

Toni Morrisoun'un Paradise Eserinde Siyah Kadın Olmak ve Dinin Önemi

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Türkçe Geniş Özet

Giriş

ABD toplumu bir çok farklı ırk grubundan oluşmaktadır. Bu gruplar içerisinde Afrikalı Amerikalıların beyaz erkekler tarafından en çok ayrıma maruz kalmış grup olduğu söylenebilir (Jarrett 204). Yinede Afrikalı Amerikalılar arasında daha dez avantajlı bir grup vardır ki o da sadece beyaz erkekler tarafından değil aynı zamanda siyahi erkeklerce ayrıma tabi tutulmuş Afrikalı Amerikalı kadınlardır. Bu noktadan hareketle, Toni Morrison *Paradise* (1997) romanında bu baskı altına alınmış toplumun sesi olur.

Metot

Bu çalışmada, Morrison'un Afrikalı Amerikalı kadını temsil ediş biçimi analiz edilecektir. Bu bağlamda, Amerikan edebiyatındaki ırkçı yaklaşım ile feminist yaklaşım eser analizini mümkün kılacaktır. Bu noktadan hareketle Afrikalı Amerikalı kadının baskı altında oluşunu ve maruz kaldığı ayrımı ortaya koymayı sağlayacak feminist ve ırkçılık yaklaşımları irdelenecektir.

Tartışma

Bu doğrultuda çalışma içerisinde ilk olarak yazarın ırk ve din olgularını işleyiş biçimi irdelenecektir. Bu kısımda eserin analizi için gerekli art alan bilgisi olarak eserin yazıldığı tarih olan 1990'lar Amerika'sında toplumdaki din olgusu ve bunun sosyal olaylara yansımaları ele alınacaktır. Bu bağlamda din ve ırk olgusunun bu dönemde nasıl bir çarpışma içerisinde olduğu ortaya koyulacaktır.

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Bu kısımdan sonra eser için önem arz eden olgulardan ırkçılık ve cinsiyet kavramlarının ele alınışı vurgulanacaktır. Bu kısımda yazarın eserde Amerikan tarihinin geçmişinden modern zamanlarına kadının ırkı ve cinsiyeti üzerinden uğramış olduğu ve maruz kalmaya devam ettiği baskıları ele alış biçimi ortaya koyulacaktır. Bu bağlamda Morrison'un eserinde ele aldığı siyahi kadının iç savaştan 1970'ler Amerika'sına kadar olan süreçte yaptığı yolculuklar ve bu yolculukta uğramış olduğu haksızlıklar incelenecektir.

İrkçılık ve cinsiyet üzerinden Amerikan tarihi boyunca haksızlıklar yaşamış siyahi kadının durumu ele alındıktan sonra, Afrikalı Amerikalı toplum tarafından kurulmuş yeni yerleşim yerindeki durumu ele alınacaktır. Bu bağlamda ten renginin bile önemli olduğu toplumda, ırksal farklılıkların kadın üzerinde yarattığı baskılar analiz edilecektir. Tüm bu analizlerle, bu yeni toplumda siyahi kadının ötekileştirilme süreci ele alınmış olacaktır.

Bu analizlere ek olarak, eserde işlenen cinsiyet ve din olgularının kadın üzerindeki etkileri de incelenecektir. Bu bağlamda din gücünü elinde bulunduran erkeklerin kadın üzerinde kontrol mekanizmalarını işletme biçimleri ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan durumlar irdelenecektir. Bu doğrultuda toplumdaki bölünmeler ve kadınlara yapılan saldırılar ortaya koyulacaktır. Bunun için bu bölümde, aynı bölge içerisinde sadece aynı alanda değil farklı fakat yakın alanlarda yaşayan siyah erkek toplum ile siyah kadın toplumun din ve cinsiyet konuları üzerinden karşı karşıya geldiği örnekler üzerinde durulacaktır. Bu bağlamda dinsel anlamda siyahî kadının ötekileştirilmesi, buna karşı siyahî kadının ortaya koyduğu kadın gücü irdelenecektir.

Bütün bu incelemelerin ardından, cinsiyet, din ve gerçek hayatın iç içe girmişliği ve bu iç içe girmişlik sonucu ortaya çıkan sosyal durumlar irdelenecektir. Bu bağlamda 1960'lar ve 1970'ler Amerika'sında cinsiyet kavramı üzerinde yaşanan çalkantılar hakkında ön bilgi verilerek bu sosyal gerçekliğin kitap ile örtüştüğü hususlar irdelenecektir. Bu bağlamda erkeklerin kadınların değişim ve birlikteliklerine karşı gösterdikleri tepkiler ve bu tepkilerin kadınlar üzerindeki yansımalarının eserde alınış biçimi analiz edilecektir. Böylelikle din, cinsiyet ve gerçek hayatın çakışması sonucu kadının tepkisi ve izlediği yol ve bu yolun kadını götürdüğü yer incelenecektir.

Sonuç

Sonuç olarak, bu yaklaşımlar ve incelemeler çerçevesinde eserin incelenmesiyle eserin yazıldığı gün ile eserin bahsettiği geçmiş dönem arasındaki bağ ortaya koyulacaktır. Bu bağlantının ortaya koyulması ile birlikte siyahi kadının eserdeki temsili, din, cinsiyet ve ırkçılık olgularının onların yaşamları üzerindeki etkisi irdelenecektir. Böylelikle siyah kadın olmanın getirdiği zorluklar ve bu zorluklara karşı kadının verdiği mücadele incelenmiş olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Irk, Din, ABD, Kadın, Erkek

Being A Black Woman And Importance Of Religion In Toni Morrison's *Paradise*

Abstract

The Society of USA is consisted of many different racial groups. It could be said that among these groups African Americans are the ones who suffered mostly from the segregation of the white male. However, there is a more disadvantageous group in African Americas as African American women who are segregated by not only while males but also black males. From this point, Toni Morrison becomes the voice of this suppressed group of American society in her novel *Paradise* (1997).

In this study, the way Morrison represents the African American women is analyzed. For this analysis, the racist approaches and feminist approaches in American literature provides the analysis. From this point, the suppression of the African American women by religious and racist approaches is analyzed. By this analysis, how the African American women are segregated is told. Moreover, the relation of gender and religion, their effect on women and reflection of all these on real lives of African American women is told.

Finally, the analysis of the work within these approaches reveals the representation of black woman and the effects of religion on their lives.

Keywords: Race, Religion, USA, Woman, Man

Introduction

People belong to different genders, races and have different ideas, religions and beliefs. It is same for United States of America. The American nation comes into existence from women, men, blacks, Hispanics, Catholics, Protestans and many others. In such a society with so many differences, for harmony and unity of the people, it is necessary to understand and respect each other. In this context Toni Morrison aims to analyze the society's approach to African American women, their ideas and religions. From this point, it could be said that her novel *Paradise* (1997) points out that for their interest, the men segregates African American women due to their race, gender and religion.

Religion theme provides the historical connection between the 1970 the events take place in the novel and the 1990's that the novel was written. As Morrison said: "I want to suggest something about negotiation that is applicable for the 90s. There are a lot of... people for integration, people against integration, who are still out there" (Widdowson, 2001: 318). As Morrison conveys, connecting the past to today is important in order to understand the past and today of African American women. In this context, religion is an important theme because it also seems as an obstacle for integration of African American people and women into American society.

Method

Feminism

Firstly, as the study's focus is on woman, the analysis of the feminist perspective of the novel is important. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the feminist approach. In this perspective, Christy Rishoi emphasizes that "feminist perspective is —to recover and honor the specificity of women experience, and cultural significance by making women's voices and stories heard" (Rishoi, 2003: 23). Rishoi aims to emphasize that it is important to show the significance of the woman, the importance of her in the community and make her more visible and crucial in the society. Understood from the words of Rishoi, feminist approach aims at revealing the aspects of the patriarchal society, the condition and situation of the woman in the male dominated society. In addition to this purpose of feminism, it also focuses on gender issue. As Judith Butler emphasizes, "gender is culturally

constructed" (Butler: 2002, 9). Butler aims to tell that women are coded in certain cultural expectations accompanying the motto and ideology of the patriarchy which tries to keep women in doors busy with houseworks but not works outside and related to men's.

Racism and Gender

Like feminist approach, the racist approach in the novel is also important because both gender and race are concepts that male dominated society use for the restriction of the women. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the racism concept for the analysis of the work. For racism, Ellen Rooney states that "deeming someone's race is important" (Rooney: 2006, 235). She emphasizes that in order to disgrace and impoverish someone, racism is a crucial tool. From this point, about impoverishing and disgracing someone, gender is also used with racism. In this perspective, Rashmi Varma puts forth that:

Over the past fifty years, at least since the era of civil rights and women's rights struggles in the 1960s, race and gender have been variously represented as being parallel, intersecting, and overlapping systems of identity formation that structure social relations (Rooney: 2006, 232).

Understood from her words, racism like gender which gives the men the opportunity for setting up social relations and conditions of women who are pushed behind in social relations due to their gender pushes women behind due to their race. Therefore, women are segregated and discriminated due to their gender and race.

Discussion

Religion and race

In *Paradise*, Morrison suggests that events of the 1990's in religious context stands as an obstacle against black people's integration into society. Black churches were burned down in nine states in 90s. These attacks were

committed by hate groups which consisted of mostly white males (Booth A01). These groups wanted to exclude and destroy black churches. And these events are depicted in the novel which centers on a group of African American women with different religious beliefs living in isolation, away from town. However, this doesn't stop or prevent the males' hatred to the women's home where the attack occurred and women were brutally killed.

Morrison points out that, historically, nothing has changed; attacks on black churches happened throughout American history and continue to occur. The novel is set in 1976, just 200 years after the Declaration of Independence. The aim of choosing this year is not only to emphasize the historical context but also the suffering of African American women. Being black results in being attacked and for woman it can result in death. Even though African American women fought for their rights, they weren't completely successful and could not attain freedom and equality. Morrison suggests that white, male who dominated American society has no understanding of these basic human rights and have tolerance for blacks, especially black women.

Racism and gender

By the help of the historical facts, Morrison portrays the restricted lives of women due to race, gender and religion. Her historical descriptions show an ongoing problem as racism. On this subject, author goes back to slavery times and comes today in order to provide the picture that shows how African American women were segregated due to her color skin as J. Brooks Bouson claimed.

In *Paradise*, Toni Morrison looks back to slavery, Reconstruction and the post Reconstruction years and to the black exodus from the South and settlement of Oklahoma. She also extends the story of black life in America into the mid - 1970s, bringing into the novel historical references to World War II and the Vietnam War, and to the civil rights and the black power movements. (Bouson, 2000: 192)

As Bouson claimed, Morrison dates back her novel to slavery times as it is understood from her sentences in the novel.

From Haven, a dream town in Oklahoma territory, to Haven, a ghost town in Oklahoma State. Freedmen who

stood tall in 1889 dropped to their knees in 1934 and were stomach – crawling by 1948. That is why, they are here in this Convent. To make sure it never happens again” (Morrison, 1998: 5).

Morrison’s words tell about the journey of African Americans from post civil war to 1948. In this historical journey, as Morrison states, Blacks were proudly standing up after the Civil War but they had to move and establish their own cities due to segregation they suffered. This idea was emphasized again by the last sentence in the quotation. Dark skinned black men of the town attack Convent where black women with lighter skin live because previously lighter skinned black communities or white communities didn’t let dark skinned black communities stay in their communities. There had always been a fight between light skinned and dark skinned ones.

The one established when the Mississippi flock noticed and remembered that the Disallowing came from skinned colored men. Blue – eyed, gray – eyed yellow men in good suits. They were kind, though, as the story went. Gave them food and blankets; took up a collection for them: but were unmoving in their refusal to let 8-rocks stay longer then a night’s rest (Morrison, 1998: 195).

Morrison states that black communities were excluded even from colored societies. In this perspective, there is an unordinary, deviant situation for these people as described by Erving Goffman.

One such deviation is important here, the kind presented by individuals who are seen as declining voluntarily and openly to accept the social place accorded them, and who act irregularly and somewhat rebelliously in connexion with our basic institutions — the amity, the age-grade system, the stereotyped role-division between the sexes, legitimate full-time employment involving maintenance of a single governmentally ratified personal identity, and segregation by class and race. These are the ‘disaffiliates’. Those who take this stand on their own and by themselves might be called eccentrics or ‘characters’. Those whose activity is collective and focused within some building or place (and often upon a - special activity) may be called cultists. Those who come together into a sub-community or milieu may be called

social deviants, and their corporate life a deviant community. They constitute a special type, but only one type, of deviator (Goffman 169).

As Goffman states, these black people in the novel segregated by race even among their own races and they chose a collective activity and focused on a new place. So they went on a journey to establish a town, community for themselves. First, they established Haven and then Ruby in order not to suffer from similar sorrows. But the arrival of these light skinned colored women caused unrest in town and reminded them their past in which they were not allowed into towns by light skinned blacks. Light skinned blacks were a threat to them so these women were a treat to the people of Ruby, so not to suffer again they attacked to Convent as Morrison stated in her words above.

It could be said that skin color and the women as the cause of the light skin color of later generations, are important issues in the town as Ron David stated.

In the process of trying to figure out why some of the community's original families (including her own) no longer seemed to be part of the town's "holy families", she realizes the unstated principle behind how people had been ranked in Ruby since the beginning: skin color. They believed they would be God's chosen people as long as they kept their 8 – rock blood untainted. Anyone who mated with a light – skinned person or had light – skinned children had relinquished the racial purity on which their identity was based. "In this case," Patricia thought, everything that worries them must come from women" (David, 2000: 164).

Women with light skin like the ones in the Convent were a threat to them because they were not racially pure as it was stated many times in the novel.

Now they saw a new separation: light skinned against black. The sign of racial purity had taken for granted had become a stain. The scattering that alarmed Zechariah because he believed it would deplete them was now an even more dangerous level of evil, for if they broke apart and we disvalued by the impure, then, certain as death, those ten

generations would disturb their children's peace throughout eternity" (Morrison, 1998: 194).

Morrison connects impurity to race, because society sets such a connection between purity of the society and race and segregates the society according to this approach.

Segregation in haven

Morrison points out the racial purity and makes a reference to WASP (White, Anglo Saxon, Protestant). At the beginning, the founding father like Zechariah wants to create a Paradise where they won't suffer from segregation but they become like the ones who segregate them as they are not WASP.

So their town which is called Haven as it is like a paradise for them and then the town Ruby turn into a place where segregation still exists and mostly it is done on women as they lead the violation of the blood rule and this become one of the main reason for attack to convent women. They are a threat to 8-rock families, the founding families who name themselves so, as they are as dark as the darkest coal mines called as 8-rock. But with such prejudices, those black people become one of those white people who segregated them during their historical journey so the black men shows no improvement in this journey. They exclude the ones who violate blood rule like Patricia and her daughter Billie Delia as Patricia married a light skinned colored men and violated blood rule and gave birth to a light skinned girl.

Those dark skinned men don't have any tolerance to light skinned black women. Besides, they don't give any chance of life for white ones as it is understood by the first sentence of the novel.

They shoot the white girl first. With the rest they can their time. No need to hurry out here. They are seventeen miles from a town which has ninety miles between it and any other. Hiding places will be plentiful in the Convent but there is time and the day has just begun (Morrison, 1998: 3).

Light skinned black women and white women of the convent are not liked by dark men of the town and they don't give any chance of life to them. They don't want to share the world with them. They are full of hatred as Bouson states.

Paradise, like Morrison's other novels, reveals that shame – rage feeling traps can be transmitted from one generation to another in the form of interracial prejudice and lead not only to bitter hatred against those who are different but also to black – on – black violence (Bouson, 2000: 213).

As Bouson states, Morrison points out the dangers of otherization. As a solution, Morrison emphasizes the interracial transcendence by presenting the white mother and black daughter as Mary Magna and Consolata. Even though Consolata was killed, her body and other bodies in the convent are not found at the end of the novel. They reach their freedom and paradise where they won't be segregated due to their skin.

Gender and religion

But before the women reach their Paradise, they suffer segregation due to their gender, as well. Because, their existence as woman is threat to men. They are threat for men's paradise which was established in Ruby. Men are the power in this town but by the arrival of the women, men begin to lose power as those women there help many other women in town and gain appreciation. The women of Ruby begin to walk to Convent to get the help they need. Some gets mental help, some physical and some material. By this help, women gets stronger, they don't need more help by men and become independent individuals. There comes feminine power. This situation disturbs men and this makes their attack rightful in the eyes of men. The best example of this occasion in the book is represented by the words written on the oven which is a communal oven and gathering place for Ruby people.

Destry, looking strained and close to ears, held up his hand and asked, "Excuse me, sir. What's so wrong about 'Be the Furrow'? Be the Furrow of His Burrow'?"

"You can't be God, boy". Nathan DuPres spoke kindly as he shook his head.

"It's not being Him, sir; it's being His instrument, His justice" (Morrison, 1998: 88).

As it is understood by these words, the young generation, men of town want to be the instrument of God for justice and they want to bring justice by bringing down the convent women. Because at the beginning, the writing on the oven was as Beware of His Furrow but the young men tried to change it to Beware of His Burrow. They also added a red fist on it. All these were

threat signs against convent women and the attack began from the place where these signs were drawn or written.

But actually there is no difference among women of convent and men of Ruby because like their drawings and writings on the oven, women have writings and drawing in the convent. But patriarchal men are ready to blame them for being witch as they draw weird shapes on the ground. But actually the drawings that men come across in the convent are just a form of art and the way of women's relief and expression. Consolata which is a mother symbol for the convent asks the women to lay on the ground in the convent and she draws their bodies with a red paint. Every such thing in the house looks weird to men as it is stated by the book.

A 1968 calendar, large X's marking various dates (April 4, July 19); a letter written in blood so smeary it's satanic message cannot be deciphered; an astrology chart; a fedora tilted on the plastic neck of a female torso, and in a place that once housed, Christians well, Catholics anyway, not a cross of Jesus anywhere (Morrison, 1998: 7).

Men consider women weird. Men think the house of the women is dirty, their clothes are very radical and many more things men see in the convent looks different than usual. The reason of such perception depends on convent women's freedom which Ruby men try to restrict. They don't suit the women description of town in the novel as it is stated by the novel.

Birdie pushed her plate toward Mavis. There was a tiny square of liver, too, and some onions. Mavis scraped it all onto her plate. "You still have children. Children need a mother. I know what you've been through; honey, but you do have other children" (Morrison, 1998 31).

Mavis is a mother who loses her two children and now not very interested in her other children but the society expects her to be a mother. That's her role as it was expected in 60s and 70s. The women, who didn't take care of their children or acting different than usual patterns, were considered as bad in the eye of the society as it happened in the novel. The convent women come to a wedding to which they are not invited. Even their arrival is disliked by the town men as their dresses were appropriate for a wedding.

None of them was dressed for a wedding. They piled out of the car looking like go – go girls: pink shorts, skimpy tops, see – through skirts; painted eyes, no lipstick; obviously no underwear, no stockings. Jezebel’s storehouse raided to decorate arms, earlobes, necks, ankles and even nostrils (Morrison 156).

Morrison’s characters don’t get dressed according to expected patterns and furthermore they don’t behave as it is expected from women. They dance, throw their arms over their heads. They act as the way they want. But this is not liked by the town and they are called as bitches and witches as it happened in 60s and 70s in America. So writer refers to real life and if a woman doesn’t fit the norms of patriarchal society, she is not a good mother or a woman and furthermore she is a bitch and witch as it was in Salem witch trials. So writer points out that nothing has changed but still men do witch trials by attacking women as it happens on parades of women in real life and the convent in the novel. So there is a war between sexes as Missy Dehn Kubitschek states.

Ruby is established as a separatist, specifically dark black community. Yet it generates its own patterns of exclusion. Most obviously, men and women are divided, and the black attack on the Convent makes the battle of sexes literal. Black men are warring on black women (Kubitschek,1998: 180).

But the reason of this fight as it is in real life and the novel, is to erase the handicaps of men by blaming women for all wrong doings as Kubitschek stated. “Precisely because Ruby must be perfect, the results of all imperfection behavior are siphoned to the Convent (Kubitschek,1998: 181). So, in the novel the man relaxes themselves and hides their faults by bringing accusation on women. For example, in the important marriage ceremony of Fleetwood and Morgan families, the hatred between two families is forgotten but the tension is loaded on women who come to wedding and behave different than usual. But actually as founding families, the patriarchs of the town, there is always tension between two families and a marriage between them is not enough to solve the problems but instead of a fight between them, they put their anger on convent women by blaming them about disturbing the people in the wedding. “Remember how they scandalized the wedding? What you say?” (Morrison, 1998: 275).

Because, patriarchy rules in Ruby. "All paradises are described as male enclaves, while the interloper is a woman, defenseless and threatening," Morrison has remarked of the novel" (Bouson, 2000, 194). As Bouson states, men create their own paradise and women's place is second rank in this hierarchical society. But such society is destructive. Women become scapegoats as a result of social and racial shaming and men attack on women. Women become only an object for men of Ruby. They could beat them or kill them. So they did. Some of them beat their wives such as K.D and some of them cheat their wives with a woman from the convent such as Deacon Morgan as a member of distinguished founding family of the town. When men are distinguished due to their past, convent women are shameful, impure, uncivilized and degenerate others.

Uh huh and it was that very same day I caught them kissing them on each other in the back of that ratty Cadillac. Very same day, and if that wasn't enough to please the devil, two more was fighting over them in the dirt. Right down in it Lord, I hate a nasty woman (Morrison, 1998: 275).

Women are represented by negative words such as ratty, dirt and nasty. Furthermore, they are associated with dreadful images such as devil. Besides, from the description of the physical attitude of the two women's toward each other, it is understood that two women are lesbians and that is unacceptable in that town and let these women be called as devil and nasty women.

Gender- religion and real life

Morrison states that men are ready to blame women in the novel as it happens in real life. Lesbianism in 60s and 70s was an important issue in America. Such relationships were considered as insane and such women were attacked or excluded from society as it happens in the novel. Nine woman lives in the convent in the novel. Their friendship and togetherness are misinterpreted by the society, especially men. The men see that women community in the convent is weird as so many woman without man lives there. For them convent is a dirty place.

And at last they will see the cellar and expose its filth to the light that is soon to scour the Oklahoma sky. Meantime they are startled by the clothes they are wearing – suddenly aware of being ill – dressed. For at the dawn of a July day

how could they have guessed the cold that is inside this place? (Morrison, 1998: 3).

Morrison emphasizes that in the eye of men, women's place is dirty and they are ill dressed. So such a women group is considered as filthy, guilty and ill mannered. This perception is also seen in civil rights movement when women act together. They are blamed for being irrational and lesbian in order to break their power. So by such an approach in the book, Morrison refers to real life.

She states that people don't understand lesbianism and ready to blame women for being lesbian such as it is a sin or guilt. And it is same for the men of the town. They call women as bitch most of the time. So women's sexuality is driven to ill mannered places and this shows that not women are ill mannered but the men are in the novel as it is in real life of 60s.

Because, in the novel men rape women, the women characters like Seneca and Pallas become sexual victims as Pallas is raped by a man and becomes an abandoned mother. In this occasion, convent becomes a shelter for women. It becomes a place of maleness. The women come to convent as broken, frightened girls and they are weak. "They have same story, disorder, deception and drift" (Morrison, 1998: 208). So women of convent like women of daily life have same sorrows and disappointment resulting from men. In this occasion, a woman can help them. Consolata becomes the leader, healer for them. Women imaginatively enter each others' stories so they undergo a collective and painful process. They experience Mavis' discovery that her twins are dead, Pallas' frightening escape from her attackers, Gigi's experience in the Oakland demonstration, and Seneca's search for the missing Jean. They notice that they have common sorrows and also potential to heal these sorrows by a leadership of another woman. They become independent as Morrison states in the novel. "They don't need men and they don't need God" (Morrison, 1998: 211). Women gain the power to be free from men. So this power frightens men. So the attack begins by killing the leader of women, Consolata. This killing act signifies that how the women and their leaders were suppressed in real life when they begin to frighten men in the context of men's losing the power.

But their attack doesn't bring men the power and relief they expected. "Ruby men don't change after the attack. Sargeant Person appears as smug as ever, Menus alcoholism worsens, Steward Morgan remains insolent and unapologetic" (Morrison, 1998: 212). When men stays same,

women changes and develop. Because, after attack, there is no dead body around. The death women's bodies disappear and the surviving women never come back. This becomes like a resurrection for women. Because throughout the novel reader witness the personal development of convent women. They walk to the town and they experience new things in their journeys. But men never walk the seven miles road between convent and town. When women go for a journey to their inner self, men don't change as Morrison states. Besides journey to inner self, women of convent get a second chance for life. So women who are victims become woman warriors as they fight against men when they attack and they have spiritual gains. So that, Morrison refers to real life and shows that the struggle of the women will continue in every platform and they will win this struggle.

Morrison states that women could establish paradise as it is in the novel because these women come over sexual and racial boundaries which men couldn't overcome. Due to this reason, writer names each chapter by a woman's name and this signifies the importance of the women for the society. Even the name of the town as Ruby comes from a girl who had been ill and died due to segregation she suffered for her treatment. Her father wants to keep her alive by giving her name to a town but they demolish her soul and everything they have done by applying same segregation to convent women. They try to create a paradise in this town where they won't be segregated but their paradise turn into a prison where patriarchy rules. So Morrison states that paradise could be anywhere and she shows this idea by the last word of the novel as Paradise. "Now they will rest before shouldering the endless work they created to do down here in Paradise" (Morrison, 1998: 318). Because, for her the women characters of Paradise is where they could come and go freely as they do in the convent. They built their own paradise. They have gardens, flowers and freedom in a way that paradise is supposed to be. But in men's paradise there is no road to connect town to other places and there are rules of patriarchy which determine the life style. The writer points out that men oriented paradise is a segregation and excludes women so women set their paradise for their freedom in the novel as it is an example for the real life.

But it is not easy for women to gain their freedom because, they also suffer from segregation on religion in the novel. This segregation is told from the very beginning of the story. Men attack to the convent where they think another kind of religion is practiced. This event in the story is based on an occasion that Morrison hears about as Ron David states.

During a research trip to Brazil, Toni Morrison heard of a convent run by black nuns who took in abandoned children and practiced Catholicism on the first floor and Brazillian Voodoo in the basement. One version of the story was that a posse of local men went on a rampage and murdered nuns (David, 2000: 153).

Similarly, Consolata is such a character who Mary Magna brings from a convent in Brazil to the convent and the convent is full of such drawings as Morrison narrates in the story.

When each found the position she could tolerate on the cold, uncompromising floor, Consolata walked around her and painted the body's silhouette. Once the outlines were complete, each was instructed to remain there. Unspeaking. Naked in the candlelight (Morrison, 1998: 263).

Men's reaction to these drawings become similar as it is in the event which happens in Brazil. Men consider them the signs of evil as Morrison states.

Pious banged his fist on the wall. "You have already dishonored us. Now you going to destroy us? What manner of evil is in you?" He had been looking at Steward, but now his gaze took in Wisdom, Sergeant and the others two. "The evil is in this house," said Steward. "Go down in that cellar and see for yourself." (Morrison, 1998: 291).

According to the men, who attack to the convent, those drawing on the cellar which Consolata drew by using the bodies of women are signs of evil. So the men's attack to convent is rightful for men.

Morrison deliberately puts this event and words of characters into the novel to make a reference to attack on convent in Brazil and to the attack of black churches in the 1990s. She states that religious hatred causes sorrows, deaths and claims that segregation from white societies is not a solution by creating racially pure, religious and isolated black community. She points out that such a society does what white people do. She also criticizes white people's attack on black churches but gives a message of integration instead of segregation. She points out the love's connecting and integration power as it is told in the novel. She talks about men's and women' love. In this perspective, Morrison puts a character called Divine

Truelove and her love for the life and people. Morrison points out the love of each other and the respect to each others' religious differences.

But men of Ruby don't show such a respect. In their isolated town, they have no tolerance for another type of religion, especially a religion that women practice. They call them as witches and this turns out to a witch trial. This situation is like occasion of Jehu. Around 800 B.C she was chosen by Prophet Elisha for special mission which is to trace Phoenician woman Jezebel who is called a whore and witch. They killed her and they gathered her believers and killed them in a temple like it is in the story (David, 2000: 185). So Morrison states that black people have no difference in a segregated society and integration of American society is necessary as it was aimed by the civil rights movement.

At the same time, like many feminists claim, Morrison claims that religion is a male dominated system as Ron David claims. "Toni Morrison seems to have noticed with a vengeance that the Bible is the ... the bible of Eurocentric White Male Mythology" (David, 2000: 190). Within the light of such thought, it could be said that religion is the way to use power and men use it for their sake as it happens in the story. They use it against women and make their attack rightful and this leads crimes based on religion as it was both in 1976, the time that the events take place and 1997 that the novel was written. Morrison states that even after the Declaration of Independence which guarantees freedom of choice and belief for everyone, freedom didn't exist in bicentennial of it and doesn't exist at the time that novel was published.

Conclusion

Finally, Toni Morrison writes a novel on past and today of black communities by references today. Her historical approach provides an insight to suffering of black community. But it is for sure, African American women have been the ones who suffered most. They suffered from the racism even among the blacks. They were accused for not being racially pure. They were excluded from society as it happens to convent women. They were also excluded due to their gender. Men who like to control race also wanted to control the rule in the society in favor of men so that they could keep the patriarchy alive. In the cases like convent attack where matriarchy occurs, they attack women and try to gain power back. These examples are given deliberately by the author because, in context of race and gender similar problems and oppressions still exists for black women in

Civil Rights movement and at the time that novel was written. But the ongoing problem is not only race and gender but also religion for women. They are segregated due to their religion. Even in the religious practices men try to hold power and make women obey the rules that male oriented religion created. The author examples this situation by the attack to convent where men think drawings of women on the ground are symbols of witches, practice of their terrible beliefs. Therefore author implies that at bicentennial of Declaration of Independence, women are still under attack and they are segregated for being witch, lesbian or light skinned. Besides the story reveals that these dark skinned African American men who were not let into cities of light skinned ones' and had to establish new cities, apply same segregation on these light skinned women as these men consider these light skinned women a threat to dark skins which signify racial purity for them. However, men become a threat to their Haven town by becoming like those segregationist they left behind when women heal and improve themselves in this convent which they turned into to a paradise by acting, dressing and living as they wish. Therefore, author aims to emphasize the historical journey of the African Americans, especially civil rights movements of African American women for freedom of choice in many social issues, an everlasting wish for usage and control of power by African American men against women under the certain names such as racial purity and patriarchy. Toni Morrison points out these issues and emphasizes the never ending struggle of black women which begins by slavery and continues in the twentieth century and even today by providing hope for women in the final scene of the story where women are free and set their own paradise.

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