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**SUBVERTING THE DOMINANT CULTURE:
EUGENIC DISCOURSE IN *THIS OTHER EDEN*
BY PAUL HARDING****

ABSTRACT

Paul Harding in his latest novel delves into the true and tragic story of Malaga Island, a small island located off the shores of Maine. It is historically important for the United States since it became the symbol of racism and eugenics. The government was urged by eugenicists to promote the sterilization of certain people with mental and physical disabilities. Although the aim was to improve the hereditary characteristics of the human population to have a more developed society, basic human rights were violated, and history witnessed atrocities and the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. Paul Harding in his novel, *This Other Eden* deals with the eugenic era in history. Despite living in harmony on an island with a unique racial integration, the characters are evicted and institutionalized under false claims. This study investigates the novel *This Other Eden* and how the eugenic discourse is employed in the novel. The study aims to explore certain ways in which the novel addresses ideas related to eugenics. This approach involves the examination of characters and thematic elements that involves eugenic concepts. By referring to the eugenics-related ideas and practices, this study explores how Paul Harding reflects eugenics in his latest novel.

Keywords: Paul Harding, *This Other Eden*, eugenics, Malaga Island

**HÂKİM KÜLTÜRÜ YIKMAK: PAUL
HARDİNG'İN *THIS OTHER EDEN* ROMANINDA
ÖJENİK SÖYLEM**

ÖZET

Paul Harding, son romanında Maine kıyılarında bulunan küçük bir ada olan Malaga Adası'nın gerçek ve trajik hikâyesini anlatmaktadır. Ada ırkçılığın ve öjenik sembolü hâline gelmesi nedeniyle ABD için tarihsel olarak önemlidir. Öjenistler hükümetin zihinsel ve fiziksel engelli bazı kişilerin kısırlaştırılmasını teşvik etmesini istemişlerdir. Amaç, insan nüfusunun kalıtsal özelliklerinin iyileştirilmesi ve daha gelişmiş bir toplum yaratılması olsa da Nazi Almanya'sında temel insan hakları ihlal edilmiş, tarih zulümlere ve Holokost'a sahne olmuştur. Paul Harding, *This Other Eden* adlı romanında tarihteki öjenik dönemi konu almaktadır. İrsal entegrasyona sahip bir adada uyum içinde yaşamlarına rağmen karakterler sahte iddialarla tahliye edilmiş ve çeşitli kurumlara gönderilmişlerdir. Bu çalışma, *This Other Eden* romanını ve öjenik söylemin romanda nasıl kullanıldığını incelemektedir. Çalışma, romanın öjeni ile ilgili fikirleri ele alma yöntemlerini araştırmayı ve analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, bazı karakterlerin ve öjenik kavramları içeren tematik unsurların incelenmesini içerir. Bu çalışma, roman bağlamında öjeni ile ilgili fikir ve uygulamalara değinerek Paul Harding'in son romanında öjeniyi nasıl yansıttığını araştırmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Paul Harding, *This Other Eden*, öjeni, Malaga Adası

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Introduction

Paul Harding, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, based his latest novel on the true and tragic story of Malaga Island, a tiny island situated off the shores of Maine. Malaga Island holds a significant meaning as both a cultural and historical landmark in the United States and symbolizes the racist and eugenic aspect of the era. It stands as a tragic reminder of a time when people of different races and backgrounds coexisted in harmony, free from prejudice. Sadly, this idyllic state of tolerance and empathy was shattered by acts of intolerance and injustice. The island now serves as a stark symbol of how false accusations instantly stripped away the very foundation of respect for diverse races and cultures that once thrived there.

Malaga Island was inhabited by a unique community consisting of different races from 1860 to 1912. They made their living by mostly fishing and farming. Despite forming a peaceful and harmonious society, the inhabitants of Malaga Island suffered from unjust practices done by the state (Drew, 2019; Davenport, 2020). They were portrayed as immoral people in newspaper reports and faced accusations of wickedness and sin, which led to their forced eviction. It is significant to note that these unfounded allegations were made deliberately to justify the removal of the community from the island. The racial integration of the island was unique in an era when racism was on the rise. With the re-emergence of racial intolerance towards African Americans, Malaga Island with its distinct features such as its geography and racial variety was regarded to be a threat. Not only did this unjust act of eviction disrupt their lives, but it also created a community that was discriminated, marginalized, and silenced. Their rights to live peacefully on the island were taken away from them. These false accusations and the following eviction show the consequences of discrimination and racism that were prevalent during that era. Any efforts to eradicate these unfair practices were silenced, and they were deliberately forced to be a marginalized group. Being forcibly evicted from their homes and being sent to different institutions traumatized the community (Pedersen, 2019). The discriminatory ideology known as eugenics played an important role in the eviction of residents from the island. Those supporting this ideology felt superior to other races and were stubborn to carry out the eviction process. By rationalizing their actions based on genetic superiority, they regarded themselves as the rightful owners of the island during that era.

Origins of Eugenics: Tracing its Historical Roots

The word eugenics is believed to have been coined by Charles Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton. Stemming from the theories of social Darwinism, eugenics gained popularity in the 19th and 20th centuries. To improve the population and reduce the undesirable outcomes of genetics, sterilization, and selective breeding were promoted (Kevles, 1999). By ignoring human rights violations and social consequences of the practice, the genetic quality of the human species was aimed to be improved. It should be stated that eugenics is a pseudo-scientific practice that advocates improving the human species by removing certain hereditary characteristics that are claimed to hinder the advancement of humankind. These hereditary characteristics are often related to mental and physical disabilities and races. Especially at the end of the First World War, eugenics in many countries became highly popular (Alemdaroğlu, 2005, p. 68). Although it is mostly associated with the Nazis during the Second World War, it is important to note that sterilization of people that were considered not fit to have children was carried out in Europe, America, and Asia. Sweden for example, sterilised about 60,000 people most of whom were women between the 1930s

and 1970s (Kevles, 1999). It is clear that eugenics was not limited to a brief period but rather expanded over decades. Thus, it is difficult to estimate the far-reaching consequences of the practice.

What is considered to be related to eugenics in the modern era is controversial since the recent scientific improvements may be interpreted as interfering with genetics. Tom Shakespeare, an influential critic in the realm of disability studies, asserts that although some consider the practice of prenatal screening as a part of Nazi eugenics, it is not fair to associate prenatal screening directly with eugenics. However, he states that the medical profession may remove the freedom of choice (1998). The Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases was officially announced on 14 July 1933 in Germany and came into effect in 1934. Those who were aimed to be sterilized were put into different categories such as hereditary feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, manic-depressive insanity, hereditary epilepsy, Huntingdon's chorea, blindness, deafness, and severe hereditary malformation (Turda, 2010, p. 94). Hereditary diseases mentioned above were targeted to be eliminated by the Nazi regime's selective breeding program. People falling into the categories above would be prohibited from having children. The clear misguided belief that racial purity can be maintained in a society is held by eugenicists. Many eugenicists believed that "since people could not escape their eugenic destiny, the only solution was to stop the 'unfit' from procreating" (Lantzer, 2011, p. 28). Marius Turda also states that in the 20th century, eugenics aimed to improve the human race by controlling heredity since it was believed at the time that mental and physical disabilities originated from genetics. Therefore, the intention was to improve future generations and ensure the survival of the human races by preventing these individuals from having children (Turda, 2022). It is clear that eugenics is strictly related to essentialism which puts emphasis on the unchanging characteristics of people.

Nancy Ordover states that early eugenics supporters believed in the superiority of certain peoples like Anglo-Saxons and Nordics and attributed any sexual or intellectual deviations, as well as financial dependency, to heredity. As a result, they claimed that sterilization of the poor, disabled, and immoral could potentially improve the human race. To this end, they also supported antimiscegenation laws prohibiting interracial sex and marriage (2003, p. xii). Margrit Shildrick suggests that in the post-Darwinian times, eugenics was not criticized based on moral values since it was thought to be scientifically grounded and practical. The critic also points out that the acceptance of eugenics was not solely based on a scientific perspective but rather on societal considerations of aesthetics and morals (2009, pp. 52-53). This clearly highlights the combination of factors such as science, ethics, and societal values in shaping the practices of eugenics in a historical context.

In her comprehensive book exploring the historical background of eugenics in the United States, Ordover highlights the persistent portrayal of immigrants and their children as foreign entities that are impossible to assimilate into society. The author stresses that immigrants are depicted as sources of contamination and disease. By referring to Proposition 187, which was a controversial ballot measure in 1994 aiming to prevent illegal immigrants from using the public services of the state like public education and healthcare (Library of Congress), Ordover draws attention to the created connection between immigrants and the spread of contagious diseases (2003, pp. 54-55). The negative image of immigrants can be said to be persistent over time. It can be concluded that such negative stereotypes and metaphors have been applied to justify

discriminatory acts against immigrants. A similar approach can be observed in the novel *This Other Eden*.

In an article in Time magazine titled *Cursed by Eugenics*, the subtitle is “A belief that human intelligence could guide evolution led the world to concentration camps” which indicates the era’s potential scientific advancements in medicine. However, the author warns that the theory of eugenics in the past should serve as a cautionary tale since in Germany, it led to the birth of concentration camps. The author maintains that early supporters of the theory based their thinking on Darwinian ideas, claiming that for a better human race, natural selection was needed. However, it is stated that atrocities were justified for the benefit of an improved human population (Gray, 1999). It is interesting to note that eugenic sterilization for the sake of the improvement of the human race was implemented in the United States before it was adopted in Nazi Germany during the Second World War (Lombardo, 2011, p. 1). Indiana’s 1907 Eugenics Law was the first in the United States and the first sterilization law in the world (Lantzer, 2011, p. 27). In the US, the practices such as forced sterilization and selective breeding were implemented as early as the beginning of the 20th century. Eugenic practices were shockingly adopted in the US before it was embraced by Nazi Germany. However, it is evident to state that the Nazis adopted more violent and inhumane practices that caused countless atrocities violating human rights.

From a biological perspective, physical flaws were considered to reflect a person’s unfit or inferior hereditary. The theory of French scientist Jean Baptiste Lamarck, for instance, that unwanted hereditary characteristics would be reversed in a positive environment was challenged by August Weismann who suggested that heredity was independent of environmental factors. The Lamarckian view which was optimistic in its nature was replaced by a more pessimistic theory that focused on the unchanging nature of heredity (Carlson, 2011, p. 12). This biological interpretation of the human race led to a more cynical approach suggesting the possibility of the improvement of society from one generation to another was slight unless necessary measures were taken to remove unfavorable hereditary characteristics. Besides this biological understanding of the human population, there were other factors shaping the frame of eugenics. Society was gradually adapting to urbanization. Paul A. Lombardo states that people born before 1920, when urbanization was not a trend in the US, lived on farms around their farm animals. Thus, animal husbandry taught them how to improve their stocks and herds, which eventually made it plausible to implement the same procedure in humans (2018, pp. 1306-1307). People thus found it reasonable to take the necessary measures to improve their own race based on their understanding of animal husbandry. Based on their experiences on their farms, eugenics seemed as a ground-breaking theory. However, there have been “profound debates around eugenics, about desirable and undesirable bodies—those doomed to sterilization, enslavement, or colonization or deemed perverse, deviant, pathological, or deficient” (Subramaniam, 2014, p. 10). Although there was a period in history when eugenics was implemented by disregarding basic human rights, these pseudo-scientific practices are no longer considered to be acceptable.

Eugenic Discourse in *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding

The word “Eden” in the title of the novel *This Other Eden* is employed in literature to refer to an idyllic, beautiful, and peaceful place. As an idealized place or a demi-paradise, this place offers beauty to its inhabitants, whereas Harding uses the title rather ironically to stress the contrast between the name and the brutality the inhabitants suffered from. The author from the very

beginning employs irony to show the reader the evident contrasts between a paradise and the island in the novel. The title of the novel thus serves as an ironic foreshadowing, suggesting the idyllic nature of the island would transform into a complete opposite.

The Honey family's existence on the Maine Island starts with Benjamin and Patience. Benjamin was a Bantu, which is a native African ethnic group, and his wife descended from Ireland. As part of a community of 30 people, the ethnic diversity on the island was remarkable. The novel starts with the story of Benjamin and Patience, one of the first settlers on the island. Benjamin, who was once enslaved, settled on the island in 1793 to grow apple trees. In 1911 more than a hundred years after the first settlement, Esther Honey, great-granddaughter of Benjamin and Patience, her son Eha, his two daughters Charlotte aged 8, and Tabitha aged 10, and his son, Ethan, 15 were affected by the eviction. At the beginning of the novel, the highly diverse and complicated family lineage of the Honeys is stressed. The family's ancestry is a mix of various ethnic backgrounds. Over a hundred years, the Honeys consisted of multiple mixed races, which stressed their blended cultural values. It is especially important to have such a mixed-racial family on the island in terms of respecting cultural diversity. The main indicator of African and Scottish heritage is to have Angolan fathers and Scottish grandfathers. The writer suggests ethnic diversity by giving examples such as Irish and Congolese ancestry, Cape Verdean and Penobscot (a native American ancestry) relatives, cousins from Dingle (Ireland), Glasgow (Scotland), and Montserrat (A Caribbean Island). These different ethnic groups highlight the diverse family connections of the Honeys. The author paints a picture of a family with a unique and diverse heritage, with ancestors coming from all over the world.

There were at that time two other families on the island named the McDermotts and the Larks as well as two others named Annie Parker and Zachary who lived alone. Although Theophilus and Candace Lark, members of the Larks were cousins but allegedly and possibly brothers and sisters, they had nine children, four of whom survived. This inbreeding resulted in unhealthy children who were hard of hearing, near-sighted, asthmatic, and highly sensitive to sunlight, the main reason why they were called nocturnal. The Lark children, Camper, Duke, and Rabbit were not able to talk or see well. Millie has the responsibility of her siblings as the second child of the family. This inbreeding would later be one of the main arguments of the council to evict the island since they argued that the islanders were immoral.

The McDermott sisters, Violet and Iris cared for three children—two sisters and a brother, named Norma, Emily, and Scotty Sockalexis. The children were the orphans of a Penobscot woman named Cheryl. Their parents Ginny and Terrence despite claiming their Congolese heritage had a mixed background: “But with the island's usual mingled background of darker and lighter, African and European forbears, the full range of their ancestors' features were expressed in Violet and Iris as if through a prism” (Harding, 2023, pp. 29-30). It is evident that mixed racial background is not limited to the Honeys in the novel.

Besides the residents, there is another character named Matthew Diamond coming from the mainland. As an old missionary, he opens a school on Apple Island to teach children maths, Latin, painting, and literature. Esther resembles Mr Diamond to his father, whom she detested. Esther was verbally, physically, and sexually abused by her father. She gave birth to Eha from her own father. Later Esther pushed his father off the cliff. While her sister left the island before their mother died, Esther stayed on Apple Island: “Esther loathed her father and his memory with a

steady, seething rage it had taken her years to cool to a simmer and her dislike of Mr. Diamond felt like the same sort, if not half as furious” (2023, p. 40). This part serves as a foreshadowing in the novel. The connection built by Esther between her father and Mr Diamond shows that Mr Diamond will bring about severe consequences for the people on the island. Mr Diamond is a part of the relief society which would have a school built on the island to teach various subjects. However, the residents on the island anticipate that no good deeds may come from mainlanders since they are sure that they will interfere with their lifestyle:

that no good ever came of being noticed by mainlanders, which always meant being noticed by white people—plain white, her mother and aunts and cousins called them, to distinguish them from the lighter-skinned Apple Islanders, in whose veins ran blood from every continent but Antarctica, just like everyone else’s there, no matter what shade their skin. (2023, p. 42)

It is evident that Esther’s mother believed being the focus of mainlanders was a risk that needed evading. By saying ‘white people’, the colour of the skin is not meant. The phrase ‘white people’ includes those in power and mainstream and those who can change others’ lifestyles. Even though there are lighter-skinned people on the island, the islanders call mainlanders white due to the power they have. Although there are lighter-skinned people on Apple Island, they are not regarded to be white because their backgrounds are mixed of multiple continents. Esther’s mother once told her, “The better he tries to do, the more outside attention he’ll bring, and that’s no good. No good at all” (2023, p. 42). The message of ‘the white man’s burden’ is given here to emphasize that those in the mainstream assume that it is their natural right to interfere with others’ lifestyles. The diversity on the island is also stressed because apart from Antarctica, there are descendants from every continent.

The first international congress on eugenics is mentioned in the novel. Major Leonard Darwin, Charles Darwin’s son’s speech is stressed through Mr Diamond’s letter to his friend. Mr Diamond’s racist approach is exemplified: “*that all men are my brothers, all women my sisters, all souls my family—I nevertheless feel a visceral, involuntary repulsion whenever I am in the presence of a living Negro*” (2023, p. 45). A committee consisting of three counsellors, the council secretary, and three doctors come to inspect the residents of Apple Island. With the committee, there is an intern and a reporter as well. With Matthew Diamond accompanying them, the committee goes door to door to inspect every resident. One of the doctors is an expert in phrenology and brain physiology. Phrenology proposed by Franz Joseph Gall refers to the study of one’s skull to analyse their psychological attributes such as their strengths and weaknesses (Greenblatt, 1995). Comparing the similarities and differences between phrenologists and eugenicists, Victor L. Hilts states that both phrenologists and eugenicists shared the idea that the progress of the human race depended heavily on selective breeding. They held the fear of the degeneration of the human race slowly if certain measures were not taken. However, the author explains that while eugenicists urged the government to take action against the possible consequences of degeneration, phrenologists warned individuals to adhere to the laws of hereditary descent as a moral duty. (Hilts, 1982, p. 73) Unlike eugenicists, phrenologists did not ask for the government’s involvement to promote selective breeding practices. They rather emphasized the importance of personal responsibility. Although it has lost its credibility as a branch of science at the present, it had a substantial influence in the 19th century. The doctors of the committee are

especially interested in the islander's skulls and the effects of inbreeding. When one of the doctors tries to inspect Scotty's head with callipers, Violet refuses and reacts angrily. Nevertheless, they carry on with their measuring: "The doctors measured the women and children's skulls and foreheads and cheekbones and noses and ears and mouths. They checked their arms and hands and legs and feet and checked their teeth with wooden tongue depressors" (2023, pp. 51-52). Incestuous marriage is condemned by the committee. While the measurement continues with Esther, Mr Diamond thinks, "Livestock, Matthew Diamond thought. No. Lower than that. He wanted to say, This woman can recite Hamlet, you know. The doctor continued measuring Eha, murmuring to the intern, Mulatto; high-grade imbecile, or moron; insanity; probable eroticism" (2023, p. 53). Esther knows how to read and write, she recites Shakespeare's work, especially Hamlet; however, she is treated as less than a human. Her son, Eha is regarded to lack intellect and reported to have insanity. The committee treats the residents on Apple Island as inferior and not worthy.

The reporter coming with the committee reports in the newspaper that the island is notorious in terms of laziness and insanity. They are referred to be lost souls and the only institution worth mentioning is Matthew Diamond's school, which reflects the morals of mainlanders. The superiority of white people is stressed in the report. The school is portrayed as an institution bringing light to a degenerate place. The photos of the residents Bernard Richardson took on Apple Island are sold with highly offensive remarks on them mocking and ridiculing the islanders. The report in the newspaper serves as the starting point to ignite a protest against the islanders by slandering them. The residents' lives are limited to the island and they have little connection with the outside world. They are not able to defend or speak up for themselves, so the narration is written for them.

Throughout the novel, any laws, newspaper reports, or personal letters that disrupt the linear flow of the novel are given in italics by the author. One of these passages is directly related to the eugenics movement in state prisons: "*if in the verdict of the majority of said boards, procreation by any such persons would produce progeny with predispositions to moronism, mongolism, lunacy, feeble-mindedness, idiocy, or imbecility*" (2023, p. 63), then the operations of vasectomy or oophorectomy can be practiced to prevent such births. What happened on Apple Island is a tragic outcome of eugenics. In one of Mr Diamond's letters, he writes to his friend that "*the State is now certain to break up the settlement on Apple Island & evict the islanders sometime in the summer*" (2023, p. 68) and asks for his friend to host Ethan Honey whose talent he truly believes in. Apart from Ethan's talent, Mr. Diamond is fascinated by the tone of his skin colour since it is not possible to tell that he is mixed. Mr Diamond's racist remarks are explicitly given in the novel to stress his perspective. He is clearly racist and believes in eugenics. Although Tabitha and Emily have different skills as well in Latin and algebra, Mr Diamond does not ask help for them because they cannot be mistaken for white due to their physical characteristics.

Esther despite being misrepresented by mainlanders is nature-conscious and foresighted. Based on her observations about Mr Diamond, she concludes that they will be challenged by the outside world: "Soon enough, Pharaoh will come after us, like he always does. She thought of the Hebrews leaving Egypt, Pharaoh's army at their heels" (2023, p. 81). According to the Biblical description in the Book of Exodus, Pharaoh refuses Moses' demand to let the Israelites, who were then enslaved in Egypt, go. In the novel, a connection is set between Pharaoh, who pursued the

Israelites despite complying with the demand due to a series of plagues upon Egypt and the mainlanders. Esther is a character with valuable insight. She is able to foresee that the future is gloomy for them as a result of their interaction with Mr Diamond. In line with her prediction, the eviction process begins. Upon the demands of the committee, “*it was decided that the cause of humanity and public health necessitated the colony be broken up and the inhabitants segregated*” (2023, p. 90). The segregation was decided, and seven of the children would be committed to a school “for the Feebleminded” (p. 90). The lives of those who are assumed to be inferior are directed by those in power. The only viable way to be redeemed suitable in the outside world is to be closer to white people. According to Mr. Diamond, for instance, Ethan “is light enough skinned and blue enough eyed and straight enough haired and artistically enough gifted” to be saved (2023, p. 92), and thus he can pretend not to be one of the islanders. Mr Diamond’s thoughts reveal that coming from a mixed race is something to be ashamed of.

no one will ever know about the blood that flows in their veins, no one will ever be able to tell from their skin or their eyes or their hair that their great-auntie was from Kamerun, that their father’s father came from Nubia by way of Mississippi, that their mother was a full-blooded Indian? (2023, p. 94)

Adopting eugenic policies and having ideas to improve the quality of a nation’s population are regarded to be acceptable and valid. Ethan’s complexion which is similar to a white man’s makes him acceptable to be saved. His complexion and talent for drawing are the main reasons for his efforts to save him. Ethan unlike others stays at Mr Hale’s house where he meets Bridget. Mr Hale learns that Ethan and the maid, Bridget Carney have been intimate. Ethan does not want to return to the island in shame, missing all the opportunities presented to him. Bridget questions the fact that Ethan has ancestors of different races other than the white: “How can he be from a colored family if he is a white boy?” (2023, p. 147). Ethan thus is regarded to be white due to his skin colour and accepted into society immediately. People do not question his lineage apart from Bridget.

Although the islanders have been on the island for six generations, the council’s decision to evict them does not change based on the grounds that they are physically and mentally not abled. The islanders also do not own official documents to prove that they own the land: “None of the islanders or their ancestors had ever paid taxes or had a bank account or a loan, gotten a birth certificate, marriage license, or fishing permit” (2023, p. 167). This lack of official documentation could have significant challenges for the islanders in claiming their land rights. The island was ignored by the government for decades. The islanders are not excluded and marginalized due to bureaucratic oversights. The main reason for this ultimate eviction is the fact that they are of mixed races. As can be inferred from the phrase “polluted blood”, the council’s main aim can be said to be in line with the recent developments in the eugenics movement. Influenced heavily by the movement of eugenics, it is evident that racism based on pseudo-scientific studies shapes the mindsets of those in power. Selective breeding is preferred, and those who do not meet the criteria are not given the chance to reproduce. The council eventually decides to burn the whole settlement down:

No, the councilmen answered. There would still be matters of hygiene, physical and mental. There would still be the polluted blood. There would still be depravity and imbecility and mixed races. Nothing could change those hard facts. Best for everyone, the islanders

most of all, to vacate the settlement as a matter of public health. Tear everything down. Burn the shacks and garbage. (2023, p. 156)

Timothy Whitcomb, who was assigned to deliver the eviction notices sees the islanders as “degenerate squatters” (2023, p. 165) and resembles them to “dirty gulls nesting in their own spattered waste” (2023, p. 165). The council by following the eugenic policy assigns Whitcomb to deliver the notices. Whitcomb’s observations on the island reveal his racist and prejudiced side: “They had the whole island but there they were all huddled together like rats in a nest. Filthy, ragged, animals. Worse. Just looking at you, stupid, imbecile. I couldn’t get one of them to say a word” (2023, p. 180). Whitcomb’s disdain towards the islanders is clear. He defines them as animals, which reveals his view of himself as superior to those of mixed races. The right they assume to have stemmed from belonging to the white race allows them to have control over other races, disregarding their right to have independent lives entirely. Esther looking back at the island reminisces the old days. The traumatic effect of eviction on her is notable: “That poor island, she said. That poor little island of such poor dear souls. Driven from our home, our ark, our little basket in the bullrushes. All for some kind of hotel, they say” (2023, p. 206). Although building a hotel is given as an excuse to evict the island, the council’s main aim was to adhere to eugenics principles. Driven from their homes unfairly, they have to get accustomed to a new set of societal rules that they are unaware of.

In the novel, the author by referring to the tragic era of Apple Island defines this era as terrible: “*the 100th anniversary of the settlement’s dismantling and to memorialize the terrible episode in the state’s history so that such a thing may never occur again*” (2023, p. 199). By digressing from the linear narrative of the events, the author exemplifies the consequences of the eviction from the news and announcements of the present day.

Conclusion

Paul Harding in *This Other Eden* reflects the eugenic era in the history of the US. By shedding light on the tragic story of Malaga Island, the author draws parallels between Malaga Island and Apple Island in his novel. The author aims to demonstrate how the theory of eugenics at the beginning of the 20th century transformed an idyllic island into one of the biggest tragedies. A unique island with people coming from every continent of the world except Antarctica is transformed into a horrific outcome of a pseudo-scientific practice. The title of the novel *This Other Eden* thus forms a deliberate contrast with the expectation of an idyllic and idealized place. As a result, it can be stated that Harding uses the title paradoxically to show the reader the clear contrast between the title and the atrocities the islanders experienced due to the consequences of the eugenic discourse.

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Ethical Statement/Etik Beyan: Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. / It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.

Çatışma beyanı/Declaration of Conflict: Çalışmada kişi ya da kurumlar arası çıkar çatışmasının olmadığı beyan olunur. / It is declared that there is no conflict of interest between individuals or institutions in the study.

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