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Motherhood As Resistance: Feminine Strength In Morrison's "Paradise"

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Abstract

Toni Morrison's *Paradise* explores motherhood as a powerful site of resistance and feminine strength, reimagining traditional roles within a patriarchal society. The novel centers on the women of the convent in Ruby, who create a sanctuary that fosters communal identity and empowerment. Through diverse maternal relationships, Morrison illustrates how these women reclaim agency, challenging societal norms that seek to define and limit them. By portraying motherhood as both a source of nurturing and a form of rebellion, *Paradise* highlights the transformative potential of female solidarity in the quest for identity and autonomy. This examination reveals that in Morrison's narrative, motherhood transcends biological ties, becoming an act of defiance against systemic oppression. Morrison explores various maternal relationships, highlighting how figures like Mother Imma and her peers challenge societal expectations, transforming motherhood into an act of rebellion. This redefinition allows them to assert their identities and resist the constraints imposed by a patriarchal culture that seeks to undermine their worth. The theme of intergenerational resilience is prevalent, as the experiences and wisdom passed down from mothers to daughters equip them to confront systemic injustices. Morrison emphasizes the strength found in these maternal legacies, illustrating a powerful continuum that supports women in their struggles for autonomy and identity. By portraying motherhood as both nurturing and defiant, *Paradise* underscores the transformative potential of female solidarity. The novel invites readers to consider how maternal bonds can foster resilience and empowerment in the face of oppression. Ultimately, Morrison crafts a narrative in which motherhood transcends biological ties, emerging as a profound act of defiance against societal norms and a celebration of feminine strength.

KEYWORDS: Motherhood, Feminine Strength, Autonomy, Paradise, Utopia, Identity

Introduction:

Toni Morrison, an iconic figure in American literature and the first African American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, is renowned for her profound exploration of themes such as identity, community, and the complexities of race and gender. Her novels often delve into the intricacies of African American life, illuminating the struggles and resilience of her characters against a backdrop of historical and cultural challenges. In *Paradise*, published in 1997, Morrison presents a layered narrative centered around the fictional town of Ruby, Oklahoma, where a group of women grapples with their identities in a patriarchal society.

Four women—Mavis, Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas- resort to the convent to regain strength for representation and resistance. The place becomes a safe recluse to these women for healing their ills thwarting patriarchy's presence in a significant way. Being in the convent also helps these women to reduce the risk of frequent reproduction trauma. Motherhood solidarity gets an immense boost when even daily chores like cooking and gardening provide healing and nourishment for undertaking responsibilities of representation and resistance. Home to Connie, the convent serves as a "safe heaven" for the depleting lot to flourish and thrive. All major actions spring from either the kitchen or the large garden, assuring the women of a positive deal.

At the heart of *Paradise* lies the theme of motherhood, which Morrison presents as a powerful form of resistance. The novel explores how the female characters, both in Ruby and the convent, navigate their roles as mothers amidst societal oppression. For these women, motherhood transcends mere biological functions; it becomes an act of defiance against the constraints imposed by a male-dominated world. Through their maternal bonds, they forge identities that reclaim their agency and assert their strength in the face of adversity.

Morrison's depiction of motherhood encompasses a spectrum of experiences, from nurturing and sacrifice to empowerment and solidarity. The women of Ruby embody a collective struggle, using their maternal roles as a means to confront and resist the oppressive structures surrounding them. Simultaneously, the convent women illustrate an alternative vision of motherhood—one that prioritizes communal well-being and challenges traditional expectations.

This paper argues that in *Paradise*, motherhood is not simply a biological role but a profound act of resistance, reflecting the enduring strength of feminine bonds. By examining how the experiences of the women in Ruby and the convent serve as catalysts for empowerment, Morrison highlights the vital role of women in challenging oppressive forces and reclaiming their identities. Through *Paradise*, she ultimately asserts that the act of mothering is inextricably linked to the struggle for liberation and self-definition.

A failed Utopia:

Nurturing a Utopian impulse has been a covert design of many a socio-political status quo perturbing intellectuals of contemporary parlance who bear the burden of rebuilding dilapidated social structures based on racial and gendered hierarchies. Morrison is aware of such an impulse when she puts the writing of the novel *Paradise* in the right perspective. The concept of heaven on earth is next to impossible, yet it keeps her daunting prospect of upliftment of black women afloat. At least, it helps her to be in the right frame of mind in her war against racial and patriarchal repression. She writes:

I was interested in the kind of violent conflict that could happen as a result of efforts to establish a Paradise. Our view of Paradise is so limited; it requires you to think of yourself as the chosen people …which means that your job is to isolate yourself from other people. That's the nature of Paradise; it's really defined by who is not there as well as who is. (Morrison,1998b; Goulimari 105).

Set in the all-black town of Oklahoma in July 1976, a year which witnessed sharp decline in Civil Rights Movement or the "Second Reconstruction" (Widdowson 2001, 319; Goulimari, 104), it purportedly deals with so many historical contexts, an alternative historiography is attempted to fight the racial evil. Nine men, led by the Morgan Twins, the New Fathers of Ruby, an all-black establishment of 1949, formed a reform group, a Utopian alternative, to fight racial discrimination. In her Nobel award acceptance speech in 1993, when the concept of the Paradise was fresh in her mind, Morrison argues,

The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that … it was the distraction or weight of many languages that precipitated failed architecture. That one monolithic language would have expedited the building and heaven would have been reached. Whose heaven …? and what kind? Perhaps the achievement of Paradise is immature, a little hasty if no one could take the time to understand the other languages … had they, the heaven they imagined might have been found at their feet. Complicated, demanding, yes, but a view of heaven as life. (Morison, 1993, 202; Goulimari, 105).

Morrison makes mothers robust and resolute, irrespective of their suffering and marginalization, the black women's experiences of and relationship with the patriarchal society make them as a site of power and resistance in her narratives. Adverse situations have made them bold and courageous to risk physical and mental agony for the larger interest of the community. The convent becomes a safe recluse repudiating patriarchal society and its male ways and the kitchen inside the convent becomes a symbol of their triumph and identity from where they can operate freely to help the cause of "maternal healing". drawing upon Andrew O'Reilly's Morrison's motherhood theory, this paper will examine black motherhood as a source of strength and power for women empowerment. Sara Ruddick's model of "maternal

practice" dealing with mother power and how and why it is important for the empowerment of black women is also at play here. Mothers work of rearing children to defy the onslaught of race, sex and gender serves as entry point of such an argument. The children are required to be mentally tough to take on the challenges of racism and gender discrimination from any potential danger of politics.

Patricia Hill Collins writes in *Black feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment* that every culture evaluates its experiences to propagate a unique worldview which would deliver goods to its practitioners. She argues that four different strands associated with black womenhood are mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother and Jezebel which have repressed the black women and their individuality. Collins is against the 'controlling images of black motherhood" (Collins 71) which has marginalized the position of the Black motherhood. She observes that "the dominant ideology of the slave era fostered four interrelated socially constructed controlling images of black womanhood, each controlling the dominant group's interests in maintaining black women's subordination" (71). The derogatory and stereotypical images of mammies, Jezebels and slave multiplying machines have contributed largely to women's oppression. To confront these negative images and to establish a robust black identity, they draw upon their experience and exploration of womanhood in relation to the Afro-American context. Their day-to- day living and "the commonplace taken for granted knowledge" come to their rescue against the injustice meted out to them by the dominant patriarchal ideology. The "rearticulated consciousness" has stood the black women in good steads in arousing a sense of resistance in them. They are able to "counter and interrupt" the established discourse of black womanhood which is central to their struggle for survival.

With Morrison, the black womanhood concept gains a new impetus that empowers the black women to resist the upper-hand and highhanded attitude of the patriarchal institutions. The typical womanly qualities being reinforced through the images of mammy, the matriarch, Jezebel and the welfare mother - the predominantly negative explorations- are effectively relegated by the rooted everyday experiences of African motherhood. The mother has become a cult figure who can now consider and positively contribute to the empowerment of their children through sacrifice and suffering.

The feminist angle to motherhood:

A prominent feminist theorist bell hooks argues that the "race and class" bias is the wrecker-in-chief for African-American motherhood which paves the way for the women oppression. Being the key to the African American culture, motherhood becomes a protective layer under supervision of which the growth and development of Black children thrive to take on the challenge of racial practices. The struggle of black people in an apathetic white society where their very survival is interrogated and measured in terms of the former being a nonstarter. The main concern of black motherhood, therefore, is how to preserve the black values and the protect the black children being deprived of their rights due to the wrath of racial ghosts. Such a practice makes the black children self-reliant. Thomas Bernard and Candace Bernard's argument about women empowerment seems to be significant in the present context. They write: "Empowerment is naming, analyzing and challenging oppression on an individual, collective, and /or structural level. Empowerment which occurs through the development of critical consciousness, is gaining control, exercising choices and engaging in collective social action" (46; O'Reilly 5)

Morrison redefines the role of the black motherhood which has been subsumed under the rigour and repression of a dominant ideology. Subversion of the hitherto dominant white ideology, which looked down upon the black experience and culture, has become the key to Morrison's agenda of resistant motherhood. The tradition of community mothering which emerges as a foil to enslaved black women culminating in the creation of other mothering. An alternative historical account accounts for their historical subversion which Morrison nurtures with care and precision. Which empowers them with a bold move to deal with their everyday living and banal experiences. The received notion of gendered roles and cultural identity of how a woman should behave with and adjust to the different role models assigned to her by the dominant hegemony has been exposed by the protagonists with a rearguard action. Such depictions, empower Morrison, as Andrea O'Reilly argues, "defies and positions maternal identity as a site of power for black women" (1). The absence of mothering and motherhood is an anathema to Morrison's narratives contributing to loss of and damage to their individual identity as well as cultural identity. Therefore, mothering is the key to Morrison's mission of women empowerment.

O'Reilly argues that "motherhood" is central to Morrison's narratives. She further elaborates that Morrison's treatment of motherhood, its traditional and cultural representation, differs from the point of view of what the dominant culture subscribes to and focuses on. O'Reilly states that *Paradise,* an integral of the trilogy which also figures *Beloved* in the category, represents "the recovery of the displaced self-hood for those individuals who were denied nurturance and cultural bearing in childhood" and makes it clear that "Healed they may reclaim their identities of mothers and/or daughters that their maternal failures caused them to deny" (45). Her in-depth representation of black motherhood as "out mothering,

preservation and cultural bearing" (Ishimoto 1) is certainly a sort of giving credit to whom it is due. But the reality related to and involved with black motherhood is certainly pricking, whether it is maternal identity or black identity. Their individual identity or their collective identity should be respected with dignity in the interest of humanity. Morrison's protagonists, especially the characters of *Paradise*, both represent and resist the received notion of motherhood identity, proposing the idea of mothering and unmothering based on the strategy of an expansionist version of identity formation.

The first sign of defiance is seen with the characters who openly defy the taboos associated with Ruby tradition. The identity of black women is in jeopardy when seen in the context of "the black and racist self-sufficient community which favours black motherhood coupled with black manhood" (Ishimoto 2). Interestingly the Convent, not the society, represents the will and pleasure of the women protagonists to decide upon their project of representation and resistance by openly defying the culture of repression and relegation. They invent their own way of dealing with and adapting to the socio-political norms of the racist regime which treat them with utmost contempt. They do not want to fall prey to the prevalent practice of identity formation consisting of a fixed notion of identity and the proven behaviour of motherhood which is afraid of breaking the protocol. In other words, the new women make an attempt to redefine their roles to rewrite their history and cultural identity which would help them express their lived reality, not the imposed notion thrust upon them by the racial hegemony. The new notion of home, as Iris Marion Young would argue, "is a nostalgic longing for an impossible security and comfort, a longing brought at the expense of women and those of constructed as Others, strangers, not-home in order to secure this fantasy of a unified identity".

Drawing upon the notion of act of remembrance of "the African American mothers and grandmothers" by bell hooks, Young argues that "Colonized people can project an alternative future partly on the basis of a place beyond dominance that is preserved in everyday life" (160). Home being the secure place of "shifting identity" and agency is the responsibility of every mother to extend its values to all the stakeholders.

In contrast to Ruby, the Convent projects a utopian vision and helps Ruby to come out of its limited vision of homemaking. The convent provides the comfort of a home by welcoming visitors to its fold, making provision for food and secure shelter. The convent located in a far-off place, almost 17 kilometers away from Ruby was an embezzler's mansion turned missionary school looking after the needs of the native Americans which had once failed in protecting the interests of its nuns where the two nuns sold fruits and took temporary refuge. Its bullet like robust shape boasting erotic ornaments invites women who seek temporary separation from their offspring, opt for an abortion, and to escape from daily drudgery of a trouble ridden life. Here there is no risk being fallen into the trap of a mere breeder or a mammy; she is no more the biologically incompetent mother that African-American women are usually associated with. The convent serves as the healer of all ills in relation to women where the empowerment comes naturally. It is regarded as the temple of the "cult" (11) of (un) motherhood where fixed identity of mothers and daughters are resisted so that women can choose what they want to do and what they do not. Letting its visitors a free hand is what the convent makes a routine practice. It is without a border where the relegated women defy the limitation of gender and race for a safe anchorage. Indeed, the first of the victimized girl is "the white girl" (3) who seek shelter in the convent where the inclusive element even allows the ill-intentioned white men of Ruby whenever they wish to visit it. The accommodating nature of the paradise in the shape of the convent is the key which captures our imagination as the host is seen as a "fluid, partial, shifting, and in relation of reciprocal support with others" (Young 141). the prospect of a "post ethnic" community with its paradisaical constructs can claim to have advantage of a home where external will and obligation comes to a bare minimum to explore the ethno-racial ancestry notwithstanding the external pressure of a forced marginalization.

Paradise of Motherhood:

The convent becomes symbol of a utopian vision where women represent their own identity which can take established identity is resisted and repudiated. Justin Tally argues that there are two kinds of Utopia present in the novel "one black and one feminist" (19). the former perspective considers Ruby where lack men is in control of everything, its history, not spared even. As far the convent being feminist in its agenda, the policy of *laissez faire* the convent practices a lurking women empowerment mission. The orphan Connie adopted by Sister Mary Magna is the leading the business as usual with her ever robust, reliable and infallible project of unmothering where motherhood is free and unrestricted from patriarchal imposition. She is "an ideal parent, friend, companion or "this play mother" (262). the place welcomes all miserable and tortured women with an impression that mothers and daughters are born to suffer. The myth of sacred and sacrificing mother is prevalent in Ruby and outside world which O' Reilly considers as "the motherhood practiced and prescribed in the dominant culture" or "the institution" which, as Adrian Rich believes, distinguishes from "to her potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children" (13). Rich further states that the "institution" is "the key stone of the most diverse of social and political systems and "for most of what we know as 'mainstream of

recorded history, motherhood as an institution has ghettoized and degraded female potentialities" (13). in contrast to Ruby and the outside world, the convent offers the much-needed respite in providing shelter to all suffering women.

The novel uses the unique technique of monologues for the characters which is not an official version of recorded history, not recognized in terms of race and class oppression. But it is collective, visitors at the convent narrated "the same tale: disorder, deception and drift" (221-222) the story of some mothers who toil hard to cater to loaded responsibility of putting up with their husbands' filthy treatment who doesn't miss an opportunity to scold them at the drop of a hat. Other mothers choose to desert their children resorting to adultery where their children are being punished for their internalized prejudices. Yet in some other cases women become victim of forceful heterosexual compulsion under the pretext of marriage, engagement, and often without any valid reason. What is even more disgusting is the treatment of their own mothers who instead of supporting their plight, become a party to the torture being unleashed by the male hegemony. Be with mothers or not, the women suffer the maternal loss, absences and betrayal. Bewildered and confused, the women reach at the convent to get rescued, patted and nurtured by Connie who is hailed as "a new and revised Reverend Mother" (265) who served women without being a mother herself. Connie's magic and foresight has given an alternative living to women where kinship, individual existence and independent identity formation becomes easy. Rebirth and inheritance have no chance here. This independent Utopia is the key ingredient of (un)mothering where they are independent to possess and enjoy, forget the memory of suffering and nobody is there to either claim or blame them.

Four pertinent issues concerning Convent women who are deserted by the mother-daughter relationship ask the reader to rethink about of Morrison's strategy and politics of motherhood. Mavis Albright becomes the victim for accidentally killing her twins, she is being blamed for irresponsibility, waywardness and even cruelty towards her own children. When she wants to show the truth behind the truth of killing her twins by suffocation in the car, she has gone to buy goods for her husband, nobody, not even the lady journalist is going to accept her version of the killing of her twins. Her explanation only fetches distrust and dismay to her at the time of interview. The journalist's "eyes were soft, but the shine was like that of the neighbors" (22). Her presence impresses Mavi initially. But her soft but malicious intent galls Mavi when she resorts to cross-examination: "Didn't you know your husband is coming home for supper, Mrs. Albright" (24). the voice of Mavi is not audible which is intentional, prioritizing the official version of institutional and stereotypical motherhood at the expense of the marginalized figure of Mavi.

Woman's trust is not heeded adhering to the mother-daughter stereotype. She is not even respected by her own children and drunkard husband for whom she has sacrificed so much. When she goes to her own mother with her grievance that her children plan to kill her, her mother, Birdie Goodroe who works in a preschool, she is not convinced, pointing out at harmlessness of "Little children" (32). Mavis's self-abasement is significant in the context:

Mavis felt her stupidity close in on her head like a dry sack…. Too rattle-minded to open a car's window so the babies could breathe. She did not know now why she had run from the gold link coming to her. Frank was right. From the very beginning he had been absolutely right about her: she was the dumbest bitch on the planet (37).

She is humiliated at the mercilessness of others. Compromising her self-respect to her utter dismay. The vision of a utopia strikes her when she drops by the convent for gasoline. Her rehabilitation at he convent, a sort of revival of hope and life, comes with the assertion, "Make yourself useful" (41) by shelling the pecans with "Strong, curved like a bird's pecan-like hand" (42). Her next, and the most important initiation comes when she sees Sister Marie Magna, alias Mother who is hailed as "my mother and "Your mother too" by Connie (45). She finds the Convent as the "a Swept world", "Unjudgmental," "Tidy" "Ample," "Forever" (48) where the kitchen assumes symbolic significance with illusory laughing and singing of the children. Betrayal by her own children, husband and mother is being compensated by Connie with her "Milky Moon" eyes and magnanimous efforts to rescue her whenever Mavis turns to her, facilitating her repeated return to the convent.

Seneca suffers from and is intimidated by her own sister Jean, who is, in reality, her biological mother, at the age of five. After her desertion, Seneca knocks on every door in search of her sister of her apartment for help, but to no avail. Left to care of a case worker in the foster home she is not accepted as a girl but "she knew that it was not herself that the mother had approved of but the fact that she took reprimand quietly, ate what given, shared what she had and never ever cried" (135). She resorts to repeated wrist-cutting efforts as the climax of her victimization. Her mental agony is revived, she now hurts herself, when she undergoes psychological trauma through acts of such self-inflicted pain. Her "exposure to conditional love and low self-esteem" (Ishimoto 7) has made her life a living hell giving excess credit to what is really due to others. Her encounters with others are obviously not balanced between her pain and empathy for others. How she degenerates into a pain-inflicting spree to herself is really rare in a society which talks about issues relating to women as important for women empowerment.

Seneca's encounters with wayward Eddie who is accused of running his car over a child, her failure to convince Eddie's mother to spare some money for the latter's spend thrift son with a reproach that "I have known him all his life"

(133), her empathy for Mrs. Turtle's (Eddie's mother) helplessness, listening to "A flat-out helpless mother cry" (134), her soft corner for a mother, who suffers due to her carefree child, "Her hands had been in her hair, her mouth wide open in a drenched face" (134), her attempt at self-humiliation to work as a sexual labourer at the behest of a stranger, Norma Keene Fox, point out her wavering between two extreme emotions of self-restraint and empathy. However, she feels at home at the convent, when everyone is, sort of "waiting for you" (138). Visiting the Convent is her "first pointedly uninstructed thing she had ever done" (138), in her mediation between Mavi and Gigi employing an agreeable smile on her face, she lapses into the fit of wrist cutting, an indication that even in the convent it would take some time to restore her normalcy "from overexposure to pain" (Ishihoto 8).

The case of Grace alias Gigi, her untraceable mother and imprisoned father, is no different. She neither cries nor smiles, has no interest in the Civil Rights Movement work culture. The trauma of a bleeding black boy in Oakland, California haunts her time and again, she fails convince her conscience with her "desert-skull dry" eyes that perturbs her psyche: "No you stupid, stupid bitch, because you weren't tough enough…. You thought you were hot lava, and when they broke us to sand, you ran" (257). What Gigi's needs is "self-nurturance" than "self-abandonment"

Gigi surfers from nymphomania, a trait which goes against matrimony and motherhood, she sleeps with K.D., a prospective inheritor of Ruby without remorse. She takes recourse to flirtatious activities taking advantage of K.D.'s obsession which is recounted passionately: "like sugar turning from unreasonable delight to body's mortal enemy, his craving for her had poisoned him, rendered him diabetic, stupid, helpless" (147). Unable to put up with Gigi's capricious behaviour, he hits her resulting in the end of their passionate relationship. The trust that Connie reposes on her, the latter becomes wayward yet reliable to the affairs of the convent

Pallas is next visitor to the convent who suffers from the same kind of fate the earlier three women who have been subject to, that of mother lessness and betrayal. Brought up by her wealthy lawyer father in her childhood, she visits her mother with her boyfriend Carlos in New Mexico at sixteen. To her dismay, her mother Divine makes love to her daughter's boyfriend, a subversive relationship which counters the long-held belief that a patriarch can only have sex with teenage girls. The myth of the motherhood is shattered and refusing to forgive her mother, Divine, she risks possible rape by unknown men on the way, to return to the Convent, "a church like place" (258) where helpless women are welcome. Belie Delia, a recruit at the clinic to the convent invites her: "… you can collect yourself there, think things through, with nothing or nobody bothering you all the time. They'll take care of you, or leave you alone, which way you want it" (175-176).

The convent is considered as the to go place for mothers/or daughters who are helpless. Pallas's pregnancy makes matters worse; she is in a dilemma of lifetime. How can she bear a child and become a mother, after her mother's intended or unintended betrayal? The answer lies in the convent being the place of a safe recluse, "the most peaceful place on earth" (182) serving as an effective antidote to mother phobia which motivates Pallas to move ahead, to recognize divinity within herself. Ironically, she becomes a mother at the convent, she goes there to become free from abhorring motherhood available outside it.

Connie also suffers from the same fate of motherlessness, taking charge of the convent after Sister Mary Magna's death, she is the mother figure who frees desolate women of their bondage. Being rescued by sister Magna, Connie makes a strong resolve to treat man and woman, flesh and spirit and mother and daughter as equal: "Never break them in two, never one put over the other. Eve is Mary's mother. Marry is the daughter of Eve" (263). women are secure in each other's company which is indicated through the feeling of "A sense of Surfeit" (265) pervading through the convent. The convent women are more assertive than the hapless men at Ruby.

The convent represents a safe recluse of and a secure place for women who are without an assertive identity suffer from distrust and betrayal by the society, by fathers and mothers alike. Every woman has who turns to the convent has got an independent existence which is not possible outside. Here the paradise is built at the cost of dismantling mother or/and daughter stereotypes. The motif of (un)motherhood characterizes the convent symbolizing the performative construction of motherhood which Judith Butler vehemently advocates. Pertinently, Adria Schwartz employs the deconstruction of the category of women adhered by Butler maintaining that "the category of mother is a constructed subject based on the questionable category of gender" (Schwartz 250)

In contrast to Ruby men, the convent women are more assuring and comfortable in the performative role. The convent represents a caricature of what Ruby men think about women. Steward Morgan, a prominent Ruby man detests what the convent women stand for, to him the latter are "a flaunting parody of nineteen negro ladies of his and brother's youthful memory and perfect understanding" whom they witnessed on their initial journey to Oklahoma with pleasure and happiness, what they are experiencing now is "the degradation of that moment they'd shared of sunlit skin and Verbena" (279). likewise, his twin Beacon proudly proclaims that he is ashamed of his erstwhile lover Connie "who had made [the very name of women] into a joke and a travesty of what women should be" (280). Ruby can ill-afford to put up with

constructive performance of "Bodacious Black Eves unredeemed by Mary" (18) which may possibly "enact and reveal the performativity of gender in a way that destabilizes the naturalized categories of identity and desire" (Butler 139)

Conclusion:

The concept of completeness of Paradise, with its underlying emphasis on "univocality, agreement, exclusion", expelling of the unworthy, is not viable in reality. Re-imaging of the concept of inclusiveness, heterogeneity, and openness is what is expected of the Paradise. The construction of a paradise is like a utopia that troubles Ruby's men which the convent women defies at will. What these women represent is a rearguard action through resistance and repudiation of the authoritative notion of mother or/and daughter relationship. their attempt to rewrite history through an alternative historiography is significant in the present context. Motherhood is considered as a source of strength and sacrifice in Morrison's works, they are dominant through their action and representation picking out holes in the mainstream functioning of and dealing with the issues regarding women's emancipation. Paradise serves as an elusive concept, all earthly beings are incomplete in one or another aspect and every individual cherishes the dream of pursuing the goal of getting a glimpse of the world of a utopian vision. We would do well to consider inclusiveness, equality and homogeneity over race and gender divide.

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