

## Frank Money's Multiple PTSDs in Morrison's *Home*

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### Abstract

Frank Money, an African American war veteran who suffers multiple post-traumatic stress disorders. Frank witnesses the horrors of war, including the murder of his fellow soldiers, experiences racism within the military, and survives a shrapnel injury. These multiple traumatic experiences leave him emotionally scarred, plagued by nightmares, flashbacks, and an inability to find stability. Frank's post-war life in racially oppressive America highlight the detrimental effect of systemic racism on African American veterans, exacerbating their trauma and causing a rupture in their sense of self. This paper sheds light on the lasting effects of racial violence, war, and personal abuse, depicting the emotional and psychological scars inflicted by these traumas. However, the novel also emphasizes the importance of healing and reclaiming one's identity. Morrison suggests that by acknowledging and confronting trauma, individuals can forge a path towards personal growth, empowerment, and a sense of homecoming. *Home* serves as a poignant figurative portrayal of the resilience of African Americans, a testament to the power of healing and the transformative potential of rejecting victimhood and embracing agency.

**Keywords:** PTSDs, trauma symptoms, racial oppression, racial medicine, eugenic experiments, displacement, humiliation, manliness disruption, trauma recovery.

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Toni Morrison is one of the most eminent African-American women novelists of the twentieth century who won many literary awards the most prestigious among them is the Noble prize for literature in 1993. However, Morrison is not a pan black African-American writer as her literary interests always have a holistic humanistic perspective. Her fictional career tackles a wide range of variant themes that exceed the limited focus on a certain gender or race. *Home*, Morrison's tenth novel, originally published in 2012 recounts the story of Frank Money, a twenty four-year-old African-American veteran traumatized by his experiences in the Korean War. He has been back in America for a year, but feels so estranged and so violently humiliated in his own home country. The novel revolves around his home coming journey to his home town in order to rescue himself and his sister Cee. Both Frank and Cee are deeply traumatized by their miserable childhoods and the shocking events of their young adult lives. They suffer physical and mental wounds, which lead them to engage in deleterious behaviors and thought patterns. Their healing process includes facing repressed memories; finding a real home; learning to love oneself and to save oneself.

This paper hypothesizes that Frank Money is a person who suffers many post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSDs). Indeed, Frank suffers multiple traumas; such as, war trauma, racial oppression trauma, displacement trauma, and the double forth trauma affecting his manhood at war home and back home.

To begin with, trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event such as a war, an accident, rape, or a natural disaster.

Kirmayer and others contend that trauma has become "a narrative theme in explanations of individual and social suffering" (1). Equally, Caruth argues that "trauma is a suffering that lasts for a while. The victim leaves the site where the violent action occurs, but the effects of the traumatic action are still in the deepest mind and soul" (10). Implicitly, this refers to the continuous feeling of suffering, pain, and disgust that causes the victim consequences of the traumatic action. Though the traumatized person leaves the place where the traumatic action occurs, he still remembers and suffers. Kai Erikson proclaims that "trauma causes the emotional and behavioral disorder; such a disturbance is a result of stress or blow that affects the body" (184). In *A Guide to Psychological Debriefing*, David Kinchin defines Post-traumatic Stress Disorder as: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder results when a person has been exposed to an event which may be outside the range of normal human experience: an event which would markedly distress almost anyone. It is the normal human response to an abnormal situation (Kinchin 12). Meanwhile, trauma is an aggressive, physical and emotional shock that triggers insane feelings, repressed sentiments and lead to eccentric demeanors of the traumatized person.

From the very beginning, Toni Morrison spotlights Frank Money's war trauma. The events of the novel begin by talking about the horrors of war and Frank entering the hospital with severe injuries and bleeding from separate parts of his body, but they decided to end his life with another shot because he had not died yet. "At 2:00 a.m. when they checked to determine if he needed another

immobilizing shot they would see the patient on the second floor in Room 17, sunk in a morphine sleep" (3). Ironically enough, the home-coming black veterans were racially prejudiced and oppressively abused in myriad ways such as the infamous acts of the police brutality and the racist medical treatment. Maxine L. Montgomery spotlights the ironic situation of Frank Money as a war veteran in the following extraction:

The irony of his situation is that once he returns to America he is subject to continued hostility or indifference from people in positions of power and authority, and the lack of sympathy on part of social institutions mediates against his recovery. It is during the Korean War that blacks fought alongside whites in an integrated military arrangement. Despite the façade of racial harmony, returning black soldiers face continued oppression on American soil. Callousness from the doctors at the veteran hospital in Chicago where Money undergoes treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder furthers his sense of alienation. (321)

Fortunately, Frank manages to escape from the hospital, almost naked and barefoot, and takes refuge in Mr. John Locke's house. "Although shoes were vital for this escape, the patient had none. Four a.m., before sunrise, he managed to loosen the canvas cuffs, unshackle himself, and rip off the hospital gown" (5). More to the point, while Frank is at Mr. John's, John tells him that he was very lucky that he was able to escape because his body was going to be

sold to the rich medical students. "They sell a lot of bodies out of there. "Bodies?" [...] "Uh-huh. To the medical school." "They sell dead bodies? What for?" "Well, you know, doctors need to work on the dead poor so they can help the live rich" (6). In the meantime, Frank's traumatized feelings as an African-American war veteran show clearly in his answer to Mr. John when the latter asks him why they took him to the hospital when it was supposed to take him to prison. Frank Money's answer indicates his traumatic feelings and helplessness:

Well how'd you end up in the hospital 'stead of jail? That's where most barefoot, half-dressed folks go."

"The blood, I guess. A lot of it running down my face."

"How'd it get there?"

"I don't know."

"You don't remember?"

"No. Just the noise. Loud. Real loud." Frank rubbed his forehead.

"Maybe I was in a fight?" He put the question as though the Reverend might know why he had been bound and sedated for two

Days. (7)

Frank's endless anxiety is obvious and indicates that he is a traumatized person who suffers from psychological ailment and isolation. He recalls the memories of the past especially his broken relationship with his girlfriend Lily: "What he did remember was

that as soon as Lily shut the door behind him, in spite of the seriousness of his mission his anxiety became unmanageable. He bought a few shots to steady himself for the long trip. When he left the bar, anxiety did leave but so did sanity" (8). In this sense, Bufka defines anxiety as an "emotional state in which people feel uneasy, or apprehensive, or fearful. People usually experience anxiety about events they cannot control or predict, or about events that seem threatening or dangerous"(n.p.). Freud himself considers anxiety "the fundamental phenomenon and the central problem of neurosis" (May 87). Frank Money cannot get rid of the pangs of the war to live the present. Frank is featured throughout the novel as a person separated from the present time and place. He is always wrapped in his silence while reliving the past; "As he stared at the socks, the immediate past came into focus: the hospital escape, the freezing run, finally Reverend Locke and his wife. So he was back in the real world when Locke came in and asked how three hours of sleep felt" (9). Frank cannot overcome the horrors of the war trauma, as those difficult events are still re-enacted in his mind and controlling all his senses. He still remembers that they stripped him of everything, money and others, and left him nothing but the medal; "[H]e rummaged in his pants pockets to see if the orderlies had missed anything, a quarter, a dime, but his CIB medal was the only thing they had left him. The money Lily had given him, of course, was gone as well" (9).

In a similar vein, Frank recalls his maltreatment in the segregated army where he has been treated like a dog; "You all go

fight, come back, they treat you like Dogs" (10). Charles C. Moskos, Jr. comments on what he labels "America's perennial dilemma—race" (94), and refers to the historical fact that President Truman's Desegregation Order in 1948 was designed by a committee that was set up for the purpose of implementing equal "treatment and opportunity for armed forces personnel." Still, in 1950 the Korean War was the main impetus for increasing the number of black soldier fighting in the same regiments along with whites:

The Korean conflict was the coup de grace for segregation in the army [...]. As was true in the Ardennes experience, black soldiers in previously all-white units performed well in combat. As integration in Korea became more standard, observers consistently noted that the fighting qualities of blacks differed little from those of whites [...]. Concurrent with events in Korea, integration was introduced in the United States. By 1955, two years after the end of the Korean War, the remnants of army Jim Crow disappeared at home and in overseas installations. At the time of the Truman order, blacks constituted 8.8 percent of army personnel. In 1972 the figure was 15.1 percent. (97)

Consequently, Frank falls into a psychological state of deep depression and this is evident in his indulgence in excessive alcohol drinking. In addition to his deep feelings of depression, Frank engaged occasionally in fits of uncontrollable anger and craziness. These symptoms were evident in Frank long before he returned to his home

country. As he speaks with Reverend Locke, he recalls his traumatized past:

Frank stared at him, but didn't say anything. [...]It wasn't their fault he went ape every now and then. As a matter of fact the discharge doctors had been thoughtful and kind, telling him the craziness would leave in time. They knew all about it, but assured him it would pass. Just stay away from alcohol, they said. Which he didn't. Couldn't. (10)

In this respect, Robinson makes a very insightful analogy between depression and alcoholism as he elaborates:

There's also a strong link between serious alcohol use and depression. The question is, does regular drinking lead to depression, or are depressed people more likely to drink too much? Both are possible. [...]Drinking will only make depression worse. People who are depressed and drink too much have more frequent and severe episodes of depression, and are more likely to think about suicide. Heavy alcohol use also can make antidepressants less effective. (1)

Equally, the nightmares that Frank always sees during his sleep and the insomnia that accompanies him indicate the psychological trauma that he suffers after the war:

But the mare always showed up at night, never beating her hooves in daylight. The taste of Scotch on the train, two beers hours later—he'd had no problem limiting himself. Sleep came fairly soon, with only one image of fingered

feet—or was it toe-tipped hands? But after a few hours of dreamlessness, he woke to the sound of a click like the squeeze of a trigger from a gun minus ammo. [...] Frank reached for the bedside lamp. Its glow revealed the same little man in the pale blue zoot suit. “Hey! Who the hell are you? What you want?” Frank rose from the bed and moved toward the figure. After three steps the zootsuited man disappeared. (20)

The above quotation shows how Frank Money suffers insomnia and is unconsciously driven insane by nightmares. In his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud pinpoints that "[b]esides those dreams that convey into our sleep the many painful emotions of life, there are also anxiety-dreams, in which this most terrible of all the painful emotions torments us until we wake" (45-46). Relatedly, Charles E. Bressler highlights that "dreams fascinate, perplex, and often disturb us. Filled with bizarre twists of fate, wild exploits, [...] our dreams can bring us pleasure or terrorize us" (123).

In a same vein, Frank bitterly remembers his feelings of homesickness, fear and humiliation as he; for instance, lost his best friends in combat and had to eat from garbage in order to survive. He recalls how he ate cheese trampled by pigs' feet; "*I have eaten trash in jail, Korea, hospitals, at table, and from certain garbage cans. Nothing, however, compares to the leftovers at food pantries. [...] I remember standing in line at Church of the Redeemer waiting for a tin plate of dry, hard cheese already showing green,*

*pickled pigs' feet—its vinegar soaking stale biscuits*" (24). One of the effects of psychological trauma on Frank is that he became a drunkard. He says; "*My stomach fell and just the thought of whiskey made me want to heave. I rushed off feeling shaky, then I spent a few nights on benches in the park until the cops ran me off*" (43). Another symptom is being affected by the whims and anxiety - dreams that always haunted him. Alcohol made Frank delirious and unable to recognize himself or others:

*[...]I caught my reflection in a store window I thought it was somebody else. Some dirty, pitiful-looking guy. He looked like the me in a dream I kept having where I'm on a battlefield alone. Nobody anywhere. Silence everywhere. I keep walking but I don't find anybody at all. [...]I needed to make my homeboys proud. Be something other than a haunted, half-crazy drunk .(43)*

Significantly, in her review, "What is posttraumatic stress disorder," Monica Taylor-Desir makes an insightful remark on the symptoms of the PTSD. These multiple symptoms that Monica theorizes are applicable to Frank's state of deliriousness:

People with PTSD have intense, disturbing thoughts and feelings related to their experience that last long after the traumatic event has ended. They may relive the event through flashbacks or nightmares; they may feel sadness, fear or anger; and they may feel detached or estranged from other people. People with PTSD may avoid situations or people that remind them of the traumatic

event, and they may have strong negative reactions to something as ordinary as a loud noise or an accidental touch. (n.p)

As a traumatized person, Frank was not fully self-composed and psychologically imbalanced. Lily asks him:

Was it something to do with your time in Korea that spooked

you?" Lily had never asked about the war and he had never brought it up. Good, she had thought. Better to move on.

Frank smiled. "My time?" "Well, you know what I mean."

"Yeah, I know. It won't happen again. Promise." Frank enclosed

her in his arms. (49)

Likewise, the trauma of the war had a formative impact on Frank, and this is what Lily actually noticed. She says, "[i]n fact he seemed to have no goals at all. When she questioned him about the future, what he

wanted to do, he said, "Stay alive." Oh, she thought. The war still haunted him" (48). Frank had "no goals at all" and all he wanted was to "stay alive." Frank's dumbness, insomnia, and constant fits of violence are all symptoms of his war trauma. Frank's psychological status was troubled while he was with Lily, as he would cry sometimes and laugh at other times. Lily wonders; "How could he change so quickly? Laughing one second, terrified the next? Was

there some violence in him that could be directed toward her? He had moods, of course [...]"(49).

Moreover, the death of his friend, Stuff, in the war was a harsh traumatic shock to Frank. Sadly, the two close friends of Frank have been brutally killed at the war. Frank's friends are always on his mind. He suffers pangs of remorse for being the only survivor. He is constantly ashamed of how his kinsfolk would think of him back in Lotus. So he says:

Jackie also described the condition of two families that had lost sons in Korea. One was the Durhams, Michael's folks. Lenore remembered him as a nasty piece of work and close friends with Frank. And another boy named Abraham, son of Maylene and Howard Stone, the one they called "Stuff," was also killed. Frank alone of the trio survived. He, so the chatter went, was never coming back to Lotus. (57)

Similarly, the traumatic events of the war still haunt Frank's memory. The horrible images of seeing the bodies of his best friends being shattered and torn to pieces still dim his sight and paralyze his whole being. Frank cannot get rid of the memory of seeing:

Mike in his arms again thrashing, jerking, while Frank yelled at him. "Stay here, man. Come on. Stay with me." Then whispering, "Please, please." When Mike

opened his mouth to speak, Frank leaned in close and heard his friend say, "Smart, Smart. Don't tell Mama." Later, when Stuff asked what he said, Frank lied. "He said, 'Kill the fuckers.' " By the time medics got there, the urine on Mike's pants had frozen and Frank had had to beat away pairs of black birds, aggressive as bombers, from his friend's body. (62)

After his friend Mike has been killed in the war, Frank's traumatized feelings aggravate and he becomes constantly neurotic. He no longer resented the smell of the dead after burying his friend with his own hands. "He even felt nervous after a kill. Now he was reckless, lunatic, firing, dodging the scattered parts of men. [...]The copper smell of blood no longer sickened him; it gave him appetite" (62-63).

Frank Money is nervous and suffers neurotic disorders. Despite being accustomed to blood scenes, he still suffers from post-war traumatic disorder symptoms; such as, fear and anxiety. In this regard, Freud in his book *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* contends that:

Fear itself needs no introduction; [Frank] has at some time or other known this sensation or, more precisely, this effect. It seems [...] that we never seriously inquired why the nervous suffered so much more and so much more intensely under this condition. Perhaps it was thought a matter of course; it is usual to confuse the words "nervous" and "anxious" as though they meant

the same thing. [...]However that may be, it is certain that the problem of fear is the meeting point of many important questions, an enigma whose complete solution would cast a flood of light upon psychic life.(219)

Another sign of Frank's psychological trauma is his inability to believe Mike's death. He always remembered his laughter and the jokes they shared together, even after the end of his service in the army, the image of his friend's death followed him everywhere. "Afterward, for months on end, Frank kept thinking, "But I know them. I know them and they know me." If he heard a joke Mike would love, he would turn his head to tell it to him—then a nanosecond of embarrassment before realizing he wasn't there" (63). Drawing on Freudian theory, Frank, unconsciously, uses denial or repression as a defense mechanism in order to keep himself separated at a distance from such unpleasant news. Repression as a psychological symptom is defined as "the 'forgetting' or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires, or traumatic past events, so that they are forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconscious" (Barry 96-97). According to Freudian ideas of defense mechanisms, Frank's denial is a defense mechanism, which he unconsciously uses to distance himself from the brutality of scene of his two best friends being dismembered in front of his eyes; as a consequence, he cannot live fully in present time. In other words, the self-denial of one's feelings or previous actions is one defense

mechanism to avoid damage to the ego caused by the anxiety or guilt of accepting them.

Frank's post-traumatic stress disorder is also evident as he is always hunted by the image of his friend's killing, even after a very long period of being discharged. It seems that those bloody images that caused his trauma are irrevocable and inescapable as, "[...] 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. [...] the hovering dead he could no longer hear, talk to, or laugh with" (63).

Obviously, the war trauma still affects Frank Money. As a post traumatic stressed person, he is influenced by the trauma of the war and the dead bodies he saw in front of his eyes still aggravate his traumatic feelings. Therefore, he suffers from insomnia as one of the psychological symptoms after the trauma:

He had spent a sleepless night, churning and entangled in thoughts relentless and troubling. How he had covered his guilt and shame with big-time mourning for his dead buddies. Day and night he had held on to that suffering because it let him off the hook, [...]. Now the hook was deep inside his chest and nothing would dislodge it. (87)

To put this more accurately, Frank Money has suffered many psychological problems; he is anxious, neurotic, and insomniac. According to Judith Herman, the hyper-arousal state occurs when the person's system of self-protection becomes vigilant, as if the

threat would reoccur at any instant. In this state the traumatized victim —startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations and sleeps poorly (35). Frank's anxious neurosis psychological state is explicable according to Bressler's psychological assumption that:

When certain repressed feelings or ideas cannot be adequately released through dreams, jokes, or other methods, the ego [of Frank] must act and block any outward response. In so doing, the ego and id become involved in an internal battle Freud calls neurosis.[...] neurosis can assume many physical and psychological abnormalities. (Bressler 130)

Noticeably, Frank is like a fish in the mesh of the net. The more he tries to disentangle himself, the more inextricably entangled he becomes. He cannot escape the painful history of the war events that harshly affected his own psyche. In this sense, Caruth elaborates that traumatic experience results in the unconscious and involuntarily “return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits.” This unconscious feature of the resistant recurrence of the traumatic memory pertains to the historical nature of the traumatic experience as Caruth further explains, “[i]f PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptoms of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (5).

Another trauma that affects Frank Money's whole being is racial oppression. Early in the novel, readers are introduced to an act of lynching. Frank and his sister Cee witness the burial of a black man who was killed by his own son in a lynch fight just for the murderous joy of some white men:

*We saw them pull a body from a wheelbarrow and throw it into a hole already waiting. One foot stuck up over the edge and quivered, as though it could get out, as though with a little effort it could break through the dirt being shoveled in. We could not see the faces of the men doing the burying, only their trousers; but we saw the edge of a spade drive the jerking foot down to join the rest of itself. (1)*

This act of humiliating burial exemplifies the white people racial and supremacist treatment of the black people. Lynching is a crime against humanity as well as an embodiment of man's most sinister and barbaric desires against another man. This scene is one of the most traumatic incidents which afflict Frank's human dignity and manhood.

In fact, the burial of the lynch victim is not the only burial that haunts Frank Money's memory, but also the burial of an "elderly man named Crawford." He was one of the black residents who suffered a lot of torment and abuse when he refused to leave his house so he was tortured, beaten to death and was buried under the tree he loved. Crawford remembers twenty years ago sitting on "his porch steps and [refusing] to vacate" when orders were given to the residents of the fifteen houses of the little community, where he

lived with his family at the age of four, to “leave their little neighborhood on the edge of town”(4). Crawford who refused to leave his home was eventually:

[B]eaten to death with pipes and rifle butts and tied to the oldest magnolia tree in the country—the one that grew in his own yard. Maybe it was loving that tree which he used to brag, his great-grandmother had planted, that made him so stubborn. In the dark of night, some of the fleeing neighbors snuck back to untie him beneath his beloved magnolia. One of the gravediggers told everyone would listen that Mr. Carwford’s eyes had been carved out. (5)

Black people suffered from lack of justice in the prejudiced American legal system. In most cases of crimes done by white people against black people there were no indictments or acts of punishment. Contrastively, crimes done by blacks were severely punished. Thus, African Americans suffered racial oppression as well as discrimination in the legal system. Likewise, in his *America as a Civilization*, Max Lerner sheds light on the facts concerning the unjust prosecution system that used double standards in judging the crimes done by blacks and those done whites:

White supremacy in the South has always used lynching as the ultimate sanction against the defilement of white blood. While these lynchings have steadily decreased [...], the Southern courts have operated on a double standard of justice in applying

the laws against rape: most of the prosecutions are against Negroes, and even where whites are brought to trial they are not given the death penalty that is visited upon the Negroes. (521)

Another vicious practice of racism that Morrison introduces to the reader is Frank's hiding from the police and sitting on his knees in humiliating manner, just because he saw a patrol running down the street. "Frank noticed a police car cruising by. He knelt as though buckling his galoshes. When the danger passed he stood, then turned to Reverend Locke and held out his hand" (11). It is remarkable how Frank Money the African-American war veteran, who have just returned home after fighting under his country's flag, feels like a criminal and fears being tortured and humiliated by the police. Here, racial discrimination enacts another trauma that afflicts Frank's whole psyche. Elsewhere in the novel, Frank's traumatized feelings of racial discrimination are aggravated and his sense of inferiority is evidently apparent due to the fact that he is a black person living in a white racist society. Therefore, he subconsciously sees everything around him in either two colors, white or black, to the extent that he dares not enter a toilet at a train station because the sign says that the place is for whites only:

All color disappeared and the world became a black and-white movie screen. He didn't yell then because he thought something bad was happening to his eyes. Bad, but fixable. He

wondered if this was how dogs or cats or wolves saw the world. Or was he becoming color-blind? At the next stop he got off and walked toward a Chevron station, its black flames shooting out from the V. He wanted to get into the bathroom, pee, and look in the mirror to see if he had an eye infection, but the sign on the door stopped him. (13)

Moreover, Frank enters a passenger car and “pushes through the separation green curtain”(14) used in those days to segregate blacks from whites on public means of transportation. Max Lerner explicates how the laws of segregation were strictly practiced against blacks during that period:

No Negro in the South could break the laws and traditions of segregation when he went to work on a bus, or wanted to eat lunch or dinner in a restaurant, when he tried to travel on a train, when he wanted to see a movie or a play. In most Southern cities no Negro would dare park his car in front of the post office without running the risk of being considered “an uppity nigger,” nor would he dare walk late at night in the white section of the town. [...] And from birth to death the Negro lived in constant tension and insecurity, walking in the shadow of uncertainty and fear. (519)

The unjust laws of racial segregation made Frank feel that he has lost his feeling of humanity; therefore, he likens himself to animals. He asks bitterly whether animals "dogs or cats or wolves" also see the world around them in two colors same as he does. Billy

Watson, who met Frank at the station and took him home, talks about their predicament as Afro-Americans living with the whites in the same society and the racial discrimination practices that the blacks severely suffer from:

We hid in an abandoned house for half a year.” “Hid from what? White sheets?”

“Naw. The rent man.”“Same thing.”

“Why him?” “Oh, please. It was 1938.”[...]

Me and my brother slept in a freight car for a month.

Where was it headed?

Away, was all we knew.

You ever sleep in a coop the chickens wouldn't enter?

Aw, man, shut up. We lived in a ice house.

Where was the ice?

We ate it.

Get out!

I slept on so many floors, first time I saw a bed I thought it was a Coffin. (17)

Implicitly, the black's humiliating living conditions have a negative impact on Frank's psyche and his sense of humanity. Thus, in addition to the atrocities of the war and loss of his beloved friends, Frank faces the harsh realities of racial segregation and legal injustice: all of which multiplies his sense of trauma. More oppressively, is the story that Watson narrates to Frank about his young boy "the eleven-year-old" Thomas. Thomas became

handicapped after the police mercilessly shot him. One of the child abuse crimes against black children is evident in the following lines:

[...] when Billy introduced his son to Frank, the boy had lifted his left arm to shake hands. Frank noticed the right one sagging at his side. Now, shuffling the deck, he asked what happened to his son's arm. Billy arranged his hands in rifle position. "Drive-by cop," he said.[...]. "You can't just shoot a kid," said Frank. "Cops shoot anything they want. (18)

This extraction reveals how the police deal with blacks, even if they are children. In other words, racism and hatred for blacks do not differentiate between a child and an adult. Frank seemed resentful and in pain from what happened to the child, and this made his post-traumatic symptoms aggrandize. Similarly, Frank remembers his lost sense of humanity and manliness when the child tells him about his wish. Frank asks; "What you want to be when you grow up? Thomas turned the knob with his left hand and opened the door. "A man," he said and left"(20).

Elsewhere, Frank as a traumatized person bitterly talks about the trauma of segregation and how Lotus, the city they lived in, was completely segregated and had no schools or any form of education:

Lotus was separate, with no sidewalks or indoor plumbing, just fifty or so houses and two churches[...] Cee thought it

would have been better if there were more books to read—not just *Aesop's Fables* and a book of Bible passages for young people—and much much better if she had been permitted to attend the school in Jeffrey. (28)

Here, the oppressive racial codes of segregation have deprived Frank and his sister Cee from their right in education because they are Afro-Americans. The trauma of Frank and his sister is exemplified in both their inferiority and ineptness. They wish they could be allowed to enter the school so that they could obtain any level of education, but the white supremacist racial codes don't allow them.

Psychoanalytically speaking, Thurgood Marshall refers to the disastrous impact of segregation and resembles it to "an eating cancer [which] destroys the morale of our citizens and disfigures our country throughout the world" (qtd. in Wexler 46). In a similar vein, Marshall attacks the separate school system and contends that the segregation of Afro-Americans students only due to their race "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way very unlikely to ever be undone" (qtd. in Wexler 47). Segregated in an inferior school, the Afro-American is "branded in his own mind inferior. This sets up a road block in his mind which prevents him from his ever feeling he is equal" (Wexler 43). More to the point Dr. Kenneth Clark, a famous professor of psychology, pinpoints the harmful impacts of segregation and racial oppression in education in the following extraction:

The conclusion which I was forced to reach was that these children [Frank and Cee]...like other human beings who are subjected to an obviously inferior status in the society in which they live, have been definitely harmed in the development of their personalities; that the signs of instability in their personalities are clear, and I think that every psychologist would accept and interpret these signs as such. (qtd. in Wexler 43)

Significantly, the traumatic effects of racial oppression become evident when Frank arrived with his sick sister Cee to Lotus, specifically to Miss Ethel's house. Frank has received a mysterious letter from a woman named Sarah, telling him that he must hurry home and rescue his younger sister from some unnamed danger: "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (66). The response of the children there was so oppressive. As they saw Frank carrying his sister while she was bleeding, they did not seem to have any kind of pity on her:

They shifted their gaze to the man and his burden. A beautiful black dog lying next to the girl rose up and seemed more interested in the scene than the children. While they stared at the man and woman on Miss Ethel's porch, their mouths opened wide. One boy pointed at the blood staining the white uniform and sniggered. The girl hit him on the head with her paddle, saying, "Shut it!" She recognized the man as the one who long ago had made a collar for her puppy. (74)

Ironically enough, the dog stands in front of Ethel's showed some kind of interest and sympathy when he saw Cee bleeding while the kids made fun of the whole scene. It was just one girl who sympathized with the traumatized Frank when she remembered that he had once made a collar for her dog.

Racial oppression prevents Frank from avenging his sister Cee whose womb had been extracted by Dr. Scott—an obstetrician who believed in the practice of racial medicine against helpless poor blacks. This helplessness passes another psychological trauma for Frank Money: he is an oppressed black man unable to retaliate or punish those who wrong him. "It could have been simply, "May I take my sister home?" But the doctor had felt threatened as soon as he walked in the door. Yet not having to beat up the enemy to get what he wanted was somehow superior—sort of, well, smart" (73). The white supremacist Dr. Scott is not to be blamed or punished for anything he does. He is conducting "eugenic experiments" on poor and black women claiming that he has an interest in wombs; this is really done to sterilize them so they will not be able to reproduce and bring more "undesirable" people into the world. It is noteworthy that, the racist eugenics movement is part and parcel of the white supremacy that dominated the 1950s.

In this respect, Gregory Michael Dorr highlights the practice of racial medicine in 1950s and writes that a number of eugenics scientists of the 1950s, among whom Paul Barringer is the well-known, adopted a "degeneration theory," which maintained that the African race is hereditably inferior to the white race:

Degeneration, while applying to all humans, also had a racial component, assuming that the different races "declined to different degrees, whites least and blacks most."<sup>27</sup> The Virginia eugenicists— particularly Paul Barringer, Harvey Jordan, Robert Bean, and Lawrence Royster—all built on degeneration theory and eugenics as they constructed theories of racial medicine. (660)

Equally, legislated and systematic practice of the sterilization of black women was widespread in America from the beginning of the century until the mid-1970s. Michelle Oberman writes that the eugenics movement was “disproportionally concerned with regulating the reproductive lives of women of color” (375). Furthermore, Oberman refers to the fact that this “state sponsored” (367) sterilization movement could not be implemented unless for the work of physicians who compromised their “ethical obligation to their patients in the name of carrying out a state policy abound” (368). According to the ideological underpinning of this racist medical experimentation the inferior race of Afro-Americans was the main target of eugenics practitioners. Dorr contends:

Since blacks were believed to be disproportionately criminal, diseased, and hereditarily unfit, the state would realize immediate (and disproportionate) savings if it sterilized blacks. On the more sinister side, sterilizing blacks would increase the dysgenic pressure on the race—maybe the final solution of extinction could be achieved [...]. (631)

In the case of Frank's sister Cee, Dr. Scott was putting the above theory of the sterilization of black women into practice because it was believed that the "sterilized black women would be "safe" domestic employees. They could not be impregnated by their employers." (631) Definitely, Frank's sister Cee is a victim of such racist medical experimentation. Cee is anaesthetized by her employer Dr. Scott who surgically sterilizes her and leaves her unconsciously bleeding to death. In this situation, all odds were against Cee because she was black, poor, and uneducated woman. She is forced by racial circumstance to earn her living by working as cleaning woman at Dr. Scott's office. When she stood up for the first time before her employer, he "seemed pleased" when Cee told him that "had been married for a spell, but had not gotten pregnant" (64).

Another traumatic incident that affects Frank's entire life is his forced displacement. Frank suffers from the trauma of the displacement, especially when he was forced to leave his homeland: he left his family and friends, and went to war in Korea. The weather there was very cold, and this is what Frank could not adapt to, in addition to leaving his little sister who was in real need for his protection especially after the death of their parents. *"You can't imagine it because you weren't there. You can't describe the bleak landscape because you never saw it. First let me tell you about cold. I mean cold. More than freezing, Korea cold hurts, clings like a kind of glue you can't peel off"* (60).

Frank remembers his sister Cee at every moment while he is in Korea, and feels the bitterness of not being close to her. Imagining

his sister in everything around him there proves the traumatic psychological state he is going through, so his psychological trauma is related to his distance from his homeland and the place in which he grew up. "I saw the bamboo part, low to the ground. A dog, maybe? No. It was a child's hand sticking out and patting the ground. I remember smiling. Reminded me of Cee and me trying to steal peaches off the ground under Miss Robinson's tree [...]" (61-62). Due to being neglected at an early age by their parents, Frank has always been his sister's caretaker and protector. This kind of relationship meant a great deal for Frank's sense of his manliness: he has always been his sister's man. When Frank is enforced to leave his hometown he is dislocated from the *terra cognita* of his manhood. Similarly, when Frank is unable to avenge his sister against her employer, his sense of manliness is shattered. The same applies to his disturbed feelings that led to the killing of the Korean girl who threatened his sense of manliness. Frank's self-image as the protector of his little sister would have been destroyed if he let himself fall into the dishonorable sexual act/service the little Korean girl offered. The killing of the Korean girl is an act of vindication not a reflex of fear. However, Frank remains in a state of complete denial of the crime that he had committed as he shot the Korean girl dead. But, this denial, one of the defense mechanisms, will not last for long. Frank himself will have a shift in his psychological state, and this inner struggle between the conscious and the subconscious will be resolved. He will confess his crime later on at the end of the

novel. Psychoanalytically speaking, Frank subconsciously projects its guilt onto an imaginary relief guard:

*My relief guard comes over, sees her hand and shakes his head smiling. As he approaches her she raises up and in what looks like a hurried, even automatic, gesture she says something in Korean. Sounds like "Yum-Yum." 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 her eager eyes, he blows her away. Only the hand remains in the trash, clutching its treasure, a spotted, rotting orange (61).*

Conversely, Frank shifts his projection of guilt onto the girl's parents who sold her off as a sex slave for food. Interestingly, he describes how loathed his imaginary colleague must have been when he shot the girl dead, "*Parents threw themselves in front of their kids without a pause. Still, I knew there were a few corrupt ones who were not content with the usual girls for sale and took to marketing children. Thinking back on it now, I think the guard felt more than disgust. I think he felt tempted and that is what he had to kill*" (61).

According to psychoanalysis, projection is a defense mechanism that is adopted when a person attempts to reduce the traumatic influence of their conflicting subconscious mind. Dissonance essentially relates to the simultaneous coexistence of conflicting perceptions of one's self-esteem and oppressive, uncontrollable relationships, traits, or behaviors. As a sequence,

Frank Money suffers from the inner conflict between his contradictory ego and his super-ego: his self-esteem as a man able to defend and protect his little sister and his spontaneous sexual arousal by a little girl who unconsciously reminds him of her. Thus, Frank tends to project his negative feelings of oppression, hatred, and subjugation onto an imaginary colleague as a means of self-defense.

Elsewhere, Frank's sense of isolation and his displacement trauma are apparent. Since he is distant from his town Lotus he feels that he is homeless and without a shelter. " *I'd been wandering. Not totally*

*homeless, but close. Drinking and hanging out in music bars on Jackson*

*Street, sleeping on the sofas of drinking buddies or outdoors, betting my forty-three dollars of army pay in crap games and pool halls"*

(42). Drinking alcohol confirms Frank's troubled psychological state and proves that he is a person who suffers severely from a post-traumatic stress disorder. He is unable to overcome his trauma, so he tries to escape it by being indulged in alcoholism.

Besides, Frank is constantly nervous due to his lack of confidence in everyone around him as well as his constant feeling of insecurity. Such traumatic feelings are revealed when he left Maynard's house in Portland on his way to Georgia, especially after that cold interview that he found from Maynard's wife Jessie. "There was no love from Jessie Maynard in Portland. Help, yes. But the contempt was glacial" (13). Frank always felt lost and displaced because he was far from his city and his home, and he continuously

dreamed of returning to it so that he could see his sister Cee and regain his self-confidence in his relation with his sister. Returning home is regaining the boundaries of his comfort zone both physically and psychologically; "As he walked to the train station his nervousness about whether he would have another incident— uncontrollable, suspicious, destructive, and illegal—was shrinking"(13).

Likewise, Frank's trauma is agitated when he returns to Lotus with his sister Cee who was very sick. Mrs. Ethel kicked Frank out and refused to be with his sister during her treatment period, "Get out." She waved him away. "You not helping, Mr. Smart Money, not with that evil mind-set. Go 'way, I said."(76). So, he occupied himself with restoring his father's house, which he had yearned for a long time. Coming back to Frank's hometown meant regaining his long lost self. The home coming journey is meant to be a journey of healing the post traumatized self by retrieving its authenticity. This is quite apparent in how both Frank and Cee are received by the town's locals. Cee's wounds are recovered by centuries-old herbal medicine that old women in Lotus knew its origins in Africa. Frank meets old people in Lotus and he learns more about the truth of racial oppression and its long unforgettable history. There, he regained many memories and events that he had been deprived of after he had been compelled to leave his home and city to participate in the Korean War:

[H]e busied himself cleaning and repairing his parents' house that had been empty since his father died. With the little that was left of his shoe money and the rest of Cee's wages he had just enough to re-rent it for a few months. He rummaged a hole next to the cookstove and found the matchbox. Cee's two baby teeth were so small next to his winning marbles: a bright blue one, an ebony one, and his favorite, a rainbow mix. The Bulova watch was still there. No stem, no hands—the way time functioned in Lotus, pure and subject to anybody's interpretation. (77)

Later on, the main turning point in the characters of both Frank and Cee came when they returned to their home country, it is not surprising that Toni Morrison entitled her novel *Home*, hence both Cee and Frank will find not only physical treatment, but also psychological treatment. There, Cee is given much due care by the local women at Ethel's:

Cee was not the girl who trembled at the slightest touch of the real and vicious world. [...]She was not the household help who believed whatever happened to her while drugged was a good idea, good because a white coat said so. Frank didn't know what took place during those weeks at Miss Ethel's house surrounded by those women with see-it-all eyes. [...]They delivered unto him a Cee who would never again need his hand over her eyes or his arms to stop her murmuring bones. (82)

Significantly, Ethel has a great part on Cee's recovery from her psychological trauma, as she advised her to liberate herself by herself, to have her own free opinions, and not to blindly follow the opinions of anyone, whether her grandmother, a friend, or even a doctor. Hence, freedom, as she advised her, begins with the liberation of the mind, and otherwise, it is a kind of slavery:

[...]Look to yourself. You free. Nothing and nobody is obliged to save you but you. Seed your own land. You young and a woman and there's serious limitation in both, but you a person too. Don't let Lenore or some trifling boyfriend and certainly no devil doctor decide who you are. That's slavery. Somewhere inside you is that free person I'm talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world.”(81)

In this extraction, Ethel provides Cee psychological support and helps her to regain self-confidence and self- strength.

As a matter of fact, Cee's recovery had a great impact on Frank's psyche, and it helped him a lot in overcoming the post-traumatic disorders symptoms that he suffered from. In both cases, the traumatized subject recovers as he/she reaches what Leah Hadomi labels “*intopia*” Hadomi assumes that “*intopia*” is a state of inner reconciliation that a protagonist achieves as he/she becomes motivated by a “utopian drive toward fulfillment of his or her inner self by viewing others, society, and nature through alternative perspectives. The inner quest toward better utopian self is described

as the protagonist's striving to understand both oneself and other, and one's commitment to society" (110). In a similar vein, Mark A. Tabone contends that Morrison's "concrete utopianism is firmly grounded "down here," in part by virtue of her work's tendency to confront, and attempt to overcome, the violence of history" (293). The hopeful ending of Frank's return to home is essentially related to Morrison's concept of home not as a physical space but as an ethical equilibrium that takes place within the protagonists Frank and Cee. All in all, Cee has recovered after the love and the care she received at the hands of her local women. Tabone presumes:

As a space of care and healing, the community not only stewards Cee's recovery. It transforms her. Symbolically adopting the ethos of her new community, Cee takes up quilting herself. She at last can tell Miss Ethel, "I ain't going nowhere this is where I belong" (81), and her arrival at "home" provides the novel's strongest expression of utopian hope. (301)

The fundamental turning point in Frank's psyche is his recognition of many of the mistakes he has committed, and that crucial point will be the beginning of his recovery from post-traumatic stress disorders. Undoubtedly, what helped him to confess his guilt is the treatment of his sister Cee from her trauma and her decision to rely on herself and to complete her education in order to become a strong character. Frank now describes Cee as "infertile but not beaten" (85). All of this impressed Frank so he consciously decides to take the first real step on the track of recovery after

admitting his own mistakes and becoming self-disclosing. Frank admits:

*I shot the Korean girl in her face.*

*I am the one she touched.*

*I am the one who saw her smile.*

*I am the one she said "Yum-yum" to.*

*I am the one she aroused.*

*A child. A wee little girl.*

*I didn't think. I didn't have to.*

*Better she should die.*

*How could I let her live after she took me down to a place*

*I didn't know was in me? How could I like myself, even be*

*myself if I surrendered to that place where I unzip my fly*

*and let her taste me right then and there? [...]What type of*

*man is this? And what type of man thinks he can ever in*

*life pay the price of that orange? (86)*

In fact, the killing of the Korean girl by Frank was one of the strong reasons behind his psychological imbalance, along with his sense of alienation and displacement. The killing of the girl caused the killing of his virility and manhood, and despite his return to his home, the feelings of alienation and displacement still dominates him. Actually, the killing of the girl took Frank "to a place [he] didn't know was in [him]," and he remained in that state until he frankly confessed his guilt before himself without any attempt to fabricate the truth of his past traumatic status.

In this respect, Cathy Caruth explicates trauma as “a repeated suffering of the event, but also a continual leaving of its site.” Caruth, in addition writes that the only possible healing of the trauma comes through listening to “the crisis of a trauma, that is, is not only to listen to the event, but to hear in the testimony the survivor’s departure from it. Implicitly, Frank Money’s confession of the truth of his traumatic experience is concomitantly a testimony of the collective traumatic experiences of black men and women in 1950s America. Caruth argues:

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time...For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs [...].(8)

The previous account of discussion shows how Morrison intends and succeeds to draw the attention to the physical meaning as well as the psychological meaning of home coming. Obviously, Morrison links the healing process with returning to one's origins. She concludes her novel with some glimpse of hope when the siblings returned their hometown and felt safe especially with the

help of people around them. Besides, she distinctively indicates how African Americans tend to collaborate and to show solidarity with each other in order to get over their traumas.

Eventually, Toni Morrison represents in *Home* the psychological ailments of both Afro-American men and women in the American society. These characters are representative of a new generation, coming of age in the 1950s, who were aware of the traumatic past of most African Americans and will carry on the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. She also represents through her protagonist, Frank Money, the physical and psychological disturbances that the blacks suffer in the American society. Despite the fact that Frank is an American by birth, who loves his country and participates in the Korean War for the sake of his country and his people, he was not spared from racial oppression, degradation, and humiliation by the whites. The study attempts to shed light on the multiple post-traumatic stress disorders that Frank suffers from. Since this young man was not only exposed to one trauma, but multiple ones at the same time. For instance, as the study tried to reveal, the trauma of war, the trauma of racial discrimination, the trauma of displacement, and the trauma of disruption of his manhood. Interestingly, Morrison introduces Frank's trauma all through her novel and at the same time she offers a clue for healing such trauma. In brief, the novel suggests that individual recovery from past traumatic experiences is usually possible; it is not so easy to bring the insidious effects resulting from cultural and collective negation to a closure.

To conclude, Toni Morrison's *Home* explores the profound impact of trauma on the lives of its characters, particularly Frank and Cee. Through their narratives, Morrison depicts the emotional and psychological scars inflicted by the multiple traumas of racial violence, war, and personal abuse. However, the novel also emphasizes the importance of healing and reclaiming one's identity. Morrison suggests that by acknowledging and confronting trauma, individuals can forge a path towards personal growth, empowerment, and a sense of homecoming. *Home* serves as a poignant figurative portrayal of the resilience of African Americans, a testament to the power of healing and the transformative potential of rejecting victimhood and embracing agency.

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## اضطرابات ما بعد الصدمة المتعدده لدى فرانك موني في رواية "الوطن" للكاتبه

تونى موريسون

### ملخص

يعد فرانك موني أحد قدامى المحاربين الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي الذين أصيبوا باضطرابات عديده بعد صدمة المشاركة في الحرب الكورية. كما انه الشخصية المحورية في الرواية التي يمكن من خلالها لقاء الضوء على الاعراض النفسية والاضطرابات التي اعترته بعد الصدمة. يشهد فرانك أهوال الحرب، بما في ذلك مقتل زملائه الجنود، ويعاني من العنصرية داخل الجيش، وينجو من إصابته بشظية. هذه التجارب المؤلمة تتركه يعاني من ندوب عاطفية، ويعاني من الكوابيس، وذكريات الماضي، وعدم القدرة على تحقيق الاستقرار. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على حياة فرانك بعد الحرب في أمريكا العنصرية-القمعية وهذا التأثير الضار للعنصرية المنظمة على المحاربين الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي من ناحية اخرى، مما يؤدي إلى تفاقم صدماتهم النفسية والتسبب في تمزق واضطراب إحساسهم بالذات. كما تلقى الدراسة الضوء على الآثار المستمرة والدائمة للعنف العنصري، والحرب، والإساءة الشخصية، وتجسيد الندوب العاطفية والنفسية التي تسببها هذه الصدمات. ومع ذلك، تؤكد الرواية أيضاً على أهمية الشفاء واستعادة هوية الفرد. حيث أنه من خلال الاعتراف بالصدمة ومواجهتها، يمكن للأفراد شق طريق نحو التطور الشخصي والتمكين والشعور بالعودة إلى الوطن. يعد الوطن بمثابة تصوير بارع لمرونة الأمريكيين ذو الأصل الأفريقي، وهو دلالة على الرغبة القوية في التعافي وواحد من المحفزات التغييرية نحو رفض عيش دور الضحية واحتقار الوكالة والتبعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اضطرابات ما بعد الصدمة، اعراض الصدمة، الاضطهاد العنصري، الطب العنصري، تجارب تحسين النسل، الازاحة، الازلال، تعطيل الرجولة، التعافي من الصدمة.