



The Passive Effect of Trauma and PTSD in Morrison's *Jazz* and *Home*

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of trauma and PTSD on African Americans and their passive effect on the traumatized characters. The two literary works chosen for this essay are *Jazz* (1992) and *Home* (2012) by Afro-American novelist Toni Morrison. Using Mitchell's relationality theory as a framework, the researcher has examined the traumatized characters in these two novels. The paper discusses the various types of trauma, such as acute, chronic, and complicated trauma. PTSD and its two sub-concepts, complex PTSD and DISONS, are also covered in this article. The main objective of this research is to explore the factors that contribute to trauma and PTSD, such as immigration, forced relocation, racial discrimination, slavery, and the marginalization of African Americans in white culture. Additionally, the study highlights the key symptoms that manifest in the traumatized characters, including feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, loneliness, and dread of losing others. The study also reveals the traumatized individuals' therapy approach and how Morrison's approach, which reconnects the main and secondary processes, aligns with Mitchell's relationality theory to heal these psychological patients.

Key words: Afro-Americans, C-PTSD, DISONS, PTSD, therapeutic method, Relationality theory, trauma

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1.1. Introduction

A total of twelve novels by Morrison document the various forms of trauma that African Americans have experienced over roughly 200 years. In addition to expressing the author's views on a variety of topics related to human existence, including beauty and ugliness, good and evil, love and hate, and life and death, her works primarily address the physical and psychological trauma that slavery inflicted upon African Americans and the oppression of white mainstream culture. Morrison's writing closely examines the living situations of African American men, women, and children. As a result of her attention to African American living conditions and her reflections on how they re-understand themselves and gain self-subjectivity, Morrison's works focus on the social problems brought about by the various types of trauma they experience, their attitudes towards trauma, and their coping mechanisms. Morrison addressed contemporary issues such as racial relations, violence, and interpersonal obstacles by highlighting the traumatic experiences of vulnerable African Americans.

Applying Stephen Mitchell's relational theory as a theoretical framework, the study analyses the fundamental concepts of trauma and PTSD, along with their sub-concepts, in by Morrison's selected novels *Jazz* and *Home*. Morrison's magic realism enables her to explore the psychosis of traumatized individuals and uncover a variety of trauma types, including acute, chronic, and complex trauma. The study also discusses various PTSD sub-concepts, such as Complex PTSD and Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified (DESNOS).

Along with looking at the causes and symptoms of trauma and PTSD, the study additionally examines some of the adverse consequences, such as losing faith in oneself, others, and life itself, and a lack of hope. Apart from the psychological factors that contribute to the trauma experienced by African Americans in Western societies, the root causes of their trauma are cultural disparities and social

illnesses, including slavery, marginalisation, racial discrimination, compelled migration, and forced replacement.

Morrison covers a wide range of suffering and different cases that African Americans, men, women and children, have endured to defend their rights. She also notices how those complex traumas develop into psychiatric disorders and suicidal thoughts. The study investigates the compatibility of Mitchell's relationality theory and Morrison's dramatic handling. Morrison depicts the traumatised characters' process of making peace with others after finding peace with themselves, their desires, goals, and aspirations which is also Mitchell's approach to re-establishing the connection between the primary and secondary processes.

1.2. Jazz

Morrison has expressed her appreciation for jazz music and its ability to convey the "emotional/spiritual longings and hunger" of black people who "had been forced" for a long time "to deny their emotional, spiritual, and physical needs" (Peach, 137–138). Her endeavour to produce a narrative with a jazz-inspired melody is apparent. According to Eusebio L. Rodrigues, jazz music "sprang out of" black people and "expressed their joys, their sorrows, their beliefs, and their psyche," similar to "spirituals, blues, and ragtime" (248).

Reconstructing the past and exposing various forms of trauma are the goals of Toni Morrison's narratives, including *Jazz*, according to Keith Byerman, rather than narrating historical events. Byerman in *Remembering the Past in Afro-American Fiction*, asserts that "contemporary narratives are trauma stories in that they tell of both tremendous loss and survival; they describe the psychological and social effects of suffering; they tell of the erasure of history and its continued power to shape black life" (3).

When examining the factors that contributed to Joe Trace's complex trauma, losing his mother may undoubtedly be considered the primary cause. Joe admits, as a fifty-year-old man narrating his tale to his seventeen-year-old lover Dorcas, that he discovered his biological parents had "disappeared without a trace" at the age of three from his foster parents (Morrison, 124). As a result, Joe Trace is his name. At some point after, when Joe is about fourteen, he leaves his foster home to be "trained to be a man and to live independently" (Morrison, 125). Joe's mother was named Wild by Henry Les Troy or as dubbed "Hunters Hunter" by the locals, a man who, Joe finds out, had assisted in the rescue of his mother a few years before she had been raped, beaten, made pregnant, and abandoned to perish in a ditch (Morrison, 181). She had refused to embrace her newborn son Joe, and as a result of her ordeal, she went insane and became untamed, living alone in a cave in the jungle. Joe sought his mother out when he was fourteen, "wanting his mother to confirm him for once and for all—to say some kind of yes to him even if it was not to confirm that she knew him—knowing him to be the one son she had had fourteen years ago" (Morrison, 36–37). Naturally, Joe was unable to receive this recognition from Wild, now the beast woman. Furthermore, Joe admits that Violet takes care of him as his mother, which reveals another source of his trauma.

Among the symptoms of Joe's Complex PTSD are the desire to control others and a love of possession. In his community, Joe transforms from a friendly neighbour into a violent "bad Nigro" (Morrison, 4), the stereotypical black man who is prone to mischief. He feels proud of himself as a guy and can control the girl because of his affair with Dorcas. Joe eventually believes that he is "free to do something wild" (Morrison, 4) because of his pride, which ultimately causes him to murder her. And so the lowly and friendly Joe becomes a murderer.

Violet, Joe's wife, has also suffered a lot from poverty, abuse, and bigotry after her mother, Rose Dear, passed away. Rose Dear, defeated and depressed, plunged herself into a well and died when Violet was only about fourteen years old. Violet also remembers those two weeks after her mother's suicide, her "phantom father," who was always travelling on "bold, fabulously dangerous, and wonderful trips" arrived too late, his arms "laden with gifts, gold, and stories of where he had been" (Morrison, 100). Violet married Joe Trace, who had fallen out of a tree into her lap three weeks after her mother passed away.

But Violet subsequently realizes that "from the very beginning of their relationship, Joe had been a substitute, and so had she" (Morrison, 97), following the affair, the murder, and her effort to desecrate Dorcas's corpse. Throughout their marriage, Violet lived "afraid to lose Joe," and she had "worked at anything to be with Joe" (Morrison, 97). Violet had previously believed that she had married Joe because she "didn't want to be like her mother, never like that" (Morrison, 97).

Violet's aggressiveness and fear of being alone and abandoned were symptoms of her trauma. That subject put her marriage to Joe in jeopardy. Joe grumbled, "Violet takes better care of her parrot than she does me. She doesn't hardly talk, and I ain't allowed near her" (Morrison, 49). Violet's poor self-esteem is another symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder. She recognizes that being white is the standard of beauty because she works as a hairstylist in the beautifying business. When comparing Violet and Dorcas, Violet thinks that Joe prefers Dorcas because of her longer hair and lighter complexion. She asks, "A young me with high yellow skin instead of black?" wondering what Joe perceives in her. Moreover, she is "a young me with long, wavy hair instead of short?" (Morrison, 90).

Due to her aggressive behaviour around Dorcas's corpse, Violet, who is traumatized and a victim of dominance, becomes known as "Violent" (Morrison, 5). She experiences strange thoughts as a result of her interactions, both past and current, with her spouse and parents. The thought of her spouse having an affair is intolerable to her. She stabs Dorcas's corpse with a knife at the funeral rather than approaching Joe. In *Toni Morrison: A Critical Companion*, Missy Dehn Kubitschek notes that Violet's act of violence is the consequence of her experimenting with "some standard reactions to her husband's affair" (149).

When Joe's girlfriend, Dorcas, was seventeen years old, she lived with her aunt Alice. She lost both of her parents during the 1917 St. Louis race riots, five days apart, when she was ten years old. Dorcas's father "had been pulled off a streetcar and stomped to death" while her mother, who "had gone home to try and forget the colour of his entrails, burned crispy when her house was torched" (Morrison, 57). Dorcas suspected the fire engine didn't arrive due to their race. According to Alice, the burning of Dorcas's mother in their home was the beginning of her trauma and suffering. Dorcas stands for women who, rather than out of fear but rather a need for acceptance, surrender to dominance and lose who they are. Joe is Dorcas's idealized substitute for an oedipal father, and she wants his approval.

In "Self and Mutuality: Romantic Love, Desire, Race, and Gender in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*" Michelle C. Loris explores Dorcas's low self-esteem as a PTSD symptom. She paints a picture of Dorcas as the type of girl "who submits to domination" and who, in search of "freedom, recognition, personal identity, and agency," looks for a "father figure" (58). Joe turns into a father figure and lover for her, and he abuses this position by controlling her.

For Dorcas, Joe stands in for her father because he embodies independence, enthusiasm, self-reliance, and a rejection of dependency. She attempts to acquire identity and authority in this way through Joe, but this path results in emptiness, absence, and feminine exploitation. According to the patriarchal oedipal structure, "for the female, the romantic quest leads to the female being singled out among all other women by a male; the man's singling her out then becomes proof of her value" (Morrison, 270). Joe tracks down and kills Dorcas after realizing she has moved on to another man. But his past search for his mother clouds his memory of Dorcas's whereabouts: "I tracked my mother in Virginia, and it led right to her, and I tracked Dorcas from borough to borough" (Morrison, 130). Thus, Joe's motivation to shoot Dorcas stems from his trauma and PTSD of losing his mother, who refuses to acknowledge him as her son. He believes that he murdered all women for treason, including his wild mother.

Similar to Violet, Dorcas's aunt, Alice Manfred, too suffers from the trauma of an unfaithful spouse. She is a black woman with a strong, independent spirit. Nevertheless, she experiences the symptoms of PTSD because she fears losing the people she once loved and cared for, beginning with her husband's death. Louis Manfred, Alice's husband, is having an affair with a different lady, who shows up at his funeral in an unsuitable white dress. Morrison says that Alice has been "starving for blood" for "seven months" and provides an explanation for her rage (Morrison, 88). Her spouse abandons her and passes away before she even gets to Harlem, but the pain from his betrayal still lingers. Her damaged psyche imposes

regulations on Dorcas. Alice thinks that Dorcas's unstable personality and relationships could be due to such enforcement.

1.3. *Home*

Although African Americans were freed from slavery in 1865, they continued to face discrimination and trauma throughout their whole lives in the US. Naturally, services offered to African Americans were typically far inferior to those offered to white people. Apart from lynching, the list of atrocities against black people grew daily; these included the use of black people as human test subjects in medical research and the enlistment of thousands of black men as soldiers. Consequently, African Americans' trauma did not end with the abolition of slavery.

According to Aitor Ibarrola in "The Challenges of Recovering from Individual and Cultural Trauma in Toni Morrison's *Home*", *Home* is appropriately referred to as "trauma fiction" since Morrison illuminates the silent voices of the oppressed Afro-Americans in the 1950s (112). Furthermore, the author casts doubt on Frank's recovery at the book's conclusion, contending that sentiments of rejection and inferiority are a result of the collective trauma of slavery and that the painful experience of racial discrimination is difficult to recover from.

Morrison has a distinct and unwavering perspective on the concepts of a house and a home. She believes a house is nothing but a solitary domestic space that is owned exclusively by a father. Home, on the other hand, becomes an open, non-boundary, and explicitly gendered space that encompasses women's homes and the areas that exist between and outside of them. She believes that home is an "elusive race-free paradise" (qtd. in Lubiano, 8). In "Building and Weaving Home in Toni Morrison's *Home*", Hye Jin Kim notes that in Morrison's view, a house encapsulates "a Western hegemony that excludes racial others, strangers, and foreigners, while home represents the more abstract, open, and ever-developing concept of healing and inclusion" (242). Morrison's *Home* portrays the "trauma of homelessness" (Visser, 150). In Bandera County, Texas, the main character, Frank Money, resides with his parents and uncle. Nonetheless, Frank's family is just one of fifteen that white nationalists have forced from their houses.

African American combat veteran Frank, the protagonist of Morrison's *Home*, battles psychological alterations to his psyche since returning from Korea and has a troubled childhood memory. In a segregated America that treats Frank like an animal and offers him no comfort, his condition persists. In the 1940s and 1950s, Frank Money, the son of a poor family, struggles to make ends meet in the South American town of Lotus, Georgia.

Upon investigating the causes of Frank's trauma, one discovers that he goes through a lot of painful situations as a child, which makes him mentally domineering. "Any kid who had a mind would lose it," remarks Frank about life in Lotus (Morrison, 84). He experiences violence, abuse, and threats as a child, which causes him to live in perpetual terror. He sees firsthand how their house is destroyed when the White people drive them out of Texas: "Living in your own house for years, and still, men with or without badges but always with guns could force you, your family, and your neighbours to pack up and move—with or without shoes... else meaning die" (Morrison, 9). Continuing to discuss his difficult upbringing, Morrison explains that:

When the parents are at work, Frank and his sisters becomes the target of the abusive treatments of the step-grandmother, Lenore, who repeatedly instilled panic and intimidated them. She frequently batters them and threatens them to lie on the stripes and welts on their legs. (44)

Frank feels abandoned and betrayed as a result, and this ruins his relationship with his parents. The absence of roots, financial support, parental care, and protection leaves Frank defenseless. Frank's early childhood was unsuitable for developing into a sound psychological adult. "Hungry and barefoot, he walked around eating, if available, trash from the garbage cans" (Morrison, 40) or standing in line to get food donated by churches, which is how he recalls his everyday existence. One of the most horrific events that affected Frank and his sister was the brutal killing and hurried interment of a black man. Frank, terrified, flees to his house to forget about this repulsive scene and soothe himself, but "he disappointedly

fails to attract the adults' attention; the grown-ups did not notice us. Some disturbances had their attention" (Morrison, 5).

After growing up, Frank, the traumatized child, experiences no improvement in his condition—in fact, it gets worse. He even struggles to obtain employment and make ends meet. He never had a close relationship with his parents because of the forced poverty; they both passed away from him. In *Lotus*, only a single church school for girls exists, which uses subpar supplies, leaving no access to education for boys or knowledge in general. Frank feels disconnected from himself and others, lacking any meaningful relationships. That topic leaves him feeling alone and fragmented. Frank eventually persuades himself that the best way to solve his problems, allow him to integrate into white culture, and end his suffering is to enlist in the newly formed army alongside both of his closest pals.

Attaining total control over Frank is achieved by severing all necessary ties to sustain any human relationship, resulting in his trauma when he enlists in the army. Frank's involvement in the war makes him psychologically destroyed. One of the main causes of the rise in post-traumatic stress disorder is the grave and violent threats of harm or destruction in the conflict, which heightens his dread. His troubled mental state is made worse by the fact that he also witnesses the deaths of his closest pals, Mike and Stuff. Morrison uses powerful language to portray the scene of Mike's death:

Mike in his arms again thrashing and jerking while Frank yelled at him. Stay here, man. Come on. Stay with me. [...] What died in his arms gave a grotesque life to his childhood. They were *Lotus* boys who had known each other before they were toilet-trained and fled Texas the same way. (Morrison, 97-98)

In another scene, Stuff "has lost his arm twenty feet away from his body and finally dies on the stretcher, holding his severed arm in the connected one" (Morrison, 99), and Frank is likewise hopelessly compelled to witness his suffering and eventual death. Frank feels bewildered by the scene's intensity and is on the verge of breaking. Frank's situation demonstrates Judith Herman's two described stages of a person's complete surrender: the first occurs when "he violates his moral principal by becoming a murderer at war, and secondly, when he loses the will to live" (83–84). Frank is no longer afraid of dying, as he begins firing wildly and carelessly, avoiding the broken pieces of men. He considered his friends' deaths to be the end of his life. Despite Morrison's earlier claim that "Frank was not brave, and even though he used to feel nervous after a kill" (98), he still wishes for a more active career in the military. He becomes a helpless, passively traumatized individual as a result of this paradox, imprisoned in a hospital mental ward.

Frank believes that by returning home, American society will reward him for his bravery and sacrifices. Tragically, he encounters not less disdain but also physical and mental assault. Once more, Frank goes on his boyhood adventure; he escapes the hospital to release his sister, who is a patient experimenter for a medical professional. Due to white supremacist societal persecution of African Americans in America, Frank endured long-lasting and recurring trauma. Rather than honouring Frank as a valiant Korean War veteran, American society has punished him as a humiliated Afro-American. Morrison mirrors the perspective of white society towards Frank as an Afro-American individual, "Go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better" (18).

The white Americans prevent Afro-Americans from using the majority of public services; for instance, Frank cannot use toilets when necessary. The incident occurred at one of the stops, forcing him to relieve "himself in the shrubbery behind the station" (Morrison, 23). In addition, because of his poverty, Frank cannot provide lodging for himself. As a result, Frank is denied access to material resources and any protection that would give him a sense of worth as a war veteran. His physical and psychological debilitation may be the result of this deprivation.

Looking for symptoms of chronic trauma, which Frank experienced repeatedly and for extended periods and which subsequently developed into DISNOS, a sub-concept of PTSD, one can find the following symptoms: Frank constantly fears that past traumatic events will repeat, even in unrelated situations. For instance, he is suspicious and believes his hand is hard when knocking on the reverend's door, "but not threatening like the bam-bam of a citizens' group, or a mob, or the police" (Morrison, 11).

He is nervous about seeing the police car, even though he is not being followed. He becomes too sensitive to noise; in one instance, the station's usual cacophony is "so abrasive...so he leaned against a steel support until the panic died down" (Morrison, 27). Frank experiences disruptive sleep due to uncontrollable reactions, which compromises his sense of safety.

Among the most serious symptoms of DISNOS are nervous agitation and a loss of control over activities. Due to the loss of close friends, Frank began using violence to murder troops and civilians during the Korean War, including women and children. For instance, Morrison mentions that "he blows her away" (95), pointing to a poor little girl who scavenges. So Frank continues to struggle with intrusive symptoms, including nightmares, daydreams, and intense flashbacks related to his early life, due to his chronic trauma. Cathy Caruth highlights all of the traumatized experiences in Frank's life, stating that reliving traumatic flashbacks might alter the brain's biological makeup and lead to "deterioration" which is "life-threatening" (63).

Feelings of humiliation, low self-esteem, and inferiority are some of the symptoms of Frank's DISNOS. Billy's son conveys these sentiments when he responds to Frank's question regarding his future job as "a man" (Morrison, 33). Frank feels shaken and unsettled about his life's purpose; in the end, he has no ambitions for the future, exhibiting "selflessness without gain or emotional goal" (Morrison, 35). His belief that his "life is rougher than confronting a battlefield" (Morrison, 109) leads him to conclude that using violence could be his only chance of surviving in such a society. But as he saves his sister, his long-lasting terror suppresses his desire to use violence. Frank feels wholly alone and cut off from human bliss and heavenly protective societies in the wake of all of his losses.

The blending of emotions such as pride and shame, joy and grief are significant symptoms that Frank's chronic trauma has been imprinted on his psyche. For instance, he tries to hide the fact that he "killed a girl because he was sexually aroused by the child and wished to eliminate the attraction she awakened in him" (Morrison, 134). But in the other section, in his monologue, he acknowledges his guilt and says, "I lied to me, and I lied to you. I hid it from you because I hid it from me. I felt so proud, grieving over my dead friends. How I loved them! No matter how much I cared about them, I missed them. My mourning was so thick it completely covered my shame" (Morrison, 133).

In *The Encyclopedia of Psychological Trauma*, Gilbert Reyes notes that "the stressor of the depression of a person whose prolonged trauma combines with PTSD manifests itself in various fields, including occupation, connections to others, and bodily health" (197). Frank's physical condition deteriorates as a result of his alcoholism. Furthermore, depression caused him to lose empathy towards the people he loved, which made Frank act coldly towards them in fulfilling his obligations. Cee admits that while Frank protected her, he didn't make her strong; he only kept her alive. He thereby experiences a lifelong feeling of loneliness, alienation, and detachment.

Overwhelming PTSD, such as DISNOS, Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified, is not something that should be tolerated because the victim is incapable of handling it or wants to do so. As Frank, our male protagonist, eventually experiences physical and emotional destruction due to his frequent and long-term trauma, he falls outside the definition of manhood because being physically and emotionally strong is a prerequisite for being a proper masculine individual. Although Frank is conscious of his failure to live up to his brotherly duties, he must leave Cee to enlist in the army and discover his masculinity. He is also unhappy with Lily, his girlfriend, and they share the same issue. The severity of the traumatic condition causes him to feel powerless, ashamed, and guilty, which are some symptoms of DISNOS, which ultimately causes him to put Lily in awkward circumstances.

Frank aims to overcome his trauma by developing a relationship with Lily, his girlfriend. It seems he has wasted that opportunity because he believes his relationship with Lily has "faded" (Morrison, 21). The protagonist finds himself homeless once more after Lily cannot satisfy Frank's demand. He cannot process his past experiences without a companion to help him deal with them. As such, he turns to coming home which he defines as a steady psychological state rather than a geographical location. Frank thinks home is the only secure place where his mind can heal from tragedy.

Cee has experienced a variety of traumas. Her first trauma began when she was just a child, and her grandmother, Lenore, began to criticize everything about her, from her birth circumstances to everything Cee chose to do afterwards instead of caring for her granddaughter. Due to Cee's birth taking place "in the street, "not" at home, in a bed", Lenore rejects her, calling her "worthless" and "sinful" (Morrison, 44). Moreover, Lenore hates Cee for her ensuing "cursed" existence (Morrison, 44). Cee has, therefore, suffered severe pains. Morrison says, "Branded early as an unlovable, barely tolerated 'gutter child'," Cee "agreed with the label and believed herself worthless" (128).

Cee first looks to Frank for protection, but as he departs for the war and leaves her to face the harsh realities of life, her trauma resurfaces. Another knight errant, the first man to arrive in the town, or, as Lenore mocks, "the first thing she saw wearing belted trousers," replaces Cee's brother's position (Morrison, 47). At first, Cee's ideal hero fulfills her wish. He even addresses himself as a "prince" (Morrison, 48). But the prince deserts Cee after getting married to her. Through the prince's treachery, Cee learns about the societal problems that arise from her search for male guardians, including the harm that systematic sexism women face.

Ultimately, Cee seeks solace from the agony of her mistreatment, desertion, and internalized self-loathing from her white male employer, Dr. Beauregard Scott, in this destructive cycle. In an attempt to better comprehend the science of eugenics, he also exacerbates Cee's trauma by drugging her and using her for medical, sex, and sterilization experiments. Cee is a victim of Dr. Beau's violation of her personhood and body because he takes advantage of her body for his own ends, abuses it without her consent, and victimizes her without her knowledge. The likelihood of Cee overcoming her experience diminishes as it manifests as PTSD.

From an early age, Frank and Cee represent the safe zone for each other that they can go to lessen their suffering and tragedies. The two kids naturally turn to one another for support when they see the Ku Klux Klan burying a lynched African-American man. Cee's entire body trembles as she witnesses the victim's "black foot... being whacked into the grave" (Morrison, 4). Frank "hugs her shoulders tight and tries to pull her trembling into his own bones" in return (Morrison, 4). This instance demonstrates how societal trauma affects people on a communal level as well as personally: Frank faces disaster without averting his gaze. Feeling Cee's trembling in his bones, he embraces her to lighten her trauma.

Confession and direct facing of trauma, as opposed to denial or avoiding memory of it, is the first step towards healing from trauma. Cee has addressed the matter, admitting to Frank that the doctor's experiments have prevented her from becoming a mother. Frank's reply, "I'm sorry, Cee... Come on, girl. Don't cry" (Morrison, 131), giving Cee solace and peace. Likewise, as he takes ownership of his ongoing victimization, Frank starts to admit to the violence he committed. He has long since experienced severe pain and trauma as a result of hiding that fact. Frank confesses with extreme shyness, "I have to say something to you right now. I have to tell you the whole truth. I lied to you, and I lied to me. I hid it from you because I hid it from me" (Morrison, 133). Frankly speaking he says, "I shot the Korean girl in the face". He resumes, "I am the one she aroused... How could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn't know was in me?" (Morrison, 133).

As they come back home again, Frank and Cee dig up the body of the black guy they saw buried when they were kids. They repost his bones according to "how they once were in life", cover his skeleton in a quilt that Cee created, and bury him under a bay tree (Morrison, 143). They are symbolically remembering their childhood trauma by doing this. First, they dig up the past by unearthing the man and collecting his remains. Subsequently, they collaborate to promote healing by organizing his bones similar to how they would set up a trauma's specifics and arranging the pieces of his skeleton in the right order similar to how they would arrange a sequence of painful memories. The siblings then honour his passing by covering his body with dignity, forging a community tie, and taking responsibility for the trauma they went through at his death by putting the man's remains in Cee's quilt. That could be the final stage in helping them recover from their trauma.

The women who live next door to Cee have come to minimize her trauma, which is the final stage of her recovery process. Rather than "waste their time or the patient's with sympathy", they insist on having Cee recollect all of her traumatic memories (Morrison, 121). Thus, while admitting to having experienced trauma can be extremely painful, gradually, it can help the traumatized individual get over their suffering. Cee is not just saved but reborn because she is "surrounded by those women with seen-it-all eyes", women who have seen it all and yet managed to endure (Morrison, 121). Frank and Cee first make peace with themselves as they share their past experiences. As a last resort, they can eventually learn to trust and make peace with their community.

1.4. Conclusion

Regardless of their age, gender, level of education, or cultural background, the main characters in Morrison's chosen novels, *Jazz*, and *Home*, have all endured significant trauma of various types. These experiences eventually led to the development of PTSD and its subtypes, including complex PTSD and DESNOS. Many factors, such as forced migration and slavery, treason, medical testing, racial prejudice, and Afro-American marginalization, can result in trauma. In addition, low self-esteem, loneliness, fear of losing people, and a lack of confidence in oneself and others are all indicative of PTSD symptoms.

Trauma that develops into PTSD can drive a traumatized person to engage in strange behaviour, such as murder. Good instances for the topic are what happened to Frank Money when he shot the Korean child during the war in *Home*, and Joe Trace when he killed his mistress, Dorcas in *Jazz*. PTSD can occasionally result in insanity, as was the case with Joe's mother, who had been raped, beaten, made pregnant, and abandoned to perish in a ditch. Consequentially, she goes insane and becomes untamed, living alone in a cave in the jungle. When they run out of food or water, humans may be able to survive for several days. But, as he is exposed to intolerable circumstances, such as a lack of trust in others and himself or experiencing loneliness, racial prejudice, and low self-esteem, he will undoubtedly go insane or commit crimes.

One can conclude that confronting the past, rather than avoiding it, is the best method to overcome trauma and PTSD. The researcher also suggests that Morrison's selected literary works align closely with Mitchell's theory about trauma and its therapeutic methods. Mitchell asserts that overcoming trauma can only be achieved by reconnecting the secondary and primary processes. Morrison employs magical realism in her writing to offer a successful approach to recovery. In most of her traumatic novels, she allows traumatized characters to reconcile with themselves as a secondary process and then integrate back into the community as a primary one.

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