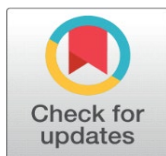
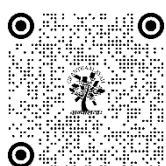


# A JOURNEY TOWARDS WHOLENESS: EXPLORING TRAUMA AND HEALING IN TONI MORRISON'S HOME

Dr. Arpita Sawhney <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English, Dyal Singh College, Karnal



## DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.4757](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.4757)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

**Copyright:** © 2024 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



## ABSTRACT

Toni Morrison was a distinguished American novelist, essayist, book editor, and professor. Growing up during a time of racial tension in mid-20th-century America, Morrison's awareness of racial inequality and injustice shaped her writing. The realities of living in a segregated society influenced her to explore themes such as race, identity, and social disparity. Trauma plays a central role in African American literature, acting as a powerful medium through which painful and often neglected histories are revisited. The paper studies Toni Morrison's penultimate novel, *Home* (2012) with particular focus on the intricate nature of trauma and its lasting effects on individuals and communities. Set against the backdrop of war and brutal racial discrimination, *Home* focuses on male perspectives, examining the brutal realities of war, its profound emotional impact on men, the strength of male friendships, and the sense of duty and solidarity that emerges among brothers. The paper engages in an indepth analysis of trauma theory. Through this paper, I seek to demonstrate how the accumulation of experiences such as witnessing violence, enduring discrimination, facing limited opportunities, and grappling with societal stereotypes leaves the main characters Frank Money and his sister Cee with a profound sense of humiliation and alienation. In *Home*, Morrison charts the challenging yet essential journey from trauma to healing. The paper examines how Morrison traces the process of self-transformation, emerging from painful external events like racial conflict while also celebrating the indomitable spirit that endures in the face of adversity.

**Keywords:** Trauma, Violence, Racism, Alienation, Healing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Toni Morrison, who became the first African-American woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, was a distinguished American novelist, essayist, book editor, and professor. Born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio, her early life had a profound impact on her literary work. Growing up during a time of racial tension in mid-20th-century America, Morrison's awareness of racial inequality and injustice shaped her writing. The realities of living in a segregated society influenced her to explore themes such as race, identity, and social disparity. She delved into the complexities of African-American experiences, often addressing the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Black communities. Her deep engagement with African-American culture, folklore, and oral storytelling traditions played a pivotal role in shaping her unique literary style. By weaving these cultural elements into her work, Morrison created authentic, evocative narratives that captured the essence of African-American life.

Trauma plays a central role in African American literature, acting as a powerful medium through which painful and often neglected histories are revisited. This theme reflects a shared narrative of suffering, resilience, and survival in the face of overwhelming hardship. At the core of much African American writing is the lingering impact of historical trauma, particularly the brutal experiences of slavery. This trauma, deeply ingrained in the collective memory, continues to echo in the works of writers like Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, and many others. Their stories preserve the harsh memories and silenced histories of pain, with each piece of literature standing as a tribute to the strength and endurance of those who have faced generations of hardship. The trauma explored in African American fiction spans a wide array of experiences, from the aftermath of slavery to ongoing struggles with racial injustice, systemic inequality, and the search for identity and belonging.

Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012), her penultimate novel, delves deeply into the intricate nature of trauma and its lasting effects on individuals and communities. Set against the backdrop of war, racial discrimination, and the search for belonging, it offers a powerful exploration of the psychological toll of conflict and the lingering wounds of racism. Unlike much of her earlier work, which often centered on female experiences, *Home* shifts focus to male perspectives, examining the brutal realities of war, its profound emotional impact on men, the strength of male friendships, and the sense of duty and solidarity that emerges among brothers. Morrison's storytelling skillfully intertwines these themes, providing a poignant look at how trauma shapes the lives of her characters.

According to Michiko Kakutani, "*Home* encapsulates all the themes that have fueled her fiction [...]: the hold that time past exerts over time present, the hazards of love (and its link to leaving and loss), the possibility of redemption and transcendence" (np).

At the heart of *Home* is Frank Money, a Korean War veteran who is deeply affected by the traumatic experiences of combat, with the painful memories continuing to haunt him after his return to the racially charged environment of America. Morrison intricately develops Frank's character, peeling back the layers of his psyche to reveal the lasting impact of war trauma. Frank wrestles with the devastating consequences of combat, burdened by grief, guilt, and a fractured sense of self. His journey offers a poignant portrayal of the psychological disintegration caused by war, highlighting the profound cost of conflict.

The war marks a critical turning point in Frank's life, a period that shapes his character and leaves an indelible mark on his identity. Morrison skillfully incorporates Frank's memories of the war, showing the chaos, brutality, and moral complexities of the battlefield. Through fragmented recollections and disturbing flashbacks, the novel allows readers to witness the emotional toll of war on Frank's psyche, illustrating the horror and psychological damage he carries with him. Instead of focusing on battle scenes or military tactics, the novel emphasizes the lasting effects of war—its continued emotional and mental strain on Frank. The war acts as a catalyst for Frank's inner turmoil, amplifying his feelings of isolation, guilt, and detachment as he struggles to adjust to life back home.

Churchwell notes: "Morrison returns to the 50s, an era she remembers, to mine the traumatic possibilities of the Korean War and of biological experiments on African-Americans" (np).

For Frank, the battlefield serves as a crucible of immense suffering, where the raw experiences of violence, death, and moral ambiguity leave deep, lasting scars on his psyche. Morrison paints a powerful, unsettling portrayal of the brutality and disorder of war, showing how the horrors witnessed and perpetrated continue to haunt him long after the physical wounds have healed. Frank's trauma is complex, extending beyond the external violence to encompass the internal struggles that torment him. The moral dilemmas of war weigh heavily on his mind as he reflects on the actions he took and the ethical compromises he made in order to survive. Through Frank's inner turmoil, Morrison explores the psychological effects of war, capturing his guilt and the relentless flashbacks that blur the boundaries between past and present.

The effects of Frank's trauma extend beyond the battlefield, deeply affecting his life after he returns home. Morrison skillfully depicts the alienation and emotional distance Frank experiences, unable to reconnect with a society that cannot understand the depth of his pain. His numbness and sense of disconnection reflect the isolating nature of trauma. His fragmented memories of the war emerge not as distant recollections, but as vivid, recurring experiences that torment him as if they were happening all over again, leaving him trapped in an endless cycle of emotional distress:

So, as was often the case when he was alone and sober, whatever the surroundings, he saw a boy pushing his entrails back in, holding them in his palms like a fortune-teller's globe shattering with bad news; or he heard a boy with only the bottom half of his face intact, the lips calling mama. And he was stepping over them, around them, to stay alive,

to keep his own face from dissolving, his own colorful guts under that oh-so-thin sheet of flesh. Against the black and white of the winter landscape, blood red took center stage. They never went away, these pictures. (20)

Furthermore, Morrison emphasizes the societal neglect and insufficient support systems faced by returning veterans, which further complicate Frank's efforts to reconcile his wartime experiences with the societal expectations of normalcy. The persistent effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are evident in his erratic behavior, emotional instability, and the overwhelming sense of being trapped in a constant cycle of memories and nightmares. Frank's inability to process the traumatic losses of his closest friends, Mike and Stuff, in Korea stands as a significant barrier to his ability to come to terms with his painful past. The absence of these two beloved friends is clearly intertwined with his difficulty in forming new connections and finding his place in the world. As Morrison writes, "Sometimes, long after he'd been discharged, he would see Stuff's profile in a car stopped in traffic until the heart jump of sorrow announced his mistake. Abrupt, unregulated memories put a watery shine in his eyes. For months, only alcohol dispersed his best friends, the hovering dead he could no longer hear, talk to, or laugh with" (99). Jacques Derrida argues that such "ghosts" often fragment both individual identity and communal ties, as they refer to "certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us" (xix). Whitehead notes that the prevalence of ghosts in contemporary literature reflects a tendency among writers to explore "the nature of trauma as psychological possession" and examine the ways in which the past reemerges in the present (6). In *Home*, Morrison thoughtfully underscores the importance of confronting the lingering traces of both individual and collective trauma, suggesting that a process of grieving may be essential in achieving resolution, or at the very least, alleviating some of the pain.

The trauma Frank endures extends far beyond his military experiences, with its origins deeply rooted in his tumultuous childhood, characterized by racism, loss, and fractured family relationships. The novel weaves together the threads of Frank's past and present, each intricately connected, unveiling the complex layers of trauma that shape his identity. His suffering becomes a multifaceted burden, combining vivid memories of the war with painful recollections of a childhood overshadowed by the pervasive presence of racism. Cathy Caruth's description of trauma as "the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (4) is particularly relevant here, as it speaks to the layers of unspoken pain Frank carries.

Racial prejudice during Frank's childhood forms a critical element of his trauma. Morrison captures the dehumanizing effects of racism on Frank and his sister, Cee, in *Lotus*, Georgia, skillfully portraying the harsh realities of segregation and discrimination. These systemic injustices leave lasting scars on Frank's psyche, shaping his perception of the world and his own place within it. For Frank and Cee, growing up in such a hostile environment means facing not only overt threats but also internalizing a sense of shame and helplessness instilled by a society that systematically devalues their worth. Morrison poignantly conveys the oppressive atmosphere of this environment, illustrating how it becomes a foundational part of Frank's trauma, constantly reminding him of his marginalized status and the ongoing threat to his dignity. A significant moment in Frank's childhood, the lynching of two Black men, underscores the brutality of racial violence and instills a deep sense of fear and helplessness, exposing him to the stark reality of racial injustice in his community.

Morrison powerfully demonstrates how the accumulation of such experiences—witnessing violence, enduring discrimination, facing limited opportunities, and grappling with societal stereotypes—leaves Frank and Cee with a profound sense of humiliation and alienation. These events illustrate the pervasive, destructive impact of systemic racism, showing how it shapes individual identities and reinforces feelings of displacement, even within their own communities.

While there are elements in the novel that support the process of confronting and finding new meaning in traumatic memories, it also introduces other factors that threaten this journey. In addition to Frank's personal traumas from both his childhood and wartime experiences, he is constantly reminded that there are broader, communal wounds that must be addressed before any true healing can take place. Reverend Locke, an important figure in Frank's life, reminds him that despite their service in the military, the situation for Black Americans has remained largely unchanged: "Well, you not the first by a long shot. An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better" (18). This grim statement proves true when Frank later witnesses a Black couple on a train who are brutally attacked simply for purchasing coffee from a white-owned establishment. The situation becomes even more dire when Frank learns of Thomas, an eleven-year-old boy whose right arm was shot off by a rookie policeman while he was innocently playing outside. When Frank expresses disbelief, Billy explains that in Chicago, "Cops shoot anything they want. This here's a mob city" (31).

Frank's awareness of racial degradation grows when he and three other Black men are randomly stopped and frisked by police officers outside a shoe store. As Leah Cohen observes, "Threaded through the story are reminders of our country's vicious inhospitality toward some of its own" (np). These racial encounters, as Durrant points out, serve as stark reminders of the persistent and haunting historical trauma faced by Black citizens in the United States: "The traumatic memory of slavery and the Middle Passage opens up something resembling an internal differend within Morrison's work, one that marks the gap between the subjective act of narration and the traumatic experience of racial oppression in which one is the object rather than the subject in one's history" (19, italics in original). Frank's struggle lies in reconciling his personal trauma with the more complex task of confronting the profound and long-standing wounds of African American history, especially those deeply entrenched in the pervasive legacy of racism.

Loss is a significant aspect of Frank's trauma, casting a long shadow over his life. Morrison vividly portrays the tragic loss of Frank and Cee's parents and the subsequent fragmentation of their family. This fractured family dynamic becomes a deep source of pain for Frank, further intensifying his feelings of isolation and emotional distress. The sudden death of their parents disrupts the foundation of their family, and its impact reverberates throughout the novel, leaving a lasting impression on Frank's psyche. Without the guidance and support of their parents, Frank and Cee are thrust into an uncertain and vulnerable world, contributing to their emotional upheaval. The separation of their family after their parents' death deepens Frank's sense of disconnection and anguish. Morrison explores the aftermath of this familial loss, showing how Frank struggles with unresolved grief and the absence of emotional support. The loss of his parents goes beyond their physical absence—it creates an emotional void that Frank must navigate on his own, fueling his desire for connection and stability. This yearning for familial bonds and a sense of belonging becomes a central theme in the novel. Through Morrison's evocative narrative, familial loss emerges as a powerful, ongoing source of trauma for Frank, shaping his emotional world and his quest for meaning.

Cee, Frank's sister, further enriches Morrison's exploration of trauma. As a young woman navigating a racially prejudiced society, Cee faces the painful consequences of systemic racism, which profoundly influence her life. Morrison presents Cee's vulnerability and resilience in the face of adversity. A particularly striking moment in Cee's journey is her experience of exploitation while working for a white doctor, where she becomes a victim of medical experimentation. She is manipulated by a malevolent doctor who uses her body as a subject for his eugenic experiments. By the time Frank rescues her, she is on the brink of death, and her chances of recovering are slim. This harrowing event marks a crucial turning point for Cee, underscoring the depth of her suffering and the long-lasting scars of systemic oppression.

The doctor's treatment of Cee may have been influenced by deeply rooted racist beliefs, viewing her Black identity as a justification for exploitation. Historically, Black individuals have been subjected to medical experimentation without consent, a practice rooted in entrenched racial prejudices. The power dynamic between the white doctor and Cee, as a Black woman in a subordinate position, likely led the doctor to feel entitled to control her body without regard for her consent or well-being.

When Cee learns that she will be unable to have children after her recovery, she initially accepts it as a consequence of her own naivety. However, after reflecting on the situation, she confides in Frank, revealing a deeper emotional pain: "'Don't,' she said, pushing his hand away. 'I didn't feel anything at first when Miss Ethel told me, but now I think about it all the time. It's like there's a baby girl down here waiting to be born to. And now she has to find another mother'" (131). This evokes an intertextual connection to Sethe from *Beloved*, a mother haunted by the loss of her baby daughter, and serves to highlight the cultural trauma ingrained in the legacy of slavery. As Whitehead notes, "[t]hrough intertextual reference to her own fiction, Morrison reveals that the trauma of slavery has not been laid to rest but resurfaces in the lives and actions of the protagonists" (85).

Through Cee's journey, Morrison examines the intersections of trauma with gender, race, and societal expectations. Cee's struggles embody the challenges Black women face in a society that marginalizes and exploits them. At the same time, Morrison highlights Cee's inner strength, showing her agency and determination to reclaim her autonomy and dignity despite the traumas she endures. Her resilience in the face of societal oppression showcases an unwavering spirit striving for survival in a world marked by injustice.

Morrison's exploration of trauma also extends beyond the individual, examining its far-reaching effects on entire communities. She emphasizes how trauma ripples through generations, perpetuating cycles of pain and dysfunction. The town of Lotus, Georgia, serves as a microcosm for the societal wounds caused by racism. The residents, both Black and white, carry the scars of prejudice, demonstrating how trauma infects the social fabric, breeding division and resentment. Morrison illustrates how racial prejudice has entrenched itself in the town's social structure, creating barriers between



communities and perpetuating inequality. The legacy of past injustices continues to reverberate in interpersonal relationships, societal norms, and the distribution of resources, maintaining a cycle of inequality and conflict. Through her sensitive portrayal of her characters' emotional worlds, Morrison invites readers to confront the complexities of trauma and its far-reaching effects on individuals and communities.

In *Home*, Morrison charts the challenging yet essential journey from trauma to healing. Through Frank's mission to save his sister, Cee, from the harmful influence of the white doctor, Morrison illustrates the long but transformative path toward recovery. Frank's resolve to rescue Cee serves as a symbol of reclaiming control and confronting past traumas. Morrison skillfully portrays the healing power of love, solidarity, and the resilience of the human spirit, showcasing the process of healing as complex and multifaceted. The novel emphasizes how healing is vital for reclaiming one's identity and sense of belonging, with Frank's journey back to Lotus, Georgia, to save his sister deeply intertwined with themes of trauma, race, and family. The narrative presents healing as a strenuous but transformative journey that requires confronting painful memories, acknowledging suffering, and building connections with community, culture, and self-acceptance.

At the heart of the novel's healing process is the bond between Frank and Cee. His commitment to rescuing her from the doctor's grip becomes a crucial element of his own healing, highlighting the transformative role of family ties. Frank reflects, "Maybe his life had been preserved for Cee, which was only fair since she had been his original caring-for, a selflessness without gain or emotional profit. Even before she could walk he'd taken care of her" (34-35).

The unconditional love and responsibility he feels for his sister motivate him to confront his own struggles and face the challenges that arise. Their relationship evolves throughout the story, illustrating how family connections can serve as a powerful force for healing. As Frank works to protect and care for Cee, he also embarks on a journey of self-discovery and redemption. After successfully rescuing his sister, he feels ready to face his personal demons in a more supportive environment: "Waving occasionally at passing neighbors or those doing chores on their porches, he could not believe how much he had once hated this place. Now it seemed both fresh and ancient, safe and demanding. [...] Frank tried to sort out what else was troubling him and what to do about it" (132).

As Frank witnesses his sister's physical and emotional healing, he recognizes that it is time for him to confront his own deeply buried traumas. These traumas date back to his childhood in Lotus, where he witnessed the secret burial of a Black man and another event related to the murder of a girl resembling Cee, which Frank had committed in Korea after she made an unwanted sexual advance toward him. Frank had pushed these memories aside, substituting them with other, less painful images: the calm sight of the horses on the farm and blaming a guard for the girl's death. Now, as he opens up to the scribe, he appears ready to face the truth of these past experiences and reclaim his damaged sense of Black male identity: "I have to say something to you right now. I have to tell the whole truth. I lied to you and lied to me. I hid it from you because I hid it from me. I felt so proud grieving over my dead friends" (133, italics in original).

Soon after, Frank persuades Cee to return with him to the stud farm where they had once witnessed the burial. Together, they exhume the body of the Black man, symbolizing the act of uncovering repressed memories, and wrap it in the first quilt Cee made. This act of unearthing and re-burying the body, confronting the ghost of their past, allows Frank and Cee to face the trauma from their childhood. It marks an important step toward maturity and responsibility, a change that is clear to the reader. Valerie Smith summarizes: "[b]y reclaiming their personal secrets, they are able to reclaim Lotus as their literal, physical home. Through their willingness to confront their past, they find their true home within them in the memories they share" (135).

Another key figure in Frank's healing journey is Lily, a woman he meets during his return to Lotus, Georgia. She becomes a significant presence in his life as they travel together. Their relationship develops gradually, shaped by the hardships and past struggles both have faced.

Frank, still dealing with the aftermath of the Korean War and haunted by traumatic memories, finds comfort and purpose in Lily's company. Lily also carries her own burdens from her past, having endured significant challenges. Their shared experiences of pain and resilience form a bond that goes beyond surface-level connection. As Frank and Lily travel together, they form a relationship grounded in mutual empathy and understanding. Their companionship becomes a source of emotional support, providing each other with comfort amid their individual struggles. Lily's presence stabilizes Frank, offering him emotional grounding and a sense of connection during a turbulent time. Throughout the novel, their relationship is depicted as one full of tenderness and care, marked by moments of vulnerability as they allow each other into their deepest fears and emotions. Their bond stands as a symbol of hope amidst the darkness of their pasts.

Tosha Sampson Choma observes about Lily:

Frank becomes the person he longs to be when he is with Lily. Her calming presence and kindness cause him to be at peace and reawaken a desire to be a strong, good man [...]. She demonstrates a love in which a Black woman nurtures her partner and provides him stability—emotional, physical, and mental. Her love abates his dependence on alcohol, his nightmares, and attraction to other women. In contrast to his brokenness and inertness, Lily brings vitality and life. (156)

As Frank continues on his journey, despite the weight of losing his two close friends and the lingering guilt from unintentionally harming the Korean girl, he begins to show early signs of healing: "Sitting on the train to Atlanta, Frank suddenly realized that those memories, powerful as they were, did not crush him anymore or throw him into paralyzing despair. He could recall every detail, every sorrow, without needing alcohol to steady him" (100). According to Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery*, survivors of trauma begin to heal when they can "recall in depth and in detail" the painful memories and transform them into a coherent narrative, enabling them to "reconstruct and integrate" these memories into their life stories (175-184).

In addition to Frank's protective drive to save his sister and his firm resolve to free her from the harmful doctor, another key factor supporting his emotional stability throughout his journey is the assistance he receives from a few compassionate individuals. Figures such as Reverend John Locke, Billy Watson, and various other African American supporters provide Frank not only with the practical resources necessary for his journey but also offer essential guidance and emotional encouragement in his darkest moments. Early in his travels, Reverend Locke warns Frank of the potential difficulties he may face: "Listen here, you from Georgia and you been in a desegregated army and maybe you think up North is way different from down South. Don't believe it and don't count on it. Custom is just as real as law and can be just as dangerous" (19).

Without the support and solidarity from these characters, Frank's return to Lotus would have been nearly impossible. They provided him with basic needs like money, food, and clothing, as well as the crucial empathy that trauma experts believe is vital for initiating the healing process. Judith Herman explains that "As the group shares mourning, it simultaneously fosters hope for new relationships. Groups lend a kind of formality and ritual solemnity to individual grief; they help the survivor at once to pay homage to her losses in the past and to repopulate her life in the present" (228).

The novel also depicts Cee's path toward healing, which is a long and difficult journey from deep trauma to self-empowerment. Her healing process begins with the crucial acknowledgment of her wounds, both physical and emotional. The scars from the exploitation and medical abuse she endured affect not just her body, but her spirit as well. Morrison gently portrays Cee's confrontation with her trauma, ensuring that it is neither hidden nor ignored.

After enduring the brutal medical examination, Cee is left with not only the physical scars but also the overwhelming weight of oppression. Her pain symbolizes a larger injustice, one that becomes painfully clear to her. Frank and Cee return to Lotus in search of healing through the wisdom and care of the local women. Under the guidance of Ethel Fordham and other seasoned women in the community, Cee undergoes a significant transformation: "Cee was different. Two months surrounded by country women who loved mean had changed her. The women handled sickness as though it were an affront, an illegal, invading braggart who needed whipping" (121). Cee not only survives her physical trauma but also emerges as a strong, independent woman, "who never again need rescue" (129).

At the heart of Cee's healing process lies the power of community and connection. Together with her brother Frank, Cee embarks on a journey that not only involves physical travel but also an exploration of their shared past. The sibling relationship becomes a fundamental pillar, providing a space where their wounds can be revealed and healing can begin. Through their dynamic, Morrison highlights the crucial role that support systems play in overcoming deep trauma: "Frank and Cee, like some forgotten Hansel and Gretel, locked hands as they navigated the silence and tried to imagine a future" (*Home* 53).

Cee's path to healing is neither simple nor linear but a collection of setbacks and moments of progress. Morrison deftly captures the complexities of recovery, presenting moments of vulnerability alongside instances of quiet empowerment. Through self-reflection and growth, Cee regains control over her story, reconstructing her fractured identity and reclaiming her autonomy.

Morrison's writing evokes a deep sense of catharsis as Cee confronts the difficult task of forgiveness. This forgiveness is not for those who caused her harm, but for herself, marking a transformative step in her healing. It

symbolizes her release from the burden of victimhood and her ability to move forward without being weighed down by past wrongs.

In the end, Cee's healing goes beyond personal redemption; it stands as proof of resilience against those who perpetuate inequality. Morrison's narrative extends beyond the individual to echo the collective journey of healing from historical traumas embedded in society. Through Cee's experience, Morrison skillfully demonstrates that healing is not an instant process but a courageous, multifaceted journey. By the novel's conclusion, Cee is depicted as having developed a "newly steady self, confident, cheerful and occupied" (135).

Additionally, the idea of home, both as a physical place and a metaphorical sanctuary, is deeply integrated into the theme of healing. Lotus, Georgia, serves as both a literal setting and a symbolic return to their origins for Frank and Cee. Morrison's vivid depictions of Lotus highlight its importance as a place of comfort as well as a site of struggle. The portrayal of home as a source of healing underscores the novel's larger theme of reclaiming one's identity and discovering a sense of belonging in the face of hardship.

Irene Visser observes: "Home is not only a story of war and trauma, but a narrative of healing and recovery as well. The novel's key message is hope to all the trauma victims...hope is a strong element of Home, inscribed in the curative and restorative forces of community and family." (161)

Morrison's storytelling technique plays a crucial role in depicting healing throughout the novel. Her poetic language and layered narrative style enable readers to fully engage with the characters' emotions and experiences. Through deeply developed characters and compelling storytelling, Morrison illustrates the complexities of human life, portraying the intensity of pain, the resilience of the human spirit, and the transformative journey of healing.

Home thus becomes a profound exploration of healing, carefully examining the multifaceted nature of this process. Through Frank Money's story, Morrison delves into trauma, racism, family ties, and the search for identity and belonging. Cee's journey conveys a universal truth—that healing, while difficult, is a powerful act of strength and a testament to the enduring human spirit. The novel emphasizes the importance of confronting the past, fostering connections, and gathering courage in the face of adversity. Morrison's evocative narrative and deep investigation of the human experience make Home a moving and thought-provoking story that lingers long after the last page.

Morrison's skill as a writer is evident in her ability to explore the complexities of internalized trauma, untangling the emotional effects of childhood neglect and societal prejudices. The novel's prose is rich with emotional intensity, skillfully blending emotions, fears, and vulnerabilities to reflect the characters' psychological experiences. It also serves as a powerful critique of societal views on beauty, race, and the lasting impact of childhood trauma on self-worth.

In her works, Morrison masterfully navigates the emotional landscapes of her characters, shedding light on their transformative journeys from suffering to healing. Through vivid and evocative storytelling, Morrison depicts characters scarred by both historical and personal traumas, inviting readers into their complex worlds. Her narratives do not dwell solely on the pain of trauma; they shift towards the healing journey with remarkable poignancy. Through her characters' strength, Morrison portrays the challenging yet transformative path to recovery. She captures moments of catharsis, self-realization, and redemption, allowing her characters to confront their pasts and create a path to restoration.

At the heart of Morrison's portrayal of healing lies the importance of community, family connections, and self-acceptance. Her narrative style itself serves as a medium for healing, with her evocative prose drawing readers into the characters' emotional landscapes. By reimagining and reshaping historical events, Morrison amplifies voices often unheard in traditional slave narratives. In doing so, she seeks to fill the gaps and omissions typically found in historical records and archives.

Morrison subtly critiques how the dominant narrative of white male Anglo-American history has excluded or misrepresented these communities, either by ignoring their existence or distorting their stories. Ultimately, her work stands as a testament to the resilience and capacity for renewal within the human spirit. Through her profound fiction, Morrison opens a window into the inner workings of individuals. She captures the richness of human experience, providing space for memories, introspection, flashbacks, future anticipation, revisiting the past, and confronting painful, traumatic recollections.

Morrison highlights the process of self-transformation, emerging from painful external events like racial conflict. At the same time, she celebrates the indomitable spirit that endures in the face of adversity. Her exploration of the journey

from trauma to healing remains a powerful and enduring contribution to literature, inviting reflection on the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative nature of healing.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

## REFERENCES

- Caruth, Cathy. Trauma: Exploration in Memory. John Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Churchwell, S. (2012). "Does Toni Morrison's latest novel stand up to her best?" Review of Home. The Guardian, 27 April 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/apr/27/toni-morrison-sarah-churchwell-home>.
- Derrida, J. "Exordium." In J. Derrida, The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International, Translated by P. Kamuf, Routledge, 1994, pp. xvi-xx.
- Morrison, Toni. Home. 2013. Vintage, 2016
- Herman, Judith. Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. Basic Books, 1997.
- Kakutani, M. "Review of Home." The New York Times, 7 May 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/08/books/home-a-novel-by-toni-morrison.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>.
- Sampson-Choma, Tosha K. "Mortifying Earthly Desires in Toni Morrison's Home." Humanities, Vol. 8, Issue 4, 2019, pp. 1-10.
- Smith, Valerie. Toni Morrison: Writing the Moral Imagination. Wiley- Blackwell, 2012.
- Visser, Irene. "Fairy Tale and Trauma in Toni Morrison's Home." MELUS Vol. 41, Number 1, 2016, pp. 148-164.
- Whitehead, A. Trauma Fiction. Edinburgh University Press, 2004.