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硕士学位论文

对《远离尘嚣》的圣经解读

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摘要

英国著名诗人和小说家托马斯·哈代（1840-1928）以他那精湛的写作技巧和不朽的作品著称于世界文坛，尤其是他的长篇小说，更是吸引了国内外众多评论家和学者的注意力，在文学评论界掀起了一股轩然大波。

众所周知，西方社会有着很深的基督教文化渊源，可以说，几乎所有西方大家的文学作品都深受基督教圣经的影响，哈代也不例外。他出身于典型的基督教家庭，从小就是个虔诚的基督教教徒，并曾立志当牧师。然而后来由于受到了许多社会和哲学思潮的影响，哈代渐渐地开始怀疑，最终甚至否定了上帝的存在。这一宗教信仰的转变过程给哈代的文学创作留下了深刻的印记，反映在他的小说中，就是他对基督教和上帝的模棱两可的态度。

《远离尘嚣》写于哈代的第一个创作阶段，是哈代第一部比较成功的长篇小说。这部小说明显受到了哈代本人宗教信仰的影响，带有深刻的宗教痕迹。在这部小说中，哈代不仅大量借用了圣经中的人名和典故，而且还按照圣经的叙事模式展开故事情节。此外，他还按照摩西十诫的教条安排小说中主要人物的命运，让违反十诫的人物受到处罚，只有遵守的才能获救。这反映了哈代对基督教和上帝的信仰。他对虔诚的基督教徒奥克的精心刻画和歌颂，也反映了他对基督教博爱精神和自我牺牲精神的宣扬和推崇。但是，哈代同时也大力塑造了一位大胆追求自由、不受传统束缚、且没有宗教信仰的女主人公芭斯西芭，并对她持欣赏态度，而且他还塑造了一群幽默风趣的乡村人物，从这些方面看，我们又可以看出哈代对基督教和上帝的嘲讽和尚不甚明显的敌对态度。

这篇论文旨在用弗莱的原型批评理论以及部分基督教教义，单独地对《远离尘嚣》这部小说做一次全面而详尽的圣经解读，以便揭示哈代对基督教所持的矛盾态度，让读者更好地理解这部小说，并期盼把学术界对《远离尘嚣》的研究向前推进一步。

该论文分为以下六部分：

第一部分是对该论文的一个简单介绍。

第二部分是文献综述，主要概括了以往学者对《远离尘嚣》所作的研究及其

成果和不足，从而引出本论文的切入口。

第三部分是本论文的重点部分。在详细分析文本的基础上，首先用原型批评理论详细分析了小说中的四个取自于圣经原型的主要人物；而后又讨论了小说中模仿圣经叙事模式的故事情节。

第四部分分析了小说中四个主要人物与摩西十诫的关系，以期更进一步了解哈代的宗教态度。

第五部分相对简单地补充分析了小说中引用的其他较为次要的圣经典故。

在前面讨论分析的基础上，最后一部分总结了哈代对基督教和上帝的态度。

关键词：原型，圣经，原始意象

Abstract

Thomas Hardy (1840~1928), the great British poet and novelist, was well-known for his excellent and immortal works, especially his full-length novels, which have drawn great attention of numerous critics and scholars, both home and abroad, from his contemporary time to the very present.

As we know, the western society is a society that is greatly immersed in the Christian culture, and almost all the western major writers' works are greatly influenced by the Holy Bible. Hardy is no exception. He was born in a strongly Christian family, and was a pious Christian when he was young. Nevertheless, with the influence of other currents of thought, Hardy began doubting the existence of God and at last even denied it. This process of his change of religious belief, reflected in his literary writings, is his ambivalent attitude towards Christianity and the God.

Far from the Madding Crowd, which was written in the first stage of Hardy's novel-writing, has a distinct religious mark. In this book, Hardy not only borrowed many names and allusions from the Bible, but also unfolded the plot of the story according to the biblical plot modes. Besides, his disposition of destinies of the main characters, who are punished when they violate the Ten Commandments and saved when they obey, also reflects Hardy's faith in Christianity and the God; and his portrait of the pious Christian, Gabriel Oak, as well as his praise on him, reflect his desire for and advocacy of Christianity's spirit of universal love and self-sacrifice. However, from Hardy's appreciating attitude towards Bathsheba's spirit of freedom, and his making of those minor and humorous characters, we can also see his sarcasm and slight hostility towards Christianity.

The purpose of this thesis is to give the novel a comprehensive biblical interpretation, and to discuss it independently, so as to reveal Hardy's attitude towards Christianity in this novel, his pursuit and restoration of God's love and salvation, as well as his not yet apparent religious contradictions reflected in this novel, hoping to

make readers better understand this novel and push the research on *Far from the Madding Crowd* a step forward.

This thesis is divided into the following six parts:

The first part is a brief introduction of this thesis.

The second part gives an overview of the diverse criticisms on *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

The third part, with a detailed textual analysis, is the most important part of this thesis. First of all, I will analyze four archetypal characters whose names are copied from the Bible; second, I will discuss the biblical plot modes used in this novel, with the theory of Frye's archetypal criticism.

The fourth part explores into the relationship between the Ten Commandments and the destinies of the four leading characters.

The fifth part is comparatively short, a brief analysis of other biblical allusions used in the book.

Then, on the basis of all these discussions, the last part will summarize Hardy's attitude towards Christianity and the Bible.

Key words: archetype, biblical, primordial images

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1. Introduction

Thomas Hardy, the outstanding novelist and poet of the late nineteenth-century England, is ever titled as the Shakespeare in the world of English novels by some critics. His excellent and immortal works, especially his greatest novels, such as *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, have drawn great attention of numerous critics and scholars, both home and abroad, from his contemporary time to the very present.

Hardy was born on 2nd June 1840, in a strongly Christian family in Dorchester. His father was a stonemason who often did the repairing work for churches, and in the meantime a musician in the local church. In and out of churches with his father, little Hardy was naturally influenced by the religious atmosphere of church. At the same time, Hardy's mother was a pious Christian, who was "essentially a literary woman—nearly blinded herself by reading"(quoted in Williams 7). Under the instruction and influence of his mother, Hardy started to learn Latin from an early age and read a lot of books, such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the prayer book and, for him, the most influential one, the Bible, which is the doctrine of Christianity. As a child, he often "enjoyed dressing up in a tablecloth and reciting services from the prayer book, and everyone thought that as he was no good at anything else he would have to be a parson" (7). Those people's thought was no other than true: to be a parson had always been little Hardy's dream.

In 1856, when he was 16, he was apprenticed to the architect in Dorchester, John Hicks. There, "a dispute with a fellow apprentice and the sons of a Baptist minister on the subject of infant baptism prompted him to more intense study of the Bible and to further inquiry into Anglican doctrine on pedobaptism" (Kramer 55). He began to learn Greek intensely all by himself, the aim of which was just to better understand the New Testament written in Greek.

At the age of 20, he got acquainted with an evangelical vicar called Henry Moule, who influenced him a lot. The Evangelicals didn't advocate that the doctrines and disciplines of Christian should be deciphered literally according to the Bible. The young Hardy soon accepted the comparatively tolerant religious idea of Evangelical church, and often took part in Moule's sermons. He even planned to go to a theological college. During this period, Hardy was almost suffocated in the atmosphere of Christianity, and it was the most religion-obsessed period in his lifetime.

With the rapid development and change of the Victorian society in the middle-nineteenth century, however, many currents of thought such as Charles Darwin's Darwinism and John Stuart Mill's idea of liberty shook the Victorian Christianity to its foundation. Hardy began doubting the existence of God and at last even denied it. By the time he was twenty-five, he "had lost most of his youthful beliefs" (Williams 70).

But, just as Dale Kramer says in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*, "although Hardy became an agnostic, he remained emotionally involved with the Church: many of his writings dramatize aspects of the pernicious influence of religious doctrines or the ineffectuality of institutional Christianity, but he could also evoke a wistful sense of the loss of an earlier, simpler faith, or affirm the lasting value of Christian Charity" (56). In short, Hardy's youthful experience with Christianity and the intense study of the Bible left a deep mark on his mind, and influenced his writings in diverse ways.

"One manifestation of the way Christianity remained a persistent influence on Hardy's writings is that his fiction is saturated with biblical allusions. Critics have disagreed on how effectively Hardy used them, as commentaries on his references to Satan reveal, but scriptural and other religious allusions in Hardy's fiction are distributed unevenly, and in some novels they form patterns that obviously play important roles" (56). *Far from the Madding Crowd* was an excellent example of this category, in which the Christian Bible obviously plays an important part.

Far from the Madding Crowd, one of Hardy's major novels, which first appeared anonymously as a serial in the *Cornhill Magazine* (edited by Leslie Stephen, the father of Virginia Woolf) from January to December 1874, was published as a book later in the same year. It was Hardy's first enormously successful novel, which therefore was significant and could even be considered as a turning point in the career of Thomas Hardy, for during the next twenty two years after the publication of this book, Hardy published nine more novels and more than forty tales, such as *The Return of the Native* (1876), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude, the Obscure* (1895)—considered by many readers as his finest works of fiction—which brought about Hardy's voluntary resignation as a novelist.

The novel was set in the fictional towns of Weatherbury, Casterbridge, and Greenhill. Central to this novel is a story of love, courtship, and marriage between a woman named Bathsheba Everdene, and her three suitors—the (variously) farmer, shepherd, and bailiff Gabriel Oak, the wealthy landowner Boldwood, and the vicious half-aristocratic Troy.

Bathsheba Everdene is a beautiful and willful young woman. When she comes to live with her aunt, she meets Gabriel Oak, a young farmer in that small village, and happens to save his life one evening. The incident at once causes him to fall in love with Bathsheba, the girl he considers as vain at the first sight. He proposes to her soon, but she refuses with the reason that she does not love him. Subsequently, Oak loses his flock of sheep and becomes an itinerant farmworker, while Bathsheba inherits a large farm from her uncle.

While Gabriel is on the way to Weatherbury looking for a job, he happens to save Bathsheba's (without knowing it is hers at first) grain ricks from a great fire. He then is hired as her bailiff, his own motive being to look after Bathsheba and to be near her; but although he may save her property, he cannot save her heart from the coming disaster. Once again, the proud woman overlooks the worthy man to become infatuated with the playboy Sergeant Troy and eventually to elope with him, without being aware that Troy's former sweetheart, Fanny Robin, is pregnant and searching

for him.

Bathsheba, too, has sown the seeds of later grief in her careless encouragement of Farmer Boldwood, a man who appears too solid and staid to lose heart but who is actually a highly emotional and sensitive person. At the very beginning, Boldwood almost pays no attention to the charm and beauty of Bathsheba. Out of vanity and fickleness, Bathsheba sends him a valentine with the words "Marry me" on a whim. The act sets Boldwood's repressed desire of love on fire. He time and again asks Bathsheba to marry him, but is always relentlessly refused by her because she doesn't love him.

From the very beginning to the end, Gabriel has always remained Bathsheba's friend. He tries hard to prevent Bathsheba from getting into her marriage with Troy, and often asks her to be kind to Boldwood, but he fails. A few weeks after Troy's marriage to Bathsheba, Fanny dies in childbirth in the workhouse; and Troy, distracted with remorse, tells Bathsheba that he really loves Fanny and not her; then, he disappears, to be reported later as drowned in the sea. Bathsheba is naturally crushed by all that have happened, but the way is eventually opened for Farmer Boldwood to renew his courtship. After much hesitation, Bathsheba agrees to accept his marriage proposal, only to have Troy reappear, quite alive and very sadistic. But he has not reckoned with Boldwood's emotional nature, and he is shot by the mad farmer. Finally, after much suffering of spirit and body, Bathsheba and Oak, who has remained loyally by her, are quietly married.

Written in the first stage of Hardy's novel-writing, this narrative is pastorally beautiful, and the attitude towards Christianity and the doctrines of the Bible reflected in this book is more positive and friendly than two of his later greatest works such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, in which Hardy's doubt towards the existence of God and his hostility towards Church are apparent.

In this book, Hardy not only borrows many names and allusions from the Bible, but also unfolds the plot of the story according to the biblical plot modes. Besides, his disposition of destinies of the main characters, who are punished when they violate the Ten Commandments and saved when they obey, also reflects Hardy's faith in

Christianity and the God; and his portrait of the pious Christian, Gabriel Oak, as well as his praise on him, reflects his desire for and advocacy of Christianity's spirit of universal love and self-sacrifice. In the meantime, Hardy's appreciative attitude towards the heroine Bathsheba, who is independent, free, and has no religious belief, and his characterization of those comic rustic men, show his light sarcasm and hostility towards Christianity and the God.

However, it is found that research on the influence of Christianity and the Bible on the writing of this book is comparatively much less than Hardy's other major novels with deep religious mark, even if there is, it was discussed together with other novels, but not independently. Most importantly, the explorations into the Christian and biblical influence on this novel are not deep and sufficient enough. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to give the novel a comprehensive biblical interpretation, and to discuss it independently, so as to reveal Hardy's attitude towards Christianity in this novel, his pursuit and restoration of God's love and salvation, as well as his not yet apparent religious contradictions reflected in this novel, hoping to make readers better understand this novel and push the research on *Far from the Madding Crowd* a step forward. The theoretical base of this thesis is the theory of archetypal criticism and the doctrine of Christianity presented in the Bible.

2. Literature Review

Far from the Madding Crowd was published in 1874. It was Thomas Hardy's first important success, both critically and financially. It was also Hardy's first novel for him to use the term "Wessex," a partly fictionalized region of southwest England centered on his own county of Dorset which acquired greater geographical precision and consistency in subsequent novels and in later revisions of this one. Therefore, we can say that this early novel plays an especially important role in Hardy's novel-writing. It is for sure the turning point of Hardy's writing career.

From the very beginning when the serial of this novel appeared anonymously in the popular *Cornhill Magazine*, it had aroused a great deal of discussions, both praises and criticisms, both from home and abroad.

The initial reception of the novel was favorable, on the whole. R. H. Hutton, the coeditor of *The Spectator* from 1861 to 1897, who himself was a theologian and man of letters, responding appreciatively to the first number of the originally anonymous serial version of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, said that "if [it] was not written by George Eliot, then there was a new light among novelists" (quoted in Hardy IX) (Although Hardy considered Eliot one of the greatest living writers, he believed that she had never touched the true life of rural countrymen). Henry James, who was then still an apprentice novelist himself, was fastidiously uneasy about Hardy's literary craftsmanship, conceding a little patronizingly that "the author has evidently read to good purpose the low-life chapters in George Eliot's novels; he has caught very happily her trick of seeming to humor benignantly her queer people" (IX-X). William Minto, editor of the *Examiner*, which was a weekly periodical, reviewed it favorably that Hardy wrote to thank him for recognizing the "dramatic aims of the story" (quoted in Wright 92). The *Echo* praised the scenes of "rustic conversion" (92), and "the *Times* (January 25, 1875) suggested that the only fault of the book was that Hardy might be suspected of imitating George Elliot" (Wright 92). The reviewer for *Scribner's Monthly* termed Hardy "the most original and impressive figure among

young English fictionists” (quoted in Wright 92). In addition, Frederic Harrison wrote Hardy in 1901 to say that “how much he had enjoyed reading the book, and that he ranked it with *Tom Jones* and *Vanity Fair*” (Wright 92-93).

As for the unfavorable sounds, the *Saturday Review*, for instance, said that the rustic wit and conversation were “idealized,” and the “intellectual banter” of the rustic characters was also criticized by Hutton of the *Sepctator*. Besides, Howard Babb said that *Far from the Madding Crowd* is “not in the same class with Hardy’s later achievements” (quoted in Daleski 56); and Irving Howe echoed him, stating that it was a novel that “by no stretch of affection could be called major” (56). However, H. M. Daleski disagreed with these unjustifiable comments on the novel. He disinterestedly stated in his book on Thomas Hardy and his works, *Thomas Hardy and Paradoxes of Love*, that “if *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* clearly stand alone as Hardy’s two great novels, *Far from the Madding Crowd* is nonetheless a major achievement and as good as anything else he wrote. Admittedly, it has one poorly contrived and ineffective sequence—the Greenhill Fair episode, which brings Troy back into the narrative after his disappearance—but its mature mastery, following some of the persistent crudities of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, is remarkable” (56).

The novel was also reviewed in a number of foreign publications. “Léon Boucher wrote a long and favorable article about it in the influential *Revue des deux mondes* (Paris, 1875), translating long extracts and praising the presentation of rural life and scenes from nature” (Wright 92). The American novelist Henry James found the book “diffuse” and Bathsheba “artificial,” though he commended Hardy for his depiction of nature and the rural atmosphere. He considered the human element “factitious and insubstantial” but declared that Hardy had “gone astray very cleverly” and that the novel was “a really curious imitation of something better” (quoted in Wright 92).

From the above responses to *Far from the Madding Crowd* readers can see that how popular this book was when it first appeared and how influential it became long after its publication. However, they are too general and superficial for readers to get deep into the book itself, and they cannot give readers a general idea of the academic

achievements on this novel. Now, let's have a look at the academic research of literary critics and scholars from both home and abroad have carried out, and what results and conclusions they have achieved.

With a critical survey on *Far from the Madding Crowd*, it seems that the most controversial and most frequently discussed point of this book is its female protagonist, Bathsheba Everdene. Many critics probe deep into this female character from many different angles, so as to see Hardy's construction of his heroine, from which Hardy's attitude towards patriarchy and women can be revealed.

From the publication of the novel, Bathsheba had been controversial all the time. Women, in the eyes of Victorians, should be totally sexually pure and self-sacrificial as to submerge themselves in their family. They are worshiped only when they selflessly exist as daughter, wife and mother. While Bathsheba is free, passionate, conscious of her physical charm and nonconforming, therefore, she is always under the male censure. She is criticized as vain, voluptuous, and capricious, and is blamed for Boldwood's downfall and his killing of Troy by male characters and many readers of the novel.

Joanna Devereux, in his book *Patriarchy and Its Discontents*, reviews the book as a "patriarchal comedy" (21). He holds that Hardy put Bathsheba Everdene under "the male gaze—of Oak, of Boldwood, of Troy, of her farm-hands, and of the other farmers in the marketplace. Even more pervasively, she is the object of the male narrator's gaze and of his moralizing platitudes" (23). He justifies for Bathsheba that life "is not what brings about Bathsheba's trials: the men desire her and bully her into submission are" (22). He observes that "the authority that Gabriel evinces in Bathsheba's presence, from the opening of the novel on, demonstrates his sense of male superiority, regardless of their relative social positions" (26). But Gabriel Oak, the only male character who does not dramatize his own sufferings—and the only male character that proves to be unafraid of female power, proves himself to Bathsheba that he is more fitter to run her farm and to control her life than she is. In Joanna Devereux's opinion, this end is a patriarchal victory, which we can see from his comments that: "Bathsheba and Gabriel, for their part, may end their story as

comrades, but scarcely as equals” (32). Just as Dale Kramer says in his book on Hardy:

Though there is what might be called a narrative endorsement of Bathsheba in the novel's final scene of quiet marriage, it is also noticeable that the process of maturation which fits her to Oak is represented—often through her own speech or consciousness—as a humiliation, a taming, a conquering.” (139)

Though with a little pity towards Bathsheba, Devereux thinks that Hardy's arrangement of her marriage with Oak in the end, his description of Boldwood's making a fool of himself over Bathsheba, and some comic rustic figures such as Laban Tall, the quintessential hen-pecked husband of Susan Tall, reveal Hardy's ambivalence about the patriarchal assumptions in the text.

While Gong Xiaobin, from the view of feminism, considers the novel as a tragedy of women. He makes a discussion according to Bathsheba's woman consciousness, her seeking and failure, and at last points out that the tragedy is the representation of the limit of the author's idea (26-29).

And Zhang Xiaona, in her thesis for Master's Degree, gives us a much more detailed discussion of Hardy's construction of Bathsheba Everdene. Through a careful exploration into the author's narrative perspective, she asserts that Hardy's perception of women is differentiated from that of Oak, who represents the patriarchal society and view towards women. She points out that “the earlier Bathsheba represents the ideal [Hardy] wishes to construct, although the later Bathsheba is transformed and reformed” (53). And, through a detailed discussion of Bathsheba's relation with nature, her unconventionality, which includes the discussion of her intellectual strength, her sexuality and her marriage, and by revealing Hardy's construction of Bathsheba's femininity as opposed to the relevant male characters, which actually betrays his sympathy and approval, Zhang states that “Hardy challenges the Victorian notion that the attitude towards sexuality becomes one of the essential defining standards for morality in a woman. Further, Hardy reveals his awareness of the dynamics of sexuality in the Victorian culture. Hardy comes to understand that for many men, the

possession of a woman becomes a sign of their power over her” (54).

Besides Bathsheba Everdene, another two main characters are often discussed, that is, Gabriel Oak and Farmer Boldwood. Gabriel Oak, more often than not, is considered as a good shepherd, who is “with rich knowledge and lofty personality,” who is “an ideal English peasant in Hardy’s mind,” and whose “honesty, kindness, intelligence and thrift give full expression to the virtues of his group” (Yang Yuming and Wen Qing 68). But there are also some others who argue that Oak represents the patriarchal society’s orthodox view towards women, and his position as a male superiority is often criticized. “Oak, although seems to be sincere, honest and just, actually functions as a moral watch dog who feels free to criticize Bathsheba and corrupts her feminine instinct” (Zhang Xiaona 17). Farmer Boldwood, as one of the suitors of Bathsheba, who is always refused by her and at last kills her husband Troy under an insane state of mind, is also frequently analyzed by scholars about his psychology and neurosis. In “Modern Consciousness Reflected in *Far from the Madding Crowd*—an Analysis of Farmer Boldwood’s Characters,” Cai Hongmei and Cheng Cailan make an analysis of Boldwood’s characters, through which they points out that:

Hardy has made tentative studies of such psychological phenomena as “repression” and “unconsciousness” and the symptom of neuroses. Although these studies are tentative and intuitive, it can also be conceived that they are extraordinarily similar to some of Freud’s clinical studies. Meanwhile, these studies can also reflect that modern consciousness has already been shown in Hardy’s early novel creation. (50)

Zheng Danyan, too, explores into Boldwood’s inner mind, and holds that Boldwood is created by Hardy as a self-repressed soul, who is placed in the forces of outside pressure, instinctual desire, and ideal self, etc. and at last is broken into pieces spiritually. He is considered as a tragic image in this novel.

There are also some others who review the novel from the angle of its bridging and foundational significance in Hardy’s novel-writing career, or through it to discuss

Hardy's pessimism and his idea of tragedy and marriage. However, compared with Hardy's other major works, especially *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, the critical attention paid to *Far from the Madding Crowd* is really too little, especially in China. Just as Kang Xiangying says in the abstract of his essay: "literary critics in [China] tend to focus on [Hardy's] later masterpieces, while neglect his first masterpiece *Far [from] the Madding Crowd*" (92), which, in her mind, is Hardy's "foundation work" (92). I quite agree with Kang Xiangying. And I find that, among these limited academic achievements, those on the religious influence on Hardy's writing *Far from the Madding Crowd* are much fewer.

As Dale Kramer says, "Christianity remained a persistent influence on Hardy's writings," and "his fiction is saturated with biblical allusions." "In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, for example, many Old and New Testament references enhance the ambiance of timeless antiquity which is one of that novel's most important aesthetic features" (56). While in China, reviews on the religious aspect of *Far from the Madding Crowd* are either not deep enough or discussed together with Hardy's other major novels.

There is only one article, by Ma Xian and Liu Feibin, which independently talks about the two biblical archetype characters in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, identifying Gabriel Oak with the angel Gabriel, and Bathsheba Everdene with Bathsheba in the story of King David. In that academic essay, Ma and Liu analyze these two biblical archetype characters and their spiritual conflicts through the theory of archetypal criticism (114-16). And in Ma Xian's another essay, he explores into Hardy's religious thought through the analysis of Hardy's several novels and poems, of which, *Far from the Madding Crowd* is one, but not discussed independently. The analysis of this novel in this essay was much less than the former one. Ma Xian analyzes briefly Gabriel's image as a Christian, which shows Hardy's desire for the spirit of universal love and self-sacrifice of Christianity, and Bathsheba, an independent modern woman, from whom reflects Hardy's anti-Christianity inclination. Thus, he shows us Hardy's ambivalent attitude towards Christianity (115-22). There is another thesis, written by He Guijuan, which includes a discussion of *Far from the*

Madding Crowd. That thesis deals with Hardy's attitude towards Christianity in his spiritual growth, especially his pursuit and restoration of God's love and salvation in every novel creation stage by means of analyzing his four chief full-length novels. *Far from the Madding Crowd* is presented in that thesis as an example of Hardy's eulogy of Christian love. The characters discussed are still only Gabriel and Bathsheba.

However, if readers explore more deeply into this novel, they can find more biblical archetypes, not only Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba Everdene, and Bible-based plots in it. Besides, readers can see in this book that Hardy borrows many names and allusions from the Bible. In fact, *Far from the Madding Crowd* has a much more distinct Christian and biblical mark than that has been discovered by the above scholars.

3. The Biblical Archetypes in *Far from the Madding Crowd*

As one of the founders of archetypal criticism in the twentieth-century western literature, Carl Jung has ever put forward such a psychological conception as “collective unconsciousness,” trying to explain the recurrence of the “primordial images” (Atkins and Morrow 46) appear in the Bible. Besides, Northrop Frye, the famous Canadian critic and the main archetypal theorist of literature, borrows the term *archetype* from Jung’s works and defines it as “a typical or recurring image” (quoted in Zhang Zhongzai et al. 117). Archetypal criticism is “almost synonymous with ‘myth criticism’” (Atkins and Morrow 42), because “archetypes find expression in myths” (45). Frye says: “The myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual and archetypal narrative to the oracle. Hence, the myth is the archetype” (Zhang Zhongzai et al. 106). A plenty of plots in novels, such as birth, development, suffering, victory or death, are all similar to those biblical stories.

As we know, the Bible exists in the western society as a religious, historical and cultural classic and is itself a great work of literature. With so many myths in it, the Bible has provided the western literature with endless “primordial images,” such as Jesus Christ, Adam and Eve, and the serpent, which has another name, Satan, in the New Testament. It is not an exaggeration at all to say that literary works in western society are more or less influenced by the Bible.

Born in a Christian family and brought up in a society that was closely related with the Bible, Thomas Hardy was greatly influenced by the Bible and Christianity, and this influence left a distinct mark on Hardy’s writings, especially in his novels. Therefore, it’s no surprise to find that there are so many allusions and archetypes drawn from the Bible, when we read many of his novels such as *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, and *Jude of the Obscure*, etc. The influence of the Bible on Hardy’s literary works is deep in root, and can not be wiped away.

Far from the Madding Crowd, as Hardy's first successful novel, in particular, is significantly associated with the Bible. In this book, Hardy not only creates his four protagonists according to the biblical characters, but also unfolds the plot of the story according to the biblical plot modes.

3.1. Archetypal Characters from the Bible

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye points out that "the presence of a mythical structure in realistic fiction ... poses certain technical problems for making it plausible, and the devices used in solving these problems may be given the general name of *displacement*" (136). And "the central principle of displacement is that what can be metaphorically identified in a myth can only be linked in romance by some form of simile: analogy, significant association, incidental accompanying imagery, and the like" (137). For this statement, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which is in fact a realistic fiction, offers itself as a good example. Hardy, while creating his four protagonists according to the biblical counterparts, employs the technique of displacement. Through the following detailed discussion of the four characters—Gabriel Oak, Bathsheba Everdene, Sergeant Troy and Farmer Boldwood—readers can see that they are respectively associated with some biblical characters, with whom, however, they are not completely identified.

3.1.1. Gabriel Oak—the combination of Gabriel the angel and Jesus Christ the good shepherd

Gabriel Oak, one of the three male protagonists, has the characteristics of both the angel Gabriel and Jesus Christ, but at the same time not totally identified with either of them.

On the one hand, he is named after a biblical messenger angel Gabriel (Luke 1: 19), who is sent by God to deliver good news to people and who announces the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist and God's son Jesus one after another. In the Bible, Gabriel is a "strong man of God" (Yang Yuming 68), and a saint who brings

people good news and good luck. With the same opinion with Ma Xian, the author of this thesis thinks that Gabriel Oak in the novel is a pious Christian made out of the very image of angel Gabriel. Through a careful reading of the text, readers can see that Gabriel Oak has nearly all the lofty personalities of a standard Christian. However, Gabriel's Christian belief is not steadfast from the beginning of the novel, but is gradually developed and presented. At first, he has not too much enthusiasm towards his religious belief. As it is said in the introduction of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, while he "is a churchgoer he is not a very attentive one" (XV), and from Hardy's description of Farmer Oak in Chapter I—"he went to church, but yawned privately by the time the congregation reached the Nicene creed, and thought of what there would be for dinner when he meant to be listening to the sermon" (3)—readers can also see he is not very serious towards Christian and church. But soon later, when his marriage proposal is refused by Bathsheba, and his flock is totally destructed, he calmly and bravely accepts them. From then on, his lofty Christian personality is gradually displayed to us readers. We can see that he is stoic, staid, honest, modest, kind-hearted, faithful, thrift, and selfless and most important, he has the spirit of self-sacrifice.

What's different from Ma Xian's opinion is that, the author of this thesis thinks that Gabriel Oak is more like another biblical character, Jesus Christ, the good shepherd. Hardy borrows the angel's name and gives his hero characteristics of another biblical character; in other words, Gabriel the angel and Jesus Christ are in fact overlapped. As what is mentioned above, Gabriel the angel is sent by God to deliver good news and good luck to people, and Jesus, too, is the one who comes from God and is ordered by God to save his people. Besides, Gabriel the angel is a pious Christian whose lofty Christian personalities are from Jesus Christ himself. The following analysis is in detail:

First, in the New Testament, Jesus often compares himself as a shepherd, whose responsibility is to make his sheep follow him and to find them when they are lost. He has ever said: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. ... And I

lay down my life for the sheep” (John10: 11-15). As for the identity, Gabriel Oak clearly plays the same part as Jesus. At the very beginning of the novel, Oak appears before us just as a shepherd. He owns a small farm and shepherds his own sheep. Not long after the story begins, Hardy shows readers a very metaphorical scene, from which they can see the image of Jesus and his mother Mary. In that scene, Bathsheba “tries to revive the suffocating Gabriel, solicitously bending over him, the illustration universalizes the situation by recalling paintings of Mary, mother of Jesus, with her crucified son laid across her knees. The effect is discreetly to associate the trials and sorrows of Gabriel with those of the Man of Sorrows, Christ Himself, confirming the hinted association of Gabriel the faithful shepherd with Christ the Good Shepherd” (Hardy XI). After he has lost all of his sheep and goes bankrupt because of an accidental disaster, he goes to Wetherbury and is hired by Bathsheba, the young woman with whom Oak is still in love since he has been refused by her, as her shepherd. There, on Bathsheba’s farm, Oak feeds the Wetherbury flock as his own. He is an excellent shepherd: He washes and sheers the sheep with a high efficiency and when Bathsheba’s sheep are poisoned with young clover, he cures almost all of them and saves his mistress a great loss. Even until the end of the novel, when he marries Bathsheba, he still is a shepherd, and the only difference is that he has changed to be his own shepherd as before, but not Bathsheba’s.

Second, as we know, Jesus is the one who comes from God and is ordered by God to save his people. According to God’s words, he cures the diseases of a lot of people who believe in God and save their lives, but he is unable to save his own life and finally is crucified on the cross. In this aspect, Gabriel Oak is another Jesus in this novel. On his road to the yearly-held hiring fair in the county-town of Casterbridge to find himself a job, he plays the most important role in saving a great fire on a farm with many people there, being unaware that the farm is Bathsheba’s; when Bathsheba’s sheep are poisoned with young clover, only is he able to cure them and he does cure them with his great talents; before the storm is coming on the wedding night of Bathsheba and Troy, he saves all the wheat-ricks and stacks of barley all by himself at the danger of his own life, because all other men on the farm have been

drunk with their new master; and at the end of the novel, when Bathsheba's husband is shot dead by Boldwood, who is then madly in love with her and later is sentenced to life imprisonment, Oak marries the lonely and helpless Bathsheba, without caring for her past. In this sense, he saves Bathsheba's life from being totally damaged and secures her happiness in the later part of her life. Like Jesus, although Oak could save others, he has no way to save himself. When the tragedy comes, he is not able to save his flock, his farm, and even his love. No matter how great efforts he has made, he is just shut out of Bathsheba's inner world and could not enter it until the end. And maybe it is just because Bathsheba has no others to love then that she agrees to marry him. In that case, we can not say that he saves himself at the last minute. But anyway, Gabriel is not crucified on the cross like Jesus so as to save others. Here, the technique of displacement is used by Hardy to make the story plausible.

In personality, Gabriel Oak has all of the virtues preached and carried out by Jesus himself. First, he has a strong will, and has never been overwhelmed by sufferings and failures. He is as stoical as Jesus. When his farm turns out to be a total failure because of an accidental disaster, he does not lose heart or is unable to recover from the setback. Instead, he soon calms himself down and confronts the reality courageously, determining to find a job and start working again. Second, he is kind-hearted, merciful, and selfless. Even in predicament, he always considers others first but not himself. Remember? Just after he goes bankrupt, the person who he considers first is Bathsheba, the woman who has just refused his love relentlessly. To readers' surprise, he even utters such a sentence in thankfulness: "Thank God I am not married: what would she have done in the poverty now coming upon me!" (30) Third, he is tolerant, and persistent and loyal in his love for Bathsheba from the very beginning to the end. He is always ready to forgive other people. He forgives Bathsheba's vanity and selfishness now and again, and even when he is fired and drove away by Bathsheba from her farm, he is still willing to come back and helps her cure her clover-poisoned sheep, not asking any kind of return; when Bathsheba is in passionate love with Troy, and at the same time carrying on her ambiguous relationship with Boldwood, he still selflessly persists in his love for her and secretly

makes every effort to protect her from being hurt. Though he is suffering a lot in his heart, he would rather bear all those sufferings all by himself.

· All these characteristics of Gabriel Oak are just as same as those of Jesus.

· From the above detailed discussion, we can see that Gabriel Oak has the image and characteristics of both Gabriel the angel and Jesus Christ the good shepherd.

3.1.2. Bathsheba Everdene—the combination of Bathsheba in the story of King David, Eve in Garden of Eden, and the lost sheep

When the name Bathsheba Everdene is named, readers would immediately call to mind the biblical King David's mistress, a woman of such beauty and sensuality, who leads the king essentially to commit murder. Her first name, which is significantly biblical, means "voluptuous" or "daughter of satiety," while her last name means "wild one" (quoted in Zhang Xiaona 42). Both names indicate the sexuality of Bathsheba. In the Bible, Bathsheba at first was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, a beautiful woman. One day when she was bathing, she happened to be seen by King David who "was walking about on the roof of the king's house" (2 Samuel 11: 2). King David fell in love with her at once. He sent for her to the king's house, lay with her and made her pregnant. Then, King David sent Bathsheba's husband to the front of the battlefield, and killed him with the hand of the enemies. Soon later, Bathsheba married with King David and became his wife.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the first time when Bathsheba Everdene appears before us, we can find that she is also observed carefully by someone—Gabriel Oak—from a distance: "The handsome girl waited for some time idly in her place, and the only sound heard in the stillness was the hopping of the canary up and down the perches of its prison. Then she looked attentively downwards: it was not at the bird, nor at the cat: it was at an oblong package tied in paper, and lying between them. She turned her head to learn if the waggoner were coming; he was not yet in sight; and her eyes crept back to the package, her thoughts seeming to run upon what was inside it. At length she drew the article into her lap and untied the paper covering; a small swing looking-glass was disclosed, in which she proceeded to

survey herself attentively. She parted her lips, and smiled” (5). Here, readers can see that Bathsheba is very proud of and satisfied with her beauty. Her vanity at once is clearly displayed before readers. Soon later, her special act on horseback is seen again by Gabriel Oak from a distance, without her own awareness that she is being observed. Look, “the girl, who wore no riding-habit, looked around for a moment, as if to assure herself that all humanity was out of view, then dexterously dropped backwards flat upon the pony’s back, her head over its tail, her feet against its shoulders, and her eyes into the sky. The rapidity of her glide into this position was that of a kingfisher—its noiselessness that of a hawk. Gabriel’s eyes had scarcely been able to follow her” (14). From that moment on, Gabriel’s love for Bathsheba begins to sprout. He proposes to her a short time after.

It is self-evident that why Hardy borrows such a name from the Bible. From the story of King David and Bathsheba, readers can see that Bathsheba is a sensuous and sexual woman. Her marrying King David shortly after her husband’s death and being contented to be King’s wife without any sense of remorse shows that she is vain, selfish and sensuous, and Bathsheba Everdene in the novel turns out to be similar with the biblical figure in many aspects. Then readers are able to anticipate the story development if they are familiar with the Bible.

Bathsheba in the novel has a lot of disagreeable characteristics. First, she has a strong sense of vanity. She is interested in showing herself off and making flirtations with men; and she feels gloried in conquering men. As for her vanity, readers have seen it clearly from the above-mentioned scene when she is appreciating herself in the glass while waiting for the waggoner to come back. And from the talk about her between the two trivial characters, Billy Smallbury and Poorgrass, readers also can get some knowledge of Bathsheba’s vanity:

“She’s a very vain feymell —so ’tis said here and there.”

“Ah, now. If so be ’tis like that, I can’t look her in the face. Lord, no: not I-heh-heh-heh! Such a shy man as I be!”

“Yes —she’s very vain. ’Tis said that every night at going to bed she looks in the glass to put on her nightcap properly.” (35)

Later, when she finds that Boldwood, a single farmer at Little Wetherbury who is gentle and handsome, pays not even a little attention to her beauty, she is annoyed and on an impulse she sends him a valentine on which there are the words of a seal reading "Marry Me," without thinking what her impulsive act will result in. It is also out of her vanity that she falls in love with the rakish and villainous Sergeant Troy. She is attracted by Troy's handsome face and his "noble" social position; she is intoxicated with Troy's honeyed words, without thinking whether they are true or not. Second, Bathsheba is extremely selfish. She will do anything that can please herself, but will never consider the feelings of others. Knowing clearly that Oak is always in love with her, she still tells him her relationship with Boldwood and asks for his opinion. "Knowing he would reply truly she asked the question, painful as she must have known the subject would be. Such is the selfishness of some charming women. Perhaps it was some excuse for her thus torturing honesty to her own advantage, that she had absolutely no other sound judgment within easy reach" (104). Her selfishness makes her attitude towards Boldwood ambiguous and self-contradictory. She knows that she doesn't love him, but still maintains her vague relationship with him and doesn't refuse him absolutely until she falls in love with Sergeant Troy. Third, like Bathsheba the wife of King David, the heroine of this novel is also a woman who pursues sensuous satisfaction. Her falling in love with Troy nearly at the first sight is not only because Troy is handsome and noble, but he is good at praising her as well. Out of jealousy towards other women who attract Troy's attention, she marries him on impulse, paying little attention to Gabriel's sincere advice. This impulsive action shows readers her strong desire for individual power. But a few months after her marriage, Troy disappears and is reported to be drowned in the sea after he tells Bathsheba that he has never loved her. Bathsheba is nearly broken to pieces mentally. She is severely punished for her own act. This is similar with the experience of Bathsheba in the Bible, that is, God punished King David and Bathsheba by killing their son. There is no doubt that the suffering of losing husband and losing son for a young woman is equally great. Since King David and Bathsheba frequently confessed to God in their later life, they were forgiven by God at last and bore another son,

Solomon, who became a great king later, too. And Bathsheba Everdene, after experiencing great setbacks in her life, grows gradually to be mature in spirit. She learns to concern for others, and becomes tolerant, kind-hearted and modest. At last, she marries Gabriel Oak, who is always in true love with her.

Bathsheba the heroine also has some similarity with Eve, the first and only woman in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3, Eve was seduced by the crafty serpent to eat the forbidden fruit on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She also gave some to her husband Adam, who was with her, and then both of their eyes were opened. When it was discovered by God, they were severely cursed and punished, and they were driven out of Eden to the earth. Readers can see that Bathsheba Everdene has the similar experience with Eve from her relationship with Sergeant Troy and Farmer Boldwood. On the one hand, Bathsheba is seduced by the villainous and crafty Troy, who in the novel is the embodiment of the sly serpent, also called Satan in the Bible. She is cheated by Troy's honeyed words to believe that he really loves her and at last marries with him. As we know, love is often compared to be a kind of "forbidden fruit" in many literary works, and Bathsheba, like Eve in Garden of Eden, can't resist the temptation, eats the "forbidden fruit" of love, and therefore gets punished. As the author of this thesis has mentioned above, Bathsheba loses her husband not long after their marriage and suffers a lot both physically and mentally. Just as Richard Carpenter says, the "eternal Eve has found the fruit of this tree bitter indeed" (87). On the other hand, Bathsheba also plays the role of a seducer and makes a man fall down. That man is Farmer Boldwood. The frivolous Bathsheba sends him on whim a valentine with a seal of "Marry Me," thus giving the forbidden fruit of love to Boldwood and making him fall in love with her. Soon after that, Boldwood begins his downfall just like Adam, mentally but not physically. This point is to be discussed in detail in the later discussion of Boldwood.

Besides these two biblical characters, Bathsheba is also created with the image of a "lost sheep." In the New Testament, there is the parable of the lost sheep. Once upon a time, when Jesus was teaching to the tax collectors and sinners, the Pharisees and the Scribes were not satisfied with him, grumbling that he welcomed sinners. So Jesus

told them the parable of the lost sheep. He said: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, and saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15: 1-7). Because of this parable, "lost sheep" is always used to refer to those young persons who are led astray.

To say Bathsheba is a "lost sheep," readers can see more clearly from her affair with Sergeant Troy. She is totally conquered by the young and handsome Troy, who is in fact a dandy and is capable of nothing but satisfying her vanity with sweet words. She is drunk in his love and despite the kind dissuasions of Oak and Boldwood and other people, and marries with him secretly at last. She becomes a "lost sheep" in Troy's passionate love which will not last forever, and can not find the way back. As we know, the image of sheep in literature often stands for such female characteristics as weak, gentle and submissive. Though Bathsheba in the novel appears as an independent and strong-minded woman almost all the time, readers still can find the scene when her hidden weakness is exposed. In chapter 43 "Fanny's Revenge," when Troy gently kissed Fanny Robin, who was then lying dead in the coffin, "as one would kiss an infant asleep to avoid awakening it" (236), Bathsheba completely lost her self-control and cried like a helpless child:

She flung her arms around Troy's neck, exclaiming wildly from the deepest deep of her heart—

'Don't—don't kiss them! O, Frank, I can't bear if—I can't! I love you better than she did: kiss me too, Frank—kiss me! You will, Frank, kiss me too!' (237)

Furthermore, when Troy relentlessly told her that who he really loved was Fanny Robin and he never loved her, Bathsheba's strong mind was almost shattered to pieces.

Near the end of the novel, when Troy is shot dead by the mad Boldwood who is sentenced to life imprisonment later, Bathsheba's disaster comes to climax. If Oak does not marry Bathsheba and helps her out of the shadow of the past, her life will be totally ruined. No matter how, the "lost sheep" is at last rescued by the good shepherd.

What's different from these biblical characters and images is that Bathsheba in the novel is an independent new woman who loves freedom and is reluctant to be controlled by men and becomes their private possession. But the outcome of the story nevertheless suggests that Gabriel's normative vision wins out and Bathsheba "is properly 'tamed,' as she told Gabriel that she needed to be, domesticated into the farmer's wife that Gabriel saw from the first he required" (Devereux 32). From such a disposition of his heroine's destiny, readers can see that Hardy's ambivalent attitudes towards Christian principles, represented by Gabriel Oak, and humanity, represented by the free and independent Bathsheba.

3.1.3 Sergeant Troy—the serpent or Satan

"The qualities that morality and religion usually call ribald, obscene, subversive, lewd, and blasphemous have an essential place in literature, but often they can achieve expression only through ingenious techniques of displacement" (Frye 156).

"The simplest of such techniques is the phenomenon that we may call 'demonic modulation,' or the deliberate reversal of the customary moral associations of archetypes. Any symbol at all takes its meaning primarily from its context: a dragon may be sinister in a medieval romance or friendly in a Chinese one; an island may be Prospero's island or Circe's. But because of the large amount of learned and traditional symbolism in literature, certain secondary associations become habitual. The serpent, because of its role in the Garden of Eden story, usually belongs on the sinister side of our catalogue in Western literature" (Frye 156-57).

As Frye has said, the serpent stands for the power of evil in the Bible. In Genesis, it was he who tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit on the tree of knowledge of good and evil against God's will, and was therefore cursed by God, and caused the first human couple to be driven out of the Garden of Eden; in the first

chapter of Job, another biblical book, Satan, another name for the evil serpent, refuted God's compliment on the blameless and upright Job many times and put him to many kinds of tests and tortures. In New Testament, Satan is mixed with the great dragon, the ancient serpent, and the Devil. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ... The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world ..." (Revelation 12: 7-9). Satan is a devil who is depraved, sly and who tempts the father of human beings to sin; he has no idea of repenting for his sins or taking necessary responsibilities; he pursues absolute freedom in spite of disciplines. All of these evil doings of Satan are all reflected in the character and life style of Sergeant Troy, a character who stands for the destroying power in the society of the novel.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Sergeant Troy plays the role of a dandy who leads a Bohemian life and abandons himself to flirting with girls and entertainment. He pays no attention to social morality and has no sense of shame; he is relentless, rude, and vulgar; he pursues absolute freedom and randomly tramples on humanity, not to mention that he would like to be disciplined by social morality. Look, the narrator has such a comment on him in the book: "He was a man to whom memories were an encumbrance and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present. His outlook upon time was as a transient flash of the eye now and then: that projection of consciousness into days gone by and to come, which makes the past a synonym for the pathetic and the future a word for circumspection, was foreign to Troy. With him the past was yesterday; the future, tomorrow; never, the day after" (130-31). Besides, he appears in the novel as the one who comes from the "madding crowd," and his intruding into the Wessex Society brings into it a destroying power and breaks its original peace and stability. As it is said in the introduction of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, "Sergeant Troy, the novel's only outsider, is a dangerous and disruptive presence, an imprudent and inattentive farmer who cannot or will not read the signs of the weather like Gabriel Oak" (XI-XII).

From the very first scene with Fanny, he enjoys tormenting her with their

presumed upcoming marriage. Fanny's elopement receives no reward. When she mistakes the wedding church "All Souls" for "All Saints," she is not pardoned. What's more, although Fanny is pregnant with his child, Troy abandons her later without pity, which finally results in Fanny's miserable death in a union-house with her child still-born. Later, when he comes across Bathsheba, who is much more beautiful and attractive than Fanny, and who has a large sum of property, he immediately keeps Fanny out of his mind and, with every possible romantic and passionate means, begins to get close to her and woos her. He acts as a knight before Bathsheba, and dresses her with compliments and sweet words. When he says frivolously to Bathsheba that she is beautiful and distracts her, the "careless sergeant smiled within himself, and probably too the devil smiled from a loop-hole in Tophet, for the moment was the turning-point of a career" (135). After a short period, Bathsheba is absolutely captured by his trap of romantic love. However, after marrying Bathsheba, he does not love her sincerely at all, but treats her with ruthlessness. He squanders her money randomly, and abandons himself to alcoholism and spree. He nearly ruins Bathsheba's life totally, not to mention that he gives any kind of help to Bathsheba's career at all. In addition, he relentlessly humiliates Boldwood, and arbitrarily tramples on his soul. Let's take a look at the scene when Boldwood offers to pay him a large sum of money on condition that he gives up Bathsheba and marries Fanny Robin:

"I like Fanny best," said Troy; "and if, as you say, Miss Everdene is out of my reach, why I have all to gain by accepting your money, and marrying Fan. But she's only a servant."

"Never mind—do you agree to my arrangement?"

"I do."

"Ah!" said Boldwood, in a more elastic voice. "O, Troy, if you like her best, why then did you step here and injure my happiness?"

"I love Fanny best now," said Troy. "But Bathsh ... Miss Everdene inflamed me, and displaced Fanny for a time. It is over now."

(180-81)

His venality is totally exposed here.

At the end of the novel, when Troy is thought to have been drowned in the sea by almost all the people in Wetherbury and when Boldwood nearly succeeds in making Bathsheba agree to marry him, Troy comes back, attempting to claim her his wife and get Bathsheba back from Boldwood again. To readers' pleasure, this villain, Satan, gets his revenge and is shot dead by the furious Boldwood at last.

3.1.4. Farmer Boldwood—Adam

As what have been mentioned in the discussion of Bathsheba, once Boldwood falls in love with the beautiful Bathsheba, he begins his downfall just like Adam. If readers pay a little attention to the developing course of his relationship with Bathsheba, they will find sufficient evidences to prove that Boldwood is just another Adam in the Garden of Eden.

In Chapter 12, when Boldwood appeared for the first time in front of Bathsheba on the market-day in the cornmarket at Casterbridge, "he was a gentlemanly man ... erect in attitude, and quiet in demeanour. One characteristic pre-eminently marked him—dignity" (72). He paid no attention to Bathsheba's beauty and charm, just as Bathsheba says to her maid Liddy that "he had more sense than to waste his time" (73) upon her. And later that day, on their way home, when he passed Bathsheba's carriage, he "had never turned his head once, but with eyes fixed on the most advanced point along the road, passed as unconsciously and abstractedly as if Bathsheba and her charms were thin air" (73). Here, Boldwood is still leading a peaceful life, and could manage his own business just as an ordinary farmer, having no desire for women and love. However, the Bathsheba's vanity could not bear his negligence to her and sent him a valentine with the words "Marry Me." Boldwood, like Adam, couldn't resist the temptation and thus, his repressed desire for women is intrigued. When Boldwood came to know that the valentine is sent by Bathsheba and later saw her again in Casterbridge market-house, "Adam had awakened from his deep sleep, and behold! there was Eve. The farmer took courage, and for the first time really looked at her" (91). Boldwood ate the forbidden fruit of love that Bathsheba had given to him, and

his eyes which were blind to women before were opened now. "He saw her black hair, her correct facial curves and profile, and the roundness of her chin and throat. He saw then the side of her eyelids, eyes, and lashes, and the shape of her ear. Next he noticed her figure, her skirt, and the very soles of her shoes" (92). Boldwood fell in passionate love with Bathsheba, and soon later he made a marriage proposal to her. Unfortunately, he was relentlessly refused by the capricious Bathsheba. But he didn't give up. On the contrary, his desire for her became stronger and stronger. Not long after his first proposal to Bathsheba, Boldwood made a second offer. This time, being awestruck at her past temerity, Bathsheba agreed to answer him, in five or six weeks, for the question whether she was able to promise to be his wife. Boldwood was held waiting, hoping that at the end of the sixth week when he returned from his business trip, he could get his Bathsheba. But it only turned out to be another refusal, which was more complete than the former one. Bathsheba fell in love with Sergeant Troy just during the period when Boldwood was away from home.

Boldwood gets his severe punishment for eating the forbidden fruit and begins to fall down and suffer. Just as Frye says that, what "[Adam] does is to exchange a fortune of unlimited freedom for the fate involved in the consequences of the act of exchange, just as, for a man who deliberately jumps off a precipice, the law of gravitation acts as fate for the brief remainder of his life" (212). Since Boldwood falls in love with Bathsheba, the earlier free and dignified bachelor has been fettered in human love until the end of the story. He jumps off the precipice of his earlier ordinary but peaceful life, and falls onto the bottom of the valley of desire. When Boldwood finds that Bathsheba is in love with Troy and has been kissed by him, he first asks Bathsheba for pity without any sense of self-respect, and later loses his temper and threatens to punish Troy. Later, when he comes face to face with Troy, Boldwood nearly kills him in a gale of anger. Now readers can see that Boldwood degenerates morally step by step. After the marriage of Bathsheba and Boldwood, he totally loses his mind and gives up himself and his farm. He "lived secluded and inactive." "Much of his wheat and all his barley of that season had been spoilt by the rain. It sprouted, grew into intricate mats, and was ultimately thrown to the pigs in

armful. The strange neglect which had produced this ruin and waste became the subject of whispered talk among all the people round; and it was elicited from one of Boldwood's men that forgetfulness had nothing to do with it, for he had been reminded of the danger to his corn as many times and as persistently as inferiors dared to do" (261). In such circumstance, Boldwood asks Gabriel to undertake the superintendence of his Lower Farm. Near the end of the story, Boldwood's moral depravity comes to extreme when he finally shoots Troy dead under the state of being frenzied and despaired. Then, he is sentence to life-imprisonment. He is another Adam who is tempted by Eve and is punished by God to fall down from Heaven to the ground.

3.2. The Archetypal Forms Based on the Bible

An archetype can be an image, a description of details such as the change of seasons and birth or death, etc. a kind of plot, such as the fight between good and evil, the conflict of body and soul, etc. and a type of character. It is an ancient mode which reflects those permanent things in human society. In the practice of literary criticism, archetypal critics have tried to find out those repeated images, forms of narration, and types of characters in literary works, and the basic forms hidden behind them. Thomas Hardy, who is deeply influenced by the Bible, uses a lot of biblical archetypes in his novels and poetry. If readers read his *Far from the Madding Crowd* more carefully and explore more deeply into it, they will find that, in addition to creating his main characters according to the archetypal characters in the Bible, Hardy's narration of the story is also based on the narrative form of the Bible.

3.2.1. The "free-guilty-punished-confess-return" mode of the Bible

Bathsheba Everdene in the novel appears before readers as a beautiful and young woman in the very beginning. Being beautiful, bold, free and passionate, she soon attracts the honest and competent shepherd Gabriel Oak. By accident, she happens to rescue Gabriel from suffocating in his closed hut, and after Gabriel revives,

frivolously allows him to hold and kiss her hand, thus making him fall in love with her at once. But when Gabriel sincerely proposes to her and asked her to be his wife, she refuses him at once just because of her capriciousness and her proud and vanity. She says that she has never been held by anybody as a sweetheart and she hates to be thought as men's property by way of marriage, and even declares that "I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband" (25), and "I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent" (26). After she comes to Weatherbury and inherits her uncle's farm, she is annoyed by Farmer Boldwood's neglect of her beauty, and sends him a valentine with the seal "Marry Me" on a whim, thus arouses his storm-like love for her. However, Bathsheba refuses Boldwood's marriage proposal with the same reason she has refused Gabriel Oak, without any sense of guilty for her own irresponsible behavior. What's worse, when the devoted Boldwood proposes again and again to her, she is always kept him waiting and suffering, gives him a little hope first and kills it absolutely soon after. All of these actions and behaviors of her cause severe harm to Gabriel Oak and Farmer Boldwood, and make them suffer a lot. Furthermore, Bathsheba even dates with the notorious dandy, Sergeant Troy, who "was a man to whom memories were an encumbrance, and anticipations a superfluity. Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present. His outlook upon time was as a transient flash of the eye now and then: that projection of consciousness into days gone by and to come, which makes the past a synonym for the pathetic and the future a word for circumspection, was foreign to Troy. With him the past was yesterday; the future, tomorrow; never, the day after" (130-31), and at last marries him.

Now readers can see that Bathsheba is trying every effort to break away from the Victorian or patriarchal bondage imposed on her and imagines to live a free life according to her own will and to be happy. "She lives in her own autonomy and the social [security] is not yet developed in her. She is a woman who lives by herself, not yet involved with her peers, not yet in any real way constituted by society at large" (Zhang Xiaona 25) But all of these impulsive and irresponsible actions and behaviors of her cause severe harm to Gabriel Oak and Farmer Boldwood, and make them suffer

a lot. She is guilty and soon later gets severe punishment. It's time for her to reap the bitter fruits of her own former behaviors, and to suffer a great deal from a succession of trials, both physically and mentally. After she quarrels with Gabriel and drives him away, her sheep are poisoned with young clover at once. Just on her wedding night with Sergeant Troy, a great storm is on the way to cause a great loss to her, and if without Gabriel's help, she might well go bankrupt overnight. The events happen after her marriage with Troy, such as Troy's neglect of their farm, his addiction to the horse-race gambling, the discovery of Troy's love affairs with Fanny Robin, Troy's reported drowning shortly after Fanny's death, his reappearing after one year and being shot dead by Boldwood, and Boldwood's life imprisonment in the end of the novel, are more shocking to her and break her nearly to pieces step by step. In this process of suffering, Bathsheba is gradually turned into a meek, thoughtful, and comely woman. For example, when Fanny Robin is dead, she insists to put her coffin in her own house, and places some evergreens and flowers in it; when she discovers that Troy is the father of Fanny's child, she doesn't hate Fanny but pities her. When Gabriel tells her that he is going to leave her and begins to shun her, she even condescends to ask him for pity and sympathy, but is not as proud as before. "She is properly 'tamed,' as she told Gabriel that she needed to be, domesticated into the farmer's wife that Gabriel saw from the first he require" (Zhang Xiaona 32). Before the story works itself out, Bathsheba marries the most devoted lover in the novel—Gabriel Oak—which, in a sense, can be seen that she is rescued at last.

This form of the narration, which can be called as the "free-guilty-punished-confess-return" mode, can frequently be found in the Bible. In the first book of the Bible, the Genesis, Adam and Eve used to lead a free and happy life in the Garden of Eden, but soon later they were tempted by the serpent (identified by later Jewish and Christian writers as Satan) to eat the fruits on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Yielding to the desire for the forbidden fruit brought the pair loss of innocence and an experience of shame and guilt which damaged their relationship with God and with one another. Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, becoming exiles who were going to face hardship, pain, disharmony and death. This

original sin of Adam and Eve caused great pain to Adam's descendants and made them suffer generation after generation. They confessed to God again and again for His forgiveness and in the end, that is, in the last book of Revelation of the Bible, human beings were rescued and returned to God.

3.2.2. The “disaster-helped by God-rescued” mode in Exodus

Gabriel Oak in the story, the only and most pious Christian who is morally superior to all the other characters, can be seen frequently meeting with misfortunes from the very beginning of the book. At first, he was refused by Bathsheba when he proposed marriage to her, and soon later, just after Bathsheba left for Weatherbury to inherit her uncle's farm, all of his awes fell off the precipice by accident and died, and thus he lost his own farm and went bankrupt overnight. When he met Bathsheba again and was employed by her as her shepherd, he was driven away by Bathsheba for one time just because of his quarrel with her. Not until the end of the novel, his love for Bathsheba was always being denied and overlooked. However, he was a devoted man who was always in love with Bathsheba. Just as he said to Bathsheba the first time when he proposed to her that “I shall do one thing in this life—one thing certain—that is, love you, and long for you, and *keep wanting you* till I die” (26). When Bathsheba wanted to drive him away for the second time, he said: “I can't go without putting things in such a strait as you wouldn't get out of I can't tell when. Unless, indeed, you'll promise to have an understanding man as bailiff, or manager, or something. I'll go at once if you'll promise that” (152). Because of his endurance, dedication and devotion, Gabriel was helped by God. Shortly after he was driven away by Bathsheba from her farm, her sheep were poisoned by young clover at once. Since Gabriel was the only one who knew how to cure the poisoned sheep, he was called back again. And as time went on, his position in Bathsheba's life and on her farm became more and more important. Finally he got his advancement as her bailiff and at the same time was asked by Farmer Boldwood to manage his Lower Farm. At last, he married the then beautiful and tamed Bathsheba, with whom he was always in deep love with. He realized his dream of both love and career, being the husband of the woman he

loved and a real farmer. In this sense, he was finally rescued by God because of his faith.

This form of Gabriel's story, that is the "disaster-helped by God-rescued" mode, can be found in the Bible, too. In the Book of Exodus, the Israelites were first slaved and oppressed by the Egyptians. They suffered a great deal on the land of Egypt. Later, Moses, the greatest of the prophets, killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave, and was exiled. While in exile, Moses encountered God and was commanded to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt. He and his brother Aaron confronted Pharaoh but their request that the Israelites be allowed to leave Egypt was refused. Then, God caused Egyptians ten "plagues": a series of disasters (the Nile turning to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock disease, boils, hail and locusts), culminating with the most devastating blow of all—the death of all the first-born boy of Egyptian families in the land. While the Israelites were protected by the blood of sacrificed lambs placed on their doorposts and lintels according to God's commands, the destroyer passed over their houses, but entered Egyptian families to kill their first-born, including pharaoh's son. Though pursued by Pharaoh's army, the Israelites were saved by the miraculous parting of the "Red Sea" which subsequently flew back together, drowning the Egyptian army. After forty years' wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites finally entered Canaan, the Promised Land which was given to them by God. Israelites got disaster; then God helped them; and finally became a free people.

3.2.3. The "success-betrayal-destruction" mode in 2 Samuel

As we know, when Farmer Boldwood first appeared in the eyes of Bathsheba, he was a middle-aged bachelor, who was indifferent to women and refused marriage. But once he noticed Bathsheba's beauty, he fell in love with her at once and was almost obsessed with her. He spared no effort trying to get Bathsheba as his wife, but was turned down again and again. About one year after Troy's reported death, Boldwood nearly succeeded in getting Bathsheba's promise to be his wife. However, his killing of Sergeant Troy, Bathsheba's husband, betrayed the doctrine of Christianity, and was totally destroyed at last. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, no love, no property

and no freedom.

Sergeant Troy, who was Boldwood's rival in love, gained Bathsheba's love by cheating her with his shining and bright appearance, and his sweet but deceiving words. He successfully got her from Boldwood's hands and married with her at last. He lived a short period of time in happiness with Bathsheba. However, in order to marry the more beautiful and wealthier Bathsheba, he discarded his former sweetheart Fanny Robin, who was then already pregnant with Troy's child and later died in a work-house during child-birth. After marriage with Bathsheba, Troy didn't take care of their farm, but obsessed in horse-race gambling. What's more, when Fanny was already dead, he relentlessly told Bathsheba that he never loved her and then abandoned her just as he abandoned Fanny before. After about one year of his disappearance, Troy surprisingly returned to Bathsheba and wanted to claim her as his wife again. The fact was that he could not bear the difficult life any longer and desired for Bathsheba's wealth. All of these abominable behaviors of Troy were against the creeds of Christianity, and he was shot dead by the furious Boldwood near the end of the novel. The villain was destroyed at last.

If readers are familiar with the Book of 2 Samuel in the Bible, you will find that the mode of these two characters' stories is identical with that of Saul, the first king of Hebrew, that is, the "success-betrayal-destruction" narrative mode. This book relates the story of Saul, who was anointed by Samuel to be the first king over Israel. Saul led Israel to victory in battle, but he wrongly offered sacrifices and violated God's command by keeping booty from battle. Therefore, Samuel warned that the kingdom would be taken away from Saul. After Saul proved to be unfaithful, Samuel anointed the young David to be king. David won renown by defeating the Philistine giant, Goliath. When Saul became jealous and tried to kill David, he fled. David lived as an outlaw but refused to kill Saul. In the end, Saul tried to consult the ghost of Samuel, and after being mortally wounded in battle, Saul fell on his own sword and died.

4. The Leading Characters' Religious Beliefs and Their Endings

If one carefully reads the text of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, he/she will find that the leading characters' endings are closely related with their religious belief, that is, whether they believe in Christianity or not; whether they conform to the basic creeds of Christianity and doctrines of the Bible or not. In order to make clear the relationship between the endings of the main characters in this novel and their religious belief, and also to see Hardy's attitude towards Christianity and the Bible and their influence on him, let's take a look at the basic doctrines and beliefs of Christianity and the Bible first.

As one of the four major religions in the world, Christianity is the most popular religion in the world with over 2.14 billion disciples, and it also is the origin of western civilization—the crystallization of both Hebrew and Greek civilizations. The doctrines of Christianity are taken from the Bible which is the canon of Christianity and the foundation of Christian culture. The basic doctrines of the Christian Bible can be summarized as follows:

First, it is God who created the world. "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1). This is the first line in the Bible, pointing out definitely that God is the creator. "In the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) creation is viewed in the light of the covenant that God made with Israel. In the New Testament, it is viewed in the light of Jesus Christ, who is the beginning of a new creation. Both points of scripture agree that all things created depend completely on God" (Carmody 15).

Second, there is only one God, but there are three elements to this one God, which are God the Father, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine of the Trinity. "The traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity asserts that there is one God in three divine persons". "Christianity thinks itself as a monotheism; the doctrine

of the Trinity does not imply that there are three Gods ... Each is fully God, and the totality of the three is not more divinity than Father, Son, or Spirit has alone” (Carmody 58).

Third is the doctrine of original sin, which is the foundation of Christian ethics. In Genesis 3, the ancestors of human beings, Adam and Eve, ate the forbidden fruits on the tree of knowledge of good and evil against God’s will, and therefore were driven out of the Garden of Eden. This is the original sin of human beings. Adam and Eve passed this sin to their descendants, and made them subject to death and suffering. Original sin is the source of all evils, and it can only be saved by God through confession.

Fourth is the doctrine of salvation. As above mentioned, human beings have the original sin which was passed from their ancestors Adam and Eve. This original sin can only be saved by God, who sent His son Jesus Christ, the redeemer, to atone for people’s sins by paying the debt of punishment people had contracted. Only if one believes in God can he be exempt from all his sins. “In Western Christianity, salvation has been seen largely as a redemption from sin” (Carmody 46).

Fifth, human beings can be saved by God if he has faith in God. This is the necessary condition to be the righteous before God.

Sixth, human beings are mortal, but his soul can be saved by God if he believes in God and will be immortal in Heaven.

Seventh, one will be punished by God and torture in the hell forever if he doesn’t believe in God or doesn’t repent for his wrong doings.

Finally, there is a Judgment day. Christians believe that on the Judgment day, human beings, including those who are already dead, will get the final judgment in front of God. The guiltless will go to the heaven, and the guilty ones will go to the hell.

In order to believe in God, Christians consider the Ten Commandments as their norm of behavior. The content of the Ten Commandments is as follows:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your live stock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (Exodus 20: 2-17)

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the leading characters' endings are closely related with their religious belief, more exactly, with the Ten Commandments mentioned above. Whether they are blessed or punished depends largely upon whether they behave according to the Ten Commandments.

4.1. Gabriel Oak

Gabriel Oak is a typical Christian that Hardy wants to portray in this novel. From his behavior, it's not difficult for us to find that he believes the doctrine of creation by God, Trinity, original sin, salvation, immortality in Heaven, damned in Hell, and Judgment day. He regards the Ten Commandments as the standard of his daily behavior and cultivates himself according to them. In his deepest heart, God is always there. No matter when he meets such a disaster as his flock is destroyed overnight, or when he is in such a predicament that he is driven away by Bathsheba from her farm, he always endures silently and patiently, and never loses heart, just as Moses led his disciples to Canaan, the Promised Land. He is a kind-hearted man, never doing wrong to other people and always considering for others here and there. For example, when his sheep are all destroyed and thus he goes bankrupt, he utters such a sentence "in thankfulness" that "Thank God I am not married what would she (Bathsheba) have done in the poverty now coming upon me!" (30) In Chapter 6 "The Fair—The Journey—The Fire," once he sees the farm is on great fire, he "suddenly ceased from being a mere spectator by discovering the case to be more serious than he had at first imagined" (36). He works very hard as if it were his own farm, without considering the danger and who is the owner of the farm. In Chapter 21 "Troubles in the Fold—A Message," when Bathsheba's sheep get poisoned by the young clover, Gabriel Oak, who has then already been driven away by Bathsheba, comes back to save the sheep immediately when Bathsheba sends him a message to ask him for help. And in Chapter 36 "Wealth in Jeopardy—The Revel," when the storm and great rain are coming on the way, Gabriel does not mind that Bathsheba has been the wife of another man and works hard alone to rescue the "naked and unprotected ricks" (189) and "stacks of barley" (192) from being destroyed, since Bathsheba's husband and all the other workmen have been drunk on that wedding night. From such kinds of doings, readers can see that Gabriel is a selfless and tolerant man. He always behaves according to God's will and has never challenged God's unrivaled authority. He is the

most devout and maybe the only Christian in this novel and therefore he is blessed by God. He becomes more and more important in the daily life of Bathsheba, with whom he is always in sincere love, and is gradually promoted to be her bailiff. At the end of the story, Gabriel Oak marries Bathsheba, and becomes a real farmer, being the owner of both Bathsheba and her farm. His faith in God gets rewarded at last and he realizes his dream of both love and career.

4.2. Bathsheba Everdene

Bathsheba Everdene believes in no God at first. At the very beginning of the story, she is seen by Gabriel Oak from a distance appreciating herself in the glass and is given such a comment as “vanity”; and when Gabriel is on his way to Weatherbury, he heard that Bathsheba is talked about by two workmen like this: “She’s a very vain feymell—so ’tis said here and there.” ... “Yes — she’s very vain. ’Tis said that every night at going to bed she looks in the glass to put on her nightcap properly” (35). From her sending a valentine to Farmer Boldwood on a whim but later refusing his proposal, readers can see that she is also a capricious woman. She dates with the womanizer Sergeant Troy by stealth and at last marries him without paying attention to other people’s remarks on her behavior. And after Troy is reported to be drowned, she promises Boldwood to be his wife in about six years. From these actions of Bathsheba, readers can see that she is also an impulsive woman. Besides, her dating with the notorious Troy by stealth and Troy’s blaming on her—“If Satan had not tempted me with that face of yours, and those cursed coquetries, I should have married her” (237) — seemingly prove that she is also frivolous. All of these evidences suggest that Bathsheba is always challenging directly the traditional religious belief of the Victorians, who consider that women should be gentle, kindhearted, submissive, self-sacrificial, modest, etc. That is to say, she is always challenging the social order of the Victorian society, which is arranged by God, and therefore deeply hurts Gabriel Oak and Farmer Boldwood’s feelings. This is against God’s will for sure, and Bathsheba becomes guilty in front of God. As a result, she is

doomed to be punished by God. She successively meets a series of disasters: first, her farm is on a great fire; second, her sheep are accidentally poisoned by the young clover, facing the danger of being totally killed; then, on the night when she marries Troy, a storm and a great rain are just on the way, threatening to cause a great loss to her farm; and soon after her marriage with Troy, she discovers the fact that Troy is the father of Fanny Robin's child, and soon Troy disappears and is reported to be drowned in the sea, which nearly break her into pieces. All of these difficulties are God's punishment on her. Fortunately, Bathsheba's crime is not too serious, and she realizes her mistakes at last and that she is unable to leave Gabriel Oak, the most pious Christian in the novel. That is equal to say that she believes in God at last—the "lost sheep" comes back to the good shepherd finally. Bathsheba's marriage with Gabriel at the end of the story can also prove that she is blessed by God later.

4.3. Farmer Boldwood

It is no exaggeration to say that Farmer Boldwood is a person who absolutely has no religious belief, though his too introverted personality which is like that of a Christian conceals this well enough when he first appears before us readers. In Chapter 12 "Farmers—A Rule—An Exception," when all the other men in the corn market are attracted by and are talking about the beautiful Bathsheba, Boldwood pays no attention to her at all. And on his way home passing Bathsheba's carriage, "The farmer had never turned his head once, but with eyes fixed on the most advanced point along the road, passed as unconsciously and abstractedly as if Bathsheba and her charms were thin air" (73). However, once he receives the valentine from Bathsheba with the words "Marry Me," and once he notices Bathsheba's beauty and therefore his sleeping desire for women and love is lit up, he begins to propose once and again to Bathsheba to marry him, and later promises Troy to give him a large amount of money on the condition that Troy should not marry Bathsheba. This farmer regards everything including love as an unsympathetic business deal, which can be obtained by money. It is better to say that his feelings towards Bathsheba are out of

self-satisfaction, self-intoxication, self-deceiving and his crazy desire of possession, than to say they are out of the sheer sexual attraction between men and women.

From his behaviors before and after he meets Bathsheba, readers can see that Boldwood's feelings and way of love have gone to two extremes—either be single for life or desiring to be married at once. As a matter of fact, Boldwood's long period of single life is not approved by God, since Christians believe that marriage is out of humanity, and its mission is to achieve the completeness of the relationship between men and women, and to continue the life of human beings by giving birth to children. It was repeatedly recorded in the Bible about this aspect. For example, in Mark 10, it writes that “from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’” (Mark 10: 6-8); and “‘It is well for a man not to touch a woman.’ But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (Corinthians 7: 1-2).

In fact, Boldwood's celibacy and his repression of love and his strong desire for Bathsheba intrigued by the valentine are a reflection of the original sin—desire, which human beings inherited from their ancestors Adam and Eve. His overt repression of love and sex distorts his human nature, and leads him to the final disaster at the end of the novel.

Before Boldwood makes clear whether Sergeant Troy, Bathsheba's husband, is really dead or not, he asks Bathsheba to be his wife. This act is clearly against the tenth of the Ten Commandments, which says that “you shall not covet your neighbor's wife.” He also violates the sixth Commandment, which teaches “You shall not murder,” by shooting Troy dead with the “double-barrelled” gun. After he kills Troy and delivers himself to the local gaol, “A petition was addressed to the Home Secretary, advancing the circumstances which appeared to justify a request for a reconsideration of the sentence. It was not ‘numerously signed’ by the inhabitants of Casterbridge, as is usual in such cases, for Boldwood had never made many friends over the counter. The shops thought it very natural that a man who, by importing direct from the producer, had daringly set aside the first great principle of provincial

existence, namely, that God made country villages to supply customers to country towns, should have confused ideas about the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments]" (305).

The above discussion proves that Boldwood is a guilty man without religious belief. Although he delivers himself to the police at last, his crime is too serious to be forgiven and saved by God. He is finally sentenced to life imprisonment, losing both love and freedom.

4.4. Sergeant Troy

Sergeant Troy can be regarded as the most vicious man in this novel. He appears before readers, as well as the other characters in the novel, totally a negative character. Since the Victorian society, Sergeant Troy, as a man who is unsympathetic and inhuman, and who has no religious belief, is completely despised by people in Weatherbury, by Hardy the writer, and by God. In the introduction of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Troy is commented as this: "Sergeant Troy, the novel's only outsider, is a dangerous and disruptive presence, an imprudent and inattentive farmer who cannot or will not read the signs of the weather like Gabriel Oak." He is a man who dwells "on unhappy love, seduction and betrayal in the manner of the old ballads invoked in the text" (XI-XII).

"From the very first scene with Fanny, he enjoys tormenting her with their presumed upcoming marriage. Fanny's elopement receives no reward. When she mistakes the wedding church 'All Souls' for 'All Saints', she is not pardoned" (Zhang Xiaona 35). Troy abandons his girlfriend Fanny Robin just because she does not arrive at the church, where they were going to get married, on time, though she is then already pregnant with his child. Soon after his marriage with Bathsheba, Troy meets Fanny again on the Casterbridge highway and asks her to meet him the next day. But the poor little Fanny, who has then been tired out because of her unborn child and diseases, died in the Casterbridge Unionhouse the next morning. Sergeant Troy indirectly causes Fanny and their child's death, which violates the sixth of the Ten

Commandments: “You shall not murder.” Besides, he seduces Bathsheba with sweet words and romantic actions, and cheats her to marry with him, not out of true love for her, but only out of his sexual desire for her. Jesus Christ teaches that one lives not for sex, but for God, hence readers can see that Troy violates more or less the seventh of the Ten Commandments: “You shall not commit adultery.” What’s more, he abandons Bathsheba shortly after Fanny’s death and disappears, being reported to have been drowned in the sea. He does some indecent work during that period, but since he couldn’t bear the difficult life, he plots to go back to Weatherbury about one year after his disappearance, attempting to claim Bathsheba as his wife again and to get her property. The tenth of the Ten Commandments says that “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” It is clear that Troy betrays this. Troy’s crimes are too severe to be forgiven by God, and therefore he is shot dead by Boldwood in the end, getting the punishment he deserves.

5. Biblical Allusions and Other Biblical References in the Novel

It is well-known that Hardy is one of the English novelists who were greatly influenced by religion. Though he became an agnostic later, “he remained emotionally involved with the Church: many of his writings dramatize aspects of the pernicious influence of religious doctrines or the ineffectuality of institutional Christianity” (Kramer 56). “One manifestation of the way Christianity remained a persistent influence on Hardy’s writings is that his fiction is saturated with biblical allusions. Critics have disagreed on how effectively Hardy used them, as commentaries on his references to Satan reveal, but scriptural and other religious allusions in Hardy’s fiction are distributed unevenly, and in some novels they form patterns that obviously play important roles” (56).

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the two most apparent and most important biblical allusions are those of Gabriel and Bathsheba, whose significance and meanings have been discussed in the first part of this thesis already. In addition to these two figures from the Bible, there are still many other biblical allusions and references in this novel, from which readers can see how important a role the Bible and Christianity have played in Hardy’s writings.

By reading the text carefully, the author of this thesis have found that there are no less than 48 biblical allusions and references in this book, the repeated ones not included. Some of them have ironical meanings and cause some amusing effect to the novel, and some have the function of advancing the plot.

For instance, in Chapter 2, Hardy described Gabriel’s hut as this: “The image as a whole was that of a small Noah’s Ark on a small Ararat, allowing the traditionary outlines and general form of the Ark which are followed by toymakers—and by these means are established in men’s imaginations among their firmest, because earliest impressions—to pass as an approximate pattern” (9). In Genesis, Noah’s Ark was where Noah and his family stayed to avoid the Great Flood and therefore survived.

After reading this part, readers can be sure that Gabriel Oak is a Noah's figure, who will survive the disaster though the others will get their downfalls. In the novel, Gabriel Oak was nearly suffocated in his hut if Bathsheba didn't pass by accidentally and saved him.

For another instance, in Chapter 3, when Gabriel was saved by Bathsheba and woke up, he "began wiping his face and shaking him like a Samson" (18). In Judges 16, "Samson lost his strength when his hair was shorn as he lay asleep on Delilah's lap, as he realized when he awoke and shook himself" (320). The biblical Samson, though he used to be a giant, lost his strength due to his mistake. By using such an allusion, Hardy intended to imply that when Gabriel found that his head was upon Bathsheba's lap, he in fact had fallen in love with Bathsheba and had no strength to control his passion for her from then on. Just as Richard Carpenter says: "Only one thing can shake Oak—neither fire, storm, nor financial disaster—only the fair Bathsheba" (86).

In Chapter 21, when Gabriel was driven away from the farm by his mistress, "he took his shears and went away from her in placid dignity, as Moses left the presence of Pharaoh" (106). As we know, in Exodus 10: 27-9 the irresolute Pharaoh finally rejected Moses' request to release the enslaved Israelites from plague-stricken Egypt and Moses was forced to depart, though with some dignity. But a final disastrous plague soon afflicted the land of Egypt, just as disaster soon stroke at Bathsheba's sheep. This allusion implied the impending disaster which was soon to fall on Bathsheba's sheep, because of her ill-treatment on the kind-hearted Oak.

And in Chapter 49, Hardy described Boldwood's mind on waiting for six years for Bathsheba to marry him as this: "Six years were a long time, but how much shorter than never, the idea he had for so long been obliged to endure! Jacob had served twice seven years for Rachel: what were six for such a woman as this?" (264) As we know, in Genesis 29, there is such a well-known story about Jacob and Rachel: Jacob fell in love with his cousin Rachel who was graceful and beautiful, and asked her uncle Laban to give Rachel to him as wife. Laban agreed on the condition that Jacob served seven years for him, and Jacob agreed without hesitation. However, after

wedding, Jacob found his wife was not Rachel but Leah, Laban's elder daughter. In order to get Rachel as his wife, Jacob was tricked to serve Laban another seven years for free. Out of his sincere love for Rachel, Jacob did so and finally married Rachel. While in the novel, Boldwood never succeeded in getting Bathsheba as his wife indeed. Here, the purpose for Hardy to use this allusion is self-evident. That is, to show Boldwood's crazy but sincere love for Bathsheba and made a false appearance for us readers that there was a great hope for him to get her after six years' waiting, so as to make a sharp contrast between Boldwood's former great hope and his final miserable failure, through which, the tragic effect caused by this character becomes stronger. Hardy successfully made Boldwood the most tragic character in this novel.

In addition to these biblical allusions, Hardy also created some comic characters in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, whose lives are closely related with the Bible and whose language has some rural humor. This is more or less related with their often use of the biblical language. The most comic one of them is Joseph Poorgrass. Readers know that he reads the Bible often, and is a pious disciple of God, because he often mentioned God and the Bible in his speaking. To make it clear, let's see his own description of one mid-night when the gate would not open:

"I kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, and then the Belief right through, and then the Ten Commandments in earnest prayer. But no, the gate wouldn't open; and then I went on with Dearly Beloved Brethren, and thinks I, this makes four, and 'tis all I know out of book, and if this don't do it nothing will, and I'm a lost man. Well when I got to Saying After Me, I rose from my knees and found the gate would open—yes, neighbors, the gate opened the same as ever." (47)

From this paragraph readers can see how Poorgrass is familiar with the Bible, but it also seems that he often speaks in bungled scripture quotations. For instance, when the farm workers are talking about Bathsheba's having no bailiff, Poorgrass said: "A headstrong maid, that's what she is—and won't listen to no advice at all. Pride and vanity have ruined many a cobbler's dog. Dear, dear, when I think o' it, I sorrows like

a man in travel!” (66) Here, “Poorgress characteristically speaks in bungled scripture quotations. Pride and vanity are often biblically rebuked, though the quasi-proverbial ruin of the cobbler’s dog is unbiblical and bizarrely obscure. His sorrowing ‘like a man in travel’ alludes grotesquely to the pangs of childbirth described in John 16:21: ‘A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come’” (323).

These kinds of Poorgress’ bungled-use of biblical quotations and his image like a saint made him the most comic character in the novel.

In addition to Joseph Poorgress, there are also other characters that are related to the Bible. For example, Jacob Smallbury—the maltster’s son, Cain Ball and Mark Clark, their names are all from the Bible. What’s interesting is the name of Cain Ball. In fact, it was a joke made by his poor mother, who, “not being a Scripture-read woman, made a mistake at his christening, thinking ’twas Abel killed Cain, and called en Cain, meaning Abel all the time” (64). As a matter of fact, Cain killed his brother Abel because of jealousy. When readers read this part, they couldn’t help laughing. What’s more, William’s grandfather could quote from the Jeremiah, while Maryann, Bathsheba’s maid, once compared herself to be “a pelican in the wilderness” (Psalm 102: 6) like the author of Psalm.

All of these small characters Hardy created bring a great comic effect to this novel by their biblical language and behavior, and made readers laugh. And, as Dale Kramer says, their “Old and New Testament references enhance the ambiance of timeless antiquity which is one of that novel’s most important aesthetic features” (56).

6. Hardy's Religious Contradictions Reflected in This Novel

In the introduction of this thesis, Thomas Hardy's religious background has been talked about in detail, and readers must have known that religion has left a pernicious influence on Hardy's writings. But because of many currents of thought in the middle-nineteenth century, such as Darwin's theory of evolution and the idea of liberty, and several other philosophical thoughts, etc., Hardy's earlier religious belief was greatly shocked. His faith in God experienced a process of passion, doubt and even denial at last. By the time of 1865, Hardy lost all of his youthful beliefs, but he never abandoned Christianity from the bottom of his heart. "With his further understanding of human nature he kept on eulogizing God's love and salvation in his writing" (He Guijuan III).

Therefore, readers can see that Hardy's attitude towards Christianity reflected in his novel-writings is really ambivalent. In his earlier works, his attitude towards Christianity and God is more friendly than hostile. Though readers can see there a slight dissatisfaction and sarcasm towards Christianity and church, the main theme is the pursuit for the Christian spirit of universal love and self-sacrifice and the belief that God's love and salvation is the only way for human beings to get out of the spiritual dilemma. While in his later works, especially the two most famous and most controversial novels, *Tess* and *Jude*, Hardy's attitude towards God is full of hostility.

Far from the Madding Crowd, as Hardy's first successful novel written during his first stage of novel-writing, reflects his somewhat ambivalence towards God and Christianity at that period.

First, Hardy characterizes Gabriel Oak as a standard Christian, from whom readers can see clearly the true spirit of Christian love which is extensive and profound. It is said in the Bible that "God is love" (1 John 4: 8), and the essence of the god that Christians believe in is love, too. Love is the core of Christian dogma and therefore, Christianity is also considered as the religion of love. The two most important commandments Jesus Christ decreed to human beings are that "love your

God” and “love your neighbor.” These two are the core beliefs of Christianity. Jesus had taught human beings to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5: 44), for “if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?” (Matthew 5: 46) The Christian love is a kind of spiritual love but not emotional love, whose essence is to sacrifice oneself, contribute selflessly, and ask for no reward. “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7). Paul, one of the authors of the Bible, sang this song for Christian love, which nearly includes all the connotations of Christian love. Fortunately, all these attributes and characteristics can be found on Gabriel Oak, the main male protagonist in this novel, from the detailed analysis of his character and behavior in the previous chapters. And from the narrator’s comment that “Farmer Oak had one-and-a-half Christian characteristics too many to succeed with Bathsheba: his humility, and a superfluous moiety of honesty” (37), readers also can see that Hardy himself thinks highly of Oak’s modesty and honesty. In short, Hardy’s characterization of the typical Christian Farmer Oak effectively proves his praise and desire for Christian love, and also his recognition and pursuit for Christian spirit. However, in the very beginning, though “Gabriel is a churchgoer he is not a very attentive one and his sterling qualities have very little to do with the church” (XV), and Hardy’s description of Oak’s funny image in the first chapters seems to have shown his slight sarcasm towards Christianity.

Second, Hardy’s characterization of the only female protagonist Bathsheba Everdene shows readers more clearly his ambivalence towards Christianity and church. From the previous detailed discussion of Bathsheba, readers have known that she is at first a proud and vain woman who has no religious belief at all, because of which she suffers from a lot of disasters. It is said in the Bible that God blocks the proud and blesses the modest. Through these painful lessons, Bathsheba changes from a rebellious and self-centered girl to be a modest and submissive woman at last. In the end of the story, Bathsheba is even deeply encouraged by the prayer from the church:

“I loved the garish day; and spite of fears. Pride ruled my will: remember not past years” (308). Bathsheba’s rebirth in the Christian love and her final return to Christian spirit well prove the victory of Christianity. While in the meantime, Hardy also shows great sympathy to the humanitarian spirit through Bathsheba, who spares no efforts to pursue independence and freedom. This contradicts with Bathsheba’s submission to Gabriel Oak who actually represents Christianity, and thus reflects Hardy’s ambivalence in his religious belief.

Third, love and marriage are always the theme of Thomas Hardy’s novels, and *Far from the Madding Crowd* is no exception. In this book, Gabriel and Bathsheba get married at last after experiencing a variety of ups and downs. Through their marriage, Hardy also sings a song for the Christian love. As early as the age of Old Testament, the Bible had already described the relationship between God and church as marriage, bride and bridegroom, and wife and husband; in the New Testament, Jesus Christ was also often compared to a bridegroom and the church the bride. Paul said in Ephesians that “Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 6: 22-25). As far as Paul is concerned, marriage stands for the combination of Christ and church, and the marriage concluded in Christianity means human beings’ confession and return to God, through which they will be saved by God and get rebirth. In the novel, Oak brings to Bathsheba hope and salvation just as the Savior does to His people, and Bathsheba too, changes herself through her marriage with Oak and becomes a new woman. Through their marriage, Hardy calls again for the Christian love.

What’s more, Hardy seems to have held an ironic, though slightly, attitude towards God and Christianity in this novel. And his creation of the two male protagonists, Sergeant Troy and Farmer Boldwood, who have no religious belief at all, as well as his creation of other trivial characters, especially Joseph Poorgrass, “the most vociferous member of the chorus of rustics who comment on the main action,” and who “has a tendency to bungle his biblical quotations,” (VIII) perhaps suggests

that the Old Testament world Hardy and his constant invoke may not altogether fit the realities and random misfortunes of contemporary rural life. Besides, as it is said in the "Introduction" to *Far from the Madding Crowd*, "Parson Thirdly's rambling sermons have nothing to say to the problems of harsh misfortunes, sexual fascination and obsession and female self-realisation which Hardy explores. The indifference of both nature and the church to the life and death of poor Fanny Robin whose grave is almost washed away by the rainwater gushing from the church gargoyle, and the oppressiveness of Bathsheba's church-sanctioned marriage to Troy, suggest a muted dissatisfaction not just with the traditional idea of divine providence but with social convention upheld by the church" (XV).

From these arguments, it's clear that Hardy's attitude towards Christianity is not totally positive or totally negative, but is actually ambivalent, though his dissatisfaction and doubt reflected in this book are so slight that readers may not even notice them if they don't pay close attention to the text.

7. Conclusion

Thomas Hardy is known as one of the great English writers whose writings were deeply influenced by Christianity and the Bible. His fictions, especially his full-length novels, were saturated with biblical allusions, references and quotations. But because of his faithful belief in Christianity and Church in his earlier years, and his later doubt and at last even denial of them, Hardy's attitudes towards Christianity and God that were reflected in his novels were really ambivalent. Just as Dale Kramer comments:

Yet although Hardy became an agnostic, he remained emotionally involved with the Church: many of his writings dramatize aspects of the pernicious influence of religious doctrines or the ineffectuality of institutional Christianity, but he could also evoke a wistful sense of the loss of an earlier, simpler faith, or affirm the lasting value of Christian Charity. In short, one thing that sets Hardy apart from many of his contemporaries was his capacity to hold the wide variety of 'impressions' of religion that informs his writings." (56)

F. B. Pinion's remarks on Hardy can also prove this:

Although a Christian at heart and a lover of church services all his life, Hardy found much that was unacceptable in the Christian Church. (167)

...

Christianity theology, chiefly the idea of Providence, Redemption, and Life after death, was overthrown for Hardy when, in his early twenties, he was introduced to contemporary scientific thought. He did not abandon his belief in the higher moral values proclaimed in the Bible and by the Church. Sometimes he regretted the passing of the old faith ... (168)

The aim of this thesis is to reveal this religious ambivalence, though not yet apparent in his earlier written novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, his pursuit and

restoration of God's love and salvation, his wistful sense of the loss of the earlier faith, as well as his doubt and slight sarcasm towards Christianity and Church, through a detailed analysis of the biblical archetypes, biblical allusions and references in this novel.

The discussion in the previous parts can show readers how great Hardy is influenced by the Christian Bible, and how he uses his rich biblical knowledge in his novel-writings to help readers better understand the meanings of his characters if they are familiar with the Bible. However, the frequent references to the Bible do not mean Hardy is a devout Christian. From the above analysis, readers also can see Hardy's religious ambivalence. This ambivalence shows itself not only in his characterization of his heroes and heroine, but also in his arrangement of their destinies. In this novel, Hardy puts Gabriel Oak, who is a pious Christian, at the position of a moral watch dog, while in the meantime, he puts his heroine Bathsheba, who is rebellious and unconventional in spirit and has no religious belief, in a more important position, that is, the center of the story, and shows his appreciation of Bathsheba's spirit of freedom. What's more, he even manages them to marry each other near the end of the novel. Besides, in this novel, Hardy also makes some funny minor characters who know the Bible but are not familiar with the Bible.

Just as what have been said in the introduction of this thesis, Hardy's religious belief experienced a process of change. Generally speaking, in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Hardy is friendly to Christianity and God, while in his later novels, especially in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude, the Obscure*, his hostility towards Christianity and God is apparent and strong. In these two novels, Hardy's hostility comes to a climax. He doubts and at last, in *Jude, the Obscure*, even denies the existence of God. These will be left to work on in my future research.

Since time is limited and there are no sufficient referential books to refer to, this thesis still has some defects and maybe mistakes, especially in the last two parts, the discussion and examples are not sufficient. The author of this thesis will spare no pains to make it better in her later research work.

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