a Psycho-traumatic work. Secondly, to identify the impact of the Korean War on Frank Money as a main character in the novel. Thirdly, to examine the responsible factors for Frank's trauma through analyzing his character. Finally, to investigate the psychological and the historical motives to test if the traumatic experiences can be generated.

To reach the key points of this thesis, we have read some articles about the novel and watched some interview videos of Toni Morrison where she explains the main issues of her novel and how the United States was a divided nation in the same period where people of different races were not treated as equal. In order to show this, *Home* has been analyzed using a historical perspective that will emphasize all the

events presented in the story. Analyzing this literary work in this study requires **The Trauma Theory** because many critics have noted that Traumatic Dimensions are widely represented in the novel.

Along with trauma theory, the research needs to rely on **The Psychoanalytical Approach** because this study is based on investigating the reasons behind the psychological issues of the analyzed characters. This analysis gives a clear image about the African Americans and exactly the effects of the Korean War and the medical experimentations.

This work is divided into two chapters: **Chapter One:** The United States during the 1950s, **Chapter two:** Trauma Dimensions and Healing Process in Toni Morrison's *Home*.

The first chapter refers to the social and the historical context of the American society during the 1950s. It compares the living conditions of white population to those of African Americans who were not treated as equal as whites. It gives a general overview about racism and segregation that African Americans suffered. Then, light will be shed on the Korean War and its consequences and how Morrison depicts the experience of an African American veteran. Furthermore, author's early life and her contribution to literature are introduced. Then, the chapter discusses the theoretical frame work by which the trauma theory is introduced, it defines trauma in various fields starting from general scope reaching the key concepts of this research. Moreover, it presents the development of trauma theory by presenting the contribution of many scholars and theorists.

The second chapter is about the psychological traumas in the novel. The novel is analyzed from different traumatic dimensions relying on trauma theory and psychoanalytical approach. It gives a clear analysis for the novel and stresses the idea of home in the book. Further, healing and recovery elements are discussed in which Morrison gives a possible trauma resolution.

## **Chapter One: The United States during the 1950s**

*The reclamation of the history of black people in this country is paramount in its importance because while you can't really blame the conqueror for writing history his own way, you can certainly debate it.*

Toni Morrison

Many historians describe the American society during the period of 1950s as "an affluent society" that created an enormous change among the communities. This affluence was the product of Post-World War II and the great privileges that resulted in the change of the social structure. However, there has been a continuous struggle between the different races; mainly White Americans and African Americans. As a consequence, this struggle turned to be a major issue in the American life.

As it is known, American culture, politics and even social classes are shaped by 'Pen' .i.e. literature played a crucial role in forming the initial pillars of the nation. Thus writers and authors write to depict what the society might reflect. The 1950s major themes were debatable; on one hand, some white American writers tended to idealize the period as being in a state of stability and wealth. Others wrote with pride to glorify 'whiteness' and to under-estimate minorities as being 'inferior'. On the other hand, African Americans wrote for the sake of claiming their existence and defending their rights.

Toni Morrison was one of the famous figures who wrote about this period. She has questioned and argued the 1950s ideas and tried to depict some of them in her novel *Home*, published in 2012.

This chapter focuses on the social and the historical context of the period presented in the novel, moving from social differences to racism and life harsh conditions.

### **1. America as an Affluent Society:**

The United States of America became one of the most powerful nations in the world especially after the Second World War (1939/1945). Howard Zinn states "The war not only put the United States in a position to dominate much of the world: it created conditions for effective control at home" (425). Of

course the country has faced many troubles, losses and most important social structure problems. However, little by little the American society was growing economically and evolving.

So the fifties were more than just a mid-point decade in a century; they were to be the crucible in which the rest of the 20th century was forged. As David Halberstam had depicted in his book *The Fifties* and shown the true drama of history; President Truman's policy and many other issues. David Halberstam notes that "the pace of the fifties seemed slower, almost languid. Social ferment, however, was beginning just beneath this placid surface"(30). He described the emergence of the United States from the long shadow of twelve years of federal presidency, with the military-industrial complex. So the perspective of white Americans toward the period was cheerful thus men of literature recorded the American History and set down its favorable outlook through shaping realities and reflecting the good life that whites were living. In other words, they depicted America as a perfect nation thanks to the developed technologies and the comfortable conditions that they were enjoying.

Politically speaking, Harry S. Truman (1945/1953), president of the United States, created a number of domestic programs which benefited the population; this was called "The Fair Deal"<sup>1</sup>. According to G.D. Moss "The Fair Deal" included controlling prices, improving civil rights, expanding public housing, raising the minimum wage, expanding Social Security" (328). Some of the measures of the "Fair Deal" are also explained by Alan Brinkley in his book *The Unfinished Nation*, he states " Congress raised the legal minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents an hour. It approved an important expansion of the Social Security system, increasing benefits by 75 percent and extending them to million additional people " (770).

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<sup>1</sup> The Fair Deal was the name given to Harry Truman's domestic program, the basic tenets of which he had outlined as early as 1945. For more information on the Fair Deal see: <http://countrystudies.us/united-states/history-115.htm>

These kinds of changes during the period of 1950s made the American society an affluent one. Do these changes serve the entire community and its all levels?

### **1.1. White Population during the 1950s:**

The period of 1950s is generally viewed as a time of prosperity, peace, social conformity and economic growth. White Americans were living in such good conditions and enjoying the enhancement provided at that time for better life. Middle-class Americans could afford appliances, cars, TVs and to enjoy as well computer technology, military advancements and medicine inventions like vaccines, they became more consumerist thanks to the growth of their salaries.

Additionally, the economic growth allowed white Americans to buy bigger houses. White Americans did not want African Americans around them, so they moved to live in the suburbs which were the perfect areas for white middle class. Those suburbs were better houses closer to cities so white Americans could raise their children with more security and wealth. The houses that were left by whites became ghettos for African Americans. Brinkley announces "Another factor motivating white Americans to move to the suburbs was race. Most suburbs were restricted to white inhabitants –both because relatively few African Americans could afford to live in them and because formal and informal barriers kept even prosperous blacks out of all but a few" (795-796).

Moving to the suburbs was the reason to enhance the automobile industry since white Americans needed to move to their place of work. This advance marked a huge change in both economy and society during the period, as Moss notes "the manufacture of automobiles remained the most important U.S. industry during the 1950s. New car and truck sales averaged 7 million units annually during that decade" (335). Those enhancements gave the white Americans the opportunity for a better lifestyle in which the period was regarded as ideal.

However, Joan Walsh argued in a report of The Commonwealth Club that while Americans tend to idealize the "Golden Era" of the 1950s, they tend to overlook how it also left out a lot of minorities and because of that, might not be the best model for present-day America. So the golden age seemed to be the result of the Great Depression of 1930s and the Second World War of 1940s, it was the result of people's feelings of tragedies and traumas at that period. This helped the whites who used the government to create a great middle-class starting with "The New Deal" which offered many programs in many domains :education, economy, politics....etc like building public schools and universities as well as building roads out to the great Suburbs. As it appears, those were the glorious years for American white population as Brinkley notes "At the center of middle-class culture in the 1950s was a growing absorption with consumer goods as a result of increased prosperity" (795).

Hence, the problem was that those programs did not prohibit discrimination or segregation and did not include minor communities.

### **1.2. African American Population during the 1950s:**

Although America witnessed a rapid growth of prosperity in all domains during this period, not all Americans experienced the wealth. Indeed, there was a social gap between whites and African Americans. These latter suffered from discrimination, miseducation, and place of living (ghettos). This led to the creation of the Civil Rights Movement<sup>2</sup> in 1954 in which African Americans tried to gain more right through Truman administration "there be a permanent Commission on Civil Rights, that Congress pass laws against lynching and to stop voting discrimination, and suggested new laws to end racial discrimination in jobs" (Zinn 449). But these laws did not work in reality. White Americans did not want

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<sup>2</sup> The civil rights movement was a struggle for social justice that took place mainly during the 1950s and 1960s for blacks to gain equal rights under the law in the United States. For more information see: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>

to be equal to minorities, to the extent that they were calling African Americans (blacks) and only blacks.

So despite the changes made by Truman's government, only few people benefited from it. There was still poverty and racial issues because white people did not show a positive reaction; they were not totally satisfied so they started to threaten and to lynch African Americans. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Jr Moss have accounted how, "On the job, white workers frequently threatened to quit if black were employed or upgraded"; in addition to that, "African Americans who sought to improve their own status were frequently singled out for attack" (511).

After all, it is noticeable that white people tried hard to fight against desegregation and to be separate from African Americans in everything. For those reasons, many African Americans sought to capture the voice of the nation. There were poets, playwrights, novelists and scholars who expressed racism, segregation and violence during different periods of time. Maya Angelou, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and many others helped inspiring the following generations.

So under those circumstances African American literature was recognized. Themes were varied, expressions were artistic and writers started to shine. This created a rich treasure of different African American literary works. Besides, 1950s writings were much more about exploring identity issues and Morrison has chosen this period to write about. She detailed the life of her protagonist Frank Money who came back home from Korean War to find out that nothing has changed during this period and he has to suffer again for being (black).

### **1.3. Segregation and Racism:**

The issue of racism and segregation arose long time before the 1950s in the United States. It began with the early 1800s and continued through the Civil War into the twentieth century. During the Colonial Era exactly between 1775 and 1783; African Americans were considered as slaves and with the beginning of the American Revolution the emancipation of slavery started to accelerate in some places. So the issue of slavery became a subject of matter between Northern and Southern States and led to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

Following the Civil War, most states adopted some laws to restrict the emancipated African Americans in order to limit their freedom. So African Americans in the United States had to face racial social system known as Jim Crow Laws under the umbrella "separate but equal" which prevent them from voting or assembling, they were segregated in schools, transport, public services...etc The bad conditions that they suffered pushed them to work in lands with low wages. On the other hand, three millions registered themselves to go to the army and fight in World War II, so when they return they would fight for the change.

Subsequently; in 1900s; the rate of freed African Americans grew because in 1830 slavery has been abolished relatively through legislative, constitutional, or judicial action. This growth created a necessity of integrating those freed people within the society, so the Civil War brought significant changes in the American society. During the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863 as a kind of Reconstruction in which African Americans would be integrated as full citizens. However, he was assassinated in the same year because of his speech of freedom and justice and he was followed by the radical Republican Andrew Johnson. Andrew showed disheartening toward the black civil rights and Black Codes were adopted to limit those rights.

Earlier, during World War I; African American did not find real rights from the government who kept ignoring them through denying equality. Twenty years later, the demand for a real elimination of racial segregation was highlighted after World War II so African Americans decided to put stress on their struggling. With the arrival of Franklin D. Roosevelt to presidency, he created the New Deal that brought new measures of political and economic inclusion that encouraged the African Americans to attack the racial inequality and white superiority in the United States.

Nevertheless, when the president Dwight D. Eisenhower took charge of the United States (1953-1961), the African Americans started to lose their rights remarkably. The president did not give much important to racial acts when he relegated civil rights to a low priority. He thought that it is not something personal thus it is not his matter to handle such issue. This led to the creation of anti-black groups like National Association for the Advancement of White People which took its name from the most important group that fought for the rights of black people NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). Another anti-black group was the White Citizens' Council; those groups were fighting against desegregation and rejected the improvement of the rights of the African Americans.

In historical studies, the 1950s are regarded as a period of global racial struggle and progress of a continuous colonization overseas and segregation. It was an era of black segregation and unequal divide between two very distinct races and racial acts became a part of the American life. The progress of the Civil Rights Movement did not help with the social, economic, physical and political disadvantages that African Americans faced during that time<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> “Racial Segregation: 1950s and Today”. Website page.social.rollins.edu . Uncategorized, 21nov2016.11mar2018.  
<http://social.rollins.edu/wpsites/thirdsight/2016/11/21/racial-segregation-1950s-and-today/>

One of the most significant examples was the ruling of "separate but equal" in education which had been applied to schools and colleges of further education, but equal was never completely true in which there was a huge differences between white schools and black schools and how teachers were qualified, how buildings were equipped, and even how much money was spent to facilitate education.

Moreover, this racial segregation continued to take place in other public services like restaurants, transportation, bathrooms, churches...etc and still not granting a complete equality for African Americans. What happened in Alabama, Montgomery, in 1955 still seen as the best example of racial acts in which Rosa Parks<sup>4</sup> explained why she refused to obey the Montgomery law providing for segregation on city buses. She was arrested because she refused to give up her seat to a white man in the bus:

Well, in the first place, I had been working all day on the job. I was quite tired after spending a full day working. I handle and work on clothing that white people wear. That didn't come in my mind but this is what I wanted to know: when and how would we ever determine our rights as human beings? [...]. I was tired of insults. You know that the law is on your side and you get tired of being run over. You say, "Well, let's fight it out-if it means going to jail then go to jail (2).

In addition to all physical restrictions and laws passed, racial segregation created the idea that African Americans were inferior to the whites. For example, blacks were used in medical experimentations as it is portrayed in the novel, where Morrison has presented the experience of Cee (Frank's young sister). She was tortured by a white doctor for medical reasons. So Morrison describes how black females also suffered racism and segregation in their daily life.

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<sup>4</sup> Rosa Parks: Civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, spurring the Montgomery boycott and other efforts to end segregation. For more information see: <https://www.biography.com/people/rosa-parks-9433715>

After the period of the 1950s, the issue of racism and segregation was still a major problem in the American life. Thus the Justice Department passed another act which was the Civil Rights Act of the 1964. The act validated by the Supreme Court in order to get rid of the segregation of public accommodations, but this did not end the racial forms of the Jim Crow laws. In the regard of what has been said above, the law professor Randall Kennedy summed up the impact of the 1964 act in the African Americans daily life:

A trip by car between Washington, D.C., and Columbia, S.C., is radically different today than it was thirty-five years ago. Gone is the fear that one might feel the need to use a toilet outside those few areas in which gas station attendants permitted “colored” to use facilities. Gone are signs distinguishing between restrooms for “Negro Women” and “White Ladies.” Gone is the sense that the southbound highways out of the District of Columbia constituted a vast no-man’s-land to be traveled only after careful planning and still at one’s peril. Gone are the overt, assertive banners of Jim Crow pigmentocracy (161).

## **2. Korean War and its Consequences:**

In the early hours of 25 June 1950, communist North Korea invaded South Korea across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The initial period of the war was a desperate struggle between the two forces, in which United Nations forces were close of being driven out of Korea. In the same year, the war marked the involvement of the United States and other United Nations forces when President Truman ordered many soldiers to go and fight on the side of South Korea. So African Americans and white people could fight together in this war and it was the opportunity to gain jobs and rights as American citizens. It also saw the entry of the Chinese and the Australian troops after the allies crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The entry of China into the war raised several important issues: The involvement of other forces, the possible use of nuclear weapons, and the fear that this war would extend the other countries.

In 1951, over a half million Chinese troops engaged the war, and the launching of several offensives pushed the United Nations forces almost back to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. In the bitter fighting of the winter of 1951, heavy losses were sustained by both sides. After being pushed back from the Yalu River, the United Nations command was forced to abandon Pyongyang on December then Seoul on January. Later on, the period between 1951 and 1953 was a stalemate period for both sides with static trench warfare.

After three years of fighting, the war ended in a stalemate with the border between North and South Korea near where it had been at the war's beginning and the United States demonstrated its continued commitment to containment.

As a consequence to the American soldiers, the war was good for whites because they had new jobs and the veterans had their pay, however it brought trauma and misery for the African Americans besides of the losses and injuries. As Moss points out in his book "About 54.000 Americans died in Korea, and other 150.000 were wounded. [...] Returning Korean veterans melted into society to become part of the 1950s' silent generation" (315).

In this sense, Toni Morrison's novel *Home* is a portrayal of the aftermath of the Korean War and its effects on an African American veteran. Morrison has explained that she decided to go back to the years of 50s to demonstrate that they were not that glorious years for everybody. Morrison has declared:

somebody was hiding something and by somebody, I mean the narrative of the country, which was so aggressively happy. Postwar, everybody was making money, and the comedies were wonderful... And I kept thinking that kind of insistence, there is something fake about it. So I began to think about what it was like for me, my perception at that time. (*Interview Magazine*)

What makes Morrison interested about that period of time is that the Korean War is remarked historically as the forgotten war. She wants to give account to the forgotten African American soldiers who participated in the war.

As it is mentioned previously, the army was desegregated because whites and blacks fought together in the war. So despite the racism that was practiced at that time, the desegregation was just temporary for ideological reasons because African Americans suffer segregation after returning home. Morrison supports this idea in her book when Reverend Locke expresses "An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better" (18).

### **3. Toni Morrison and her Novel *Home*:**

#### **3.1. Toni Morrison's Early Life:**

Black women writers – having the example of authoritative mothers, aunts, grandmothers, great-grandmothers – have something special to contribute to the world. They have a distinctive and powerful artistic heritage.  
(McKay 416)

Toni Morrison is an African American writer, editor, novelist and the first African American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. She is the second of four children in a black working class family. She was born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio (USA), and her real name is Chloe Anthony Wofford. Her parent participated in the great wave of migration from the South in the early 1900s. Her mother's parents fear white sexual violence against their adolescent daughters so they were looking for a better education for their children; her grandparents from her father's side came from Georgia, a state where racial violence was omnipresent. The confrontation with this racism heavily influenced Morrison's father's, and consequently indirectly also Morrison's, vision on white America. (McKay 414).

Morrison was raised in a family who believed that whites are immoral and her father George distrusted every white man unlike his wife Ramah who was educated enough to trust persons. She were a strong self-esteem since adulthood which helped her not to develop the same racial self-loathing as her childhood friend who told her she did not believe in God because He did not fulfill her prayers for blue eyes, inspired Morrison to write her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

Morrison's early life was richly infused with elements of black culture. Her family life thrived on a long storytelling tradition, which stimulated her rich imagination and which left her, later on in life, with the will to evoke an oral quality, proper to this ancestral tradition, in her novels. She argues:

The novel is needed by African-Americans now in a way that it was not needed before—and it is following along the line of the function of novels everywhere. We don't live in places where we can hear those stories anymore; parents don't sit around and tell their children those *classical, mythological, archetypal stories* that we heard years ago. But *new information* has got to get out, and there are several ways to do it. One is the novel (340).

Morrison's grandmother, who fled from the South in order to give her children more opportunities and in order to save her daughters from sexual harassment, formed strong female role models for Morrison; they were the ones who transmitted those ancient black stories to her. Doing so, they provided her with a “distinctive and powerful artistic heritage” (McKay 416) that would be decisive for and characteristic of her writing.

At the year of 1949, she entered Howard University in Washington; Black College; and continued her education at Cornell University in New York at received her M.A in 1955. In 1957, she became an English teacher in Howard University.

### **3.2. An African Heritage:**

Toni Morrison herself presents a store of an African heritage of literature. Her use of African storytelling and the old folk orature tend to connect the Black African culture to the African American Literary tradition. This connection is a kind of bridging gap between the two communities that Morrison really succeeded to offer. Her style of writing and the common themes she brought in her novels strengthen her position in the field of literature and give her interpretations such a great value. Morrison as a challenging writer has expressed many times that themes such as race, female issues and home are at the top of her interest.

Many critics and writers acknowledge the ability of Morrison in using the power of words and themes to make her novels unique. Besides of being a talented writer; Morrison's valuable recognition of postcolonial issues made Sharon Rose Wilson classified her as a postcolonial writer who:

powerfully critiques U.S. colonialism of both past and present, the system of patriarchal racism, sexism, and classism that has not only denied the freedom, self-determination and even humanity of African Americans, but has sometimes literally colonized the bodies of people who live within its territories and borders (78).

### **3.3. Morrison's Contribution to Literature:**

Morrison is the author of ten novels. She wrote *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 and followed it with *Sula* in 1973. She has received the National Book Circle Award for her novel *Song of Solomon* in 1977 and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988 for her novel *Beloved*. In 1993 she was the first African American woman to award the Noble Prize in Literature. Besides to the ten novels, Morrison wrote *Home* in 2012.

In her novels, Morrison explores various themes such as feminism, racism, double consciousness, social differences...etc in addition to African beauty, love, romance, goodness of people...etc However,

it is noticeable that her novels share common themes which Morrison prefers to highlight like race issues, African American identity, solidarity, slavery and trauma. Her aesthetic style and adequate words give her novels such a great value. The language she uses is purely literary even that her topics are about society and politics. So Morrison succeeded in making readers able to feel and to live the story she recounts.

This dissertation will discuss and analyze her novel *Home* which is a collection of events and themes where Morrison tries to combine between optimism and pessimism, ups and downs, blackness and goodness, home and loneliness...and much more important, she builds her novel upon the aftermath of the Korean War through exploring trauma and identity besides to other themes like manhood and the sense of responsibility that the protagonist presents. *The Plain Dealer* journal expresses:

Her themes—identity, community, the resoluteness of both good and evil—are epic and her language uniquely her own... Taut and muscular, *Home* wastes not a word... In sentences balanced like proverbs, the Noble Prize winner conjures up the community of country women Frank asks to help save Cee. (Acclaim for Toni Morrison's *Home*)

## **4. Theoretical Framework: Trauma Theory**

### **4.1. General Definitions:**

There have been many definitions and meanings to the word “Trauma” according to the field associated with. The Oxford dictionary has defined Trauma as:

1 A deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

‘A personal trauma like the death of a child’

Emotional shock following stressful event or physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis.

‘The event is relived with all the accompanying trauma’.

2 Physical injury (medicine) ‘A foreign body usually presents with a history of trauma and an entrance wound that will not heal.’

In addition to that, many critics and scholars have discussed the issue of trauma in many domains. The term is generally regarded and connected with people experiences and events, as Briere and Scott have pointed out:

The term ‘trauma’ can mean different things, depending on the context. Semantically, trauma refers to an experience or an event; nevertheless, people use the term interchangeably to refer to either a traumatic experience or event, resulting injury or stress, or the longer-term impacts and consequences (51).

More broadly, professors of health relate the term trauma to severe bodily wounds ranging from the smaller physical injuries to life-threatening accidents. So the modified definition of the term by those experts of health was expressed as “an injury that results from exposure to either a mechanical force or another extrinsic agent, including an extrinsic agent that is thermal, electrical, chemical, or radioactive” (Improving Trauma Care Act of 2014)<sup>5</sup>.

However, the term trauma is not only related to health or physical injuries. Many studies had shown how trauma is shaped in other forms and largely expanded to comprise psychological issues and brain studies. Researchers tried to figure out how the brain is affected by the traumatic stress, they classified

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<sup>5</sup> Improving Trauma Care Act of 2014 - Amends the Public Health Service Act to include in the definition of "trauma" injuries resulting from thermal, electrical, chemical, or radioactive agents, thus making burn centers eligible for trauma center grants and trauma research programs.(US Congress)

this stress as a Complex Trauma in which people have experienced maltreatment, loss of self-integrity, and disturbances in childhood. These are the criteria of complex PTSD<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore, other researchers focus on how trauma affects social groups through inheriting traumatic experiences from one generation to another. This formed the phenomenon of Historical Trauma in which many scholars expressed “the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, as a result of group traumatic experiences, which is transmitted across generations within a community” (SAMHSA, 2015)<sup>7</sup>. This shows how community is affected by historical trauma and people experiences that are widely associated with ethnicity and races. Besides of those forms, we can differentiate between two main types of trauma:

**a- Naturally Caused Trauma:**

People can be traumatized by any event happens naturally without any human intervention. Examples: wildfires, earthquakes, dust storms, hurricanes, famines, epidemics, landslides...etc

**b- Human Caused Trauma:**

This type of trauma is obviously in contrast to the previous one. It is directly caused by humans. Examples: warfare, domestic violence, terrorism, accidental gun shooting, physical abuse...etc

Through time, trauma has been a subject of concern by theorists and scholars and it continued to influence many domains to embrace finally literary studies. Authors and writers tend to depict people experiences and sufferings. As a result, Literary Trauma Theory emerged during 1990s.

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<sup>6</sup> PTSD: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

<sup>7</sup> SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. To know more see the book *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*.

## **4.2. Trauma Theory:**

### **4.2.1. Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Studies:**

It is important to mention that trauma theory was a significant part in postcolonial studies because it firstly appeared in this field during 1960s. Since colonization is perceived as a collective trauma, it was necessary to reflect the colonial traumas through postcolonial trauma theory that many researchers adopted. Critics like Michael Rothberg and Hal Foster work within a neoFreudian and postcolonial framework. Others such as Irene Visser and Roger Luckhurst focus on the traumatic implications in political and social frameworks. Visser used a social psychological model of trauma within a postcolonial analysis. However, she criticized the theory as being inadequate to the research agenda in postcolonial studies. Similarly, Luckhurst demonstrated in *The Trauma Question* that trauma theory “shockingly fails to address atrocity, genocide and war” (213). In other words, the failure lies in how the theory was not applicable in literary field.

As a result to this failure, critics tend to relate postcolonial trauma theory to psychoanalytical approach so the components of trauma can be analyzed clearly.

### **4.2.2. Trauma and Literary Theory:**

Trauma study is a field of cultural investigation that developed in the mid 1990s and the roots of trauma theory-- which related to modernity-- are originated from psychoanalysis. However, it was not recognized as an independent constant paradigm in literary studies. Many scholars such as Sigmund Freud and Dominick LaCapra contributed in shaping the principle course of literary trauma theory by promoting the idea of trauma. For the scholar Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, a trauma is retroactively induces when excess psychic excitations penetrate the ego defenses, and can be worked

through the analytic setting by hiding the excess forces together. The historian and the author Anne Whitehead explains that:

For Freud, the concept refers to the ways in which certain experiences, impressions and memory traces are revised at a later date in order to correspond with fresh experiences or with the attainment of a new stage of development. Freud's conception involves a radical rethinking of the causality and temporality of memory. The traumatic incident is not fully acknowledged at the time that it occurs and only becomes an *event* at some later point of intense emotional crisis (6).

For the historian LaCapra, trauma and its often symptomatic aftermath pose acute problems for historical representation and understanding. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma* he provides a broad-ranging and critical inquiry into the problem of trauma. His main concern was 'history and trauma' in which he tries to link between the two, he expresses:

Despite notable exceptions (such as Saul Friedlander), it is astonishing how little historians recognize the significance of individual and collective trauma even when they write of events and processes in which it is prevalent, such as genocides, wars, rape, and various forms of victimization and abuse both of humans and others animals (116).

So there is no doubt that the discussion of trauma existed earlier but the real attention was gained in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. In her book, Caruth explores:

the way in which texts of a certain period—the texts of psychoanalysis, of literature, and of literary theory—both speak about and speak through the profound story of traumatic experience. Rather than straightforwardly describing actual case studies of trauma survivors, or attempting to elucidate directly the psychiatry of trauma (4).

Thus, Caruth's main concern that was based on philosophical as well as literary texts gave her theory such a great value.

Besides to Caruth, we can name Geoffrey H. Hartman and the trauma study critic Kali Tal. In his book *On Traumatic knowledge and Literary Studies*, Hartman suggests that:

the theory holds that the knowledge of trauma, or the knowledge which come from that source, is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psyche. The other is a kind of memory of the event, in the form of a perpetual troping of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche (1).

In short, traumatic knowledge seems to be contradicted concerning the real event and the memory.

In the same vein, Tal explores trauma literature in her book *Worlds of Hurts* which was published as well in 1996. Tal focuses on the link between individual trauma and cultural interpretation, she defines:

Literature of trauma is defined by the identity of its author. Literature of trauma holds at its center the reconstruction and recuperation of the traumatic experience, but it is also actively engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the writings and representations of nontraumatized authors (14).

Subsequently, it was necessary for the literary field to adopt this theory and use it in order to analyze many literary works. In this sense Herrero and Baelo-Allué state that “trauma theory can prove to be useful in analyzing and understanding colonial traumas such as forced migration, sexual, racial and political violence, dispossession, segregation, genocide, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma, to mention but some” (xvii).

Due to the previous efforts, trauma as a subject was highly recognized and adopted by authors and writers during different periods of time. However, this thesis discusses the period of 1950s and mainly trauma depicted by Toni Morrison in her novel *Home*.

Besides to Trauma Theory, Psychoanalytical Approach is adopted in this study to well understand the psychological problems because it addresses the importance of the unconscious that makes up the majority of all human beings' personalities, it also teaches the readers how to recognize the effects of the unconscious. Moreover, it focuses on the past situations and childhood experiences through exploring the human behaviors.

The theory of psychoanalytic literary criticism was found and developed by Sigmund Freud in 1897, he was well known psychologist and wanted to study and analyze the audience, character, and the author in a story. Thus he set up the basic components of this approach in which he looked into the conscious, the unconscious, regression, low self-esteem, insecure sense of self...etc

Psychological criticism deals with the work of literature as an expression of the personality, state of mind, feelings, and desires. The theory requires the investigation of the character's personality and psychology in order to interpret the work. More broadly, it deals with traumas and how they can be resolved.

So it is obvious that psychoanalytical approach and trauma theory are combined to analyze this literary work, in sense that they deal with the psyche.

In her novel, Morrison has recounted all of the previous events and she has chosen an African American veteran to depict his bad experience after the Korean War through exploring the theme of 'trauma' resulted from both the post war and homelessness.

## **Chapter Two: Trauma Dimensions and Healing Process in Toni**

### **Morrison's *Home***

*Trauma and recovery are complicated, layered processes for all individuals because both personal and cultural memory reactivates past experiences stored in bodily circuits.*

Evelyn J. Schreiber

There is no doubt that trauma as a theme is widely used by authors and discussed by critics since it reflects what history presents. *Home* is a historical trauma story that recounts the repeated visits of past memories and ghosts that the protagonist is trying to forget. In this sense, Cathy Caruth argues that “The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all” (17).

So this section discusses both trauma and recovery elements that Morrison uses to explore Frank and Cee’s experiences. These elements are analyzed upon and through previous studies of many scholars and theorists.

### **1. The Novel *Home*:**

The structure of the novel is very simple and it is short with seventeen chapters. There are two main narrators: Frank Money who opens the book and speaks in first person telling his own story besides to another narrator who speaks in third person. Morrison uses two different points of views (positive and negative) by choosing two narrators. The book also ends with Frank’s point of view. Michiko Kakutani declares that, in *Home*, “Morrison has found a new, angular voice and straight-ahead story telling style”. She seems to argue the challenging of telling a story through an external narrator and the heart of this novel is racism, war, trauma, and post memory.

The novel is noticeably a modern literary work in which Morrison uses a modern way of narrating about the 1950s period. She tells the story using fragmentation of time and place in a complex language and gloomy sad setting.

The novel tells the story of Frank Money, an African American veteran, who joined the army to escape his too small world; he left behind his cherished and fragile little sister, Ycidra or as they used to call her 'Cee'. After the war, his shattered life has no purpose until he hears that Cee is in danger.

Frank is a modern Odysseus returning to a 1950s American mind with lethal pitfalls for an unwary black man. As he journeys to his native Georgia in search of Cee, it becomes clear that their troubles began well before their wartime separation. Together, they return to their rural hometown of Lotus, where buried secrets are unearthed and where Frank learns at last what it means to be a man, what it takes to heal, and—above all—what it means to come home.

*Home* is also about African American women that were traumatized and victimized in a patriarchal society. Despite the fact that manhood is the major theme in the book, Morrison does not neglect the feminine voice that is presented in Cee's character which is the typical example of the alienated self and the black female that suffered racism.

It is very important to mention that Morrison wrote an essay called "Home" in 1997 long time before writing the novel. She explains why she has chosen this title:

"Home" seems a suitable term because, first, it lets me make a racial distinction between the metaphor of house and the metaphor of home and helps me clarify my thoughts and racial construction. Second, the term domesticates the racial project, moves the job of unmaterring race away from pathetic yearning and futile desire [...] Third, because eliminating the potency of racist constructs in language is the work I can do.[...]Also, matters of race and matters of home are priorities in my work and both have in one way or another initiated my search for that illusive sovereignty as well as my abandonment of the search once I recognized its disguise (Home essay).

## 2. The Idea of “home” in the Novel:

The book opens with an old poem "Whose house is this" which is based on questioning to attract the readers. Those lyrics are from a song cycle written by Morrison long time before *Home* was published, and that was set to music in 1992 by André Previn.

The concept “Home” is generally defined by critics and authors as being both a physical place and a psychic space. While the word commonly denotes a “fixed residence” or “domestic setting”, the concept extends beyond the material structure of a house into a psycho-emotional space of being. Carole Després explains that home provides a sense of “physical security” for individuals and thus becomes a “haven” or “sanctuary” where in one can escape “outside pressures” and maintain “privacy and independence” (98). She listed a number of significant interpretations of what home means. The interest of most of people goes beyond the following meanings:

### a- The Physical Interpretation:

Home may refer to physical security and self-expression as well as it presents a sense of freedom in which persons may control or act upon their environment. Moreover, home can be considered as 'permanence and continuity' as Després expresses:

Home can also be memories (childhood home, home where one's children were raised, home before spouse died, etc.) indicating a connection with past experiences. This dimension of home is also function of how much the dwelling unit fits one's changing life objectives, aspirations, and future goals (98).

This interpretation expands to the surrounding relationships of family, neighbors and friends where one's home. In this sense Després denounces:

Home is perceived and experienced as a locus of intense emotional experience, and as providing an atmosphere of social understanding where one's actions, opinions, and moods are accepted. Ideas such as a place to share with others, to entertain with relatives and friends, and to raise children, are related to this dimension (98).

### **b- The Psychological Interpretation:**

According to Després; there are two main models of the psychological meaning of home. The first model is based on the psycho-analytical perspective of Clare Cooper Marcus in which Cooper explained that the house is a symbol of self. This model holds that the home is the most powerful extension of the psyche after the physical meaning of the concept.

The second model is based on Abraham H.Maslow's theory of personality. His theory is classified as a 'hierarchy needs', those human needs are typically psychological. However the focus of psychological safety, love and self-esteem included the meaning of home in which it provides a roof over one's head, a shelter for physical security and a private space. So home as a psychological term is meant to provide quietness, cleanliness, sanctuary and comfort.

### **c- Socio-Psychological Interpretation:**

In this perspective, the home is important part in self-identity of people. The social position sometimes requires a kind of dialogue in sense that community is stand as a whole; however; it is important to mention that the exterior character of a home can interpret many things like: one's profession, family status, social position...etc

Després notes that Eugene Rochberg-Halton explained the idea of social meaning of home, she expresses in her book:

In social psychology, self-identity, or the knowledge of the self, is defined in relation to broader social entities rather than isolated subjects. It is a multi-level concept, that includes the personal self, which refers to the awareness of one's body, thoughts, moods, emotions, perceptions, gestural expressions and character of physical being; the social self, [...] The home plays a crucial role in people's definitions of their self-identity, acting as a dialogue between them and the larger community (101).

Correspondingly, expression such as “there’s no place like home” determines a state of safety, comfort and nostalgia. This interpretation may have led Maya Angelou to call home “the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned” (196). Robert Frost expresses as well, “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in” (38).

Other theorists like Walter Benjamin and Homi Bhabha are also concerned with the concept of home and add some points about it. Benjamin expresses that the fragmented vision and the modern age are the result of home anxiety. Thus authors' perspectives change because man is deprived from seeing the whole. In addition to that, Bhabha explains the concept "unhomely" in his book *Third World and Post-Colonial Issues*. He states:

The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world (141).

Besides, he introduces a new concept to Morrison's newest novel in which she gives another perspective of home. Bhabha points out:

In a song called "Whose House is This?" Toni Morrison gives this problem of "unhomely" dwelling a lyric clarity:

*Whose house is this? Whose night keeps out the light in here? Say who owns this house? It is not mine. I had another sweeter....The*

*house is strange. Its shadows lie. Say, tell me, why does its lock fit my key* (141).

Bhabha actually does not refer to the concept "Homelessness" as being without shelter. But he wants to emphasize the feeling of terror and being "placeless" in a world that "first shrinks [...] and then expands enormously" (9).

So Morrison uses home as physical and psychological states to underline the concurrent difficulty and necessity of confronting the troubling and even traumatizing memories and relationships associated with "home". Besides, she exposes the journey of the siblings (Frank and Cee) going back home to Lotus and traces the mechanism they went through in the mourning process. At the end, she paints the image of home as a recovery and as a solution that embraces the traumatic experience they were living.

In a video, she says that she wanted Lotus "to be welcoming, and for him {Frank} it's a safe place and that's what home is; nobody is out to get you at home" (19:03 min). She adds that the idea of home is very important for Americans and that everybody in your home will help you no matter the experience you have been through "Everybody don't like you in your home, some people really dislike you in your home, but no one is gonna hurt you, everybody is gonna help you, whether they like you or not, and that's the safety, spiritual and physical safety, of home" (20:12 min). So Morrison wants to make the readers feel the sense of home and belonging as something sacrist.

### **3. Trauma Dimensions in Toni Morrison's Fiction:**

*Home* is a fictional novel despite the recounted realities that exist in it. It can be easily read as an instance of trauma fiction in which Toni Morrison went back through the neglected historical periods of 1950s to revive the wounds and the forgotten stories of the African Americans. Anne Whitehead notes

:"*Home*, like Toni Morrison's other novels, can be read as "trauma fiction," which focuses on recovering African Americans' daunting history from the blacks' point of view. In fact, trauma fiction is closely related to post-modern and postcolonial narratives'' (21).

Morrison explores many themes through the use of narrative techniques that readers became familiar with in her previous fictions, such as dialogues, repetition of scenes, intertextual references and the use of poems. She tries to break the ideal image of the period by showing the social complexities and the negative side that African Americans experienced such as racism, racial abuse, female issues and medical experimentations.

### **3.1. Psycho-traumatic Dimensions in *Home*:**

It is important to mention that psychological trauma and PTSD were included only in 1980 in the DSM<sup>8</sup> after the Vietnam War where soldiers were in need to psychological services. By time, psychological trauma took place in the literary field through depicting and analyzing people's traumatic experiences. This process aims to face the terrible events and comes to find solutions of recovery. The psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman affirms in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that:

To study psychological trauma is to come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature. To study psychological trauma means bearing witness to horrible events.[...]The study of war trauma becomes legitimate only in a context that challenges the sacrifice of young men in war (4-5).

So the concept "Psycho-traumatic" refers to both psyche and the traumatic experiences i.e. psychological trauma. In an article "*Psycho-traumatic Stress and Anxiety*", it is expressed that:

Psychotraumatic stress and anxiety refers to psychotrauma and Psychotraumatic situations and experiences. It is also related to

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<sup>8</sup> DSM: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

Psychotraumatic reactions and disorders. Psychotraumatic stress, including stressors and strains, may also refer to the process of appraisal and coping with psycho-trauma, and coping with psychological, behavioral, social and emotional reactions to trauma.

Psycho-trauma, as defined in DSM-III-R (1987), may involve serious threats to one's life or physical integrity, serious threats or harm to one's children, spouse, or other close relatives and friends, sudden destruction of one's home or community,[...] Psycho-trauma may be experienced alone or in the company of groups of people.

### **3.1.1. Individual Trauma:**

*Home* narrates the story of the Money siblings as they grow in Lotus. They are raised in the house of their step-grandmother Lenore who was incapable of taking care of Frank and his little sister. They live there with their parents who struggle to feed them. In the absence of the parents, Lenore physically punishes them especially the little girl Cee. What promised to be a warm environment, turned to be a nightmare. The humiliation and the poverty that were a constant in the community made the siblings escape searching for a better place. So as they grow up, Frank leaves the town to join the army with his two close friends and being sent to the Korean War. Cee stays alone and married at the age of fourteen with a young man called Prince. Lenore's house was just a physical space in which the siblings did not feel the sense of belonging and safety.

The distinction between house and home becomes a recognized trope in Morrison's work. In her previous novels such as *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987), and in *A Mercy* (2008) the concepts of house and home are presented. The house is the physical space in which the individual can live, while the home is where the individual is able to grow and fulfill their intellectual and emotional potential. In Walden, Henry David Thoreau described his house: "the conversion of space

into place is almost always an aesthetic project; an order of creation incurred by the sequence of objects to subjects: what goes where” (16).

In *Home*, Lenore’s house is filled with objects that are familiar to the space and the readers such as tables, beds, roof, chairs...etc however; the negative memories that fill the space make it impossible for the Money children to refer to it as a home as they grow up. Morrison affirms in her essay “Home”:

I believe, however, that my own writerly excursion and my use of a house/home antagonism are related ... because so much of what seems to lie about in discourses on race concerns legitimacy, authenticity, community, belonging. In no small way, these discourses are about home: and intellectual home; a spiritual home; family and community as home; forced and displaced labor in the destruction of home; dislocation of and alienation within the ancestral home; creative responses to exile, the devastation, pleasures, and imperatives of homelessness as it is manifested in discussions on feminism, globalism, the diaspora, migration, hybridiy, contingency, interventions, assimilations, exclusions (5).

Thus the impossibility for the space to become a place for Frank and Cee pushes them to escape. But, their lack of understanding of their roots puts them on a traumatic path. While going to Korea, Frank does not only leave his house and his family; Cee specifically; but he also loses his identity. Additionally, the story recounts the reality of Frank as a soldier after the violent event of the Korean War. Morrison depicts the difficulties that many veterans may face after coming back from battlefield; she reveals those facts such as denial, dissociation, and trauma through a realistic approach. After all, African American veterans were not regarded as heroes like the other veterans from World War II.

The most evident thing about *Home* as a trauma story is the repeated visits of the past ghosts that Frank receives. He tries to forget them by drinking but subsequently this returns to disturb his peace of

mind. The broken memories he suffers from the war reveal the reality of his trauma since the past memories return to haunt him as if they were being experienced for the first time:

So, as was often the case when he was alone and sober, whatever the surroundings, he saw a boy pushing his entrails back in, holding them in his palms like a fortune-teller's globe shattering with bad news; or he heard a boy with only the bottom half of his face intact, the lips calling mama. And he was stepping over them, around them, to stay alive, to keep his own face from dissolving, his own colorful guts under that oh-so-thin sheet of flesh. Against the black and white of the winter landscape, blood red took center stage. They never went away, these pictures (20).

The book opens with a short poem about a ghostly gloomy dwelling in which darkness appears:

Whose house is this?  
Whose night keeps out the light in here?  
Say, who owns this house?  
It's not mine.  
I dreamed another, sweeter, brighter  
With a view of lakes crossed in painted boats;  
Of fields wide as arms open for me.  
This house is strange.  
Its shadows lie.  
Say, tell me, why does its lock fit my key?

These short lines questioned about the house where Frank and Cee were raised, they expose the siblings' feelings and emotions toward a place where they never felt home because of their bad childhood. As the poem ends, it stresses the dissociation and the sense of alienation of the speaker toward his original home.

As the novel starts, it tells the story of Frank when he was in the hospital of Seattle; he suffers from PTSD after his return from the Korean War and being discharged from the army. He tries to cope with the harsh life of the other ordinary black people. If we notice, it is very ironic to name the protagonist Money because Money has no money actually as it is mentioned in the novel *"Women are eager to talk to me when they hear my last name. Money? They snigger and ask the same questions: Who named me*

*that or if anybody did... [...] they can make lame jokes: Hey, Smart Money, gimme some. Money, come on over here. I got a deal you gonna love*" (67). In the very beginning of the book, we can see that he does not even own shoes. That is to say he is poor.

Frank finds himself in a hospital but he cannot remember anything. He was full of pain "Everything reminded him of something loaded with pain" (8). He was getting injected by morphine, so he was faking "The trick of imitating semi-coma, like playing dead facedown in a muddy battlefield" (7) to not get more injections, all what he can remember is the noise "No. Just the noise. Loud. Real loud" (13). So he thought that he was in a fight "Maybe I was in a fight?" (13). Then he receives a letter from a woman called Sarah in which she tells him about his sister Cee "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (8). This makes Frank uncomfortable with himself and loses control of his own being.

Along one year, instead of taking care of his health, Frank is still suffering from being a black soldier in the hospital and his traumatic memories come back again to chase him. As Dominick LaCapra has explained "one disorientingly feels what one cannot represent, one numbingly represents what one cannot feel" (42), it shows how the disassociation between effect and representation is produced by traumatic memories. Because of this disconnection, Frank feels dislocated anywhere and cannot feel home. During this year, he meets Lillian Florence Jones or Lily and falls in love with her, he feels that he is home only with her, Frank says when first seeing her "*I must have looked the fool, but I didn't feel like one. I felt like I'd come home. Finally. I'd been wandering. Not totally homeless, but close*" (68). Lily presents the optimistic side in his life. But she gets tired because of Frank's behavior and his bad attitude towards life. But he decides to get rid of the pain and the traumatic memories: "*Right then I decided to clean up. To hell with the dreams. I needed to make my homeboys proud. Be Something other than a haunted, half-crazy drunk. So when I saw this woman at the cleaner's, I was wide open for her*" (69). Nevertheless, the ghosts did not leave easily and kept showing in his mind each time. In this sense

Jacques Derrida explains that those ghosts refer to “certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us” (xix), Derrida shows how one’s identity and psyche can be affected by the disjoining memories of the past.

Another fact that Frank acknowledges is that he hates his hometown Lotus, as he expresses:

*Lotus, Georgia, is the worst place in the world, worse than any battlefield. At least on the field there is a goal [...] In Lotus [...] there was no future. [...] There was no goal other than breathing; nothing to win [...], nothing to survive or worth surviving for (83).*

He hates to turn back there “because he didn’t want to go home without his “homeboys”. He was far too alive to stand before Mike’s folks or Stuff’s” (15), so it was painful and really hard for him to return back home without his friends whom he has lost in the war; their memories could not leave him. Their murder pushed Frank into a combat frenzy:

Frank had not been brave before. He had simply done what was told and what was necessary. He even felt nervous after a kill. Now he was reckless, lunatic, firing, dodging the scattered parts of men. [...] Now, with Mike gone, he was brave, whatever that meant. There were not enough dead gooks or Chinks in the world to satisfy him. The copper smell of blood no longer sickened him; it gave him appetite (98).

So Frank’s loss of Mike and Stuff makes him terrifying to cope with his memories for few months after his return from the war, hallucinations and nightmares became a part of his daily life:

Afterward, for months on end, Frank kept thinking, “But I know them. I know them and they know me.” If he heard a joke Mike would love, he would turn his head to tell it to him—then a nanosecond of embarrassment before realizing he wasn’t there. [...] Sometimes, long after he’d been discharged, he would see stuff’s profile in a car stopped in traffic until the heart jump of sorrow announced his mistake. Abrupt, unregulated memories put a watery shine in his eyes. For months, only alcohol dispersed his

best friends, the hovering dead he could no longer hear, talk to, or laugh with (99).

Due to these events, Frank was unable to go back home to Lotus. The loss of his homeys and his actions in the war were the first struggle that he was not able to face. In fact, it is only because of little sister Cee that he was obliged to go back there in order to rescue her, it was his “mission” (15) to protect her and he felt always the sense of responsibility toward her. Here Frank tries to get over his fears and he escapes the hospital to start his journey to Lotus, he says "*I don't miss anything about that place except the stars. Only my sister in trouble could force me to even think about going in that direction*" (84). So his sister is the only reason for him to go back to Lotus.

Frank's life is a collection of shocking traumas since his childhood. The book opens with the bad experience that he has witnessed with his little sister when they saw a murder scene in front of their innocent eyes. As Frank recounts "*We shouldn't have been anywhere near that place. [...], this one here had plenty of scary warning signs*" (3). They were just kids playing in the grass when suddenly they heard voices,

*Although it took forever to re-sight the fence, neither of us panicked until we heard voices, urgent but low. I grabbed her arm and out a finger to my lips.[...], we saw them pull a body from a wheelbarrow and throw it into a hole already waiting* (4).

It was a traumatic for Frank and his sister to handle such event in this age but Frank was courageous and tried to protect Cee "*I hugged her shoulders tight and tried to pull her trembling into my own bones because, as a brother four years older, I thought I could handle it*" (4). So the miserable conditions and the poor life he lived pushed him to join army hoping for better situation and the worst that this hope fails to turn into traumatic experience and Frank suffers more during the war and after returning home. Frank states:

*Korea. You can't imagine it because you weren't there. You can't describe the bleak landscape because you never saw it.[...] Korea cold hurts [...] Battle is scary, yeah, but it is alive. Orders, gut-quickenning, covering buddies, killing-clear, no deep thinking needed (93).*

The horrible events he experienced in the war affected his mind state and caused him post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but what really affected him more was the Korean girl he killed during his solitary guards. The girl was gathering food from the army trash and Frank felt attracted to her so he abused her sexually then killed her. One day,

*She smiles, reaches for the soldier's crotch, touches it. It surprises him. Yum-yum! As soon as I look away from her hand to her face, see the two missing teeth, the fall of black hair above eager eyes, he blows her away (95).*

It is noticeable that Frank is psychologically unstable, he denies the atrocious action that he did and he did not want to confess and face the reality even with himself. He was talking as if another person did that, he was narrating moving from first person (I) to the third person (He). As he said "*I think the guard felt more than disgust. I think he felt tempted and that is what he had to kill. Yum-yum*" (96) Here Frank refused the idea that he was the guard himself who killed the Korean girl.

Besides of war traumas, Frank comes back to the United States and finds out that he is still suffering racism and segregation because of his skin color and roots. So he does not feel home, and the maze of trauma did not yet end. He could not own a respectful job but only his pay from the war and he was spending it on drinks "*Drinking and hanging out in music bars on Jackson street, sleeping on the sofas of drinking buddies or outdoors, betting my forty-three dollars of army pay in crap games and pool halls.*" (68).

Throughout this analysis, it is clear that *Home* is a trauma story based on individual trauma. It is presented in the protagonist Frank Money who is chased by his past ghosts which disturb his peace of mind each time.

### **3.1.2. White Medical Experimentation:**

Medical experimentations developed during different periods of time. However, it started to increase after World War II (1939/1945) in Europe. The physician Josef Mengele was one of the famous figures during that time, he was called “The Angel of Death” and committed atrocities with living bodies and examined surgeries without anesthesia on children. As it is stated in the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* “ Mengele performed a broad range of agonizing and often lethal experiments with Jewish and Roman (“Gypsy”) twins, most of them children”<sup>9</sup> He considered the Jewish and Gypsy people as inferior to the white race. So in order to create the perfect white human being, he had chosen those people as a sample to his experiences.

At the same time, these experimentations expanded to the United States during 1950s, they started first with Nazi doctors in collaboration with many others white doctors who applied new medical experiments on prisoners, women, African Americans and even children. According to Brinkley:

New scholarly theories argued that the introduction of immigrants into America society was diluting the purity of the nation’s racial stock. The spurious ‘science’ of eugenics spread the belief that human inequalities were hereditary and that immigration was contributing to the multiplication of the unfit (575).

White Americans saw that those immigrants were considered as a threat to social purity. Thus many white doctors tried hard to improve the genetic quality of society’s genes through Eugenics. They aimed

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<sup>9</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. For more information, visit: <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007060>

to enhance the reproduction of inferior individuals who were considered as having undesirable traits by reducing the negative eugenics and replacing them with desirable traits i.e. positive eugenics. Karen Norrgard has stated in her article "*Human Testing, the Eugenics Movement, and IRBs*" that "the goal of eugenics was 'to improve the natural, physical, mental, and temperamental qualities of the human family, [...]'. These experimentations were the subject of matter during the 1950s and minorities were the most range who suffered especially African Americans. Morrison depicts this period as 'a period of racial medical experimentation'. In this novel, there is a perfect example of these medical experimentations which took place during the 1950s with African Americans.

Cee, Frank's sister, falls a victim of an ambitious young man who claimed to love her and married her, and later on abandon her hopeless in Atlanta. Cee emerges as a prey to racial tyranny. She experienced a harsh life that caused her low self-worth, self-disgust and having a fractured identity thus she appears defenseless and having psychological issues. Being left behind by her brother, who had always protected her, she was left to be looked after by Lenore who would constantly humiliate her. After the betrayal and the harsh life she experienced, Cee expresses:

If Frank were there he would once more touch the top of her head with four fingers, or stroke her nape with his thumb. Don't cry, said the fingers; the welts will disappear. Don't cry; Mama is tired; she didn't mean it. Don't cry, don't cry girl; I'm right here. But he wasn't there or anywhere near. In the photograph he'd sent home, a smiling warrior in a uniform, holding a rifle, he looked as though he belonged to something else, something beyond and unlike Georgia (53).

Being alone, Cee was working in a restaurant but she wanted to have a real job so she asked her friend Thelma about any "I need something better. Better paying [...], but I need a real job where I can save. And no, I'm not going back to Lotus" (56-57) so, she starts working as 'A helper' (58) for a doctor

called Beauregard Scott. His wife interviews Cee and explains to her that her husband “is more than a doctor; he is a scientist and conducts very important experiments. His inventions help people. He’s no Dr. Frankenstein” (60) to insure her that his inventions are successful and may help people. When Cee enters Dr. Beau house she was astonished by the grandeur of the house and the beautiful objects that populate it and the cleanliness of it. This reminds her to the familiar objects in Lenore’s house and the memories of abuse she suffered from. Her lack of education makes her blaming herself for the escape with Prince. She was not permitted to attend school but she was only allowed to attend church schools,

Cee thought it would have been better if there were more books to read—not just *Aesop’s Fables* and a book of Bible passages for young people—and much much better if she had been permitted to attend the school in Jeffrey. [...] If she hadn’t been so ignorant living in a no-count, not-even-a-town place with only chores, church-school, and nothing else to do (47).

Her naïf character makes her thinking that Dr. Beau is a good person that would help her to change her situation. Being illiterate, Cee does not understand what is going on in the doctor’s laboratory,

One day, a couple of weeks into the job, Cee entered Dr. Beau’s office a half hour before he arrived. She was always in awe of the crowded bookshelves. Now she examined the medical books closely, running her finger over some of the titles: *Out of the Night*. Must be a mystery, she thought. Then *The Passing of The Great Race*, and next to it, *Heredity, Race and Society*.

How small, how useless was her schooling, she thought, and promised herself she would find time to read about and understand “eugenics.” (65)

Cee discovers that the three books deal with superiority and inferiority of race. She wants to comprehend what the term “eugenics” means. *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) by the American geneticist *Madison Grant*, *Out of the Night* (1938) by the German communist and the Gestapo agent Jan

Valtin, and *Heredity, Race and Society* (1946) by the geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky, those books influenced Dr. Beau thus his experiments are conducted to emphasize the inequality between white and black race.

So the fact of the doctor's intention is to utilize Cee's body as an experiment in order to heal his two daughters who have Cephalitis "big heads" (63) this makes him eager to do experiments on people. Consequently, the doctor wants to improve the effectiveness of the speculum "What she didn't know was when he got so interested in wombs in general, constructing instruments to see farther and farther into them. Improving the speculum" (113) Cee does not know how danger is this experiment until she almost died when she started bleeding. Sarah, the friendly girl who was working in doctor's Beau house, treats Cee in a good way and she "had become her family, her friend, and her confidante" (65). She is the one who sends the letter to Frank after noticing that Cee is in a real danger". She noticed Cee's loss of weight, her fatigue, and how long her periods were lasting, she became frightened enough to write the only relative Cee had an address for" (113) Meanwhile, Cee was struggling, Sarah was hoping that Frank had received her "scary note" (113). At this moment, Frank appears to rescue his sister "Exactly the way old folks said: not when you call him; not when you want him; only when you need him and right on time [...]. It would be in her brother's arms" (113) .So he comes up at the right moment and carries Cee to take her home, Lotus. This experimentation affects Cee in many ways in which she is now completely dissolute and physically violated. Morrison did not describe specifically Dr. Beau's experiments but she portrays Cee's physical sufferings. However, the story demonstrates that when Frank takes Cee to Lotus in order to be healed by Miss Ethel, she confirms that Cee will not be able to get pregnant ever again because of those experiments. She says: "Your womb can't never bear fruits" (128).

Besides Cee, Frank also was about to be experimented in the mental hospital. But he escaped arriving to Reverend Locke's house who told him "You lucky, Mr. Money. They sell a lot of bodies out of there.

[...] Doctors need to work on the dead poor so they can help the live rich.”(12) So the bodies of African Americans soldiers were exposed to experimentations done by white doctors in Seattle hospital.

Throughout this analysis, it is clear that the author sheds the light on African Americans who were used as guinea pigs<sup>10</sup> during the 1950s. She wants also to denounce those abuses that are neglected by historians and to highlight how much racism was practiced in medical experimentation and science.

### **3.2. Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity:**

Many authors have argued that trauma can be generated and transmitted from one generation to another. The typical example can be seen in African Americans who inherited slavery from their ancestors even if most of them did not live the same experience. This can be defined as cultural trauma in which collective identities are fragmented. In other words, slavery is a significant cause that formed the early African American Identity.

Trauma when concerning slavery is a kind of a collective memory rather than being experienced. It is unconsciously shared throughout the generations. In this sense, Ron Eyerman notes that:

Individual identity is said to be negotiated within the collectively shared past. Thus, while there is always a unique, biographical memory to draw upon, it is described as being rooted in a collective history. Here collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior (65).

So it is obvious that the past is collectively shaped even if it is not experienced.

In addition to slavery, African Americans coexist with the fact of having fragmented identities that are resulted from their traumatic memories. It is described as "Double Consciousness" in which African American individuals struggle self-determination; that is to accept blackness or to behave as whites; as

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<sup>10</sup> The Medical definition: a small stout-bodied short-eared nearly tailless domesticated rodent of the genus *Cavia* (*C. cobaya*) often kept as a pet and widely used in biological research—called also *cavy*.

Du Bois has questioned “What, after all, am I? Am I an American or a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American?” (244), this dilemma of identity is included in the process of cultural trauma. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey Alexander argues that:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (1).

In his book, Alexander focuses on the social meanings in communities in which historical events took place. Thus traumatic collective events are shared moral responsibility, in which he demonstrates “Insofar as they identify the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral responsibility, members of collectivities define their solidary relationships in ways that, in principle, allow them to share the sufferings of others” (1).

In this regard, a number of scholars have remarked that Toni Morrison's novels are a representation of collective memory and traumatic experiences in which she always uses characters to present the sufferings of the whole community. She is interested in African Americans issues such as slavery and identity. Her novel *Home* is a typical example of a historical trauma narrative that focuses on the fragmented identities, past memories, slavery and its legacy and also deals with the Korean War. Morrison is definitely trying to consider all the negative traces of individual and collective traumatic memories to examine if the grieving processes and the traumatic experiences can be resolved.

She tries to shed the light on the collective quality of the characters’ healing process. This process cannot be possible without the social help of the black community. The connection and solidarity that

African Americans show to each other help in rebuilding the collective identity through mending the individual traumatic experiences in the society. It is clear that when Frank was released from the military hospital, he finds difficulties to adapt with the civilian life. However, he meets many people who help him thus he can coexist with the society.

Morrison has chosen the characters Frank and Cee to depict how they are haunted by their past and also to portray their individual traumatic experiences and psychological wounds. She chooses both genders to present the story. On one hand, Morrison explores manhood, adulthood and responsibility through the male character Frank in which the story recounts his sufferings in both home and war, so Morrison uses him in order to reflect his experience on all community.

On the other hand, Cee as a female character shows the sufferings of African American women during that time. By doing so, Morrison seems to rely on these characters so that all readers can relate to them, she tries to link between psychological wounds of black individuals and the healing of collective traumas.

The other examples of collective trauma can be seen in the novel are the forms of racism and segregation. Lynching was practiced on African Americans in public places. The narrator describes how the African Americans were forced to leave their houses and move to other places during the years of the Great Depression,

Twenty-four hours, they were told, or else. "Else" meaning "die". It was early morning when the warnings came, [...], man named Crawford sat on his porch steps and refused to vacate. [...]. Just after dawn at the twenty-fourth hour he was beaten to death with pipes and rifle butts and tied to the oldest magnolia tree in the country—the one that grew in his own yard (10).

Moreover, a black man called Billy Watson helps Frank in his journey. Billy introduces his wife and his son Thomas to Frank; Frank sees that the son had no right hand so he asks him. Billy says "Drive-by cop," he said. "He had a cap pistol. Eight years old, running up and down the sidewalk pointing it. [...]" "Cops shoot anything they want. This here's a mob city." (31).

Furthermore, racism was practiced even in transportation where blacks were suffering during travelling. Reverend Locke tells Frank:

You'll be grateful for every bite since you won't be able to sit down at any bus stop counter. Listen here, you from Georgia and you have been in a desegregated army and maybe you think up North is way different from down South. Don't believe it and don't count on it. Custom is just as real as law and can be just as dangerous (18-19).

So when Frank was in his way home he sat at the back of train and meets another Reverend named Maynard who helps him by giving information about the places Frank would go during the journey "From Green's travelers' book he copied out some addresses and names of rooming houses, hotels where he would not be turned away" (22-23). So Frank has to follow the book's instructions to have a safe trip to Georgia because it is necessary to be cautious to avoid racism.

However, African Americans were not the only minority who suffers racism and segregation. Other groups were also marginalized as it is mentioned in the book when Lily wanted to buy a house, the woman that works in the agency tell her that "Not part of said property hereby conveyed shall ever be used or occupied by any Hebrew or by any person of the Ethiopian, Malay or Asiatic race excepting only employees in domestic service" (73).

So all these forms of racism and collective sufferings marked the collective identity of the African Americans that they have to cope with. These shared experiences help in a way or in another the minor groups to stand together to overcome the collective traumas.

## 4. Healing and Recovery:

### 4.1. The Mourning Process and Trauma Resolution:

After rescuing Cee, the siblings need to go home to Lotus to be healed from their respective traumas: physically in the case of Cee, and psychologically in the case of Frank. The way going back home is a challenge for them since they have to reconnect their past and bad experiences by returning to the origin of their distress 'Lenore's house'. As Frank states:

*In Lotus you did know in advance since there was no future, just long stretches of killing time. There was no goal other than breathing, nothing to win and, save for somebody else's quiet death, nothing to survive or worth surviving for. [...] Nobody in Lotus knew anything or wanted to learn anything. It sure didn't look like anyplace you'd want to be (83).*

Lotus and especially Lenore's house present the bad past for both Frank and Cee in which they did not have chances to prove their selves. So going away was the only option for them, but they have no place to return to when Cee was in danger except their town. Instead of going to Lenore's house, Frank decides to take Cee to Miss Ethel in order to be healed. As Morrison's previous novels such in *Beloved* and *Paradise*, she uses female community as a common theme to show solidarity and help.

So the mourning process presents the siblings journey going back home (Lotus, Georgia) from the West Coast. Along this journey Frank is still unstable and feels insecure toward himself; he cannot remember too much but he is feeling bad because of his past. He feels grief and sad when he thinks of his little sister. Therefore, Morrison uses different mechanism of recovery, first she sees that it is necessary to reconnect the past memories in order to get rid of pain and to be healed.

Second, she emphasizes on focused-group and the cooperation of the collective community of African Americans to surpass the disturbing past. As Judith Herman argues “Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation” (94). So Frank meets many people in his journey who help him in his recovery process in which Morrison exposes some steps to resolute both physical and psychological traumas that many psychiatrists and psychoanalysts find them useful.

Some psychiatrists and researchers affirm that the resolution of trauma cannot be fully recovered because the traumatic experiences are hard to be forgotten or healed. Herman explains:

Resolution of the trauma is never final; recovery is never complete. The impact of a traumatic event continues to reverberate throughout the survivor’s lifecycle. Issues that were sufficiently resolved at one stage of recovery may be reawakened as the survivor reaches new milestones in her development (152).

Others such as the psychologist Mary Harvey believe that trauma resolution is possible. Harvey defines stages that can be useful in the recovery and the healing of traumatized people. Besides to Harvey, Kristin Boudreau has explained that the traumatized victims need to retell their stories and experiences in order to face them. This mechanism helps to attach to the sad memories that create chaos and disorder in their daily life. She states: “sufferings can heal and humanize, provided that one can reorganize the painful event of the past and retell them in one’s own language” (105). So it obvious that storytelling helps African Americans to overpass their painful memories and unspeakable past situations.

The psychoanalysts also may help traumatized patients to face the forgotten memories through remembering and the haunting past through reality. According to Freud, the victims of trauma tend to block their past memories from their conscious mind. This action leads to the failure of recollection

some events, however in his book *Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through* Freud emphasizes that “when the patient speaks of these ‘forgotten’ things, he rarely fails to add ‘I’ve always know that really, I’ve just never thought about it’ ” (1082). Even though Freud wrote his book in 1914, it would be clear that his study can be regarded as the seed of further researches of what is known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder studies since remembering and reconnecting past memories is an important step toward recovery.

In this sense, Morrison adopts the same criteria in order to find solutions to Frank’s problems and to heal the psychological wounds. Firstly, his sense of responsibility toward his sister gives him a glimpse of hope that may help him to manage his mind state “...in spite of the seriousness of his mission his anxiety became unmanageable.” (15) This shows how much Frank cares about Cee.

Secondly, his behavior changed and he could control himself when he saved Cee from Dr. Beau, he reacted smartly and nonviolently by just saying to the doctor “May I take my sister home?” (114) this makes Frank satisfied in rescuing his sister “Yet not having to beat up the enemy to get what he wanted was somehow superior—sort of, well, smart” (114).

Thirdly, Frank meets many African Americans in his journey backing home such as Reverend John Locke, Billy Watson and others who help him emotionally (advice and hospitality) and offer him material assistance. Reverend warned Frank:

“Don’t matter,” said Locke. “You’ll be grateful for every bite since you won’t be able to sit down at any bus stop counter. Listen here, you from Georgia and you been in a desegregated army and maybe you think up North is way different from down South. Don’t believe it and don’t count on it.[...] Frank stood at the door, while the Reverend retrieved his coat and car keys.

“Good-bye, Mrs. Locke. I do thank you.”

“Stay safe, son,” she answered, patting his shoulder (18-19).

This dialogue shows how group members cooperate and help each other in recovering their traumatic experiences and past memories.

Finally, it was until the end of the book that Frank finally confesses his crime:

*I have to tell you the whole truth. I lied to you and I lied to me, I hid it from you because I hid it from me. [...]. My mourning was so thick it completely covered my shame. [...]*

*I shot the Korean girl in her face.  
I am the one she touched.  
I am the one who saw her smile.  
I am the one she said "Yum-yum" to.  
I am the one she aroused. (133)*

At this point, Morrison chooses the confession as a measure of resolution and tries to show that Frank is finally able to accept the truth and to bear his feelings about his traumatic experiences.

So the significance of Frank's journey toward recovery is represented through the scene of the Korean girl he killed. Before, Frank seems to be unreliable narrator hiding facts of scenes and he tries to protect the details because he is not able to face them. However, he is finally able to confront the truth and share it with the reader. By doing so, Frank is also able to face his past and deal with it in order to be healed.

Another reason of recovery is female relationships that appear along the story. These relations provide an emotional support and care that give African American women the chance to escape patriarchal conventions. Morrison stresses the power of women and their important role of sisterhood. Miss Ethel and other black women play a huge role in healing Cee physically and even assist her mentally by helping her to develop her sense of self, thus she would gain self-appreciation, self-reliance, and self-assurance:

Look to yourself. You free. Nothing and nobody is obliged to save you but you. Seed your own land. You young and a woman and there's serious limitation in both, but you a person too. Don't let Lenore or some trifling boyfriend and certainly no devil doctor decide who you are. That's slavery. Somewhere inside you is that free person I'm talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world (126).

During her recovery, Cee gain self-respect and self-acceptance so she decides to stay home where she belongs "I ain't going no where, Miss Ethel. This is where I belong." (126).

Furthermore, Frank is the only one who really cares about her even he was in danger and bad mind state; he plays the role of the healer to his sister Cee:

Frank alone valued her. While his devotion shielded her, it did not strengthen her. Should it have? Why was that his job and not her own? Cee didn't know any soft, silly women. Not Thelma, or Sarah, or Ida, and certainly not the women who had healed her. Even Mrs. K., who let boys play nasty with her, did hair and slapped anybody messed with her, in or outside her hairdressing kitchen (129).

The Brother-sister relationship is deep and important in the novel because Frank and Cee had to rely on each other from their infancy. They were raised without caring atmosphere that children really need. So Frank tries to protect Cee from any abuse and he becomes the protective and the affectionate father for her. On the other hand, Cee was the only reason behind his journey and only together they can achieve redemption.

As a defense mechanism, crying is cathartic in *Home* since it helps to release the painful emotions. It was at the end of the story that Frank and Cee open their hearts and have the ability of crying. Cee tells her brother that she cannot have a baby while she is crying:

"I can't have children," Cee told him. "Never." She lowered the flame under the pot of cabbage.  
"The doctor?"

“The doctor.”  
“I’m sorry, Cee. Really sorry.” Frank moved toward her [...]  
“Come on, girl. Don’t cry,” whispered Frank. (131).

When Frank hears his sister telling him so and crying, he cries as well which he had not done since his childhood. Finally, the siblings start to confront the traumatic recollections and embraced their suffering by facing the reality in which they gain selfhood and get rid of the ghosts.

#### **4.2. Black Self-Discovery:**

Along the journey, Frank has suffered a lot of horrible events like racism and being not accepted anywhere. He was fighting with himself because he hated his hometown which leads him to escape by which he lives other traumas. It is likely the same for his sister.

However; until the end; Frank and Cee discover that they only belong to Lotus where they were born. Morrison has declared in an interview for PBS channel that she mentioned the colors at the end of the book as a sign of hope “When he reached the cotton fields beyond Lotus, he saw acres of pink blossoms spread under the malevolent sun. They would turn red and drop to the ground in a few days to let the young bolls through” (118).

Besides of that, Morrison wants to highlight the idea that everybody is going to help you when you are home and this is what happened in the case of Frank and Cee. Miss Ethel and the women of the community welcomed them and healed Cee. So that is the reason why Frank felt safe and satisfied “This feeling of safety and goodwill, he knew, was exaggerated, but savoring it was real” (118).

At the end of the book, both siblings experience a change in which they accept the reality. At the beginning, they escape the place because they could not feel the sense of belonging. After the journey,

they discover that the only space can contain them is their native town thus they decide to turn the physical space of Lenore's house into a psychological space that holds all the meanings of home.

The contrast between the journey escaping and returning home creates the awakening of a new man and woman in which Frank and Cee develop self-reliance, self-reshaping, and most important self-discovery. It is true that trauma left indelible scars in both Frank and Cee, but in the end they appear no longer defenseless or fragile children.

So despite the harsh experiences and the psychological wounds in the story, *Home* can be seen somehow as a hopeful story in which trauma recovery is possible. The story ends with those lines:

*I stood there a long while, staring at that tree  
It looked so strong  
So Beautiful.*

Morrison has chosen tree as a symbol of hope as Irene Visser notes:

If this tree symbolizes the importance of heritage and freedom, Frank's memory foregrounds their destruction by white racism [...] trees in Morrison's work symbolize not only racist violence and inhumanity, but also the forces of resilience and regeneration (15).

By doing so, Morrison seems to emphasize the ability of African Americans to regain and recover after traumatic experiences during their healing journeys toward wholeness, self-worth and self-actualization.

## Conclusion

Trauma fiction has been widely recognized in the field of literature. Many writers and authors adopt this genre in order to depict the traumatized experiences through history and to recount the mourning stories. Trauma narratives tend to illustrate the forgotten facts and realities as well as to present the thoughts and feelings of victimized people. In other words, these narratives are considered as psychological techniques in which the painful memories are shared to help the survivors of trauma to be healed by making sense to their experiences. Such kind of literature is mostly used to portray the sufferings of minorities and the marginalized people. Hence, this study shed the light on African Americans during the period of 1950s depicted by Toni Morrison.

The 1950s in the United States that Morrison has chosen to write about are a best example of traumatic period. Morrison writes to show that this period was not that glorious years for everybody, she wants to reveal the facts that African Americans lived in the 1950s which was seen as the most influential decade. In *Home*, the ambitious writer uses her pen to explore the neglected historical events that African Americans experienced during that decade. So this research is based on discussing and analyzing the main events and issues that Morrison has presented in this book.

The first chapter is about social, historical and literary context in which Morrison wrote *Home*. The chapter examined the American society and how historians described it as an affluent thanks to the privileges that Americans enjoyed. However, it made a contrast between the white population and the African American population. This contrast has shown that not all the social classes benefited the same rights and prosperity. Moreover, it provided some examples of segregation, racial abuses and white supremacy during this period. Afterward, the Korean War and its consequences have been introduced since *Home* is a portrayal of a traumatized veteran. According to the historical events that happened

during the 1950s, Morrison had well described the period as being racial and cruel for African Americans. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework in which both Trauma Theory and Psychoanalytical Approach had been introduced.

The second chapter analyzed the novel from different dimensions. It firstly provided multiple understandings of the concept home, Morrison has chosen the title of *Home* to produce a range of definitions that may be different from one person to another. The concept home is always regarded as safety and security. Thus Morrison wanted to clarify what it means through the events of the story. Then it studied the psycho-traumatic dimension in which characters were analyzed, the character Frank Money was analyzed as an individual since he suffered a lot of traumas. However the analysis focused on the impact of the Korean War on his state mind in which he suffered badly past memories (PTSD), in addition to that the analysis included his struggling for being a black soldier. Moreover, the chapter discussed the issue of the white medical experimentations that existed during the 1950s. Morrison has selected an African American female character Cee Money to present this misery. By doing so, Morrison seems to challenge the hidden past and its horrible facts.

Besides to the individual traumas, it was necessary to address the cultural trauma which is related to collective identity of African American community. Morrison has always shown a great interest in African American issues as collective and shared experiences. That is to indicate how African Americans tend to collaborate and to show solidarity with each other in order to get over their traumas.

Throughout this research, the main concern was to show how recovery is related to traumatic events. The author recounted the mourning process by showing the psychological issues that might be healed; she has chosen trauma resolution as a solution to Frank and Cee's problems. As the book is entitled *Home*, this process of mourning started in Lotus (hometown) and ended up as well in the same place.

This shows Morrison's intention to draw attention to the physical meaning as well as the psychological one of home. It is clear that Morrison relates healing process with being home. She concludes her book with some glimpse of hope when the siblings returned their hometown and felt safe especially with the help of people around them.

Finally, this study has achieved a set of drawn objectives in which *Home* was proved to be a psycho-trauma narrative where the impact of the Korean War on the protagonist is truly identified. Besides to that, the investigation of the psychological and the historical motives on African American individuals has been achieved.

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## ملخص

رحلة العودة إلى لوتيس، جورجيا هي رحلة مليئة بالعقبات و الذكريات المؤلمة التي يحاول فيها بطل الرواية المدعو فرانك ماني التخلص منها. في روايتها الأخيرة "بيت" صورت الكاتبة الأمريكية ذات الأصول الإفريقية توني موريسون معاناة الشاب فرانك العائد من الحرب الكورية التي جرت أحداثها خلال حقبة الخمسينيات حيث حاولت موريسون تمثيل الرحلة كنوع من الحزن و العذاب و الصدمات النفسية التي يحاول فيها فرانك إعادة ربط تجاربه من أجل الشفاء من هاته الصدمات. هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحليل الرواية ولتغطية الأحداث الرئيسية التي جرت أحداثها خلال فترة الخمسينيات في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. تهدف هاته الدراسة إلى تقديم رؤية موريسون لهذه الفترة حيث صرحت في عديد من المرات أن الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي ما زالوا يعانون من التمييز العنصري و التفرقة. كما تتعامل الدراسة مع القضايا النفسية للضحايا في الرواية عن طريق إجراء تحليل عميق لتغطية الأبعاد النفسية الصادمة. إضافة إلى ذلك تقوم الدراسة بتقديم الكتاب عن طريق وصف جميع الجوانب التي عرضتها موريسون، وهذا يتطلب دراسة خلفية اجتماعية تاريخية عن الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية خلال الخمسينيات. كما يستكشف هذا البحث معنى الصدمة من أجل إعطاء تحليل شامل حول التجارب الصادمة الفردية و الجماعية. الهدف النهائي من هاته الدراسة هو كشف غرض الروائية موريسون من وراء كتابة رواية كهذه و لتسليط الضوء على كفاءة نظرية الصدمة كأداة تحليلية لتحليل الشخصيات النفسية، علاوة على ذلك، لسرد نتائج البحث و مشاركتها من أجل الحصول على تقدير أفضل للرواية.