

3.1.4.3.1 Racial Segregation and Injustice	37
3.1.4.3.2 Medical Exploitation of the Poor	38
3.2 Extrinsic Elements	39
3.2.1 The Causes of Frank Money's Grief.....	39
3.2.1.1 Individual Factors	39
3.2.1.1.1 The Weight of Personal History and Accumulated Loss	39
3.2.1.1.2 Hiding the Truth and Dealing with Pain Later	40
3.2.1.2 Psychological Factors	41
3.2.1.2.1 The Fear of Emotional Collapse and Loss of Control.....	41
3.2.1.2.2 Guilt as a Psychological Intensifier of Grief.....	42
3.2.1.3 Social and Environmental Factors	43
3.2.1.3.1 A Culture That Does Not Know How to Grieve	43
3.2.1.3.2 Environmental Isolation and the Absence of Communal Mourning..	44
3.2.2 The Stages of Grief Experienced by Frank Money	45
3.2.2.1 Denial.....	46
3.2.2.1.1 The Absence of Denial Toward Mike and Stuff	46
3.2.2.1.2 Denial Toward the Korean Girl: Mourning as a Psychological Cover	47
3.2.2.2 Anger.....	48
3.2.2.2.1 Anger Rooted in the Loss of Mike and Stuff	48
3.2.2.2.2 Anger as Self-Directed Rage Over the Korean Girl.....	49
3.2.2.3 Bargaining.....	51
3.2.2.3.1 Bargaining Over Mike and Stuff: "If Only" Thoughts.....	51
3.2.2.3.2 Bargaining Over the Korean Girl: Negotiating Self-Identity	51
3.2.2.3.3 Bargaining Over Survival: Searching for a Reason to Live	52
3.2.2.4 Depression.....	52
3.2.2.5 Acceptance	53
3.2.2.5.1 Accepting the Truth About the Korean Girl: Confession	53
3.2.2.5.2 Accepting the Loss of Mike and Stuff: The Burial Ritual	54
3.2.2.5.3 Moving Forward: The Final Acceptance	55
3.2.3 The Impact of Frank Money's Grief.....	56
3.2.3.1 Feelings of Guilt.....	56
3.2.3.2 Feelings of Shame and Social Stigma	58
3.2.3.3 Feelings of Betrayal and Abandonment	59
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION	62
REFERENCES	64

ABSTRACT

This undergraduate thesis discusses the five stages of grief of Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012). The aim of this research is to examine how this theory is resembled through Frank's identity and psychological journey after the Korean war toward healing. This research employs a psychological literary approach, using the theory of the five stages of grief by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler. This research uses the library research method in collecting the data. The primary data of this research is Toni Morrison's *Home*, while the secondary data are books and journals related to the theory and the object of the research. The intrinsic discussion covers character and characterization, conflict, and setting. The extrinsic discussion covers the cause, the five stages, and impact of Frank Money's grief. The result of this research shows that Frank experiences denial by hiding his secret shame behind the mourning of his dead friends. He expresses anger through violent outbursts and bargaining through if only thoughts about the past. Furthermore, he suffers from depression through social withdrawal and alcoholism. Finally, Frank reaches acceptance by being honest about his past. In conclusion, Frank shows how moving through these stages helps him transform from a broken veteran into a resilient man.

Keywords: five stages of grief; korean war; war trauma; psychological study

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

War is one of the most painful experiences a human being can go through. It does not only cause physical injuries, but it also leaves deep emotional wounds which are difficult to heal. Many soldiers who return from war carry invisible scars in their minds and hearts. These emotional scars often result in grief, which is a natural response to loss. Based on Konigsberg in *The Truth About Grief*, grief is a series of stages (Konigsberg, 2011:68). This idea reveals that grief is not just one state, but it is a process. Individuals who experience grief often go through different emotional stages before they are able to move on. In literature, themes of war trauma and grief are often explored to help the readers understand the deep emotional suffering of soldiers and veterans. Through literature, it shows the readers how war affects not only the body but also the mind and soul of those who experience it.

The Korean War, which took place from 1950 to 1953, is often referred to as the "Forgotten War" because it has received less public attention than World War II and the Vietnam War (Cumings, 2010:68). However, the impact on the soldiers who fight in it is no less devastating. Studies by Hunt and Robbins found that many war veterans continued to experience long-term psychological distress decades after their military service, where their study shows that traumatic memories of combat often remained vivid and emotionally powerful, leading to

persistent symptoms such as intrusive recollections, emotional suffering, feelings of guilt, and difficulties in psychologically separating themselves from wartime experiences (Hunt and Robbins, 2001). Those findings suggest that the effects of war can continue to influence veterans' mental and emotional well-being long after the conflict has ended. For the Black American soldiers, the pain is even more complex. They return to a country that is deeply divided by racial segregation and discrimination. This means they face not only the trauma of war but also the injustice of racism in their own homeland, which makes their emotional healing process much harder and more complicated.

The novel written by Toni Morrison titled *Home*, published in 2012, tells the story of Frank Money, a Black Korean War veteran who struggles to rebuild his life after returning from the war. The novel follows Frank as he travels across the United States to rescue his younger sister, Cee, from a dangerous situation. Throughout his journey, Frank is haunted by traumatic memories from the war, especially witnessing the deaths of his closest friends and the killing of a young Korean girl. Beyond the loss of his friends, Frank is also burdened by intense feelings of guilt and shame. He struggles with the belief that he failed to save those he loved and is haunted by memories of his own actions during the war. These emotions complicate his grieving process because it prevents him from openly confronting his trauma. As a result, his grief extends beyond sadness and becomes a psychological struggle that affects his identity, behavior, and relationships with others. Those experiences leave him in a state of deep emotional pain. By understanding how those emotions interact with grief is

essential to understanding Frank's journey toward healing and self-acceptance.

To understand Frank's emotional journey, this research uses Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's theory of the five stages of grief. According to Kübler-Ross and Kessler, the five stages of grief including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, are described as "a part of the framework that makes up our learning to live with the one we lost" (Kübler-Ross and Kessler, 2014:18). This means that these five stages are not a strict set of rules where all individuals follow in the same way and order. Instead, it is a general guide to help understand the complex emotions which individuals go through when they experience loss. Denial is when a person refuses to accept the reality of their loss. Anger appears when the person starts to feel frustration and rage about what has happened. Bargaining is the stage where the person tries to find ways to undo or change the situation. Depression comes when the person feels deep sadness and hopelessness. Finally, acceptance is when the person begins to make peace with the loss. By using this framework, the emotional stages which Frank undergoes throughout the novel are identified and analyzed in this research.

This topic is chosen for several reasons. First, Frank Money as the main character in *Home* is an interesting character to analyze because he represents a Black Korean War veteran who carries the burden of both war trauma and racial discrimination. Throughout the novel, he struggles with painful memories of losing his closest friends during the war and the guilt he feels after killing a young Korean girl. These experiences make his emotional journey complex, meaningful, and intricate to study. Second, the theory of the five stages of grief developed by

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler is highly relevant to Frank Money's experiences because his psychological journey throughout the novel reflects many emotional responses associated with grief. Frank does not merely mourn the deaths of his closest friends during the Korean War, but he also struggles with profound guilt and shame resulting from his inability to save them and his involvement in the death of a young Korean girl. These unresolved emotions influence his behavior, relationships, and self-perception throughout the story. His attempts to avoid painful memories demonstrates denial, his hostility and emotional outbursts reflect anger, his attempts to mentally negotiate with the past indicate bargaining, and his feelings of hopelessness and emotional exhaustion reveal depression. Eventually, Frank begins to confront his traumatic memories honestly and accepts responsibility for his past actions, which corresponds to the stage of acceptance. Therefore, Kübler-Ross and Kessler's framework provides an effective analytical tool for examining how Frank processes loss and trauma and gradually moves toward acceptance. Third, this topic is important because it shows that grief is not only sadness caused by loss, but also a process that can involve guilt and shame, which may strongly affect a person's psychological condition, as reflected in Frank's experiences in the novel.

This research thesis analyzes the causes, stages, and impacts of grief experienced by Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home*. The research focuses on how the deaths of his closest friends during the Korean War and his involvement in the death of a young Korean girl initiate a grieving process that develops through the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining,

depression, and acceptance. In addition, this research examines how feelings of guilt and shame emerge throughout this process and influence Frank's psychological condition. By applying Kübler-Ross and Kessler's theory, this research aims to explain how Frank gradually confronts his traumatic memories, acknowledges his past actions, and ultimately reaches a stage of acceptance. Through Frank's journey, the novel illustrates the complex relationship between grief, trauma, and psychological healing.

1.2 Research Questions

This research, entitled "Five Stages of Grief Experienced by The Main Character of Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012)", focuses on examining Frank Money's psychological journey through grief toward healing and self-acceptance. Therefore, the research problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the causes of grief experienced by Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home*?
2. How does Frank Money, as the main character, experienced the stages of grief in his struggle to survive in Toni Morrison's *Home*?
3. Which impacts of grief are experienced by Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home*?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To identify the causes of grief experienced by Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home*.
2. To analyze the stages of grief experienced by Frank Money as the main character in his struggle to survive in Toni Morrison's *Home*.
3. To investigate the impacts of grief experienced by Frank Money as the main character in Toni Morrison's *Home*.

1.4 Scope of Research

The scope of this research thesis focuses on analyzing the main character, limited to Frank Money, in the novel *Home* written by Toni Morrison. The writer uses both intrinsic and extrinsic elements to explore Frank's emotional journey. The intrinsic elements which cover the character, characterization, setting, and conflict are analyzed using the theory from the book *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* by Guerin, W. L., Labor, E., Morgan, L., Reesman, J. C., and Willingham, J. R. These elements help to show how Frank's environment and his personal struggles are presented in the novel. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements focus on the psychological approach of the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, which adopts the theory from Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler in their book, *On Grief and Grieving*. This analysis specifically focuses on how Frank's traumatic experiences, particularly the deaths of his closest friends during the Korean War and the killing

of a young Korean girl, initiate a grieving process which develops through the five stages of grief. Furthermore, this research examines how feelings of guilt and shame emerge throughout that process and influence Frank's psychological condition. By analyzing these stages and the psychological impacts, this research explains how Frank gradually confronts his traumatic memories and ultimately reaches a stage of acceptance.

1.5 Previous Researches

Many researchers have studied Toni Morrison's novel *Home* from different perspectives. Thus, reviewing these previous researches is important because it helps the writer understand what aspects of the novel have already been analyzed and what areas still need further discussion. Therefore, the writer reviews ten previous researches that use the same object, Toni Morrison's *Home*, in order to show the similarities and differences between those studies and the present research.

The first previous research is J. Hu's article, "Melancholia as resistant mourning in Toni Morrison's *Home*" (2025). This study discusses the concept of melancholia not as a pathology, but as a form of resistant mourning in the novel. The study explains how the characters experience deep sadness and mourning and use it as a way to resist forgetting painful memories. The research uses a psychoanalytic and political lens to show that mourning in the novel is complex and connected to their personal past and historical trauma and also how grief functions as a critique of racial injustice.