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**A postcolonial approach to Trauma in Toni Morrison's gothic  
novel *Home* (2012)**

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## *Dedication*

Praise be to Allah, the Glorious; without his help, none of this would be possible.

I would like to dedicate this thesis

To my parents, who gave me the little they had to ensure I would have the

Opportunity of an education

To my sisters, for their support and encouragement.

To my ideal brother

To the soul of my grandmother

EL Modjahida Elshikha.

*Djekidel Halima Saadia*

## *Dedication*

Above all, I would like to thank my Almighty God who has been my source of strength, wisdom, and knowledge. Through whose grace and favour, I have been able to run my dissertation.

To the soul of my mother Dhawiya, who promised to share all successes with me. Though death has taken this precious opportunity from me, she is still alive inside my heart, God bless her in heaven.

This work is wholeheartedly dedicated to my dear father Ibrahim, who has been nicely my supported financially and morally.

Sincere thanks go to all my brothers, sisters as well as brothers and sisters in law. You are my best spiritual family.

*Sebgagui Noura*

## Abstract

African American history has gone through important phases characterized by cruel events, including property dispossession, police brutality, and many other brutal acts that haunted the past and traumatized the present of black people. This study is an attempt to analyse the novel *Home* and cover the main events that happened in the course of 1950s in the United States, especially during the Korean War, by presenting the psycho-traumatic dimension, white medical experimentation, and trauma war in the novel since it reveals numerous realistic facts about a neglected historical period and describes how African Americans suffered from. This dissertation tries to investigate the representation of the struggle of African Americans in Toni Morrison's *Home* and reveal the traumatizing experience they underwent. It also aims to show how Morrison's narrative tends invert the dominant western assumptions. This dissertation is carried out using a postcolonial along with psychoanalytical approaches. It follows a descriptive method in order to scrutinize blacks sufferings within a postcolonial context, drawing on history, memory, gothic fiction. Finally, this study concludes that the traumatizing impacts in Toni Morrison's *Home* have both psychological and physical negative effects.

**Keywords:** Gothicism, Home, Postcolonialism, Toni Morrison, Trauma.

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ملخص

Résumé

## **Acronyms**

**PTSD:** Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

**KKK:** Ku Klux Klan.

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

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### General Introduction

The 1950s are best recognized as a decade of affluence during which the United States saw economic expansion as a result of technological and scientific advancement. Despite the fact that this historical era was viewed as one of improved family life, medical advancement, uniformity, besides to many other advantages, it was also full with not worthy incidents. As a result, not all social segments of society were experiencing prosperity; for example, African Americans were struggling for their rights. Additionally, in 1950, American troops fought in the Korean War, which provided white soldiers with a chance to fulfil the American dream after their return, but not for African American soldiers, who faced racism and segregation and were not treated as full citizens. Therefore, during a time that was favourable for most Americans, blacks confronted discrimination, harsh treatment, inadequate education, and numerous other cruel practices. The ignored historical truths and the other side of that period are frequently shown by African American writers, who also claim to highlight racism, social injustice and mistreatment.

Toni Morrison, through her latest novel *Home*, invites readers to recognize the trauma of racism, war, colonialism, slavery and post memory that is at the heart of her work. *Home* does in fact provide a sense of homecoming and belonging that may be read as a form of closure to Morrison's engagement with the trauma of slavery and colonisation, in her writing, this concept is post colonially referenced. She is a postcolonial author who vehemently criticizes the United States colonialism, both historical and contemporary, as well as the patriarchal racism, sexism, and classism that has not only denied African Americans their freedom autonomy and humanity but has also at times literarily colonized the bodies of those who reside within its territories and borders. Frank Money trauma narrative in *Home* fully engages African

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American history of enslavement, disenfranchisement, and continuing oppression and discrimination. As a matter of fact, America's political action in Korea and its racial discrimination in *Home* are interviewed in his memories reinforced by further parallels made in the novel during the era of slavery. In *Home*, Morrison also explores the eugenic medical experiments on African Americans that were frequent in American history up until and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the Dr. Beau, who is considered as the real embodiment of gothic evil. In this regard, Morrison portrays terrifying imagery of gothic villainy, the callous scientist figure, and the threat he offers to the self-integrity and physical security of black women.

This dissertation is important in terms of dealing with Morrison's novel from deeper perspectives. It is more than a character centred study of the protagonists. This study expands the work of Morrison to include the whole reasons behind the psycho-traumatic experience that the protagonist siblings suffer from. Furthermore, the study is developed by presenting how Morrison tends to go back to the period of 1950s in order to revisit long forgotten memories and to portray the struggle of African Americans to obtain their rights due to racial discrimination on the part of white authorities.

The aim behind choosing this subject is to give Morrison's interpretation of the 1950s by demonstrating her representation of traumatic individuals. Moreover, it seeks to analyse the postcolonial quality of *Home* in addition to the problem of blacks especially women within these communities. Further, it looks at demonstrating the images of racial discrimination, segregation, and those black veterans who went to the Korean War. In the same vein, in order to give more clarification about the process of trauma and colonialism, new perspectives has been used such as the gothic elements which results from the protagonist's horrific life. All this aspects make our study

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significant by showing the suffering of African Americans who try to prove their existence.

*Home*, therefore examines trauma in the light of postcolonialism and gothicism and the way African Americans were treated roughly and subjected to the system of dehumanization and segregation. Thus, the question that manifests itself is how trauma is expressed in the work of Morrison's *Home* within the context of postcolonialism and Gothicism? This main question engenders other sub questions as follow:

- To what extent postcolonial traumas affect African Americans?
- How trauma and postcolonialism were portrayed in Toni Morrison's *Home* and what are its legacies on characters?
- What is the link between trauma and Gothicism in the novel *Home*?

According to the previous questions, we hypothesize that due to the long African American history of enslavement, disenfranchisement, and the constant oppression, black people seek to be healed from their traumas, besides to gain a sense of individuality and personhood. Thereby, the devastation and haunting history that Frank and Cee escape from has psychological and emotional repercussions which trigger dreadful and horrific incidents in their lives.

In order to conduct this research, a number of works have been consulted in order to investigate trauma within a postcolonial and gothic context. To comprehend deeply the concept of the novel, we rely on Manuel Hernandez Andrés in his book *a postcolonial reading of Toni Morrison's Home*, in 2014, provides a number recurrent preoccupations within the field of postcolonial studies that resonate in Toni Morrison's *Home*. Besides that, in "African American Gothic Elements in Toni

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Morrison's *Home*, published in 2010, Rosana and Gabriel, in their article, seek to show the gothic images which were assimilated in the form of terror, horror, and nightmares that create scattered world for the characters inner personality. Furthermore, 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 Irene Visser "Entanglements of Trauma, Relationality and Toni Morrison's *Home*" discusses the issues of trauma within postcolonial literary studies. The work *Gothic Queer Culture*, prepared by Westengard Laura, she argues that trauma and the gothic are connected by their ghostly and aspectual aspects which originate in the physical and psychological wounds of the past.

Underlying the previous works, it is noticeable that each work relies on one aspect rather than study it from different points of views, thus the existing literature in *Home* does not yet extend far enough to address all the aspects in the work. Still there are few works that deal with Toni Morrison which gather between postcolonialism and Gothicism. Thus, this work comes as a tentative contribution to cover the field of postcolonialism and the dilemmas that blacks suffer from slave history.

In this research, psychoanalytical and postcolonial approaches along with descriptive method are to be used in order to examine the reasons behind the psychological issues of the chosen characters. This analysis gives a clear image about the African Americans and exactly the traumatic effects of the Korean War; added to that, the gothic tropes that resulted from the white medical experimentation.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters: the first chapter provides an overview about the origins of trauma theory and highlights the relationship between trauma theory and both postcolonialism and Gothicism. The second chapter discusses

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the novel *Home* from a postcolonial context, and describes the psychological wounds and the traumatic experiences. The third chapter focuses on the way the novel uses gothic tropes to represent the effects of racism and the haunting consequences of trauma and abuse in African American society.

# **Chapter I**

**Postcolonial, Trauma Theory and Gothic  
Fiction: an overview.**

**Introduction:**

African Americans went through centuries of cruelty, disgrace, and segregation, along with psychological dominance that left its influences and imprints on their personalities during the colonisation process and even the period after which known as postcolonialism that forced them to live along with traumatic experiences and gothic tropes; thus, it would appear that the term “postcolonialism” does not mean “post-independence” because it would be falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process, postcolonialism rather begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is in the discourse of oppositionality that colonialism brings itself into being (Aschrofr et al 117).

Colonisation had a major impact on trauma and Gothicism at different levels. A number of critics discussed the issue of trauma and contributed to understand the African American works, literature of trauma and the historical period of the 1950s in Morrison’s work. The historian Dominich Lacapra explores trauma through history in his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma*; he explains how trauma is affected by historical events. Another trauma study critic Kali Tal defines literature of trauma in her book *Worlds of Hurt*, interest on how individual and collective traumas are combined. Moreover, the plurality and growing number of responses to trauma theory in postcolonial criticism demonstrate the on-going appeal of trauma theory despite the fact that it is also increasingly critiqued as inadequate to the research agenda of postcolonial studies; this leads us to say that part of the wide spread impact of trauma theory has however been criticized by theorists and critics in the field, who have pointed out many controversies, contradictions, and limitations in the theory originally conceptualized by Hartman, Cathy Caruth, and others of the Yale School.

This chapter advances the current state of the field of trauma, then it discusses the theoretical framework by which the trauma theory is introduced, it defines trauma in various field, 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; in addition to that, a light will be shed on the new connections between trauma theory and gothic fiction in the context of postcolonial literary studies.

**1-Postcolonial Theory: definition and prospects**

Among the spread concepts is the phrase “postcolonial theory,” an academic discipline that analyses, explains, and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. It largely emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. It focuses on the process of reading and writing literature in formally or currently colonized countries; in other words, this theory tries to provide a critical investigation of what happened between two clash cultures. The first appearance of the terms postcolonial and postcolonialism was in the mid-1980s in scholarly journals, which refer to a sundry field of study in which even spelling provides various alternatives, postcolonialism, postcolonial, or post-colonialism; when the term is spelled with a hyphen, it refers to writing that set out in one way or another to fight perspectives both before and after the period of colonisation; but today the most common spelling of the three variants is postcolonialism (Jane). Furthermore, this theory is found in a number of texts, such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin’s previously mentioned powerful work.

Bill Ashcroft, Caruth Griffiths, and Tiffin define postcolonial theory as follows: It involves discussion about the experience of various kinds of migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, and linguistics, in addition to the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. None of these is essentially post-colonial, but together they form the complex fabric of the field. When post colonialism is mentioned, it is necessary to be followed by decolonisation since postcolonialism began with the end of colonialism, the fall of great powers like the British, Spanish, and French. However, the aim of postcolonialism is not to tell the story of what

happened after decolonialisation; it seeks to cover all the cultures affected by the actions of the imperial process as Young assumed that “postcolonial critique focuses on forces of oppressions and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism, race, gender, nationalism, class, and ethnicities define its terrain” (11).

### **1.1-Postcolonial literature**

Postcolonial literature includes all literature affected by the colonial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day, which makes the African countries ,Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, India, and Caribbean countries all postcolonial literature(Ashcroft et al. 318). Postcolonial literature deals with the writers who reflect the postcolonial past and how they survive a new way to create and understand the world by correcting the dark or the false image that has been fabricated by the western explorers.

In recent years, critics have argued for the postcoloniality of African American literature. While real attention was gained with the publication of Christine Macleod’s “Black American Literature and the Postcolonial Debates “, in her article, Christine explained that,” with neither a territorial identity nor the usual element of physical separation from the metropolitan centre , black America cannot strictly be said to fit any standard model of the colonial or Postcolonial experience(51-65) There may be compelling reasons to include African American works within the category of postcolonial literature because the writers of these texts seek to build around the concepts of resistance ,human freedom, liberty, identity, and individuality, though they believe they faced various problems in producing a literature that helps to reconstitute their identity since the concept of producing a national or cultural

literature are in most cases foreign connotations to the traditions of the colonised people. Moreover, one of the complexities of African American writer was mainly assimilated in a language, since they write in language and genre that are not their own.

Trauma theory is an area of cultural investigation that emerged in the early 1990s as a product of the so-called ethical turn affecting the humanities. It entails violent intrusion and a sense of utter objectification that annihilates the person as an agent or a subject. According to Cambridge Dictionary which defines trauma as severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience. In other words, a physical injury or wound, or a powerful psychological force that has damaging effects. In the same vein, the Oxford Dictionary states the meaning of the term trauma as a mental condition caused by severe shock, stress or fear, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time (“Trauma Theory”).

### **.2-Trauma theory, its meaning and key thinkers**

A theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytical post structural approach that suggests trauma as an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. This Lacanian approach crafts the concept of trauma as a recurring sense of absence that sunders knowledge of the extreme experience. The unspeakable void became the dominant concept in criticism for imagining trauma’s function in literature. This classic model of trauma appealed to a range of critics working outside of poststructuralism as well, due to the notion of trauma’s irreversible damage to the psyche. The assumed inherent neurobiological features of trauma that refuse representation and cause dissociation were significant to arguments that sought to

emphasize the extent of profound suffering from an external source. Whether that source is an individual perpetrator or collective social practice.

Trauma narratives portray the feelings and emotions of victims. In other words, these narratives can be seen as psychological techniques in which the distressing memories are shared to help the survivors of trauma hold on by making sense to their experiences. Thus, this kind of literature is considered a portrayal of traumatized people and the suffering of minorities.

### **2.1- Historical Trauma and African Americans' experiences**

Over the last decade, the scope of trauma research has expanded to include historical traumas. This expansion is important because it shows the common suffering of different vulnerable groups that have survived the atrocities of slavery, war, and colonialism. The theory of historical trauma holds that survivors manifest symptoms and consequences of traumas survived in common by their familial and cultural ancestors. There for, historical trauma can be defined as the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over a lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group experiences “ (Brave Heart 7). Historical trauma has also been used to describe the experiences of African Americans, whose communities share in a collective grief of a massive group trauma considering their multigenerational history of slavery, racism, and discrimination. Thus, the ultimate definition for African American historical trauma is

“The collective spiritual, psychological, emotional, and cognitive distress perpetuated intergenerational deriving from multiple denigrating experiences originating with slavery and continuing with

pattern forms of racism and discrimination to the present day”  
(Hampton et al.32).

The theory of historical trauma is grounded in three related frameworks. In the first place, according to psychological theory, it is known that traumatic stressors can increase susceptibility to disease and have other negative influences on human physiology. The second is political, economic theory which looks at the impact of political, economic, and structural inequalities at the individual level. The last framework demonstrated is the Social Ecological System Theory, which tends to evaluate and identify dynamics and interdependences between the past and present and course of life factors that contribute to disease.

## **2.2-Psychological trauma**

During the past decade, international studies have shown that over 50 % of the general population has been exposed to psychological trauma. Ferenczi’s work as a medical officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War provided the basis for his first systematic study of psychological trauma. His observations of shell-shocked soldiers led him to conclude that “sudden affect that could not be psychically controlled (the shock) causes the trauma ‘(129).

Around the 1970s, a paradigm shift occurred in the way that psychological trauma was conceived and managed. Until then, it was argued that individuals without a family history of mental illness or other evidence of predisposition exposed to a traumatic event might develop acute psychological distress but would then go on to recover naturally with no long – term effects, rather like a self–healing wound. Freud developed his theories of both psychological trauma and hysteria simultaneously, mainly in two articles on the (“Neuro–psychosis of defence “) and also in his co-

publications with Josef Breuer (Freud and Breuer 5-6). According to Freud, who stated that every case of hysteria can be looked upon as traumatic hysteria in the sense of implying a psychological trauma (34). Freud was convinced that patients with hysteria suffered from psychological trauma that had not been sufficiently abreacted (34). Freud found that each of these hysterical symptoms was due to psychic trauma reviving an earlier traumatic event. According to the findings of recent investigations (from the analysis of recent literature on the ps 2013 to present day), psychological mechanisms underlie the development and treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD)<sup>11</sup>. This latter is the most studied diagnosis as a result of trauma, including early traumatic experience; however, there is strong evidence demonstrating that physical and sexual abuse during childhood constitutes risk factors in the development of depression, which is two times more prevalent than (PTSD) in the general population, and a major cause of morbidity worldwide. In psychotherapy research, mechanisms are the factors through which interventions produce change; researchers mainly focus on four putative mechanisms, such as emotional engagement, extinction, and contextualization, distress tolerance and negative post traumatic cognitions. So it would appear that, psychological mechanisms can be defined as processes or events that are responsible for specific changes in psychological outcomes.

A series of epidemiological studies has demonstrated that childhood abuse is associated with a range of psychiatric disorders in adulthood that include mood and anxiety disorders. While men are more exposed to a little or no interpersonal trauma, women are seriously affected by interpersonal trauma, of which physical and sexual events are the most common. In these cases, polytrauma is more frequent than single

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1 (PTSD): Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

trauma; in this sense, female gender, interpersonal, and childhood trauma constitute risk factors associated with the further development of psychopathology.

### **2.3-Gothic fiction scope:**

Gothic fiction is often associated with the supernatural and the uncanny; it is also often has elements of murder, and torture all of which are also part of the narrative and history of slavery. In this way and as Teresa Goddu states 'Gothic has served as a useful mode in which to resurrect and resist Africans' racial history '' (152). The term "gothic" is considered a means by which African Americans decide to appropriate it for themselves as genre in attempt to use these tropes to write about the terrors and realities of being black in America. Gothic fictions are traversed by darkly material disturbances, traces of unformed things operating beyond the reach of reason, rule, and sense. Going bump in the night, making skin crawl or hairs stand on end, these things undo the laws of the known world and are out of place, out of time, and out of nature. As the gothic has become established as a creditable field of enquiry in literary, film, and cultural studies, among others, it has also expanded to emerging areas where it has proved to be a fertile mode of critique and theoretical analysis. Postcolonial gothic is certainly one of these. Jerrold Hogle explains in this volume's introduction that gothic stories are often critical investigations, aesthetically unstable and engaging actively in theory themselves (qtd. in Rudd ch4).

As the popularity of gothic rose, black authors began to write in the genre, thus reclaiming it and subverting its inherently racist and oppressive traditions. What once represented white fears and anxieties about a racial 'other' and associated blackness with evil was re-invented to symbolise the historical transgressions of slavery and American's history of racial oppression. Through this genre, black authors were able

to assert a much-needed voice and correct its racist associations. Moreover, African American authors do not directly mimic the tropes of the white American Gothic but use variations or parodies of such tropes in their Gothic texts, in which the supernatural and ghostly evils of the gothic became representations of racial anxieties and of the black body itself. In the African American Gothic, authors represent the black body not as demonic evil that will inevitably be conquered by a white hero, but as a disembodied wonderer or ghost that is haunted by memories of an oppressive past and the persisting fears of residing in a racially divided America that has left black people silenced despite the abolition of slavery (western 20).

Racism has long been a haunting discourse in gothic literature, often masked by a monstrous visage; racial minorities appear throughout traditional gothic text as figures around which authors spin debates about civilization, enlightenment, freedom, and human nature. Many bodies in such texts act as objects of discourse, rather than as social agents, allowing white subjects to meditate upon complex realities and behaviours without having to claim them. Hortense Spillers' observation addresses the construction of black women in American society (154).

#### **2.4-Trauma and Gothic fiction**

Gothicism appears consistently in a broad range of works by African American and white American writers during the nineteenth century. Specifically, Black authors used the gothic to express trauma caused by enslavement and other forms of white racial violence. Resisting scholarly impulses to read the gothic metaphorically as representing fictional or distorted versions of reality, Black writers show how they deployed the gothic to express experiences of soul murder trauma, the dire spiritual implications of slavery, and to narratives the incoherent world slavery created, a

world ruled by the moral insanities of white supremacy and its unspeakable violence that resist representation. .

Laura Westengard argues that during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a queer culture has emerged that challenges and responds to traumatic marginalization by creating a distinctly gothic aesthetic. In her book, *Gothic Queer culture*, Westengard proposes that contemporary US queer culture is gothic at its core. Using interdisciplinary cultural studies to examine the Gothicism in queer art, literature, and thought – including ghosts embedded in queer theory. *Gothic Queer culture* examines the material effects of marginalization, exclusion, and violence; besides to that, it explains why discourse around the complexities of genders and sexualities repeatedly returns to the gothic. Westengard places this queer knowledge production within a larger framework of gothic queer culture for understanding these debates in the context of distinctly gothic cultural mode that acknowledge violence and insidious trauma.

According to Marita Nadal, who has written about the desirability of relating trauma and the gothic, she assumes that not only trauma but also the gothic suggests “something prior that eludes us, “an enigma”, that implies uncertainty and entails a difficult access to history “(162), she argues that trauma and the gothic are also “connected by their ghostly and spectral aspects, which originate in the physical and/or psychological wounds of the past” (162). Besides the centrality of haunting, gothic and trauma also share a linking for excess (Nadal 169). In a similar way, both trauma and gothic texts collaborate on a set of narrative techniques such as those described by Anne Whitehead, and the range of devices he identifies in narratives dealing with trauma could perfectly be read as a list of gothic stylistic features. Additionally, one of the reasons for the symbiosis between trauma and the gothic is

that, “trauma fiction often demands of the reader a suspension of disbelief and novelists frequently draw on the supernatural” (84). In return to Marita Nabal, she states that “if the gothic explores taboo, terror, suspense, and the guilty secrets of past transgression, trauma is also concerned with fear, secrecy, guilt, uncertainty, possession, and haunting” (qtd. in Botting 114).

Both gothic and trauma have been depicted in African American texts to demonstrate the nineteenth-century slave world, white supremacy, and the lived realities of African Americans in dramatic and powerful ways and to illustrate how the system of slavery and white hegemonic power were gothic and traumatized adhering to an ethos of evil that bore grave and long-term spiritual, moral, and historical consequences for both black and white people. Critics tend to view the gothic as a means of fulfilling trauma theory’s ethical imperative of evoking in readers an empathic identification with the gothic or psychoanalytic subject. Doing so, however, relies on problematic assumptions about the inevitability of an ethical response from writers and audiences alike.

### **3-Trauma theory in the postcolonial context:**

Based on the American Psychiatric Association definition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Cathy Caruth has defined trauma as “a response to an event outside the range of usual human experience” (1). Caruth contends that “trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves” (11). In describing trauma, he conceives the concept as a structural failure to realize events; not because of their

innate catastrophic nature but rather on account of how they are experienced at the time.

Despite the fact that trauma studies have great influence on the postcolonial field, critics like Stef Craps and Irene Visser have drawn attention to the pitfalls of a direct transportation of the premises of classical trauma theory to the non-western world. According to Craps, he illustrates in *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* that the founding texts of trauma studies such as Caruth's work "largely fail to live up to the promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement" (2). on the other hand, he affirms that trauma theory, along with psychoanalysis and deconstruction, which birthed it, can make an invaluable contribution to postcolonial thought: "an exclusive and culturally sensitive trauma theory can assist in rising awareness of injustice both past and present and opening up the possibility of a more just global future and, in so doing, remain faithful to the ethical foundations of the field" (Stef Craps). Through his book, Craps aims to purge trauma theory from the biases of the context in which it was born in order to make it available for the interpretation of literary texts produced in the post colonising world. He assumes that the analysis of "postcolonial literature that bears witness to the suffering engendered by racial or colonial oppression" (Stef Craps). Irene Visser, like Craps, she suggestively wonders in her article "Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literary Studies" that trauma can be "post colonised", she discredits against uncritically adopting the western model of trauma for the postcolonial texts' analysis, and suggests that the definition of trauma in a postcolonial trauma theory should be expanded in order to be able to account for the aftermath of colonialism's systematic oppression, with has the characteristics of prolonged, repeated, and cumulative stressor events .

In 2008, a number of publications pointed out the limits of trauma theory for postcolonial studies, for instance, its dehistoricizing and depoliticizing tendencies. Roger Luckhurst noticed in *The Trauma Question* that it overlooks political concerns and that the trauma theory "shockingly fails to address atrocity, genocide, and war" (213). According to a project to effectuate a "rapprochement" between trauma theory and postcolonial literary theory, trauma theory was presented in the introduction as having strengths for postcolonial literary studies to integrate but also weaknesses to be configured.

### **3.1-Colonialism as collective trauma**

Colonialism and postcolonialism are two paradoxical terms related to each other and almost any form of relation featuring inequality in the sense of power, but without colonialism the phrase "postcolonialism" does not appear. First of all, colonialism is a system in which one country innovates a government by taking over other lands and making them into colonies, and the mother country takes riches from the colony. It is not a fair system. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary "colonialism is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial control over another country by occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically" ("Colonialism"). Colonialism has always had a bad reputation, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has had a huge negative impact on the economic, social and political structures of the indigenous populations. Violent, traumatic, and oppressive foundations laid down through colonialism became further entrenched structurally in various historical and current contexts, which include the colonisation of nations, genocides, ethnic cleansing, and a repressive racist, and apartheid political systems, aside from the displacement of peoples through war. However, it is not only these structural consequences of colonialism that are of concerns; there are also the

on-going intra-psychic and social impacts in the contexts of the postcolonialism. Going steps further, understanding the collective trauma that colonisation brought is fundamental, in which colonial trauma is described as a complex, continuous, collective, cumulative, and compounding interaction of impacts related to the imposition of colonial policies and practices that continue to separate indigenous people from their land, language, cultural practices, and one another. The theory of colonial trauma is presented as a useful framework for understanding the links between persistent health disparities, the trauma genic nature of colonialism, and the right to self-determination. To sum, the impact of colonisation is extremely large and widespread at different levels, which can be considered a clear representation of collective traumas that were created through oppression and the savage treatment by colonizers.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter, entitled Postcolonialism, Trauma Theory, and Gothic Fiction, has covered a general background in trauma theory. It has also contained an overview of postcolonialism and trauma theory, including its emergence and prominent scholars; in another part, a definition of trauma theory according to Cathy Caruth's understanding is mentioned, in addition to the gothic fiction. Likewise, the first chapter deals with trauma as both psychological and historical approaches, in which the former approach, Freud's interpretation of trauma theory, is presented, while in the latter approach, as far as history is concerned, the historical trauma concept has been introduced in trauma as a historical approach.

Trauma was represented in forms that are crucial components of postcolonial literature, which is written in response to events of collective violence on a national scale, particularly in African American literature, in which they are discriminated against by white authors and suffer from racism, identity issues, and many other brutal treatments. Trauma theory is, of course, a metaphor, implying that a nation or a people suffer the same kinds of symptoms that psychologists or psychoanalysts have identified in individuals who have unconsciously repressed experiences of overwhelming stress. The gothic as well as transgression share common concerns with trauma in the issue of subversion and transgression since both genres enable the unspeakable to be spoken and allow a silenced history of blacks to be heard, thereby seeking to depict traumatic experiences of postcolonialism. Therefore, they can be regarded as symbolic representations of alternative experiences, worldviews, and different histories in literature. Moreover, the gothic, in its engagement with the uncanny offered access to trauma's hidden psychology in ways that helped the readers

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recognize how pre-existing desires, fears, and fantasies played a part in trauma, including fantasies of violence implicit in western imperialism.

**Chapter II**  
**Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic**  
**Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.**

## Chapter II: Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.

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### Introduction

The United States experienced a “prosperity decade” during the twentieth century, but African Americans struggled to obtain their rights due to racial discrimination on the part of white authorities, as well as other brutal treatment such as racial abuse, unfair acts, poor education, and other factors. Also, American soldiers fought in the Korean War in the 1950s; it was a perfect opportunity for white men to win, but not for black soldiers. The past and history that have been buried or ignored frequently appear in the works of African American writers. Morrison was one of the well-known authors who highlighted and illustrated racism, social injustice, and mistreatment in her most recent book, “Home”. More than that, she has made the decision to revisit long-forgotten memories and expose the scars left over from 1950s. That is to say, her book “Home” is a tale about racial tenets and identity related to traumatized characters. She based her book on retelling and detailing psychological wounds, traumatic events, and various other challenges that emerged in 1950s. 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 makes these writers such as Sharon Rose Wilson classified her as a postcolonial writer.

This chapter highlights how Toni Morrison portrays the story as a kind of trauma and sorrow in which the protagonists are reconnecting their experiences in order to be healed. Throughout this chapter, it could be understood that Morrison, in her novel, tackles the issue of the neglected sides of both white medical experimentations and the Korean War besides to their consequences on African Americans during the 1950s from postcolonial perspective.

## Chapter II: Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.

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### 1- About the novel *Home*

The structure of the novel '*Home*' is very simple and it is short with seventeen chapters. It includes two main narrators: Frank Money and who opens the book and speaks in first person telling his own story, besides to another narrator who speaks in third person. In *Home*, Morrison has found a new angular voice and straight-ahead story telling style. She appears to contest the difficult of telling story through an external narrator and the heart of this novel is racism, war, trauma, and post memory. Additionally, she seeks to highlight the neglected period in American history which is the Korean War in the 1950s. *Home*, is placed in her capability to portray what it denotes to be a black in America during the 1930s-1950s. The novel is set in a society where the black individuality is looked down and segregated in relation to the supreme whiteness and the touches of this inferiority advocate an array of trauma in connection to African American experiences. *Home* is about African American veteran, Frank Money, who has a disturbed childhood memory which combines with his struggles with the changes that have been happening to his psyche after his returning from Korea.

Frank's disorder continues in segregated America, which treats him less than an animal, depriving him from any solace. Reading Toni Morrison's *Home*, one can understand that the main character in the novel is suffering from social domination and oppression. Furthermore, 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, this novel is considered as another vision of trauma fiction and recovery process, it is mainly about to two traumatized siblings; Frank and his sister Ycidra; who are trying to be healed. Morrison builds her novel upon recounting and describing the

## **Chapter II: Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.**

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psychological wounds and traumatic experiences besides to many issues that happened during that period. She chooses Ycidra and Frank 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 perspective and themes like manhood, medical experimentations, and war. This makes readers attracted and excited about it. In a sense, we should not forget that the colonisation of black women's bodies and minds were even more severe. In Cee's case, for instance, her step-grandmother will silence her voice, the protection of her brother will curtail her movement, her husband will turn out to be a pimp, more interested in her assets than in her company, and her body will end up being maimed by a racist doctor experimenting with eugenics.

### **2 – Korean War and its traumatic consequences on a black veteran**

In June 1950, South Korea was invaded by communist North Korea across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The initial period of the war was a desperate struggle between the two forces, in which it 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. This led African Americans to fight with white people together because it was an opportunity for them to gain jobs and rights as American citizens. Besides, it witnessed the entry of Chinese and the Australian troops after the allies crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

In 1951, over a half million Chinese troops engaged the war, and the launching of various offensives pushed the United Nations forces almost back to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. During the impetuous fighting of the winter of 1951, enormous losses were sustained by both sides; the United Nations command was forced to abandon Pyongyang on

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December then Seoul on January, after being pushed back from the Yalu River. Later on, after three years of struggling, the war ended in a dead lock with the border between North and South Korea near where it had been at war's beginning and the United States illustrated its continued commitment to containment. As a consequence to the American soldiers, the war was good for white people because they had new jobs and veterans had their pay, however, it brought trauma and misery for the African Americans in addition to the losses and injuries. 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 the 50s to demonstrate that they were not that glorious years for everybody. Morrison has declared

“Somebody was hidden something and by somebody; I mean the narrative of the country, which was so aggressively happy. Post war, 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 regarded historically as the forgotten war. She seeks to give account to the forgotten African American soldiers who participated in the war. Despite the racism that was practiced at that time, the desegregation of the army was just temporary for ideological reasons because African Americans suffer segregation after returning home. Morrison in her book supports this idea when Reverend Locks expresses “An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like

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dogs. Chang that. They treat dogs better“(18). Frank’s participation in the war renders him totally broken. He experiences greater dread as a result of the war’s serious and violent threats of destruction or annihilation, which is one of the main causes of the growth in post-traumatic stress disorder. He also sees his closest friends Mike and Stuff die, which aggravates his problematic mental situation. Morrison describes the scene of Mike’s death in a very effective manner: Mike in his arms again thrashing, jerking, while Frank yelled at him “stay here, man. Come on. Stay with me.” Frank had to remove pairs of aggressive black birds off his friend’s body because the urine on Mike’s jeans had frozen. The birds were as aggressive as bombers. He underwent a change as a result. A horrific life was given to his childhood by what died in his arms. He is also helplessly forced to observe the agony and death of Stuff, who has lost his arm twenty feet away from his body and finally dies on the stretch “holding his served arm in the connected one”(Morrison 99).

### **3-Reading *Home* from a postcolonial standpoint**

Toni Morrison’s *Home* presents a fictionalized account of how colonial discourse, which is synonymous with white supremacy, enforces its power and always seeks to mold the colonized subject so that he or she can be easily exploited. It is also the recreation of a set of characters in constant alertness to prevent these discourses from taking control of their minds. It is important to mention that, Frank and Cee (Ycidra) as the protagonist siblings not only their youth that makes them vulnerable to colonialist forces, but also the fact that they are poor, black and from the Southern countryside. Furthermore, the innovative narrative structure of *Home*, where a metafictional dialogue between a scribe-the omniscient voice and Frank’s first-person testimony of past events is established will allow Frank to redress his crimes and find

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some kind of healing from his trauma as the novel progress. He declares to the scribe towards the end; ‘‘ I shot the Korean girl in her face’’ (*Home*133). Just as many postmodernist and postcolonial writers aim to do, Frank’s words help to symbolically debunk the omniscient narrative authority of the scribe. At the time the novel takes place, the United States was still a highly segregated country in which Jim Crow laws were fully in operation. Though, the enforcement of these laws questions Frank’s as well as other black men’s humanness, we should not forget the case of Cee who symbolises the colonisation of black women’s bodies and minds which was even more severe. In dead-like state provoked by continuous bleeding, she will reach a postcolonial community of country female interveners that will decolonised her mind and emancipate her ‘‘self’’ or personhood. So, this alternative respectful community reflects in some respect other postcolonial communities whose goal is to empower ‘‘the poor, the dispossessed, and the disadvantaged...within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism’’ (Young 113).

Morrison’s novels invite us to witness the experience of being black in America. In fact, much postcolonial literature is about the stories of those who were once deprived of their lands, their culture or their religion by the powers of the subjugating empire. Morrison, however, understand this type of western accounts as the empire’s ‘‘effort to clean up everything’’ (Bollen), especially the darkest examples of violence, segregation or medical experimentation accompanied the era. She has said that she wrote her novel in part to see’’ what was really going on underneath this discursive veil of good intentions’’ (Bollen).Some rights such as education,’’ citizenship with equal protection under the law, and the male suffrage’’ (Darden12), would legally take away in the South by the institution of the so-called Jim Crow laws as it can be seen

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in *Home*, these segregationist laws often medical experimentation, police brutality, prosperity dispossession and many other cruel acts. In the United States government and other organisations, McCarthyism (1950-1954) was a campaign against purported communities. It often resulted in the blacklisting of many intellectuals, such as Ray Stone, an educator and jazz musician. In the novel, Stone is Lily's boss and ends up arrested by two government men in snap-brim hats and his theatre is shut down for simply, the text seems to imply, having meetings with intense argument" (*Home*72). The portrayal of McCarthyist persecution in *Home* suggests the censorship that has been historically curtailed the free expression of ideas and that ironically went against unalienable rights protected by the first amendment of the constitution of the United States. Continuing with her effort to signal was "fake about" the 1950s, Morrison has complained about the lack of recognition the Korean War has suffered in historical accounts of the period. For her it a "police action" than never a war" knew about Korea but not understanding what it was about did not give it the respect, the seriousness Frank thought it deserved" (*Home*136).

The critic who has stated most clearly the necessity to expand the field of postcolonialism to make possible inclusion of texts by American writers of colour is Deborah L. Madsen in his first essay "beyond the commonwealth: post-colonialism and American literature", he shows us that "postcolonial" is a label that does more justice to these writers because their literature confront the danger of being erased by the dominant white culture. Karen Piper, an essayist within side the identical collection, assumes that postcolonial studies of minority literatures can create an era in which the voices of those people may be heard. Thus, and due to the fact so little postcolonial scholarship traditionally devoted to African Americans literature, it is not

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especially that a current novel like *Home* has no longer but received any particular postcolonial treatment. Notwithstanding, possibly the essays which have been posted on Morrison's trendy novel examine troubles which includes up rootedness, restoration or belonging, which now no longer handiest resonate during her works especially and ethnic American literature in general, but are also marketable with inside the texts of many postcolonial authors. It is worth noticing; therefor interfere of thematic preoccupation that often occurs between postcolonial and African American literatures. After all, each literature is regularly involved with the language question, the cultural clash, the racial divide or the evils of colonialism or slavery.

Similarly, Aitor Ibarrola's essay on *Home* entitled "The Challenges of Recovering from Individual and Cultural Trauma in Toni Morrison's *Home*" indicates a postcolonial reading of Morrison's novels because, as he well notes, they often deal with the "enslaving discourse" that maintain "unequal relations" between the black and white cultures. Later following Herrero and Baelo Alluè's ideas, Ibarrola hyperlinks postcolonial and trauma fiction because of the near interest they each pay to ancient and social contexts as a manner to find the beginning of trauma. The central passage, slavery, the great depression or Jim Crow laws are certainly repositories of trauma for all African people and, as argued through Wald and Darder, they may be now no longer hugely extraordinary from different episodes of collective trauma that passed off on account of British colonisation, South Africa's apartheid or land usurpation from indigenous people.

Scholars like Deborah Madsen or Karen Piper argue in favour of a postcolonial approach to ethnic American literatures and believe that this approach to Toni Morrison can be very profitable indeed. So *Home* shows the postmodern questioning

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of history and mistrust of metanarratives that characterizes postcolonial literatures. Undoubtedly, the postcolonial quality of *Home* comes from the creation of a sisterhood of intervening advisors; a sense of *Home* where the voices of those that the segregationist culture of the time tried to engulf can finally be heard. Further, there are other recurrent preoccupations within the field of postcolonial studies that also resonate in Morrison's texts: the problem of landlessness that the Moneys suffer, for example, or the pervasive stereotyping and the double subjugation that women like Cee endure.

All things considered, *Home* calls for a postcolonial reading since it resists western discourse and all its ramifications: colonialism, racism, sexism, capitalism which Ibarrola calls "enslaving discourses" (112). Even though, this violent form of oppression was flourishing under stained throughout the United States in 1950s, there have been accounts of people who tried to veil its hurtful truths and project an artificial image of success and good intentions. Hyden White's analysis of history as a made-up artefact and Homi Bhabha's ideas on the ambivalence of colonial discourses are keys to understanding Morrison's political agenda of contesting bigoted, white patriarchal historiography and show alternative perspectives that are more valuable. *Home* also shows how mimic men and women, as studied in Bhabha's work, are forms of resistance too because they destabilize colonialism with its own tools.

In essence, the postcolonial postulates of *Home* are natural responses to the abiding period of segregation and racism that black Americans endured in the United States during the Jim Crow era. Contestation of received ideas, therefore, is a way of coming to terms with past trauma since it offers the possibility of a better future to black Americans and the use of non-colonial ways of expression, such as the vivid

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vernacular, the non-linearly of tales or the lack of closure within them, provide a sense of worth that colonial forces cannot destroy. Critics like Peterson and Rutherford argue that “colonialism celebrates male achievement in a series of male-oriented myths such as’ mat ship, the Mounties, explorers, freedom fighters, bushrangers, missionaries’ “(qtd.in Mckleod175).Subsequently, if we take into consideration their assertion, then, *Home* is a postcolonial novel because its main character is anything but heroic. Frank himself requests the omniscient narrator to portray him like this: “don’t paint me as some enthusiastic hero. I had to go but I dreaded it” (48).

Homi Bhabha’s theories in his ground-breaking essay collection” The Location of Culture” are crucial for understanding the true nature of colonial discourse. According to Bhabha, the racial stereotypes that make up orientalism aid the coloniser in securing the other in a safe location. Because those stereotypes will inevitably slip, it is actually impossible to achieve, and hence they” must be frequently repeated in an anxious, imperfect attempt to secure the colonised subject in the discourse of colonialism” (53). In *Home*, we sense this anxious repetition in the continuous bombardment of critiques that Cee endures from many characters, including herself. The colonial discourse is pervasive and deeply ingrained in society as a whole, not something that is violated by a single person. From Cee’s circle loved ones to her place of employment, her race to the dominant one, and from the outside to the inside another instance of anxious repetition in Cee’s constant self-deprecation as the text says:” as usual she blamed being dumb in her lack of schooling” (128). That is necessary in order to combat colonialist stereotypes, but it also serves as evidence that this goal will never be fully attained. Besides property rights issues, Robert Young

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contends that postcolonialism also “stands for the right to basic amenities security, sanitation, health care, food, and education for all people of the earth, young, adult, and aged; women and men”(113). All of those rights are upheld by postcolonialism since colonialism denied them to the people it occupied. For instance, in the 1950s, segregationist constitution restrictions in the United States kept African Americans outcasts and prevented them from accessing high-quality education; this explains why Cee is continuously resentful of the lack of educational chances. Notwithstanding, empowerment against capitalism or the medical and other enslaving discourses such as orientalism will be offered to Cee and Frank at the end of their journeys inside the alternative community of country women, a motif that reinforces *Home*'s postcoloniality. Contrary to the segregationist ethos that run rampant in the greater society in the 1950s, in this postcolonial community difference does not entail discourses, exclusion is absent and they are “generous to strangers, even to those running from the law”(46). It is, like the title of the book signals, *Home*; a safe place, a nurturing place, a place where nobody is going “to degrade or destroy you”(118).

In their effort to eradicate injustices, these postcolonial communities make sure they do not reverse the colonial and patriarchal stereotypes that have subjugating them. As it was shown in the novel, Lenore oppressed poor women and children by her colonising attitudes. She is an embodiment of the discourses of control. Similarly, Frank, a patriarchal figure, is not despised either. They are believed to have “an evil min-set” (120), That is, a prosperity to control. Furthermore, Female postcolonial communities of women can be understood as ecofeminist, in part due to the bonds of mutual nurturance they establish between women, nature and culture. These movements often establish cooperatives that respect both the human and environment.

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*In Home*, the quilting centre in Miss Ethel's house is very suggestive in this respect since, like a third world small cooperative, it aims at fighting cooperative capitalism from below. Besides, it represents Cee's healing process from a deeply traumatic past since that depressing, broken-body state she felt before is now whole, a "newly steady self, confident, cheerful and occupied" (135).

### 4- Trauma Dimension in the novel *Home*

The word "trauma" refers to more than only physician harm or ill health. Several studies have demonstrated how trauma can take different forms and how it has substantially expanded to include psychological problems and brain research. The criteria for complex PTSD include maltreatment, a loss of self-integrity, and disturbances in early development. Researchers study the effects of traumatic stress on the brain and classified it as a complex trauma. It should be mentioned that PTSD and psychological trauma are linked and became recognized disorders following the Vietnam War. By describing and analysing the traumatic experience of others, psychological trauma entered the literary world. This process aims to confront the terrible events and find solution for healing. The psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman affirms in her book *Trauma and Recovery* that

"To study psychological trauma means being witness to horrible events. The study of war trauma becomes legitimate only in a context that challenges that sacrifice of young men in war (4, 5).

The novel *Home* provides a wealth of opportunities to talk about issues like acts of racial, memory traces, the politics of mourning, and both explicit and covert depictions of pain and sorrow. The novel tells a horrific and sinister story about racism, child abuse, and war trauma, it also dramatizes the tragic experiences of war

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veteran Frank Money and his sister Cee in a powerful way, but it also looks at ways to overcome trauma and find peace and healing. Frank Money, the main character in Morrison's newest novel, travels back to Lotus, Georgia, but encounters for too many difficulties to make it the kind of" reconnecting experience "that would aid in his healing from the traumas he endures. In addition to his involvement in the Korean War and the tragic losses he suffered there, his sense of estrangement is heightened by certain nasty memories from his childhood, his failure to support the woman he loves, and the racism he continuous to encounter in the 1950s, in America. In addition, the repeated visits from the past ghosts that he experiences are the most glaring example of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and they highlight the reality of Frank's trauma because they show how his wartime memories have broken and came to block out these memories, as it was indicated in the novel that all he remembers is that after he left Lily's house, he was terrified, he went to the tavern to cheer up and prepare himself for the long journey, Frank left the tavern, and so did his sanity and panic, his self-loathing returned to him disguised as the mistakes of others, and the memories lingering at camp( at Fort Lawton) that survived over his face once he was discharged.

Psychologically speaking, the traumatic experience haunts the traumatized individual and turns into unforgettable memory chasing him like a ghost. Though, the traumatized may forget the details of traumatic events because of its heinous and unbearable nature, Frank finds himself in 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 face down in muddy battlefield" (7) to not get more injections, all

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what he can remember is the noise “no. Just the noise. Loud. Real loud” (13). So he thought that he was in fight” maybe I was in fight?”(13). In addition, those who have experienced trauma may still experience phobias and obsessive connected to the event, suggesting that trauma is a psychological and mental injury that has lasting and sometimes obvious impacts on the victim, going back to the novel, it is worth remembering that after Frank gets off the train, he leans against a steel brace until his panic dissipates from the noise of the station. Moreover, trauma syndromes gives a wide understanding of the shocking events and their impacts on individuals that they faced in life, such as violence, rape, abandonment, and their impacts on their relationships, and that what Toni Morrison try to shed a light on the story of the two siblings.

Frank had been a black soldier in the hospital where they sell dead bodies for a year, and he was still suffering with his horrible recollections. Frank cannot feel at home and feels dislocated everywhere as a result of this estrangement. During this year, he meets, Lillian Florence James or Lily and falls in love with her, he feels that he is in home only with her, Frank says when seeing her “I must have looked the fool, but I did not feel like one. I felt like I’d come home. Finally, I had been wondering. Not totally homeless, but close” (68). At first, life with Frank was wonderful, and she eventually gave in more to tiredness than loneliness. When she returned from work and saw him sitting on the couch, gazing at the floor, wearing one of his stocking and holding the other in his hand, neither calling his name nor kneeling to his face moved him, she start to feel contempt rather than anxiety. Lily eventually discovered that she should ignore him and rushed into the kitchen to tidy up his messes. Her zeal for obtaining that goal was not shared by him, and it appeared that he had no aspirations

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at all. He reportedly responded "to survive" (83), when she asked him about the future. She sighted and thought to herself that the war was still haunting him. Lily presents the optimistic side in his life, but she gets tired because of Frank's behaviour and his bad attitude towards life, he decides to get rid of the pain and the traumatic memories

Right then I decide 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, I was wide open for her"(69).

But he eventually failed to support the woman he loved. Furthermore, Frank and his sister Cee grew up in the small town of Lotus, where they were raised in the house of their cold-hearted grandmother, Lenore. They endured daily injustices, and they are shattered by buried secrets and horrible visions of racial violence. Cee becomes more of a tragic figure than Frank, her life is a collection of shocking traumas since her childhood, she was born on the road without having any roof over her head and her grandmother predicated this homeliness as a "worthless and sinful future"(44). Besides that the book opens with the bad experience that Frank and his sister have witnessed when they saw a murder scene in front of their innocent eyes. It was a traumatic for them to handle such event in this age. She experienced a harsh life that caused her low self-worth, self-disgust and having a fractured identity thus she appears defenceless and having psychological issues. When she was fourteen years old, she became the victim of Prince, a young man with ambition who exploited her by pretending to love her, getting married to her, and leaving her for dead in Atlanta. Inhuman experiments nearly took Cee's life, but her brother was able to save her after

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receiving a letter from Sarah. When Frank arrives just in time to carry Cee home, Lotus, so that she can receive treatment from Miss Ethel, she confirms that Cee will never be able to become pregnant again as result of those experiments, she says” your womb cannot bear fruits”(128). This leads us to say that some fictional characters suffer a terrible trauma that conspicuously affects their psyches; they are traumatized by accidental death. However they in overcoming their traumas and survive. Moreover, Morrison in this novel clarified how important a connection exists between the trauma of war and the trauma of civilian life.

### **5- Black women and white medical experimentation**

Medical experiments developed over different periods of time. The 1950s saw its expansion into the United States, nevertheless. They began with Nazi physicians, working together with numerous other white physicians, who conducted cutting-edge medical experiments on prisoners, women, African Americans and even children. Minorities, particularly African Americans, suffered the most as a result of these experiments, which were the focus of much discussion in the 1950s. Morrison describes it as “a period of racial medical experimentation”. In *Home*, there is a typical example of these medical studies conducted on African Americans in 1950s. Cee falls as victim to an ambitious young man who claimed to love her and married her, living her hopeless in Atlanta and left behind her brother who had always protected her, she experienced a harsh life that caused her low self-worth, self-disgust, and a fractured identity; thus, she appears defenceless and has psychological issues.

Being alone, Cee was working in a restaurant but she desired a professional carrier, 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 am not going back to Lotus”

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(56-57). She consequently begins working as a “helper” for Dr. Beauregard Scott. His wife informs Cee that her husband is a scientist who performs crucial experiments, in addition to being a doctor. She believes Dr. Beau is a good person who can help her improve her position because of her gullibility. Dr. Beau’s experiments emphasize the disparity between white and black race as a result of the Great Race (1916) by American geneticist Madison Grant, *Out of the Night* (1938) by German Communities and the Gestapo against Jan Valtin, and *Heredity, Race, and Society* (1946) by geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky, these publications had an influence on Dr. Beau. The purpose of Dr. Beau is to heal his two daughters, who have had Cephalitis “big heads” (63) throughout the use of Cee’s body. Before she nearly died when she started bleeding, Cee was unaware of how risking these trails were. Upon observing Cee’s difficult circumstances, Sarah, Cee’s friend, is the one who writes Frank the letter. Cee was having trouble in the meanwhile. Right when his sister is in need, Frank appears to save her and brings Cee home. Exactly the way the 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” (133).

Morrison did not specifically portray Dr. Beau’s experiments, but she describes Cee’s physical sufferings and how this experimentation affects her in many ways in which she is now completely violated. Besides Cee, Frank was also about to be experimentation the mental hospital. But he escaped, arriving to Reverend Lock’s house. So the bodies of African American soldiers were exposed to experiments done by white doctors in a Seattle hospital. It is quite obvious from this analysis that the author discusses how African Americans were used as a test subjects in the 1950.

## **Chapter II: Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.**

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Additionally, she aims to expose historical injustices and emphasize how widespread racism was in scientific research and medical experimentation.

## Chapter II: Postcolonial Reading of Traumatic Experiences in Toni Morrison's *Home*.

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### Conclusion

Toni Morrison, like other African American writers, tries to reflect the difficult conditions of blacks, especially women, in her novel. Racism, violence, and slavery impact a character's mental status in different ways; trauma, however, is a consequence that is of particular concern in *Home*. The two protagonists in the novel were the victims of maltreatment, which led them to witness the painful trauma in addition to various emotional damages. Morrison portrays the physical and psychological abuse of the blacks through the embodiment of the white medical experimentations and the Korean War as well, in addition to their terrors and traumas, while challenging the domination of white supremacy over African Americans, which causes shock and later leads to self-distraction. Further, it is safe to assume that she wants to demonstrate that the homeless and ambivalent people have lost their rights, lands, and identities under the Jim Crow laws to the extent that they have been subjected to the dominant power during the 1950s. In his regard, Toni Morrison's *Home*, like her other works, can be considered in a postcolonial feminist context since she touched at the consistent tension and addresses the trouble of black lady in a postcolonial context as Anne Whitehead notes that *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 postmodern and postcolonial narratives.

**Chapter III**  
**Gothicism and Trauma in Morrison's**  
*Home.*

**Introduction**

Both gothic and trauma are literary genres that try to reflect alternative realities, distinct worldviews and various histories; both genres are concerned with subversion and transgression. This chapter reconsiders the relationship between trauma and gothic through Toni Morrison's novel *Home*, in which she uses gothic themes and tropes to expose, refute, and oppose the dominant racial oppression narrative that defines African Americans as less than human. In this sense, Morrison frequently uses gothic imagery since it create a space for both the expression of the anguish and suffering brought on by racism and discrimination as well as a counter-hegemonic force. Subsequently, this chapter explores the way Toni Morrison's novel *Home* uses gothic and trauma to confront crises and contends that by combining the two genres, the unspeakable can be stated as well as the silenced history of slavery, in addition to that, it can be understood that trauma is not immediately or consciously recognized by the suffer (Vees –Gulani 19). Only later do the effects of trauma appear in the form of symptoms associated with it, such as nightmares and obsessive and repetitive behaviour. These symptoms violate the integrity and coherence of the story about the self in a way that they seem to be “lived” rather than “remember” experiences. It contends that the past can be perceived to haunt the present and to impose itself in crisis and several horrific situations. Thereby demonstrating *Home's* symbolic representation of history that has been kept silent and tragic experiences that have been buried; besides to that, and in order to deal with trauma of slavery, Morrison makes the case that the story must be told and the memories must be given space to be released.

**1-The African American Gothic**

*In Screams from Shadowed Places*, Maisha Wester outlines a few fundamental ideas about the gothic and American gothic. Wester (2012) emphasizes the difficulty for African American writers to borrow the gothic to express worries and concerns about their place in the larger American culture. According to the critic, the gothic has served as a stage for conflict between “normative” and “non-normative” bodies from the very beginning of the genre (Wester 27). The scholar assumes that “Southern gothic can be understood as a genre that is aware of the impossibility of the escaping racial trauanting and the trauma of a culture that is not just informed by racial history, but also haunted and ruptured by it” (Wester25). In this regard, Charles Crow reminds us that a sizeable percentage of African American gothic is connected to slavery and its legacy. But the critic also points out that other issues are covered by the Southern Gothic and that it is vital to keep in mind that racism is a national problem as well as a locale one.

According to Wester, because the Southern gothic is historically conscious, it can be helpful to understand the African American gothic. The South is thought to be the scene of temporal conflict for this reason: writers frequently depict it as a spot where history loops back on itself. In addition, Wester notes the female gothic as a good lens through which to view the African American gothic, noting that numerous female gothic texts deal with the ambivalence of women's relationships with males. She makes observations about how a patriarchal family may serve as both guarantee of security and safety as well as a consultant for imprisonment and torture. Besides, she contends that there is a clear connection between African American's adoption of the gothic to deal with their traumas and problems and the female gothic attempt to navigate a complex figuration inside an unjust society. As she indicates,

Like women, black authors must navigate locations within a society that problematically renders them as other, commodity, and monster; like women, black authors turn to a genre in which their bodies have been historically over articulated and manipulated to render them non-normative (Wester 27).

Wester also mentions that the African American gothic has undoubtedly thought about the horror of temporal collapse as one of its main themes and cares about it, presenting a combined temporal system in which the past is a crucial component of the present. She believes that this idea offers from gothic haunting. In this vein, the African American gothic can be connected to postcolonial trauma studies. Stef Craps supposes that it should take into consideration the historical and social specific contexts in which trauma narratives are produced and received. To him trauma theory” can and should be reshaped, resituated, and redirected so as to foster attainment to previously unheard suffering”. Craps states that in order for trauma theory to become more culturally sensitive and extensive, it needs to acknowledge the sufferings of non-western and minority groups” more fully, for their own sake, and on their own terms” (Craps).

Wester remarks exactly that temporal collapse in African American gothic fiction does no longer paintings as a unified presentation of the past and present. Often, this collapse is figurative, showing how the rhetoric behind slavery continues even now, in contemporary “progressive” America. The scholar also observes that black writers around and after the Civil Rights movement are not only concerned with the ways dominant American culture tries to mash this temporal collapse, but also with the ways black memory and culture may help perpetuate it. According to her: if American gothic literature is concerned with the proverbial “ skeleton in the closet”, or more exactly, the problem of the repressed-specifically repressed histories- returning to

haunt and demand recognition, then African American gothic is more exactly concerned with the problem of repression itself. Wester, likewise, one of the notions with the African American gothic significantly rewrites is that of the uncanny. In black literary texts, there is tendency to replace the concept of the uncanny as he revealed hidden object or the returned with the moment of hidden and the process of repression: they look at the institutions that marked them as savage, look at the reasons for the hiding, and the historical moment of silencing. Here, the uncanny are the motives, the method, and the process behind the Anglo-American trope of uncanny (29). Furthermore, Wester highlights the fact that politicized concepts of identity such as black rapist, the other, the helpless, and the fainting woman pervade the gothic genre.

## **2- Gothic Tropes in *Home***

The implication of paranormal or illogical occurrences, such as inanimate objects coming to life, ghosts, and spirits, in gothic literature contributes significantly to the genre's fascination. More recent and conventional example is Toni Morrison's *Home*, which is commonly regarded as contemporary interpretation of the traditional gothic since it embodies various gothic elements including supernatural and paranormal activities in addition to nightmares and the uncanny. The protagonists of the tale are a former slave, Frank, and his sister, Cee, whose house is haunted by a spirit that is said to be the ghost of a young infant. Apparently, Frank suffered from horrific images like the image of a "zoot-suited man" or the ghost that appeared and disappeared, like the ghost he met on the train while he was traveling to Chicago, or the other images, for instance

“Hey! Who the hell are you? What you want?” Frank arose from the bed and moved toward the figure. After three steps the zoot-suited man disappeared. Frank went back to bed, thinking that particular living dream was not all that bad compared to others he'd had (*Home* 33).

These images influence his inner character and show that his world is a scattered one. Frank has deduced that the ghost likely belonged to Jerome's father since, when he asks Salem and the other man in Lotus about the place where some white farmers used to have horse and dog fights, it was the place where he and his sister used to visit when they were kids, he learns of a horrible story. Once, a black man and his father were forced to fight each other. Only one of them could leave the improvised ring, and only when the other had been killed. After being forced to murder his father, the son, Jerome, escaped to Lotus and sobbed while he told the people in town about what happened. Frank takes Cee and a quilt she had knitted, they returned to the horse farm where they had earlier seen the black man brutally killed and buried, and recovers the remains of the body. The siblings involves the bones and skull in the quilt and bury it by a sweet bay tree,” split down the middle, beheaded, undead” ( Morrison 144). By doing so, the ghost appeared and disappeared again as it was indicated in the novel when Cee asks Frank

“Who is that?” Cee pointed her finger at the other side of the opposite bank.

“Where?” Frank turned to look. “I don't see anyone”.

“I think he is gone now”. But she was not sure, he seems to her as a short man in an odd suit, swinging a watch chain, and grinning widely (160).

Thus, utilizing paranormal components like the ghosts, it adheres to the conventions of terrors and horror. Besides to that, in gothic literature, nightmares are

an especially significant omen. The haunting elements of a novel's plot were made more intense by using nightmares, which have a long history of being associated with the act of prophecy. Authors can more effectively depict the feelings of their characters in a terrifying and urgent state by using dreams. It is clear that when Frank experiences frequent nightmares and terrifying visions, some of which include the murders of his companions as the narrator stated that when he visited Reverend Locke, Frank's sleep-induced dreams of bodies and blood. When he first awoke, it took him some time to realize where he was, however, once Reverend Locke entered, he began to remember. According to Van Der Kolk and Van Der Hart, traumatic events cannot be experienced at the time of their occurrence, they are instead "contained in an alternate stream of consciousness"(168), where, as Caruth and others argue, the memories" are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control"(151). Subsequently, memories of traumatic events emerge unconsciously, often in the form of" somatic sensation, behavioural re-enactments, nightmares and flashbacks" (Van Der Kolk 172) at a distance from the event itself, the survivors are eventually forced to remember, to confront indeed, to truly experience for the first time, events that have psychologically scarred them,

So, as was often the case when he was alone and sober whatever the surrounding, he saw a boy pushing his entrails back in, holding them in his palms like a fortune-teller's global 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 colourful guts under that oh-so-thin sheet of flesh. Against the black and white of the winter landscape, blood red took centre stage/ they never went away, these pictures (*Home* 20).

Regarding the novel again, it is important to keep in mind that after the conversation between Frank and Thomas, Frank remembers his memories of his two homeboys who were killed in the battle field while he was unable to rescue or assist them; as the author states, they had screamed and asked for help but Frank did not do much for them. This refers to his worst nightmares, such as “dogs or birds eating the remains of his comrades, like the hallucinations he'd had once while sitting on a bench in the city park's rose garden” (*Home*33). It was terrifying for Frank to deal with his memories after losing his homeboys, Mike and Stuff, following his return from the war, hallucinations and nightmares,

Afterward, for months on end, Frank kept thinking,” but I know them, I know them and they know me”. If he heard a joke a Mike would love, he would turn his head to tell it to him- then a nanosecond of embarrassment before realizing he was not there. Sometimes, long after he'd been discharged, he would see Stuff's face 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).

That is to say, trauma is typically understood as the psychological state of a person who experiences a traumatic event, such as family conflict, war, or shock following an unpleasant experience, the victim's behaviour can also be altered by a traumatic experience. He begins acting strangely, experiencing nightmares and flashbacks of what transpired. The uncanny, likewise, is another vision in gothic literature. When Frank received a letter from Sarah asking him to rescue his unconscious, weak, and feverish sister, he is eventually spotted by the Scott:” the doctor raised the gun and pointed it at what in his fear ought to have been flaring

nostrils, foaming lips, and the red-rimmed eyes of a savage. Instead he saw the quite, even serene, face of a man not to be fooled with" (Morrison 111). According to Wester the African American body exists as the threatening object to white identity which is exactly the place where minority bodies are rendered abject. As we can see very clearly that Scott despises Cee's body, even as he studies it. His repulse is accompanied by his fear: Ycidra's fertility presents the possibility of miscegenation, one of the greatest sources of anxieties in the American gothic (Wester).

It is also interesting to know that Scott looks at Frank with absolute fear, ready to find the "black savage". Instead he sees a calm, determined man. Morrison here is both subverting notions related to the black rapist, aggressor or savage showing that the absence of monstrosity is destabilizing to Scott. In addition to that, the medical industry is not the only white institution which is met with suspension and scorn by the Lotus community. Trying to make sense and reintegrate memories from past, in this way, Frank once heard a terrible tale about a black man and his father being made to fight, and the son Jerome was obliged to have his father killed so that he could escape the improvised ring. Thus, neither white medicine nor white police offer comfort or security to black people. As Wester observes, the uncanny in the African American gothic is represented by the institutions that marked them as savage. The uncanny here, is the process, the motives, and the method employed by the Anglo-American tropes of uncaniness. Furthermore, Cee's journey is very interesting to observe. When she considered the experiments that were conducted on her, she cries because she cannot have children. Nevertheless, the girl refutes this approach to her pain "I can be miserable if I want to. You don't need to try and make it go away. It shouldn't go away. It is just as sad as it ought to be and I am not going to hide it from what is true just because it hurts" (Morrison 131). Hence, we can infer that Ycidra does not see

her body as monstrous because of her infertility; instead she recognizes that Scott is the true monster, because he has done this to her. By the time Cee and Frank move back to their old house, the woman is determined to respect herself and to never need rescuing again as a result of her healing progress and what she learns from the teaching of the women in Lotus which were beneficial to her situation. Accordingly, this process can be linked to one of the themes that Wester identifies in the African American Gothic: the acceptance of the “grotesque” and decision to flee the insanity and cruelty of the “civilized” world.

### **3-Gothicism as a literary retrospective in *Home***

One of the most important aspects of the gothic is the distinctive tendency, sometimes referred to as “the gothic loop”, which is characterized by literary “Backsomersaults” and is perhaps one of the most fundamental structural principles. Any gothic text relies upon in its depiction of fictional events. Thus, a violent incursion of previous events into the protagonist’s present day experience curves the “gothic loop”, as it can be called; its appearance serves a variety of literary purposes. In this case, the past often depicted as an issue burdened with historical and personal crises. Several authors, among them Toni Morrison, have found this intellectually stimulating effect of the temporal loop, and they commonly use the retrospective direction of gothic narratives for particularly fascinating goal, in particular the reliving of personal and sociocultural trauma. In order to create a better restarting point in the story, the gothic loop appears to be unique element, a fictional time and space of various suspensions where certain past or present traumas must be repeatedly experienced and ultimately resolved with horror and suffering on the part of the protagonists. Within the framework of the gothic loop, a previously suppressed past event forcibly enters the present and refuses to go away in attempt to haunt the

protagonists 'minds until they agree to face the difficulties that processing that past memory has to offer, in this regard and as Fassin and Rechtman state that

“the traumatic event is defined as an event outside the range of usual human experience that disturbed the psyche’s normal capacity for resistance, and the personal response is defined as a normal response to an abnormal situation; whereas trauma is described as an unfortunate encounter between an ordinary person and extraordinary event”(87).

Consider how, for instance, in Toni Morrison’s novel *Home*, the past literally walks into the protagonists’ present time as an incarnated ghost, bringing a host of unwelcome memories that neither the main character Frank nor his sister Cee are ready to resolve. Moving in a physical sense does not provide a solution to the kind of haunting Morrison’s characters experience; what is really needed is a form of psychological movement, the liberation of one’s identity from the past, whose unresolved matters deprive the self of its own legitimacy within the present time. Frank has memories, even re-memories, of his past, but he is unable to conceive of a future as long as his character is defined by an even-returning, aggressively present personal history. Thus, Morrison’s characters decide to turn to the past, and the more their story evolves in the course of the novel, the further they venture back in time to the heart of their present-day problem. Thus, the structure of the gothic loop allows for such self-reflection precisely because it creates a literary space for examining the relation between past and present through historical, experimental events where both present-day cultural identities and societies can be brought into parallel with their past or even with their non-existence, fictional counterparts.

**3-1 *Home* between Gothicism and cultural trauma:**

Some literary works are linked to characters' traumatic experiences that led to psychological disorders. Through *Home*, Morrison subtly demonstrates how African Americans were the victims of slavery and they were exposed to a variety of traumatic events and unfavourable circumstances that left them unstable mentally. They were subjected to horrible and unfair treatment. Slavery played a key role in the trauma that shaped the early African American identity and as it is known that Morrison is interested in African American issues like slavery and identity by using repetition in the gothic. Since it functions as it does for certain other traumas, the reactivation of trauma is an attempt to recognize the incredible and unspeakable that happened. Other traumas are caused by slavery including psychological trauma and cultural trauma, the concept of cultural trauma refers to a collective experience, according to Smelser

” cultural trauma refers to an invasive and over whelming event that is believed to undermine or overwhelm one of several essential ingredients of a culture as a whole, here culture is defined as the pattern of elements (values, norms, beliefs, ideologies, and knowledge) that constitute a group's meaning-system” (38).

Thus, a cultural trauma refers to the breakdown of a group's meaning-system. At its core, a cultural trauma can therefore be said to threaten collective identity. In this sense Jeffery Alexander argues that

A cultural trauma occurs when members of collectives feel they have been subjected to horrendous events that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, making their memories for ever and changing their feature identity in fundamental and in evocable ways”(1)

So it is safe to assume that cultural trauma is an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions and actions. In the novel *Home*, Toni Morrison discusses her views on identification and serves as reminder of shared humanity through the representation of suffering, regardless of whom or what kind of trauma that is, and using the gothic narrative and gothic loops as structural types of representation to discourse about the past in order to alter view points, transform identities, and defend a potential future for its protagonists. Morrison sheds a light on the on-going trauma of female identity and also makes a connection between trauma re-enactments and the gothic of repetition. Bloom stated that “Morrison’s world is richly imbued with a sense of place, community, and identity” (Bloom).

The looping pattern of the gothic tradition can be considered a significant structural and representational tool of fragmented identities that result from traumatic memories, regardless of the traumatic event’s cultural or social environment, and that is what Morrison indicates in her novel through her characters, Frank and Cee, that their looping pattern can be easily recognized, she has chosen both genders to present the story. More generally, Morrison always uses characters to present the suffering of the entire community; she makes an effort to imply something about the overall nature of the characters’ healing process. The connection and solidarity that African Americans show to each other help in rebuilding the collective identity through mending the individual traumatic experiences in society. It is obvious that Frank had a hard time adjusting to normal life after leaving the military hospital. Yet, he encounters numerous helpful individuals, enabling him to get along with society.

The second example depicts Cee as a female character and highlights the pain experienced by African American women at that time; that is to say trauma might

therefor take the form of an even-affecting state rather than being limited to a particular past horror. Morrison also demonstrates that the problem of trauma re-enactment in gothic discourse is not only a gender-specific issue that affects aspects of female identity or the feminism of gothic, but also a central theme of gothic that permeates a wide range of cultural and social traumas. In addition to that, the narrator discusses the effects of racism and segregation, including how black people were compelled to abandon their homes and relocate

Twenty-four hours, they were told, or else. "Else" meaning "die". It was early morning when the warnings came, just after dawn at the twenty-fourth hour he was beaten to death with pips and rifle butts and tied to the oldest magnolia tree in the country-the one that grew in his own yard"(10)

Moreover, Billy Watson, a black man, also assists Frank on his journey. Billy introduces Frank to his wife and his son Thomas. Frank inquires after observing that the son is missing his right hand, Billy says "drive-by cop", he said "he had a cop pistol. Eight years old, running up and down the sidewalk pointing it, cops shot anywhere they want there is a mob city"(31). Thus, all these forms of racism and collection suffering serve to mark the cultural trauma and collective identity of African Americans. Members of minorities define their solidarity relationship in a way that enable them to share in the pain other, as long as they recognize, the source of trauma and accept such moral responsibility.

#### **4- Little Baby-Ghost: Haunting past and Haunting memory**

*Home* is imbued with gothic elements and reminiscent of a traditional ghost story. The haunted house, the baby-ghost, the dead returning to living, and murdered, all work together to construct a narrative of terror and horror, it is "not a story to pass on,

or in other words, a story to write, as it is too horrific and traumatic to be narrated”(Morrison324). Nevertheless, Morrison is able to create a narrative, through which the unspeakable is spoken or maybe rather signified, which in itself is a gothic feature (punter169). Spaulding argues in “Ghosts, Hunted Houses, and the Legacy of Slavery” that *Home* draws from the gothic genre to enable a rewriting of the past and that Morrison uses gothic feature to “ expand the parameters of the original slave narrative and traditional history”(61). As the return of the dead or the repressed, here the ghost physical return, is a gothic feature, the gothic becomes a means to allow a disclaimed history to resurface into the present and to simultaneously present an alternative to conventional hegemonic historiographies. This enables Morrison to inscribe into hegemonic history a previously silenced view and experience of slavery.

The siblings Cee and Frank, as well as his two friends, who managed to flee slavery, racial discrimination and brutality, are novel's protagonists. Cee witnessed the horrific events and traumatic experiences with her step-grandmother, her husband and later with the doctor Beau who rendered her sterile as she tells her brother that she cannot have a baby when she is crying” I can't have children “ Cee told him” never” (131). These entire serve as related traumas in her life, this traumas nonetheless remains unsolved and latent, which ultimately triggers a crisis and the baby ghost rogue actor. On the other hand, Frank, who became a cold hearted individual and purposefully killed the little Korean girl after the deaths of his friends in the Korean War. He developed post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the terrible things he went through in the war, but the Korean girl he killed while on his solitary duty affected him more. Frank was drawn to the girl as she gathered food from the army trash; he sexually assaulted her before killing 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 (99).

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 yam-yam" (96), here Frank refused the idea that he was the guard himself who killed the Korean girl.

The psychoanalysts may help traumatised 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 future of recollection some events. 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 have always known that really', I have just never thought about it" (Freud). More broadly, the haunted house trope is frequently employed in gothic literature to engender unease and tension. The house itself might be viewed as a character, with its own secrets and hidden dangers, it can be a literal house that is haunted by the ghosts of former tenants, or it can be a symbolic house in which case the house does represent the protagonist's mental state and serve as a metaphor for it. In her novel, Morrison used the baby ghost and the haunted house. Baby ghost return functions as a turning point in the lives of the siblings, Frank and Cee are still affected by the traumatic memories of slavery and the horrific events; additionally, the baby ghost of the murdered little Korean girl haunts their house. Cee observed a baby girl smiling and hovering over the entire home as

well as in the air, the cloud was changing its shape to resemble a baby; more than that, she observed the child's toothless grin in a green pepper corn. She initially thought that her vision of the ghost was just a reflection of her physical state as a result of losing her womb and being unable to have a baby due to the experiments which were conducted on her body. Cee tells Frank that she keeps seeing a ghost around their house, and that she knows it is the child who should belong to her. Frank understands that her vision had a deeper significance related to the incident; he believes it to be the kid that he shot in Korea, and he has now finally faced this tragic event and the truth. When the ghost physically returns as a taunt to Frank as a guilt-ridden person, Frank faces his turning point and is required to address his past and exorcise the ghost. He confesses his sin at the end of the story while he had told that the guard shoots at the little girl,

I have to tell you the whole truth. I lied to you and I lied to me

I hide from you because I hide it from me my mourning

I shot the Korean girl in her face,

I am the one she touched

I am the one she said "yam-yam" to

A child. A wee little girl. I didn't think, I didn't have to

Better she should die (33).

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 bear his feeling about his traumatic experience, on the other hand, Cee is reborn when Ethel and the black

women of her community cure her deep physical wounds, as well as the psychological and emotional scars inflicted by the patriarchal system; therefore, she truly is on her way to achieving her request for self-affirmation

“Look to yourself. You are free. Nothing and nobody is obliged to save you but you. Seed your own land. You young and woman and there is a 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 is slavery. From where inside you is that free person I am talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world” (126).

*Home* draws attention to the collective trauma of slavery and the gothic “creates an alternative representation of slavery that forces readers to shift their focus away from the haunted house and the ghost toward the real gothic element of the text which is slavery itself and those who systematically perpetuated it” (Spaulding 63). In the novel, Morrison refuses again” to accept isolationism and instead upholding community “(Brillon 8). Eventually, 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.

**Conclusion**

Since its inception, gothic fiction has taken on a distinctive narrative trajectory that is sometimes characterized as retrospective, repetitious, or circular in nature by academics and readers alike. In order to highlight an issue that, despite being deeply rooted in some old legacy, still exists in the present and necessitates rapid resolution, gothic texts often move through a succession of flashbacks. In her most recent novel, Morrison displays aspects of the African American Gothic, in which she presents the story of two siblings after facing several traumatic episodes throughout their lives. As previously noted, this chapter aims to analyse and observe the gothic elements presented in the novel *Home*, particularly those related to the trajectory of the two protagonists. Morrison shows how the gothic is associated with the supernatural and the uncanny, in addition to elements of murder, torture and rape, all of which are also part of the narrative and history of slavery. Her story depicts tragedies that have their origins in the suppressed truths of history. Moreover, she exposes the unjustified eugenics world that defines blacks as inferior with gothic overtones.

Notwithstanding, Morrison uses gothic tropes in order to convey the abhorrent behaviours and shows that African American Gothic can be said to resemble the Southern Gothic by representing a community that is haunted by its history and its struggle to keep its humanity and achieve wholeness in a white-dominated patriarchal western world full of violence and gothic horrors. Subsequently, this chapter explores the influence of traumatic events and gothic elements in Toni Morrison's novel, and how the author uses them as devices to expose the tribulations of being African American in the United States.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

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### General Conclusion

Through her novel *Home*, Morrison seizes the chance to allot justice to some unprivileged subjects as well as to critique the United States colonialism of both past and present, the system of patriarchal racism, sexism, enslaving discourses, and classism by putting them at the fore front of the literary scene. Therefore, *Home* is a tale about racial tenets and trauma of colonialism in which the author tend to use the gothic to express these traumas that caused by enslavement and other forms of white racial violence.

This research studied trauma theory as it represented in Toni Morrison's *Home* in the light of postcolonialism and Gothicism contexts. In this dissertation, the first chapter dealt with a theoretical background about the three concepts; postcolonial theory, trauma theory, and gothic fiction by demonstrating their key concepts and main thinkers. The second chapter covered the novel from a postcolonial perspective and indicated the two neglected historical events. Moreover, it discussed the traumatic experiences of the selected characters in the novel. While the third chapter presented the African American gothic besides that, it highlighted the incorporation of trauma theory with Gothicism in *Home*.

Throughout investigating the traumatic experiences of the main characters and exploring the psychological and physical impacts of trauma and enslaving discourses, it was apparent that the alleviation of wounds inflicted by them required a variety of measures that are differentiated by gender. For Cee Money, this entailed having her mind decolonized and her agency strengthened with confronting words in a home like space. Furthermore, it includes learning how to cope with the trauma of having her womb cut open as well as the ghost of the unborn child. However, Frank Money must

## General Conclusion

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go through his PTSD induced nightmares .it consequently resulted in the redemptive act of understanding that manhood did not necessarily equate with brutality, since one can always be a man and feel smart and dignified without resorting to violence. Likewise, we noticed that history and its presence in the present was a recurrent sense in gothic fiction. The notion of the past haunting the present and the threat of return were also features of trauma and postcolonialism. Thus, the horror in *Home* sprang from a series of historical events that deeply affected the protagonist's life experience. As a result, through the analyses of the protagonist siblings, we found that they suffered from the extreme effects of racial segregation and violence on their psyche and body.

In this dissertation, it was hard to commit to the same track of research regarding the minor problematic immersing of the conducted research. In addition to that, the scope of postcolonialism and Gothicism were too broad to be addressed comprehensively in just a few pages. Perhaps the most difficult part in our dissertation was actually writing it, since we struggled to find sufficient data and research material.

Nevertheless, the future research could further elaborate the context of postcolonial feminism in *Home* by giving new perspectives and more expansibility of the black women torture within these imperial communities. Going steps further, this current study can be interrupted from a postmodern standpoint with different angles of trauma theory.

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## ملخص

شهد تاريخ الأمريكيين من اصل إفريقي مراحل مهمة تميزت بأحداث قاسية و صعبة, بما في ذلك سلب الممتلكات, ووحشية الشرطة, والعديد من الاعمال الوحشية الاخرى التي طاردت الماضي وصدمت الحاضر للسود. هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتحليل رواية "الديار" و تغطية الاحداث الرئيسية التي حدثت خلال الخمسينيات من القرن الماضي في الولايات المتحدة, و سيما خلال الحرب الكورية, من خلال تقديم البعد النفسي للصدمة, والتجارب الطبية البيضاء, و صدمة الحروب في الرواية لأنها تكشف العديد من الحقائق الواقعية حول فترة تاريخية مهمة وتصف كيف عانى الأمريكيون الأفارق من هذه الصدمات وكانوا ضحايا لسوء المعاملة والعزل والعنصرية. الى جانب ذلك, فان وجود الاشباح بالإضافة الى العناصر القوطية الاخرى في السرد يدل على اسبابها وتأثيرها على الشقيين. تحاول هذه الأطروحة التحقيق في تمثيل الأمريكيين من اصل افريقي في رواية "الديار" للروائية توني موريسون من وجهة نظر الام لنظرية الصدمة واثبات كيف تعتمد موريسون, في سياق ما بعد الاستعمار, على التاريخ والذاكرة والخيال القوطي والصدمة التي عانت منها الشخصيات الرئيسية من اجل قلب الافتراضات الغربية السائدة. و بالتالي, تم تقديم هذا البحث الى مناهج ما بعد الاستعمار والتحليل النفسي, الى جانب الاساليب النوعية والوصفية. الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على الصدمات التي عانى منها تاريخ السود في سياق ما بعد الاستعمار والقوطية. ومنها تخلص هذه الدراسة الى الاثار المدمرة النفسية والجسدية لأنها تشير الى عملية الصدمة في رواية توني موريسون "الديار".

## Résumé

L'histoire Afro-Américaine a connu des phases importantes caractérisées par des événements durs et difficiles, notamment la déposssession de biens, la brutalité policière et de nombreux autres actes cruels qui ont hanté le passé et traumatisé le présent pour les Noirs. Cette étude est une tentative d'analyser le roman *Home* et de couvrir les principaux événements survenus au cours des années 1950s aux États-Unis, en particulier pendant la guerre de Corée, en présentant la dimension psycho-traumatique, l'expérimentation médicale blanche et la guerre des traumatismes dans le roman car il révèle de nombreux faits réalistes sur une période historique négligée et décrit comment les Afro-Américains ont souffert de ces traumatismes et ont été victimes de maltraitance, de ségrégation et de racisme. En plus de cela, la présence des fantômes en plus d'autres éléments gothiques dans le récit dénote leurs raisons et leurs effets sur les deux frères et sœurs. Cette thèse tente d'enquêter sur la représentation de l'Afro-Américain dans Toni Morrison *Home* du point de vue de la théorie des traumatismes de la mère et de démontrer comment Morrison, dans un contexte postcolonial, s'appuie sur l'histoire, la mémoire, la fiction gothique et les traumatismes dont les personnages principaux ont souffert afin d'inverser les hypothèses occidentales dominantes. Ainsi, cette recherche a été soumise à des approches postcoloniales et psychologiques, ainsi qu'à des méthodes qualitatives et descriptives. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est de mettre en évidence les traumatismes vécus dans l'histoire des personnes noires dans le contexte du postcolonialisme et de gothicisme. Par conséquent, cette étude conclut aux impacts psychologiques et physiques destructeurs car ils indiquent le processus de traumatisme dans le roman de Toni Morrison.