

上海大学

硕士学位论文

《圣经》女性人物塑造中的诱惑和欺骗主题阐释

姓名：何琛

申请学位级别：硕士

专业：英语语言文学

指导教师：周平

20090301

摘要

本论文主要研究了《圣经》女性人物塑造中的“诱惑和欺骗”主题以及对英语文学中女性人物创作产生的影响。在《圣经》中，无论她们的身份地位以及贡献，大多数女性人物的塑造都或多或少地体现着“诱惑和欺骗”这一主题。

论文作者运用女性主义理论对三种不同类型的女性形象进行分析并发掘隐藏在“诱惑和欺骗”女性形象塑造后面的原因。第一类“好女人”以拔示巴、以斯贴和雅亿为例。作者通过研究发现，这类女人之所以经常使用诱惑和欺骗手段达到目的是因为她们在社会中处于劣势地位，在政治上处于无权状态。《圣经》产生于以男权为中心的文化背景，反映了男性的利益和思想。这些女性人物的塑造方式反映出一种意识形态，男性将所有罪恶和世界中存在的问题都投射到女性身上。由于女性话语权的缺失，《圣经》在这类“好女人”的塑造中也常常表现出“诱惑和欺骗”主题。第二类“坏女人”包括了大利拉、耶洗别和喇合这三位异族人。在《圣经》中，以色列人与异族人通婚往往导致对信仰的背弃，因此这类女人都被打上“诱惑和欺骗”的烙印。《旧约》是希伯来文化的遗产，犹太教的经典，叙事者的立场自然是站在以色列的一边，诱惑和欺骗参孙这样的以色列英雄自然要受到谴责和惩罚。第三类女人“寡妇”的“诱惑和欺骗”大多则为了完成传宗接代的责任，因为传宗接代是《圣经》时代赋予女性最重要的身份特征。

《圣经》女性塑造中的“诱惑和欺骗”主题对英语文学中的女性人物产生了深远影响。在本论文中，作者通过对霍桑作品《红字》中的海丝特以及福克纳作品《喧哗与骚动》中的凯蒂等女性人物进行分析，指出《圣经》中充满“诱惑和欺骗”的女性人物原型对作家创作的影响。本论文揭示了《圣经》女性人物塑造中充满“诱惑和欺骗”的原因及其对英语文学中女性人物的创作所产生的影响。结合对叙事角度和社会习俗的研究来解读《圣经》女性人物形象的“诱惑和欺骗”主题由此来挖掘女性人物形象潜在的含义是本文创新和意义所在。《圣经》女性人物形象的塑造是我们辩证的认识女性在世界文明进程中的地位和作用，重新评价女性社会形象的重要依据，对其进行研究进一步加深了对现实女性身份和角色的理解。

关键词：《圣经》，诱惑，欺骗，形象塑造

Abstract

In this thesis, the author has studied the elements of seduction and deception in biblical women characterization and its influence on English literature. A particular attention of the study has been given to the biblical books of Genesis, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Joshua and Esther.

In the Hebrew Bible, most female characters are presented as being liable to seduce and deceive if need be. The author explicates different reasons for this characterization through analyzing three types of biblical women characters. The “Good Women” group includes, Bathsheba, Esther and Jael. Because of their inferior social position, they have to use seduction and deception frequently so as to carry out their plans even if out of good-will. Their characterization is chiefly shaped and interpreted by men in a patriarchal culture and from an andocentric perspective. The “Bad Women” club is full of foreigners: Delilah, Jezebel and Rahab. The intermarriage is seen as a result of the corruption of the Israelite and this “crime” is generally thought to be brought about by the female weakness in seduction and deception. Loyalty to their late husband is another reason that causes the seduction and deception in the third group “Widows”. Within the cultural context of the time, especially in regards the law of Levirate, the seduction and deception of Tamar and Ruth are understood and even appreciated.

This thesis also reflects upon the way in which this characterization of seduction and deception has impacted modern understandings of women and the formation of archetype in English literature. In previous studies, few of scholars combine feminist theory with narrative critical method and sociological method which are the highlight of this thesis. Discovering the hidden reasons for the characterization, the reader can examine and reevaluate the seductive and deceptive women characters in a new light. The thesis is certainly not a comprehensive representation of women images in Hebrew Bible, but it will shed some light on the recent biblical research.

Keywords: Hebrew Bible, Seduction, Deception, Characterization

原创性声明


本人声明：所呈交的论文是本人在导师指导下进行的研究工作。除了文中特别加以标注和致谢的地方外，论文中不包含其他人已发表或撰写过的研究成果。参与同一工作的其他同志对本研究所做的任何贡献均已在论文中作了明确的说明并表示了谢意。

签名：何琛 日期：2009.6.15

本论文使用授权说明

本人完全了解上海大学有关保留、使用学位论文的规定，即：学校有权保留论文及送交论文复印件，允许论文被查阅和借阅；学校可以公布论文的全部或部分内容。

（保密的论文在解密后应遵守此规定）

签名：何琛 导师签名： 日期：2009.6.15

Acknowledgements

Thesis writing was strenuous and challenging. Though the process was lonely and tiring, I'm so thankful that I was not alone. There were people who granted me courage and faith to overcome all the troubles and frustrations, and I now whole-heartedly dedicate this thesis to those who have supported me and cared about me. It was your companionship that helped me accomplish such a difficult task.

First, my deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor, Professor Zhou Ping, without whose patience, warm encouragement and inspiring instructions, the completion of my thesis would have been impossible. She not only patiently discussed every idea with me but also carefully examined every detail I wrote. Her insights and directions improved my writing skills and sharpened my thinking. I also want to express my gratitude to all the other respectable teachers in the School of Foreign Languages. They are Prof. Gu Zhengyang, Prof. Huang Lushan, Prof. Tang Shuzong, Prof. Zhu Zhenwu, Prof. Zhuang Enping, associate professors Zhang Qiang, Zhu Jie, Yu Jiancun, Tang Genjin, Dr. Shang Xiaojin and Dr. Miao Fuguang. From them I have learned how to do research correctly and what attitude I should take in academic study. Their comments and criticisms have helped greatly in the revision of this thesis.

Second, I would like to show my appreciation to my parents, who have been caring and loving even though they never said it to me. I am glad I didn't let them down and I hope they will also be proud of me. I owe my special gratitude to my husband Hao Honghai, who has always been there for me and offered me whole hearted support as well as untiring comfort.

Finally, I also want to thank my classmates, 205 roommates and my other friends. The happiness they brought to my life gives me the strength to move on.

Seduction and Deception in Biblical Women

Characterization

Introduction

The Bible is a compilation of writings spanning over thousand years. Few critics in modern times have questioned the Bible as a most influential literature work, and almost every critic has been aware of the complexity of the biblical texts. More than a century ago, Matthew Arnold laid the foundation for the literary study of the Bible. In *God and the Bible* he argued that “the language of the Bible is not scientific, but literary. That is, it is the language of poetry and emotion, approximate language thrown out, as it were, at certain great objects which the human mind augues and feels after, and thrown out by men very liable, many of them, to delusion and error” (Arnold 228).

The importance of biblical feministic criticism was early stated by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In her introduction to *The Woman's Bible*, Stanton argued that it was important for women to know and understand the Bible because it was the document which men were using to legitimate the oppression of women (Stanton 3). Furthermore, like those of many other disciplines in the Humanities, scholars of biblical studies have been concern with such important theoretical issues as race, class, sexuality and nationality. In the early part of the nineteenth century when women began to protest against their civil and political degradation, they referred to the Bible for an answer (Stanton 8). For example, Simone de Beauvoir argued that Genesis 2-3, the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, was the foundational myth in the West that deems woman as a “relative” rather than “autonomous” being (Beauvoir 136).

The new wave of literary studies of the Bible has been gathering force now for more than a decade. Although the last decade has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of women's rights throughout all of social life, even in the dawning years of the twenty-first century, biblical stories of women still influence the way women

think of themselves and the way the rest of the world thinks of them. Much of this influence is more or less negative, for example, the influence of the seductive women characterization in the Bible. Modern scholars generally agree that Eve, Delilah, Bathsheba and some other female biblical characters represent seduction and evil. In *"Status and Role of Female Heroines in the Biblical Narrative,"* Esther Fuchs offers the first critique of the presentation of heroic women in the Hebrew Bible. She discusses the relationship between literary strategies and the ideology of male supremacy, and also the ways in which the biblical narrative constructs women. Since then, feminist companions and commentaries on the Bible and the various anthologies that center on the female images in the Hebrew bible have come out. In the 1980s and 1990s, feminist interpretations of the Bible became not only great in number but also in variety. A range of literary theories, such as Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Reader-Response theory, Rhetorical Criticism, Psychoanalytic Criticism and so on, have been applied by many feminists in the field. The various critical perspectives and methods have helped enriching the readers' understanding of Bible. Although books about women in the Bible, as well as studies of prescriptive male texts on women's roles and places, have been numerous throughout the centuries, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza believes that "feminists must develop a critical interpretation for liberation not in order to keep women in biblical religions, but because biblical texts affect all women in western society" (Fiorenza 1992:20). A few of scholars have noticed the seductive and deceptive women roles, but they seldom combine feminist perspective with narrative critical method and sociological method as this thesis tries to do. Moreover, the female images in the Hebrew Bible have profound influence on the English literature. Many of them become heroines in some writers' masterpieces such as "Paradise Lost" written by John Milton.

In this thesis, the author tries to examine a number of female characters mainly in the biblical narratives of Genesis, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, and Esther. In these books, female characters enter the texts as part of male stories. The author explicates the ways in which the male authors and narrators of the Hebrew Bible describe women in a negative way. The author notes that most female characters in the Hebrew

Bible play seductive and deceptive roles. This representation is related to both the attitudes of male authors and the actual social conditions of women in the world that produced the texts. Thus, in this thesis, the research of female characters involves the use of narrative strategies and understanding of social context.

The aim of the thesis is to find out why seduction and deception are common characteristics of all biblical women; why some seductive and deceptive women such as Jael and Esther are celebrated as heroines while Delilah, the Philistine prostitute, is regarded as evil for seducing Samson; why the biblical women such as Tamar spare no effort to give birth a heir to carry on the name of her husband even through seducing her father-in-law. It also aims to study the interrelationship of patriarchal ideology that sanctions the subordination of women and literary construction, such as type-scenes, characterizations, dialogue and narrative perspectives. The thesis attempts to promote critical reflection and academic study of biblical women characterization by analyzing the three types of seductive and deceptive biblical women. Moreover, it reflects upon the ways in which the archetype of seductive and deceptive biblical women has impacted the portrayal of women in modern English literature. The thesis is certainly not a comprehensive representation of women images in Hebrew Bible; however it attempts to shed a new light on the recent biblical research.

This thesis consists of five sections. The introduction explains the significance and purposes of the study and presents an overview of the thesis. Chapter one reviews the development of feminist studies of the Bible as literature and explains the framework of feminist theory, narrative critical method and sociological method. Chapter two focuses on the three reasons for different types of seductive and deceptive scenes. The author begins with an overview of the female images as a whole, classifying the female characters by examining their “positive” or “negative” roles in the story, interactions with male characters, age and marital status and so forth. The first reason concerns most of women in the Hebrew Bible who have, more or less, a tendency to seduce and deceive men. The second reason explains why some seductive and deceptive biblical women are still regard as heroines while others are

despised or condemned by readers. The third reason answers the characterization of seductive and deceptive biblical women within cognation. Chapter three analyzes the influence of seductive and deceptive biblical women archetype on English literary works. Finally, in the conclusion part the important argumentation is reaffirmed.

Chapter I: Literature Review of Feminist Biblical Studies and Theoretical Framework

1.1 Major Scholarship in the Feminist Studies of the Bible as Literature

Before the eighteenth century, literary criticism of the Bible as literature focused initially on the vocabulary, style, grammar, authors, and times. From the middle of eighteenth century to the middle of twentieth century, the historical criticism of the Bible has developed to its full swing with the most remarkable achievements. From the middle of the twentieth century, the Bible has been interpreted from many different perspectives, for instance, reader-response criticism, narrative criticism, feminist criticism, post-colonial criticism, structural criticism and other ways. Meir Sternberg's book *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* uses modern literary criticism to carry forward the surface and the depths of biblical narrative. He gives a very specific analysis of the story of Bathsheba and David, suggesting that Bathsheba might seduce the king through bathing on the roof. Sternberg's biblical criticism gains its own recognition among most western readers through the favorable comments by Robert Alter in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. In this book, Robert Alter provides an enlightening guide to the Bible's narrative strategies. He also describes the interrelationships among religion, history, and literature in the Hebrew Bible, the dynamics of narration, characterization, and dialogue and the functions of a sequence of repeated scenes in the narratives.

In the nineteenth century, the women's rights movement promoted the feminist interpretation of the Bible. Before the movement, women were judged to be deficient as human beings in the literature writings including the Bible. Since the judgment about what counts as the criteria was drawn exclusively from male experience, it prevailed until women stepped forward and raised their voices in protest. As a matter of fact, most participants in feminist biblical criticism are women. They have examined the representation of women in canonical and non-canonical texts and

unveiled the patriarchy in texts. They also have studied the influence of women's stories in Hebrew Bible on modern literature. The eleven-volume series *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* written by Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine not only give comprehensive coverage of the biblical texts, but also provide a good sample for current critical voices. It proposes a good representation to roughly divide feminist biblical criticism into three phases. The first phase coincides with the rise of the feminist movement in the United States. As its roots in the late eighteenth century, the emerging feminist movement raised critical questions about the Bible. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a leader of the women's movement in the nineteenth century, was a person who had great influence during the period. She brought attention to the ways in which the Bible contributed to the subordination of women. From 1895 to 1898, she gathered female colleagues to create a biblical commentary, *The Woman's Bible*. These women devoted themselves into searching for a feminist interpretation of the Bible that was rooted in the feminist critical consciousness: women and men are fully human and fully equal. This consciousness contradicts to teachings and actions that strengthen the social system that oppresses women and other groups in society. *The Woman's Bible* rejects those scriptures that portray women as irrational, or otherwise unfit for public responsibility. Stanton revealed the contradictions and inconsistencies in the Bible such as its attitude towards women, "The Bible cannot be accepted or rejected as a whole, its teachings are varied and its lessons differ widely from each other. In criticizing the peccadilloes of Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, we would not shadow the virtues of Deborah, Huldah and Vashti" (Stanton 13). The first phase came to climax in 1895 with the publication of *The Woman's Bible* and was followed by a period of relative feminist silence on this subject lasting until the 1960s.

The second phase began shortly after Valerie Saiving's article, *The Human Situation: a Feminine View*, asked fundamental questions about the inclusivity of contemporary Christian theological models. It was only in the 1970s that women biblical scholars began to engage in research and publication that could be defined as feminist interpretation. Books such as Letty Russell's *the Liberation Word* and Phyllis Trible's *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* introduced many women and men to the

new possibilities opened up by feminism for reading and understanding the Bible. Phyllis Trible's feminist interpretation of biblical texts influences those who are studying biblical criticism. In her work "*Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*", Trible told the sad stories of four biblical women. Letty Russell's edited book, *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, is quoted by all later scholars who are working in the field.

The early feminist interpreters of the Hebrew Bible in this time showed two major tendencies. Mieke Bal and Esther Fuchs stood for "hermeneutics of suspicion" which attributed gender-politics agenda to any texts originating in the male community. Phyllis Trible represented the "hermeneutics of reconciliation" which attempted to balance the feminist scholars' admiration for the sacred texts with their painful realization that the female voice was suppressed in it (Petersen 226). In the 1970s, the work of Phyllis Trible, particularly her investigation of Genesis 2-3, stood out as the most influential feminist studies focusing on the Bible. "Phyllis Trible has always been very clear about her commitment to the biblical tradition in a Christian context and she works to overcome, resolve or confront the problems presented by the Bible and its interpreters" (Milne 46).

During the first decade of the second phase, feminist biblical scholars had to struggle for the publication of their work. They struggled for working opportunities in relevant institutions; they struggled for the right to participate the conference program; they struggled for space in traditional scholarly journals. In the 1980s the number of feminist studies of the Hebrew Bible grew steadily. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza has earned worldwide recognition during this phase. Her work in the field of feminist hermeneutics has become a standard reference in the feminist academic world. Her pioneering book *In Memory of Her* was published in 1983, which represented the first hermeneutic approach to feministic analysis. This hermeneutic approach with a specific feminist character took a position, on the one hand, against the Church's traditional treatment of the biblical texts and, on the other hand, against the premises of traditional biblical scholarship (Schroer 1). In the following years Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza developed and refined her feminist critical hermeneutics in diverse

publications such as *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* and *Bread Not Stone: the Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. In the latter book, she argued that the Bible's patriarchal bias had functioned to legitimate the oppression of all women. She took women's experience as her criterion of authority in struggling for liberation, and viewed the Bible as a historical prototype open to transformation. Women around the world began to work with the biblical texts on the basis of Fiorenza's books, at times even in contradiction of her theories, but in any case stimulated by them.

Over the last twenty years, biblical scholarship by women has come into its maturity. Not only are women prominent in the discussions of traditional topics in biblical studies, but "the new questions women have posed and the new ways of reading that women have pioneered have challenged the very way biblical studies are done" (Newsom and Ringe 21). By the 1990s, the diversity of woman-centered critical analyses of the Bible reveals a third and very complex phase. For one thing, the term "feminist" is no longer adequate to describe all women's analytical and ideological interpretive concerns. Women critics strengthen their rights to participate to the interpretive process for granted. They use traditional methods of analysis to investigate non-traditional questions. They may examine factors of social and economic class, race and nationality in relation to the literary characters in a biblical text, the women of the ancient community, as well as in relation to the women in contemporary society. During the third phase, the women critics engage in three essential tasks. First they criticize the sexism of the tradition, denying that the subordination of women can ever be identified with the text of Bible (Higginbotham 45). Esther Fuchs published her book *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* in 2000. By means of a thoroughgoing literary analysis of a sequence of biblical stories, Fuchs isolated and unpacked the narrative strategies to depict female characters as less-than-ideal humans in many subtle ways. She had consistently raised feminist concerns about how biblical text communicates patriarchy. In her book, she illustrates how these female characters are treated as the actual and symbolic property of males by examining the stories of raped virgins,

maidens at wells, brides, would be brides, wives, sisters, daughters, and would-be mothers. Second, women critics challenge existing interpretations of women's roles in Hebrew Bible. *Helpmate, Harlots, and Heros: women's stories in the Hebrew Bible* written by Alice Ogden Bellis was published in 1994. In this comprehensive book, the author shares the work of many feminist biblical scholars who have examined women's stories in the last twenty-five years. These stories have profoundly affected how women understand themselves. In the last chapter of this book, Bellis discusses the subversive women in subversive books such as Ruth, Esther and Judith from a new perspective. Third, women critics add new ideas to the transformed tradition, arguing that the recognition of women's equality would not just mean that a male-oriented tradition opens to women. Gale A. Yee had written a ground-breaking book *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* in 2003. Yee's basic hypothesis is that images of woman as evil in the Bible are generated largely by male compensatory mechanisms. She calls attention to the social sciences to understand women's roles, particularly their social power, in societies resembling ancient Israel. Gale A. Yee demonstrates her proposed method by reading four sections of the Hebrew Bible. A multi-volume series *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* which gathered the work of a wide range of feminist commentators were published in 2001. It not only celebrates feminist scholarship but also makes a unique contribution to the rapidly emerging field. It is a reflection of the diversity and creativity which now characterize feminist scholarship on the Hebrew Bible. Methodological diversity also characterizes the book. There is no prescribed or privileged critical methodology or analytical focus. Historical, sociological, anthropological, archaeological and psychological approaches are all evident alongside or in partnership with literary approaches. "The community which produced the biblical text, readers or the text, the history of interpretation of the text are among the foci includes along with the text itself" (Brenner and Fontaine 40).

With increasing self-confidence, feminist study of the Bible has become one of the most important divisions in contemporary biblical research. Women gradually become prominent in the traditional biblical studies and pose new questions and new

ways of reading on biblical studies. There are many different directions that feminist biblical studies have taken. Some scholars have attempted to recover knowledge about the actual conditions of women's lives in the biblical period. Others have focused on the telling of the stories, using literary approaches to shed new light on metaphors, images, and narratives about women. Although the Hebrew Bible is written by males from a male-centered society and portrays a man's world in which the male perspective is privileged and the female perspective is marginalized, still some scholars have tried to discover the presence of women and their own points of view between the lines.

For more than one hundred years, feminist biblical studies especially the research on biblical women characterization have made important contributions to the biblical literature scholarship. Firstly, they establish a systematic investigation into the status and roles of women in ancient Israelite culture. Secondly, they reassess the passages and books about women and the overlooked biblical traditions involving women. Last but not the least, they promote the developments of translation principles relating to women's concerns. However, it is not difficult to observe the defect of feminist biblical criticism. Although there are a rapidly increasing number of books and articles on the Bible by women, there appears to be a suspicion that much feminist work on the Bible subordinates feminist ideologies to theological ones, "a suspicion that the usual goal is to find ways, no matter how tenuous, of making the bible into a positive resource for women" (Milne 45). Feminist biblical studies sometimes ignore the fact that the biblical text is an interpretation of historical circumstances. Though feminist critics never stop attempting to perfect a hermeneutic theory that affirms point of view of woman by revealing, criticizing and examining its impossibility, more attention should be focus on some other aspects of feminist biblical scholarship which have not yet been adequately developed. An urgent step is to consider the political and social implications of biblical gender ideology. It is not only affects women characters in the text but also affects women in the real society.

1.2 Theoretical Basis and Research Methodology of this Study

The author has observed that most women in the Hebrew Bible, more or less, play seductive and deceptive roles. This representation is related to both the attitudes of male authors and the actual social conditions of women in the world that produced the texts. Thus, in this thesis, the author would use the feminist theory and adopt narrative method and sociological method for a close reading of the biblical female characters.

1.2.1 Feminist Interpretation of Seductive and Deceptive Biblical Women

Most feminist critics would agree that culture has provided a different set experience for women. Feminist theory of interpretation values women's experience as a source of knowledge. Radical feminist theory begins with the assumption that women form a "sex class" (Madsen 153). Radical feminism analyzes the relationship between social inequality and sexual difference; the domination of women by men is seen to provide the foundation of social inequality, and the sexual oppression of women is seen to underlie the economic, cultural and social subordination of women (Madsen 152-153). It regards gender oppression which precedes the economic structure of patriarchal societies as the most fundamental form of oppression. Patriarchy is one of the most stable features of ancient biblical society. The word "patriarchy" is used very frequently by feminist interpreters, and here the author uses it in its generally accepted meaning of "male dominated" and "oppressive of women." The Bible is shaped by men in a patriarchal culture and interpreted by men from an androcentric perspective which eliminate the traces of female experience. Thus, in studying biblical texts, the reader needs to be alert the patriarchal bias. The feminist critical principle demands that "women stand outside of judgment upon this patriarchal bias of the scriptures and that feminism reject the scriptures altogether as normative for its own liberation" (Ruether 116).

Women in patriarchal culture are surrounded by messages that devalue their existence. Their bodily sexual presence is regarded as a dangerous threat to male

purity. The systemic nature of gender ensures continued male domination through the masculine control of feminine sexuality. In radical feminist terms, gender oppression is “the most fundamental form of oppression and precedes the economic structure of patriarchal societies” (Madsen 153). Women’s viewpoints and judgments of events are devalued because they are regarded as stupid, uninformed and incapable of making right decision. Thus they are dissociating from their own perceptions and minds. These preconceptions about woman are used to justify women’s exclusion from the interpretation of the Bible. However, the biblical interpretations by women are not simply identical with a critical historical consciousness. It seeks to understand the meaning of texts, the effects biblical discourses produce, from whose point of view and how they produce the texts. Women’s experience which arises when women become critically aware of the patriarchal bias is the key to the theory of interpretation. Women begin to be aware of these experiences and affirm their feelings and thoughts as intelligent and healthy rather than stupid. After this process of self-affirmation, they are able to take part in the complex process of critical analysis and become freed and empowered to criticize the experience of sexism as an unjustified assault upon their beings. The critique of sexism implies a fundamental principle of judgment. This critical principle of feminist theory is to affirm and promote the full humanity of women. “Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, to be appraised as not redemptive” (Ruether 115). The feminist biblical interpretation utilizes the analysis of gender and sexism as intellectual tools in struggles against patriarchal oppression. The feminist biblical critics regard interpretation as a cultural-religious practice of resistance and transformation. They utilize historical-literary and ideology-critical evaluative methods of rhetorical analysis. “They also employ methods of storytelling, bibliodrama, dance, and ritual for creating a “different” religious imagination” (Code 43).

Recognizing the patriarchy of biblical texts, the author attempts to focus on the seductive and deceptive women images in the Hebrew Bible and to reveal the male-center consciousness in it. In each context the roles of female characters are devalued in relation to their male counterparts. Therefore, “feminist biblical

interpretation must challenge the scriptural authority of patriarchal texts and explore how the Bible is used as a weapon against women in our struggles for liberation” (Ruether 129). It also must explore whether and how the Bible can become a resource in this struggle”.

1.2.2 Methods of Interpretation

In this thesis, the author adopts two methods in approaching the biblical texts. The two methods are not rigidly separate and are sometimes used in combination. The first approach is narrative critical method which looks at the text with the concern of the narrative point of view. In making a study of the seductive and deceptive women characterization in the Hebrew Bible, the author will use a narrative critical method for a close reading of the text. This method focuses on how the narrator suppresses the voices of women and stigmatizes women as seductive and deceptive characters.

All stories have four elements which may differ from culture to culture: plot, characters, setting and narrator or point of view. These four elements are closely interrelated with one another. Characters in the Hebrew Bible are like real people in that readers can know them only partially. The readers learn about the characters of a story by their actions and speeches. Since the Hebrew Bible is a collection of writings by males from a male-centered society, these writings portray a man’s world in which the male perspective is privileged while the female perspective is marginalized. They primarily speak of events and activities engaged in by males. The overall picture is dominated by male values such as subordination, obedience and possession, and male prejudices: woman as seductive, sinful and gossipy. The readers’ understanding of biblical women characters is controlled and mediated by the male narrator who contributes certain words, gestures or actions to female characters. In fact, the “male narrator” refers to a male-centered perspective rather than a particular male because some texts in the Hebrew Bible may have been written by women. As Fuchs suggests, “The narrator refers to a construct, a collective male-centered consciousness spanning many periods, styles and approaches” (Fuchs 2000:15).

The Bible does not merely project a male consciousness; it also promotes a

patriarchal ideology in its legal texts. The Hebrew Bible creates its central male character God which is omniscient and admired by Israelite. The male-supremacist social and cognitive system ensures the superiority of men. According to the biblical law, women are legally and substantively dependent on men in marriage and inheritance. Then women come to be inferior and are portrayed as seductive and deceptive characters in biblical narratives. "The narrator may choose to reveal much about a character, in which case the character is complex or round; or the narrator may choose to tell the reader very little about a character, which is therefore flat" (Longman III 73). Most men are round characters while women are neglected in some texts although the effects of their lives and actions are important elements which influence the stories in the Bible. However, the ideas of men about women do not reflect women's reality in biblical society. Women are portrayed as supportive characters that help achieving God's goal through giving birth the family's heir. Therefore, the widows in the Hebrew Bible always seduce and deceive the prospective fathers and give birth to sons who continue the name of their late husbands.

According to Esther Fuchs, "These narratives do not merely describe a male-dominated social order, but justify it as morally requisite and sanctioned by God. They do not merely tell us how women came to be inferior; they also tell us that this inferiority is necessary" (Fuchs, 2000:14). In order to achieve this effect, the biblical author adopts various literary ploys such as the construction of point of view, the repeated scenes, and the characterization of women. Therefore, it is very beneficial to analyze the biblical stories by taking a narrative critical method.

The second approach is sociological method which interprets texts in the context of the historical or social setting. Like all other writings, biblical texts communicate meanings according to assumptions shared in common by writers and readers. The understanding and interpretation of any sort of text is ultimately rooted in a social world. "The social system of ancient Israel signifies the whole complex of communal interactions embracing functions, roles, institutions, customs, norms, symbols, and the processes and networks" (Gottwald 27). Generally speaking, the task of the research

is to investigate and discover what is in fact communicated by those meaningful stories concerning seductive and deceptive female characters. The cultural and social setting of ancient Israel becomes an important element in the study of the Hebrew Bible in the early twentieth century. Philip Davies, the author of *In Search of Ancient Israel*, has suggested adopting a combination of literary and sociological approaches in the study of the Hebrew Bible. "Sociology may be defined as the study of human society and its institutions. It not only examines the literature and social setting of 'Israel' but also the social forces underlying the production of that literature" (Carter 4). The author uses the sociology approach to examine the social setting of ancient Israel and its influence on biblical women characterization. Research questions have been proposed: how the texts portray them as seductive and deceptive women; why seductive and deceptive women are even appreciated in some cases and what the points of the portrait are.

Firstly, each of social groups in biblical society not only protects the distinctive interest of its own but also keeps balance between various groups. For example, property is normally passed from father to son. However, if there is no son to inherit the property, the daughters could inherit it only when they agree to marry within their clan (Num. 36:6-9). As a result, the property would remain within the clan and thus balance be achieved. Secondly, conflicts between different people are inevitable in social life. They fight for their own beliefs, lands and wealth, etc. Women, such as Judith and Jael, are involved in different kinds of conflicts, using seduction and deception as weapons to defeat enemies. Lastly, the behavior of human individual is evaluated in society. In Hebrew Bible, women are always wrapped in social roles, sets of social rights and obligations relative to each other. For example, female status is usually measured by childbirth in domestic contexts in the Hebrew Bible. If women produce heirs for their families, they have gained respectable status despite their seduction and deception. From this perspective, it is necessary to consider these social elements or customs when studies the seduction and deception in biblical women characterization.

In conclusion, the different texts in Hebrew Bible span almost a millennium in

their dates of composition. The differences both in the time of composition and in social context attribute to the seductive and deceptive biblical women characterization, therefore sociological method is a proper complement to feminist theory and narrative critical method in this thesis.

Chapter II: Three Types of Seductive and Deceptive Biblical Women Characterization

Though men outnumber women in the biblical stories, women still play critical roles in it. The female characters offer a full range from the strongest characters to the most abject victims. Some of them are famous (Ruth and Esther for example), others are unknown (Potiphar's wife and Levite's concubine for example). Some of them are powerful (Jezebel, Deborah), others are powerless (Rahab, Tamar). Like their biblical male counterparts, some women use their gifts and abilities out of good will, and some out of evil will. But no matter what their individual personalities and contributions, the characterization of biblical women presents seduction and deception as inescapable feature of femininity.

Most of the information concerning women's status in ancient Israel comes from laws and historical stories in the Hebrew Bible. It will be helpful to look at what the biblical laws tell the reader about women's status. Though the laws in Hebrew Bible give only a partial view of the model of ancient Israel, they are nevertheless a primary source for reconstructing the ideals and practices of that society. "They are preserved, for the most part, in several large 'codes' or collections, ranging in date from premonarchic (before 1000 B.C.) to postexilic (500 – 400 B.C.) times" (Bird 258). According to the biblical laws, only the male who is regarded as responsible people obtains the full membership of their own clans. He is responsible not only for his own acts but for those of his dependents as well. These include his wife, children, and even livestock, in the extended understanding of household or property that pertained in ancient Israel (Exod. 20:17; 21:28-29). The basic unit in the biblical society is the family headed by the father. It is called "the father's house". Before marriage, a woman is dependent on her father for support. After marriage, she relies on her husband. If her husband died and they have no children, the property will be given back to the husband's clan. As a result, the widow has no one to dependent on. Normally, property was passed from father to son. If there is no son to inherit the property, the daughters could inherit it only when they agree to marry within their

clan (Num. 36:6-9). As a result, the property would remain within the clan. Their sons would eventually inherit the property. A related biblical law is Levirate marriage. The brother of a deceased man who has died without leaving children is to marry the widow. Their first son is to be considered the dead brother's child and thereby perpetuate his brother's name in Israel (Deut. 25:5). In this way, the man's reproductive powers extend beyond the grave. "In a symbol system like that of ancient Israel without belief in bodily resurrection, offspring are one's afterlife" (Newsom and Ringe 25). The woman's primary responsibility is to bear children for her husband. Biblical laws set severe penalties for sexual transgression and worship violation (Lev. 18-20). The story about worship of Baal of Peor illustrates the serious consequences. While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Thus Israel yoked itself to the Baal of Peor, and the lord's anger was kindled against Israel. The plague took twenty-four thousand people's lives. After the Phinehas killed a Midianite woman and an Israelite who has yoked himself to the Baal of Peor, the plague was stopped among the people of Israel (Num. 25). Adultery by a married woman is punished by death. Brides are supposed to be virgins. If a bride has committed adultery, she is going to be executed. However, if a man violates a virgin who is not engaged, he shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father and then marry her (Deut. 22). Prostitution is tolerated, although female prostitutes are outcasts. Only male has the right to give a certificate of divorce (Deut. 24).

Because of the inferior social position and political powerlessness in biblical society, women have to use seduction and deception to carry out their plans. The story of Rebekah is told in Genesis 27. Rebekah schemed with her favorite son Jacob to deceive Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob. Rebekah made the stew for him and then covered Jacob's hands and neck with goat hair. Isaac gave Jacob the blessing that belonged to Esau by birthright (the Right of the Firstborn, see Deut. 21:15). Deception is the only way to grant her preferred son a blessing. Although Isaac is old and blind, he is still superior to his wife in power. When Rebekah was pregnant, she

went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:19). Therefore, the deception of Rebekah is in accordance with the Lord’s will. The fact is that Rebekah deceives Isaac not because she is a deceptive wife but because she is inferior and subordinate to Isaac in the biblical society. Within biblical patriarchy, the right of the firstborn and parental blessings applied strictly to males. Mothers are deprived the right of blessings to their children. In this story, “if Rebekah could express her love for Jacob through maternal blessings, she would have blessed Jacob by herself rather than have adopted deception” (Fuchs 1985:138).

Potiphar’s wife is another female character presented as a seductive and deceptive character. After several unsuccessful attempts of seducing Joseph, Potiphar’s wife tried again. “One day, she caught hold of his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me!’” (Gen. 39:11-12). Joseph refused to betray his master and fled, leaving a piece of his garment behind in her hand. Then Potiphar’s wife used the torn garment as evidence and accused Joseph of trying to seduce her. The narrative condemns Potiphar’s wife through the detailed description about her deceptive action. She is a negative temptress and a negative foreign woman. Unlike Rebekah’s deception of Jacob, “the deceptive behavior of Potiphar’s wife is self-serving, spiteful, and hypocritical. Potiphar’s wife is the stereotypical sexually potent, evil woman” (Bellis 92). Joseph is portrayed as the wise man: faithful, hardworking, God-fearing, and can resist the seduction. In contrast, Potiphar’s wife is characterized by several defections: disloyal to her husband, quick to seek satisfaction in forbidden places, strongly sexual, and duplicity. Although Potiphar’s wife succeeds in having Joseph punished, she disappears from the text afterward. Joseph’s story continues. In the jail, he used his skills as an interpreter of dreams and impressed Pharaoh. Finally, he was freed to become Pharaoh’s second in command (Gen. 40-41). He is remembered as a hero. Esther Fuchs criticizes the double standard in the narrative:

Had Potiphar himself seduced a maid servant he would not have been condemned for either betraying or deceiving his wife, since patriarchal

monogamy applies exclusively to women. Since the wife's legal status vis-à-vis her husband was little more than that of a servant, only she stood to be condemned for her betrayal of her husband-master. It is doubtful that the biblical narrative would have found it necessary to report an incident in which the husband deceives his wife having seduced one of his maid servants, let alone condemn him for it (Fuchs 1985:139).

Rebekah and Potiphar's wife are just two images in so many seductive and deceptive biblical female characters. In her book *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, Alice Bach compiles a fascinating collection of nearly 40 essays on attitude toward women and their status in early biblical times. In this book, top scholars including Esther Fuchs, Susan Ackerman and Bach herself analyze the lives and roles of the "wives", the "good girls", the "bad girls", the "sad girls", the "women warriors" and the "amazing women". However, many of the female characters are both good and bad, both warrior and victim. There is no one category into which the characters fit. "Thus, Delilah is a wicked woman if you are a reader loyal to Samson. But if you are a Philistine, then Delilah is a warrior hero, like Deborah or Judith or Jael" (Bach 1999: xxi). However, Jael is definitely not a "good woman" in the eyes of the Canaanite while Rebekah is not a "good mother" to Esau. Considering the interests of Israelite, the author classifies the seductive and deceptive biblical female characters into three types: "good women", "bad women" and the "widows", unveiling the reasons for the seductive and deceptive in biblical women characterization.

2.1 Seduction and Deception of "Good Women"

Portrayed as the first woman, Eve in fact symbolizes all women. "The story of Eve has been used more than any other as a theological base for sexism" (Bellis 45). Eve believed the tricky snake and ate the forbidden fruit. She then gave some to Adam, who was with her (Gen. 3:6). Eve tempts Adam to eat the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Beginning with Eve, women have been blamed as temptresses. However, the narrative disregards the fact that Eve's subordination might lead her to be easily persuaded by the snake. Her deception and disobedience could be linked to her priori

subordination. In the story, Eve is penalized with a greater degree of subordination to her husband. The image of Eve frequently appears in western art and literature. The story of Adam and Eve is interpreted in ways that have had an everlasting influence on the characterization of women's status and roles. "By ascribing moral inferiority to the first woman, the story of Genesis seeks to justify her social inferiority and to promote the ideology that supports man's supremacy over woman" (Fuchs 1985:143). Even the "good women", such as Bathsheba, Esther and Jael can not escape from the shadow of seduction and deception.

2.1.1 Bathsheba

Bathsheba's story is told in 2 Samuel 11. Walking on his roof, David saw a beautiful woman bathing. David brought her to his royal residence and committed adultery with her. Bathsheba is sometimes condemned as a seductress for she might take bathing on the top of the roof on purpose. The adultery resulted in a pregnancy. Then David had Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed on purpose in the battlefield. David legitimized the child by marrying the widowed Bathsheba. According to the Bible, David and Bathsheba were punished for their adultery with the death of their first son. David should have been at the battlefield, leading his troops, but instead he was at home in Jerusalem. Some biblical interpretation suggests that Bathsheba took the advantage of his staying and seduced David when she knew David would see her. However, because her character is suppressed, Bathsheba seems to know nothing of her husband's death and David receives full blame for the adultery and murder. Lillian Klein suggests that Bathsheba's goal, however, is not simply sexual seduction but rather conception: she has been unable to bear children by her Hittite husband Uriah (Klein 92-125). While this interpretation is novel, Klein makes a case for reading Bathsheba's motives in relation to the stories of Tamar and Ruth, women in the royal line who also secure offspring in enterprising ways. Bathsheba rarely becomes the narrative focus in this story and is always spoken of in the third person. She is silent except for the announcement of her pregnancy to David, which she does not deliver in person. "The only hint that she might have cooperated willingly in her

predicament is her initial act of bathing in a place where she could be observed by the king out walking on his roof which is not an uncommon place to stroll in the Middle East for the cool evening breeze” (Newsom and Ringe 98). The narrator does not say anything about how she feels about the adultery and how she feels about her husband’s murder. The text offers no judgment on her for that. Bathsheba is rarely even called by name in the whole story. Women’s presence and perspectives are often hidden or absent in the biblical texts. It would be totally different if the biblical stories were told from the perspective of a female character rather than from the point of view of a male character. In this story, how would David’s adultery with Bathsheba look if the story were told from her perspective rather than his? It could be a seductive and deceptive David. He deceives an innocent man Uriah who is loyal and dedicated and seduces Bathsheba. Even though, David is given a chance to regret, be punished, and finally be absolved. He is not only forgiven for his deception, murder, and unlawful appropriation of Bathsheba, but also allowed to make her into a wife. In the Bible, there are double standard concerning seduction and deception.

2.1.2 Esther

Another queen’s story is told in the book of Esther. King Ahasuerus banished Queen Vashti when she refused to display herself before his guests at a banquet. Ahasuerus is presented as being led by his eyes and taking an interest only in external appearances, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king. And let the girl who pleases the king be queen in stead of Vashti” (Esth. 2:2-4). The new queen is going to be chosen on the basis of her external appearance alone. It is for this reason that the text describes in detail the twelve-month cosmetic treatment (six months with oil of myrrh, six with perfumes and cosmetics) during which the external beauty of each girl is nurtured. “Often women smell too good, and such hyper-fragrance is understood to be for the express purpose of seduction” (Bach 1997:180). In Proverbs, the perfumed woman is connected with sexual temptations and promises. “I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love” (Prov. 7:17-18). The beautiful young

virgins of the empire, including Esther, were brought to the palace harem, where they underwent a twelve-month cosmetic treatment. Then they were offered to the king. Esther is described as being of “fair and beautiful” and her character is revealed to the readers through the eyes of the people surrounding her. Hegai, the keeper of the women, who handled thousands of young maidens, yet paid extra attention to this special girl. Whoever saw Esther was impressed by her special character. Finally, the king himself was attracted by her and loved Esther more than all the other women because of her external appearance. The sexuality of Esther is prominent. She won the king’s favor in what Michael Fox has characterized as a “sex contest” (Fox 28). Esther used her appearance and sex appeal as weapons to achieve her ends. She won the contest and the king awarded her the title of Queen. However, on her cousin Mordecai’s advice, Esther deceived everyone including her husband by not telling them that she was Jewish. Because of the inferior position and political powerlessness in the palace, deception is a good way for Esther to ensure her safety. Haman, the king’s second-in-command, arranged for the slaughter of all the Jews in the Persian Empire. At this time, Mordecai asked Esther to use her influence with the king to save the Jews. Esther was reluctant to do so because of the rule that anyone who went to the king inside the inner court without being called would be put to death. Although Esther was the queen, she was no exception to this rule. In a strongly patriarchal culture, “the woman who wishes to survive has no choice but to accord and accede to Otherness and thereby forgo subjectivity, transcendence, and a will of her own. She must adopt a posture of submissiveness and complicity” (Beauvoir 18). Finally, Esther agreed to help. Descriptions of Esther’s beauty and body are replaced by accounts of her cleverly strategies, her action as helpmate to Mordecai and flattery to the king. Because of her charming, beauty and seduction, Esther was not only invited into the internal court but welcomed and encouraged to express her desire by the king’s generous promise to grant all her wishes “even to half the kingdom” (Esth. 5:3). Esther understood that her power came from being the favorite women of the King. The place that Esther chose for her seduction was not the bedroom but the banquet hall. She invited the king and Haman to a wine banquet, where she finally made her

request of the king. Wine always connects with seduction and deception for it turns the mind away from the truth and throws in the passion of lust. At last, the king ordered Haman hanged and made Mordecai his new chief counselor. Through her beauty and deception, Esther brought about Haman's downfall and saved the Jews. Esther becomes another of those female characters who exert power over men through their seductive wiles. As Alice Laffey writes, "In contrast to Vashti, who refused to be men's sexual object and her husband's toy, Esther is the stereotypical woman in a man's world. She wins favor by the physical beauty of her appearance, and then by her ability to satisfy sexually" (Laffey 216).

Although Esther acts with considerable skill and bravery to save the Jews from destruction, she still guards the patriarchal norms of ancient Jewish society. Kristin de Troye notes, "The book of Esther has a hidden agenda. Between the lines it transmits a code, a norm of behavior for women. This code and norm is delivered completely from the male point of view" (Troyer 55). Esther's primary characteristic is her beauty, which seduces the king who possesses her. Esther is also obedient compared with Vashti who defies Ahasuerus's command to come before his guests during his banquet. She respects the power of the man over his household. This obedient is ensured by biblical law, "All women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike" and "every man should be master in his own house" (Esth. 1:20-22). This obedient wife is rewarded: Esther is remembered as a biblical heroine while Vashti effectively disappears from the story. "The literary prominence given to Esther, at the expense of Vashti, demonstrates the biblical stance on sexual politics" (Bach 1999: 82). However, Esther completely disappears at the end of the book. All the praise comes to Mordecai, "for he sought the good of his people and interceded for the welfare of all his descendants" (Esth. 10:3). The patriarchy attempts to glorify Esther by naming book of the Bible after her. As role model she is also representative of "good women".

2.1.3 Jael

Like Esther, who uses her beauty to dispatch an enemy, Jael is another biblical character who is celebrated as hero for killing an enemy of Israel. The story of Jael's murder of Sisera is told in Judge 4. Defeated by Barak, Sisera fled on foot and came upon the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite who had a peace treaty with king of Jabin. Jael confronted Sisera, an experienced warrior who even survived the battlefield. Physically she was inferior to him, so she made full use of her femininity to defeat him by exploiting the weakness of men. When Jael came out to meet Sisera, she said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear" (Judg. 4:18). Her greeting is filled with ambiguity. She may offer the promise of a sexual encounter. This greeting and invitation remind readers the call of a prostitute in the Book of Proverbs: "calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way, 'You, who are simple, turn in here'" (Prov 9:15-16). Sisera foolishly believed that her invitation was genuine and that she wished to show him hospitality. Then Jael offered a cup of milk and blanket. In the biblical narratives under consideration, women offer all sorts of deceitful delicacies to men, who greedily reach out for them no matter what the dangers (Bach 1997:206). The multiple references to Jael covering Sisera in bed imply her seduction which deceives Sisera into false confidence. Sisera trusted Jael to the extent that he asked her to guard him while he slept in the tent. When Sisera fell asleep, "Jael wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple" (Judg. 4:21). Jael, the beautiful seductive woman, killed Sisera single-handedly.

However, Jael's motives in assisting Israel are not apparent in the story. The story offers a powerful argument against Jael's killing act: there is a peace treaty between King Jabin of Hazor and Jael's clan. The Canaanite Sisera believes he will be safe in her tent, but her loyalties are not what he expects. From this point of view, Jael is just as much a betrayer as is Delilah in Judges 16. Though her thoughts are never revealed, Jael is clearly a woman caught in the middle. Jael does what she has to do. The Israelites have obviously won. "They cannot be far behind Sisera, and they are unlikely to take kindly to a family that has allied itself with the enemy—especially

if found to be hiding the Canaanite commander” (Newsom and Ringe 75). Jael is one of the most memorable characters in Hebrew Bible. At the end of the story, Deborah and Barak sing a great victory hymn, in which Jael’s deed is praised. In their description of her feat, her violent act becomes larger than life. The ends justify the means: no seduction and deception in the victory hymn. Most feminist readers have avoided dealing directly with the murderous aspect of Jael. They transform the murder into brave act committed on behalf of the Jewish people. Jael’s courageous loyalty to the Israelites is indeed highly praised in the biblical text, but “the repeated dramatization of the deceptively hospitable welcome she extends to the exhausted Sisera injects her image with a foul taste of treachery” (Fuchs 1985:142). Jael who risks her life to protect the Israelites exhibits the same courage as the Esther who uses cosmetics and finery to seduce a man into fulfilling her political desires.

2.2 Seduction and Deception of “Bad Women”

As Newsom states, “Because of the social nature of discourse in which subjectivity is established, it can never be ideologically neutral” (Newsom 143). Both Esther and Jael are celebrated as heroines of Israel for seducing men with wine and food and then cutting off the enemies’ heads. However, another biblical woman Delilah who also uses the same weapon—wine and food and sexuality—to seduce Samson is regarded as a “bad women”. Traditionally the difference has been one of ethnic triumphs. Jael and Esther who are favored by the side of the traditional readers of the biblical texts kill the right men while Delilah destroys Samson whom the ideal community has identified as heroes. In spite of her foreign identity, Rahab is praised for her protecting of the Israelite spies. Women’s seduction and deception are condemned when they jeopardize the benefit of Israelite. Being female and foreign obviously plays a significant part when Jezebel becomes the symbol of seduction and deception. “The woman is using her wiles to serve the interests of Israel, which is laudable, or using sexuality in her own interest, which is deplorable” (Bach 1997:32). The binary code of good and evil labels the first group of female literary figures as good and the second group as evil. “Such dichotomous reading reproduces

essentialism by assuming that texts have a fixed identity” (Bach 1997:4). Interpretation of the “bad women” characterization begins with careful and active reading. It attempts to understand the time, place, and purpose for which a particular biblical book is written, the principal concerns of the author and the communities that shaped the book.

2.2.1 Delilah

The story of Delilah and Samson is told in Judge 16. Samson has been a leader of the Israelites for 20 years. His major fault is falling in love with Delilah and revealing the secret of his strength to her. Delilah is not, as biblical women typically are, pictured as a part of the household of a father, a brother, or a husband who has authority over the woman’s life. Delilah managed her own house where Samson slept and where the Philistines hid waiting to capture him. Delilah was bribed with eleven hundred pieces of silver by the nobleman of the Philistines to find out what gave Samson his preternatural strength. The woman character is normally condemned when she uses seduction and deception to gain something for herself. In Delilah’s case, she deceives Samson in exchange for money. However, Delilah never tries to hide her desire to discover Samson’s secret. She directly asks Samson to reveal it no less than three times (Judg. 16:6—13). She also never hides her intention to deprive his strength. At first, Samson gave the false answer for three times. Delilah followed exactly his instruction in order to subdue him and then summoned the Philistines to capture Samson. From this point of view, Samson volunteers to be deceived by Delilah in the name of love. How Delilah feels about Samson is not revealed in the story. “Some degree of ambivalence is probable since she readily agrees to the Philistine proposal that she seduces Samson and discovers the source of his strength” (Newsom and Ringe 79). Then Delilah put a great deal of pressure on Samson and when she questioned his love for her, he finally told her the secret of his strength. Delilah makes full use of her feminine attraction to fulfill her plan. When Samson slept upon Delilah’s lap, he lost his strength for Philistines shaved off his hair. Sleeping on her lap may imply Samson’s maternal dependence on Delilah. He

transfers his allegiance from his real mother to his substitute lover-mother. “Not only does he reveal the secret known only to himself and his mother, but he entrusts himself to Delilah as a child might trust his mother” (Newsom and Ringe 80). Samson, seduced and deceived by Delilah, was captured, blinded, and made into a public spectacle by the Philistines. Delilah disappeared from the story. The story demonstrates that confiding secrets to a seductive and deceptive woman can undo the achievements of even great leaders.

Delilah is often viewed as among the most evil women in the Hebrew Bible. She is portrayed as beautiful, but seductive, unfaithful, and deceptive. However, Delilah is rarely examined in her own rights. Because Samson is often labeled a hero, Delilah is cast in the role of the villain who destroys God’s chosen people. If her story were told from the Philistine point of view, Delilah would probably be viewed as a hero. Both Delilah and Jael play a role within an ethnic conflict that is not necessarily their own. However, when Jael seduces and deceives Sisera, she is still considered a hero and praised in the “Song of Deborah” because she acts on behalf of the Israelites. Delilah, likewise, acts on behalf of the Philistines and against the Israelite hero Samson. If Judges had been written by a Philistine, there would have been the “Song of Delilah” or at least a celebration of the “hero” Delilah.

2.2.2 Jezebel

The characterization of seductive and deceptive Delilah reflects the ancient Israelite fear and distrust towards the foreign women in the biblical society. Delilah’s successful deception of Samson implies a motif: women, especially a foreign and beautiful woman is untrustworthy. Jezebel happens to be a foreign and powerful queen. She is another biblical woman who is characterized by seduction and deception. Unlike the portrayal of Delilah, there is no mention of sexual attraction in the narratives of Jezebel. She first appeared in 1 Kings 16:31, where her husband Ahab, king of Israel committed the crime for marrying a foreign wife and building a house and an altar for Baal. Ahab is responsible for making all Israelites to sin. However, Jezebel is blamed for inciting Ahab to worship Baal. Ahab and Jezebel are a

clear example of why the God prohibits the mixed marriages between the Israelites and the "people of the land" at that time. "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for your selves" (Neh. 13:25). "Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women" (Neh. 13:27). Mixed marriages always results in the corruption of the Israelite. As queen of Israel, Jezebel attempted to force the worship of Baal upon the Israelites in the most ruthless and deadly manner: she killed many of God's prophets (1 Kings 18:4-13) and supported 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah (1 Kings 16:32 18:19). As a result, Jezebel has become a symbol of evil just because she is a zealous defender of her own religious tradition which is pagan from the perspective of Israelites. Jezebel, the Phoenician prince, is condemned, at least in part, because of her foreign identity. Moreover, Jezebel commits another crime of deception. Unlike the queen Esther, or Jael in the book of Judges, self-interest is a strong motivator of Jezebel. The political queen attempted to gain Naboth's vineyard that her husband Ahab desired. She staged a false trial against Naboth for refusing to sell his vineyard to Ahab (1 Kings 21:8-11). At the end of the story, Jezebel was brutally penalized for her idolatrous transgressions and deception. Considering her actions, Jezebel surely is not a model of morality. However, being female and foreign obviously plays a significant part when she becomes the symbol of seduction and deception. Camp writes: "Her brutal response to Naboth's refusal to sell his vineyard may be understood from her point of view as an appropriate royal response to insubordination, in contrast to Ahab's unconscionable weakness as a leader" (Camp 110). Compared Jezebel's deception of Naboth with King David's deception of Uriah, the reader can easily perceive a double standard that treats women's offenses as far worse than men's offenses in the Hebrew Bible. Both of them covet a possession that does not belong to them. Jezebel obtains Naboth's vineyard through accusing Naboth falsely and bringing about his death. David orders Uriah dead in order to marry his beautiful wife Bathsheba who commits adultery with David. Jezebel deserves an extremely dreadful death while David is just punished through the death of his first

child with Bathsheba. He is given the chance to be absolved from his deception and murder. He is even allowed to keep Bathsheba and marry her. Women's seduction and deception are condemned when they jeopardize the benefit of Israelite.

2.2.3 Rahab

Ancient Israelite disliked foreign women because they had the tendency to seduce Israelite men into worshipping other gods. Another foreign woman is described in the story of the spies at Jericho (Josh. 2). The spies went directly to the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab. The Proverbs 7 demonstrates how dangerous female sexuality is to men. A prostitute's sexuality is regarded as even more dangerous for two reasons. First, her sexuality is not controlled by a man; and second, she is perceived as a shameless, mercenary seductress and loyal to no one but herself (Ezek. 16:30-31). "Another metaphor for her dangerous power is that of witchcraft" (Sanderson 234). As a prostitute, Rahab is marginal even in her own people. "Her house was on the outer side of the city wall and she resided within the wall itself" (Josh. 3:15). The king of Jericho heard about the two spies and sent orders to Rahab to turn them out. Unexpectedly, Rahab hid them and deceived the king of Jericho, claiming they had already left. At this time, Rahab, the marginalized woman of the society, had the power over the lives of the spies. If, on the other hand, the power is Israel's, the very "foreignness" of Rahab in itself undermines the Israelite perspective, for when foreigners can quote Deuteronomy with more facility than Israelites that raises questions in itself about the grand theological ideas of chosenness and exclusivity (Fewell and Gunn 120). In exchange for her saving them, the two spies would save her and her family when Israelites attacked Jericho. The reason that Rahab deceives the king of Jericho and protects the spies is not clearly stated in the text. "Self-interest alone cannot explain her commitment, for the risk of siding with an unknown force against one's own people is too great to ascribe solely to that motive" (Bellis 108). Perhaps she identifies with the spies. They come from an outcast people, just as she is probably an outcast in her own society. According to the narrator, Rahab took a big risk in protecting the two Israelite spies. The story showed her faith in God:

“I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you” (Josh. 2:9). Despising her seduction and deception, Rahab is still regarded as a hero because she protects the Israelite spies. She is also heroic because she has faith in God and takes risks based on that faith. On the national level, women assisting the Israelites against their usually mightier enemies are free from blame and even highly praised. Thus Rahab, who deceives her own people and assists the Israelite spies, is a positive role model in the Hebrew Bible. Similarly Jael the Midianite, who deceptively kills Sisera the Canaanite, is praised for her braveness and deception. Rahab, if described by her fellow citizens in Jericho, would undoubtedly be an evil woman who deceives her king and betrays her clan.

Joshua spares the prostitute Rahab with her family and all who belongs to her when Jericho is destroyed by Israelites. Her family has lived in Israel ever since (Josh. 7:25). Despite her personal motivation, Rahab is still celebrated for her allegiance to Israel. Moreover, Rahab is rewarded by appearing in the genealogy of Jesus and becoming a paradigm of faith.

2.3 Seduction and Deception of “Widows”

In biblical society, the woman’s primary responsibility is to bear children for her husband. If her husband dies and they have no children, the property will be given back to the husband’s clan. As a result, the widow has no one to dependent on. Levirate marriage is adopted to reserve the name of the dead husband. When one man dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall take her in marriage, and perform the duty of a husband. The firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the deceased brother, so that his name may preserve in Israel (Deut. 25:5-10).

Moreover, the law of the Levirate marriage is also important to the widow herself. Before marriage, a woman is dependent on her father for support. After marriage, she is supposed to be a faithful and fruitful wife, providing sons for her husband’s family. The childless widows probably lose their connections with their

husbands' clans. The law of the Levirate marriage saves them from economic deprivation and secures their places in the patriarchal clan. Therefore, the widows in the Hebrew Bible always manage to seduce and deceive the prospective fathers and then give birth to male heirs who continue the name of the house. Ruth and Tamar are the best examples for this type of seductive and deceptive women.

2.3.1 Tamar

The story of Tamar is told in Genesis 38. After her husband died, Tamar became a childless widow. Her husband's brother Onan married her, but refused to produce heirs for his deceased brother. God killed him as a punishment. Judah told his daughter-in-law to return to her father's house until his only remaining son was older. However, Judah did not keep his promise to Tamar. As a childless widow, Tamar did not receive an inheritance from her husband's family and had to rely on others to provide their needs (Num. 27.5-11). If Tamar has no chance to practice Levirate marriage, both her future and her husband's line are in jeopardy. She was loyal to her dead husband's name and willing to bear a son who would continue her husband's name. Therefore, she employed her wit and cunning to devise a trick and to achieve her desired result. Tamar changed her mourning clothing and assumed the disguise of a prostitute. Her goal was to seduce Judah and obtain from him what he would not provide through his son. The suspense is in how she deceives Judah, her father-in-law. "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face" (Gen. 38:15). Tamar deceived Judah with her appearance. Judah himself becomes a victim to a garment trick. However, Tamar deceives Judah for his own sake, showing more loyalty to the name of Judah than Judah himself, who keeps Shela from marrying his brother's widow.

Tamar devises a plan of deception and seduction, waits until she can execute it, and does so flawlessly. She conceives as she wishes; but the unmasking of the deception makes her situation momentarily destabilized. She then initiates the second part of her plan to ensure her safety. Three months later when Judah was told that Tamar was pregnant, he wanted her burned. Then Tamar showed the evidence that he

was the father. If it were not for Tamar's deception and precaution, she would have been burnt at the stake by Judah as a harlot. Within the cultural context of the time, especially in regards the law of Levirate marriage, the seduction and deception of Tamar is easily understood. Finally, Judah admitted that, in contrast to him, Tamar was in her right. And it was only thanks to her righteousness—that he performed the Levirate marriage duty.

Tamar is clearly a woman who takes charge. Like many other biblical women, She must use deception to achieve her ends. Tamar's deception and seduction is construed as a heroic deed for she does not act out of concern for her own well-being. For some women in the biblical world, seduction itself is not the purpose; the ultimate goal is to produce offspring, to achieve the status of motherhood. Tamar must become a mother to have a place in society. She is rewarded for her loyalty to her husband's name. Tamar conceived male twins, Perez and Zerah. The remarkable birth of these twins parallels the miraculous birth of the offspring of Isaac and Rebecca: the twins Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:21-23). Two babies is surely a sign of divine approval within the biblical context. Peretz, son of Judah, was the ancestor of Oved, father of David—thus the patrilineage from Judah to King David was established and secured by the widow. "The text stresses the heroine' exceptional performance as wife and mother and her relentless allegiance to patriarchy as her most exalted property" (Bach, 1999:77-79). The beginning of the story presents the father leaving; the ending focuses on the birth and name-giving of the sons. The ongoing life of Judahites is therefore the main point in the frameworks of Tamar narratives (Brenner and Fontaine 434). Although Tamar was the mother who gave birth, her name disappeared in the narratives. Moreover, some unnamed third person rather than Tamar gave a name to her children. The birth story was not presented from Tamar's point of view but from that of the midwife, who decided who was the first-born son and who the second. Nevertheless, in a culture that comes to be fearful of women and especially of foreign women, Tamar's story is a ray of hope.

2.3.2 Ruth

The books of Ruth and Esther are the only book-length narratives in the Hebrew Bible revolving around female characters. No other female characters dominate the narrative scene for more than one chapter, not even the extraordinary prophet Deborah. The man that Ruth seduced is Boaz, her husband's wealthy relative. In the chapter one, Ruth was introduced as a widow without any children. Mahlon, her husband, her brother-in-law Chilion, as well as her father-in-law, had all died without leaving behind them male offspring (Ruth 1.3-5). Therefore, she has no chance to practice Levirate marriage in her husband's family. As a matter of fact, Ruth has no obligations to her husband's family and can go back to her own home. However, she refused Naomi's suggestion and volunteered to go to Bethlehem where she came upon Boaz's field by chance. "The coincidental encounter between Boaz and Ruth prepare the way for the temptation itself and foreshadows its positive outcome" (Fuchs 2000:75). Naomi encouraged Ruth to seduce Boaz and selected the right time and right place for the seduction. "He is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor...but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking" (Ruth 3:2-3). In order to ensure the success of seduction, Naomi also instructed Ruth how to make up and become attractive. Follow her mother-in-law's instruction, Ruth went to Boaz's barn, uncovered his lower body, and lay down by his feet. Thus the scene implies both a sexual and a master-slave relationship between the woman and the man. Levirate marriage at first fails to work for Ruth as both of the two sons of Naomi have died. In this case, it is the duty of the next of kin to keep the property and the name of the family. Boaz was aware of the fact that there was another kinsman more closely related to Ruth than him. Then Boaz went up to the gate and took ten men of the elders of the city to judge the redemption. The next-of-kin refused to take the obligation on the ground that his own inheritance would be damaged. Finally, Boaz got the right to marry Ruth and to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance. The narrator emphasizes once again, "lest the symbolic gestures of drawing one's sandal be lost on the reader, that Boaz is acting in full accordance with Israelite

custom” (Fuchs 2000:76). The detailed description, the emphasis on the public forum, and the propriety of Boaz’s actions create an effective way of conveying to the reader that the seduction composed by Ruth is in full agreement with the social order.

Like Tamar, Ruth also uses tricks in order to seduce Boaz. Women could not always be straightforward in the male-dominated society of the early Israelites. Therefore, Ruth does not take a direct approach though conventional tribal justice is on her side. At first, Ruth disguised her own identity to approach Boaz at the threshing floor. When Boaz waked up startled in the middle of the night to find her sleeping by his feet in the barn, Ruth revealed her true identity and asked for his protection which implies the marriage. Ruth is not “taken” as a bride but rather uses her feminine charms to manipulate Boaz into marrying her. Her cunning deception and seduction saves a family line that might have died out. Ruth’s loyalty to her dead husband’s name rewards her with giving birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David. The story of Ruth is told from a Judahite perspective and not from a Moabite one. She is absent both at the beginning of her story and in the concluding scenes of the story. The last chapter of Ruth closes with Boaz’s evaluation and with those of the elders and the women. Ruth succeeds in her plan of seduction and gives birth to a baby. The very last lines refer exclusively to the newborn son without mentioning Ruth. Naomi adopted the baby and the women of Bethlehem named him Obed. Ruth disappears in favor of her son who continues the family line. She is neglected at the end of the story, but nevertheless become famous later on and praised as Israelite ancestor.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, the author has analyzed three types of seductive and deceptive biblical women characterization. They reveal not only the Bible’s patriarchal bias but also the roles and status of ancient women in biblical society. Women are described in a different way from men because “the ideal spectator has always been assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him” (Bach 1997: 8). The stories of seductive and deceptive women illustrate how cautious the male should be in the presence of female sexuality. Because of the inferior social position, biblical

women have to use seduction and deception to carry out their plans. The female sexuality of “good women” is also glimpsed in the narratives. Esther tricks an appropriate man with her beauty and saves all Israelites. Because of their contribution to Israelite, “good women” are still regarded as heroines.

Other female characters such as the “bad women” Delilah and Jezebel who threaten biblical heroes are more marginal, but still portrayed within the same system as “good women”. However, the reader’s identity determines the positive images of “bad women”. Delilah would be a hero in the mind of the Philistine. Like Esther, she kills an enemy threatening the state. Rahab represents a more subtle consciousness, for she protects two enemies of her own people. But the common thread that connecting these seductive and deceptive female characters and providing a key to a feminist mode of reading remains the detailing of beauty and tricks each uses to fulfill her plans.

Female figures in Hebrew Bible are frequently portrayed as male-controlled wives or widows successfully giving birth to male heirs. Their seduction and deception are related to the implied purpose—the birth of a male heir. The law of the Levirate marriage saves them from economic deprivation and secures their places in the patriarchal clan. The widows’ deception and seduction are construed as heroic deeds for they do act out of concern for the interests of patriarchy rather than their own well-beings. The purpose of widow’s seduction and deception is the birth of a male heir, and the re-establishment of patrilineal continuity. The widows rather than the prospective fathers are most interested in giving birth to a male heir, though their names will inevitably be omitted from the patrilineal genealogy they try so hard to sustain. Upon the birth of a male heir, the female figures slip out of the literary scene and are rarely mentioned in subsequent narratives.

Chapter III: Influence of Seductive and Deceptive Women Characterization on English Literature

No one would doubt that the Bible has a great influence on English literature and offers eternal sources for its creation. In an often quoted statement, Northrop Frye notes that the Bible is “the major informing influence on literary symbolism... Once our view of the Bible comes into proper focus, a great mass of literary symbols from *The Dream of the Road to Little Gidding* begins to take on meaning” (Frye 1957:316). The Bible becomes part of the western tradition, because it is its greatest source. Many writers use the language, styles or stories of the Bible in their works in different ways. “Even in the present century, they still acknowledge their indebtedness to the Bible” (Kehl 5).

It is not difficult to trace many familiar dramatic resemblances in the Bible. Shakespeare who is certainly well read in the Bible frequently quotes it. Macbeth and the Weird Sisters have many traits in common with Saul and the Witch of Endor. Lady Macbeth is a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. She urges her husband to kill the king Duncan and seize the crown. After the crime begins, however, Lady Macbeth becomes mad and commits suicide. As the story develops, the readers are reminded of parallel actions and character in the Bible: Jezebel’s urging, planning, and helping to execute a crime to gain something for her husband King Ahab. Jezebel also manages to turn her husband away from the God of the Israelites and the Jews to her god, Baal. Manipulation and seduction are trademarks of a Jezebel’s character. The two women, Jezebel and Lady Macbeth, are almost twin images; indeed it is quite likely that Shakespeare took his cue for *Macbeth* from Kings in the Hebrew Bible.

Since all the biblical female characters have the tendency to be seductive and deceptive, the English literature has been populated with dangerous women identified as seductress, adulteress and deceiver: Hester in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Tess in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and Caddy in William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, etc. They have committed crimes by seducing or

deceiving men. Traditionally, the fate of these characters have fallen into two categories: women such as Hester whose seduction and deception is situational and temporary and who can finally get redemption; or women like Caddy whose seductive and deceptive behavior, once deemed culturally unacceptable, is punished.

3.1 Biblical Archetype of Seductive and Deceptive Women as Reflected in the Characterization of Hester

The Scarlet Letter pictures Hester as the seductive woman caught in adultery and traces her salvation in a process that examines the nature of guilt. Bible's influence on Hawthorne gets reflected in his treatment with the plot of the story. In the novel, both Hester and Dimmesdale surrendered themselves to the temptation of evil and committed sin. Because of her seduction and deception, Hester was punished to stand on the scaffold and received nothing but humiliation. Like Eve, she commits crime and is expelled from the Garden of Eden. Like seductive and deceptive biblical women, it is her, rather than the man, has been blamed in public. Hester's story concerns not only her fall but also her punishment: she has to wear the scarlet letter "A" which means "adultery".

However, Hester does not surrender to her fall. Sinners can receive salvation from their sufferings. "The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion" (Num. 14:18). In the Hebrew Bible, Rahab took a big risk in protecting the two Israelite spies. She was saved from destruction because she had enough faith in God to hang a red rope out of her window. Despising her seduction and deception, Rahab is still regarded as a hero because she protects the Israelite spies. Her faith in God is rewarded with the honor of being placed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5). Like Rahab, Hester also had firm faith and believed that she would be saved by God. She was always ready and willing to give help to others. When pestilence hit the town, she was much more self-devoted than anyone else. People's attitudes towards her changed for all the charities she had done. The sinful temptress had changed the original meaning of the scarlet letter from an emblem of sin to an emblem of salvation.

After death, Hester was buried near Dimmesdale and with the scarlet letter “A” on her gravestone. Understanding the biblical significance of the letter Hester wears sheds light on Pearl’s role both as the embodiment of the letter and as an instrument in the regeneration of Hester. She named her illegitimate child “Pearl”. Echoing “the pearl of great price” (Matt. 13.46) in Jesus’ parable, the name suggests both the worth of the child and the way in which she costs her mother everything in terms of social standing in the Puritan community (Ryken and Longman 474). Terence Martin’s description of Pearl captures some of this sense, “Pearl cavorts through the romance embodying the seamless garment of joy and suffering that is the fate of Hester Prynne” (Martin 120).

For so many years’ sufferings and atonement, Hester finally got redemption because of her firm faith and her behavior of atonement. Like the biblical character Rahab the harlot, Hester becomes a symbol of salvation for her household. In the Hebrew Bible, Rahab hung a “scarlet thread” out of her window to ensure her house would be spared in the destruction of Jericho (Josh. 2.18). The color scarlet or red is frequently used to emphasize that blood alone can remove sin.

3.2 Biblical Archetype of Seductive and Deceptive Women as Reflected in the Characterization of Caddy

The story of Eve also inspires William Faulkner in his *The Sound and the Fury* that describes the Compson family’s downfall in the American South during the early twentieth century. As with Eve, Caddy violated her father’s rule about a tree. At the beginning of the novel, Benjy told readers in his own way what happened: Caddy climbed a pear tree to watch her grandmother’s funeral. Then the group of the children returned to their house after playing in a pear tree when a snake appeared (Faulkner 24-25). The pear tree reminds the readers of the biblical scene of Eve seducing Adam to try a fruit from the tree of Knowledge. In Eden, it is a snake that originally tempts Eve to taste the forbidden fruit. A snake is also presented in Faulkner’s story just before Caddy climbed the pear tree, “a snake crawled out from under the house. Jason said he wasn’t afraid of snakes and Caddy said he was but she

wasn't" (Faulkner 37). Both the snake and the tree create physical parallels between Caddy and Eve. The tie between climbing up the tree and the notion of sin was reconfirmed when Dilsey, the black servant, discovered Caddy and called down her with the words, "you, Satan" (Faulkner 45). Children are not allowed to take part in the funeral but have to stay outside, so Caddy's action of climbing on the tree is like breaking a law dedicated to them by their father. Eve was expelled from the paradise for breaking the God's rules. Later, Caddy was force out of the family home for her sin: her illicit pregnancy and never returns.

In the novel, there are many symbols which refer to sexual connotations and which are closely related to the death and decay images. For example, Caddy's muddying of her underwear in the stream as a young girl foreshadows her Fall and also symbolizes the shame that her conduct brought on the Compson family. Because of the Christian theology, in which Eve seduced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, the women are always portrayed as seductive and deceptive characters. The woman causes the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and therefore is responsible for all sins in the world. Caddy Compson is only portrayed through her brothers' perceptions and memories. She has no narrative voice at all. She is characterized by her brothers and represents the object of obsession of her brothers. She is usually seen as a mirror reflecting male desire. Each of Benjy's memories of Caddy was linked to her purity or her role as a mother figure. After she lost her virginity, she was no longer able to comfort him. Caddy's influence to her brother Quentins was lethally bad, although it was not intended by her. Quentin was unable to escape the sexual and sinful air surrounding Caddy. "Benjy would not be so extraordinarily alert to his sister's sexual development nor so preoccupied with her virginity if sexuality played no part in his own desire" (Bleikasten 78). He also lost his loved pasture for it was sold to pay for the wedding of Caddy with Herbert Head. Caddy's female function also made Jason suffer. Herbert Head ever promised a bank job to Jason. However, Jason's dreaming job did not come true because Caddy was pregnant with another man's child and divorced with Herbert Head. The Compson brothers had to suffer for the affairs of their sister, and Caddy's aims were not like hurting the family. Her role as a seductive

and deceptive woman leads to all these conflicts.

Faulkner creates a society in which it is taken for granted that women are impure and seductive. Nearly every male character in the novel expresses this androcentric ideology. Dalton Ames argued with Quentin, "No but they're all bitches. Did you ever have a sister? One minute she was Bitches. Not bitch one minute she stood in the door" (Faulkner 92). Jason also said, "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" (Faulkner 180). The archetype of seductive and deceptive women affects the reader's judgment upon all female characters. The downfall of the Caddy leaves no room for hope or expectation. At the end of the story, her life is not resolved. Caddy is simply ejected into the world rather than made pure and clean.

Conclusion

Through a careful study of the seductive and deceptive biblical women characterization, the author has found that most female characters in Hebrew Bible are, more or less, portrayed as seductive and deceptive roles. With the analysis of the characterization of Eve, the first biblical women, the author has noted that Eve has been viewed as the second, inferior sex and as the temptress responsible for man's downfall. However, the narrative disregards the fact that Eve's subordination might lead her to be easily persuaded by the serpent. The Bible reflects and supports the patriarchal structure of western society. Because of the inferior social position and political powerlessness in biblical society, biblical women had to frequently use seduction and deception to carry out their plans. As is revealed by the analyses of the related texts, the real seduction and deception is not committed by biblical women but by the androcentric texts, which ignore or suppress the motivations of the female characters, especially when they are related to their powerlessness. The narrator said nothing about how Bathsheba felt about the adultery and how she felt about her husband's murder. Although Esther acts with considerable skill and bravery to save the Jews from destruction; she still guards the patriarchal norms of ancient Jewish society. Her primary force is still her beauty, which is used to seduce the king who possesses her. Jael becomes another of those female characters who exert power over men through their seductive wiles. However, the presence and perspectives of all "good women" are often hidden or absent in the biblical texts. It would be totally different if the biblical stories were told from the perspective of female characters rather than from the point of view of male characters.

In the group of "bad women", the seductive and deceptive women are all foreigners. Compared with "good women", Delilah who also used sexuality to seduce and deceive man is regarded as a vixen because of different narrative perspectives. The reader's identity determines the negative images of "bad women". Both Jael and Esther who are favored by the side of the traditional readers of the biblical texts kill the right men while Delilah destroys Samson whom the ideal community identifies as

heroes. The “bad women” might well be considered “good women” in another time or by another culture. The “good women” are heroes only if the reader shares their victories. If the stories of “bad women” were told from a different narrative perspective, Delilah would probably be viewed as a hero. And also, the female character is normally condemned when she uses seduction and deception to gain something for herself. Moreover, the characterization of seductive and deceptive foreign women such as Delilah and Jezebel reflects the ancient Israelite’s fear and distrust of the foreign woman for the mixed marriages likely results in the corruption of the Israelite. However, Rahab is an exception in this group. When “bad women” assists the Israelites against their usually mightier enemies, no matter how seductive and deceptive they are, these women are free from blame and even highly praised. Thus Rahab the harlot, who deceives her own people and assists the Israelite spies, is a positive role model in the Hebrew Bible.

Loyalty to one’s late husband is another reason that caused the seduction and deception in biblical women characterization. The third group “widows” is full of this type of women: Tamar and Ruth, who are well-developed characters and act independently, and creatively. In biblical society, the childless widows could save themselves from economic deprivation and secure their places in the patriarchal clan through practicing Levirate marriage. Therefore, the widows in the Hebrew Bible managed to give birth to male heirs through seducing the prospective fathers. Tamar deceived and seduced Judah, her father-in-law, and finally rewarded by giving birth to male twins. In Ruth’s case, the best choice was Boaz who closely related to her. Ruth’s cunning deception and seduction saved a family line that might have died out by giving birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David. The stories of Tamar and Ruth empower women and minorities and effectively overthrow opposition to women and foreigners. The purposes of widow’s seduction and deception are the birth of a male heir, and the re-establishment of patrilineal continuity. Their deception and seduction are construed as heroic deeds in the Hebrew Bible because they are in agreement with the interests of patriarchy. Within the cultural context of the time, especially in regards the law of Levirate marriage, the seduction and deception in the

“widows” characterization are easily understood. The characterization of seductive and deceptive women in Hebrew Bible serves an effective ideological tool that strengthens the suspicion and distrust of women. It also confirms women’s subordination through discriminatory literary techniques. Just as Esther Fuchs said, “the female seduction and deception is not a product of woman’s innate insidiousness but a result of the power-structured relations between men and women as reflected in the artistic construction of the biblical narrative” (Fuchs 1985:144).

These stories of seductive and deceptive women in the Hebrew Bible have profoundly affected women’s self-understanding and men’s perception of women in English literature. The characterization of seductive and deceptive biblical women has immeasurable influence on numerous writers who create many dangerous female images identified as seductress, adulteress and deceiver. The archetype of seductive and deceptive women has been a continuous presence in English literature. From Lady Macbeth to Hester and Caddy, all of them have committed crimes by seducing or deceiving men. In the literature works, some of them finally get redemption and the others not. Discovering the hidden reasons for the characterization, the readers can be in a better position to understand and reevaluate the seductive and deceptive female characters in the Hebrew Bible.

Bibliography

- Alter, Robert. *The World of Biblical Literature*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- . *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- Arnold, Matthew. "God and the Bible". *Selected Poems and Prose*. Ed. Miriam Allot. New York: Dutton, 1978.
- Bach, Alice. *Women in the Hebrew Bible: a reader*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999.
- . *Women, Seduction, and Betrayal in Biblical Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex*. English Translation, New York: A.A. Knopf, 1952.
- Bellis, Alice Ogden. *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- Bleikasten, Andre. *The Most Splendid Failure, Faulkner's The Sound and The Fury*. Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1976.
- Camp, Claudia V. "1 and 2 Kings." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Ed. Carol Ann Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- Carter, Charles E. "A Discipline in Transition: the Contributions of the Social Sciences to the Study of the Hebrew Bible." *Community, Identity, and Ideology*. Ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers. Indiana, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996.
- Code, Lorraine, ed. *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2000.
- Davies, Philip R. *In Search of "Ancient Israel"*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Faulkner, William and David L. Minter. *The Sound and the Fury, An authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Critics*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1994.

- Fewell, Danna N. and David M. Gunn. *Gender, Power and Promise: the Subject of the Bible's first Story*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth S. *Bread not Stone: the Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.
- . *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Fox, Michael V. *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- . *The Great Codes: the Bible and Literature*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Fuchs, Esther. "Who Is Hiding the Truth? —Deceptive Women and Biblical Androcentrism." *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*. Ed. Adela Y. Collins. Missoula: Montana: Scholars Press and the Society of Biblical Literature, 1985.
- . *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- . "Status and Role of Female Heroines in the Biblical Narrative." *Women in the Hebrew Bible*. Ed. Alice Bach. New York and London: Routledge, 1999.
- Gottwald, Norman K. "Sociological Method in the study of Ancient Israel." *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. Ed. Norman K. Gottwald. New York: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Habel, Norman C. *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. Philadelphia: Running Press, 1986.
- Henn, Thomas R. *The Bible as Literature*. New Nork: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "Feminist Theology, 1880-1900." *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace & Ecological Wisdom*. Ed. Roger S. Gottlieb. Illus. ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Kehl, D. G., ed. *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*. Indianapolis:

- Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.
- Klein, Lillian. *From Deborah to Esther: Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Laffey, Alice. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
- Longman III, Tremper. "Biblical Narrative." *The complete literary guide to the Bible*. Ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- MacKinnon, Catherine A. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence." *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Ed. Nanneil O. Keohane et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Madsen, Deborah L. *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Pluto Press, 2006.
- Martin, Terence. *Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Boston: Twayne, 1965.
- McKnight, Edgar V. *the Bible and the Reader: an Introduction to Literary Criticism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Milne, Pamela J. "Toward Feminist Companionship: The Future of Feminist Biblical Studies and Feminism." *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible*. Ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine. Illus. ed. London & Chicago: Taylor & Francis, 2001.
- Newsom, Carol Ann, and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *Women's Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- Newsom, Carol. "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom." *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*. Ed. Peggy L. Day. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989
- Peterson, John. *Reading Women's Stories: Female Characters in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Reinhartz, Adele. "Feminist Criticism and Biblical Studies on the Verge of the Twenty-First Century." *A feminist Companion to Reading the Bible*. Ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine. Illus. ed. London, Chicago: Taylor & Francis, 2001.

- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation." *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Ed. Letty M. Russell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985.
- Russell, Letty M., ed. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985.
- Ryken, Leland, and Longman III, Tremper, eds. *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- Sanderson, Judith E. "Nahum." *Women's Bible Commentary*. Ed. Carol Ann Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- Saving, Valerie. "The Human Situation: A Feminine View." *Woman-spirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. Ed. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Schroer, Silvia. "'We Will Know Each Other by Our Fruits': Feminist Exegesis and the Hermeneutics of Liberation." *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible and the Hermeneutics of liberation*. Ed. Silvia Schroer and Sophia Bietenhard. London & New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, ed. *The Women's Bible*. New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Trible, Phyllis. "Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives." *Overtures to Biblical Theology*, 13. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Troyer, Kristin de. "An Oriental Beauty Parlour: an Analysis of Esther 2.8-18 in the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Second Greek Text." *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*. Ed. Athalya Brenner. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Wright, Terence R. *D. H. Lawrence and the Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Yee, Gale A. *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

- 李滢波:《〈旧约圣经〉中女性形象的文化解读》[J],《湘潭大学学报》(哲学社会科学版),第28卷第3期,2004年5月。
- 利兰·莱肯(著),黄宗英(译):《圣经文学导论》[M],北京:北京大学出版社,2007年。
- 梁工:《圣经叙事艺术研究》[M],北京:商务印书馆,2006年。
- :《西方圣经批评引论》[M],北京:商务印书馆,2006年。
- 刘意青:《〈圣经〉的文学阐释—理论与实践》[M],北京:北京大学出版社,2004年。
- 刘锋:《〈圣经〉的文学性阐释与希伯来精神的探求》[M],北京:北京大学出版社,2007年。
- 刘建军:《基督教文化与西方文学传统》[M],北京:北京大学出版社,2005年。
- 申丹,韩加明,王丽亚:《英美小说叙事理论研究》[M],北京:北京大学出版社,2005年。
- 《圣经》,中英文和合本,New International Version,中国基督教协会出版,南京:爱德印刷有限公司刊印,2007年7月。
- 孙彩霞:《〈西方现代派文学〉与〈圣经〉》[M],北京:中国社会科学出版社,2005年。
- 伍锋,黄敏:《西方古典文学作品中父权制的印记》[J],《南京理工大学学报》(社会科学版),第13卷第4期,2000年8月。
- 西蒙·巴埃弗拉特(著),李锋(译):《圣经的叙事艺术》[M],上海:华东师大出版社,2006年。
- 周平:《〈路得记〉的人性美与文学魅力》[J],《四川外语学院学报》,第15卷第3期,1999年7月。
- :《走出伊甸园》[M],成都:四川人民出版社,1999年。

Publications

- 1 何琛:《戴贵族面具的小丑》,《爱·伦坡小说全解》[M],上海:学林出版社,2008年1月,第217至222页。
- 2 何琛,钱晓燕:《人性的罪与罚—评〈老无所依〉》[J],《电影评介》,2008年7月。
- 3 何琛,刘蓓,郭树强:《从电影〈刮痧〉看中西文化的碰撞和调和》[J],《电影文学》,2008年9月。
- 4 何琛,郝宏海:《鸟鸣山更幽—王维〈鸟鸣涧〉英译文赏析》[J],《黑龙江教育学院学报》,2008年9月。
- 5 周平,傅洁莹(主编),何琛,冯晓娟,章俊(参编):《西方文化源流》[M],上海:上海大学出版社,2008年11月。

注:本论文受上海市教委基金项目“希腊犹太《圣经》人物研究(项目编号A.10-0103-07-401)”以及上海大学研究生创新基金项目“《圣经》女性人物中的背叛和诱惑阐释(项目编号A.16-0103-08-001)”资助,在此表示感谢。