

摘要

美国文学有着深厚的宗教文化背景，《圣经》资源在许多美国文学作品中被广泛运用。由此可见，许多美国作家都深受《圣经》传统的影响。在这种文化背景的影响下，黑人女作家莫里森亦以其自己独特的方式运用《圣经》。

莫里森的作品贯穿着从《圣经》而来的三大主题：“失乐园”、“苦难”与“成长”。《旧约》中在上帝的道德观照下呈现的罪恶与《新约》中基督降临后拯救的希望交互出现在她的作品之中，体现了《旧约》和《新约》包含的两种意识。

莫里森在作品中广泛运用了《圣经》中的人物原型、人物关系模式、情节模式、意象等等，来为她的故事寻找《圣经》对应。

莫里森对《圣经》的运用有其独特之处。莫里森不仅运用了《圣经》的内容，也模拟了《圣经》的形式。其次，她把《圣经》人物、故事所具有的复杂多面的内涵切割开来，抽取单一的内涵用于特定的情境，产生出故事素材与《圣经》经验之间的呼应。这种抽取原型身上局部意义用于作品的方式导致了莫里森作品的典故运用在主观意图与客观效果之间形成反差，从而使她的作品产生“魔幻变调”与反讽的效果。此外，阅读莫里森的小说，可以感受到作者的《圣经》经验在小说中的积淀。她把她对《圣经》的感悟融入到作品之中，《圣经》中的每一个人物、数字、意象、故事都化作了一种生命体验。在她的故事与《圣经》故事的对照之中，她给她的人物、故事增加了丰富的历史文化内涵，将个体性的经验变为人类共通的情感，从而使她的故事超越了南方，超越了美国，代表了全人类的历史与现在，具有史诗的风范。莫里森用她的一己之力，在作品中模拟着《圣经》的永恒。

关键词：莫里森；《圣经》；主题；原型

Abstract

American literature has profound religious background. The biblical resources flow in many American literary works. Toni Morrison, a black woman writer subject to the cultural background, makes use of the biblical resources in her own unique way.

Three principal themes coming from the *Holy Bible* go through Morrison's works: the lost paradise, tribulation and the prodigal son. The sin shown under the balance of God's moral standard in the Old Testament and the hope of salvation after Christ's befalling in the New Testament appear alternately in Morrison's novels, which represents two kinds of consciousness embodied in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In her works, Morrison employs a lot of character archetypes, character relationship modes, plotting modes and images from the *Bible* so as to look for parallels between the *Bible* and her novels.

As far as the application of the *Bible* is concerned, Morrison not only simulates the contents of the *Bible* but also its form. Besides, she cuts the complex meaning endowed with the characters and allusions from the *Bible*, extracts one of them and then puts it into specific circumstances. The method of extracting part of its meaning from archetypes and then putting into certain works leads to the striking contrast between subjective intention and objective effect while Morrison uses biblical allusions. What's more, when reading Morrison's novels, we can experience accumulation of her apprehension of the *Bible*. She also puts her personal apprehension of the *Bible* into her novels. Thus each of characters, numbers, images and stories in the *Bible* becomes a kind of individual life experience. In the antithesis of her novels and the *Bible*, Morrison adds rich historical and cultural meanings to her characters and stories, which turns her individual experience into universal emotion of human beings and also makes her novels surmount the South as well as the United States. In this way, her novels are endowed with epic grandness because they represent the history and the present of human beings. Anyway, Morrison is trying to imitate the eternity of the *Bible* with her humble effort.

Keywords: Toni Morrison; the *Holy Bible*; Theme; Archetype

Index

- Afro-American, 2, 8, 36
Archetype, 1-4, 11, 16-17, 25, 30-31, 33-35, 37
- Bernard .W. Bell, 2
The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition, 2
- Bildungsroman, 11
Black culture, 1-2, 36
Black novel, 2, 4-5, 34, 36
Black women, 10, 14, 16-18
Character relation, 4, 16, 18-19, 25
Christian, 13, 16-17, 26, 33
- Depravation, 5-6
Destiny, 12, 21, 35, 37
Displacement, 30
- Elegy, 4-6, 8, 29
Eternity, 36-37
Exodus, 9, 18-19, 22, 33
- Feminist, 7, 34
Foreordination, 8, 11
Freedom, 2, 5-6, 13-14, 24-25
- Gender, 1, 13, 34, 36
Genesis, 5, 17-18, 22, 29
- Holy Bible, 2, 4-5, 9, 11, 13, 16-29
- Image, 3-5, 7, 14, 16-17, 21-26, 30-34
Incarnation, 17, 30
Initiation, 11-12
Irony, 3, 30, 32-33
Identity, 12-14, 19, 25, 28, 31
- Lost Garden, 5-6, 8, 29
- Magic modification, 30
Mode, 2-4, 16, 18-19, 25-26, 34-36
Modernism, 1, 3, 26
Myth, 1-3, 6, 13, 36
- Narrative technique, 2, 26-28
- Optimism, 8
- Plot mode, 19
Politics, 14, 33
Prodigal son, 4-5, 11-12
Race, 1-2, 5, 11, 13-14, 34, 36-37
Redemption, 8, 24
- Scapegoat, 17-18, 32
Simulation, 4, 26-28
Sin, 4-6, 8-11, 13-15, 22-24, 31
Slavery, 10, 15, 28
Symbol, 3, 21-22, 34
Survival, 4-5, 7, 13, 25
- Tragedy, 6, 11, 13, 31
Tribulation, 8-11, 20, 23, 30, 36
- Utopian paradise, 7
- William Faulkner, 1-2, 27, 36
The Sound and the Fury, 2

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Introduction

American literature has profound religious background. The biblical resources flow in many American literary works. Many American writers have applied the biblical resources to their works in different ways. From Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner to Toni Morrison, obvious biblical shadows can be seen in their works. Morrison's employment of the *Bible* is not only from the traditional origin of American literature, but also towards the tendency of modernistic trend. Modernist writers, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, all make use of the biblical resources and allusions from Greek myth, which serve their creation as an artistic technique. Sandwiched between the setting of the *Bible* and the mythic tradition of modernism, Morrison's novels have countless ties with the *Bible*. This paper is going to explore how Morrison deals with the biblical resources in a unique way under the circumstances of modernism and the framework of American tradition.

As far as Morrison's novels are concerned, there are many research results at home and abroad. One of the authoritative scholars in China is Wang Shouren. In the monograph coauthored with Wu Xinyu *Gender, Race, Culture—Toni Morrison and 20th American Black Culture*, they introduce and explore the concept of gender, race and culture, and Morrison's inheritance and reform of the American black literature as well as her application of black culture and contribution to the construction of feminine literature for the first time. Besides, they also analyze her employment of black folklore, fable and myth. In a chapter of Wang Yukuo's monograph *Toni Morrison*, he elucidates the relations of Morrison's mythical application and reality. In addition to these monographs concerning Morrison and her works, there are also biblical archetype research results about a single novel, among which *Beloved*, *Sula* and *Solomon* are analyzed the most.

In foreign countries, monographs concerning Morrison and her works are mostly related to feminism, black literature and classic white writers. Morrison is sometimes named as "magic realist and symbolist using myth" in some foreign research fruits. (Sandra, 2002: 83) In Harold Bloom's monograph *Toni Morrison*, he collects some articles connected Morrison's works with other writers and literary tradition including David Cowart's article which is

focused on the relationship between Morrison and Faulkner as well as the intertextuality between their works, for example, the narrative techniques in *Beloved* and *The Sound and the Fury* and the relations between the *Holy Bible* and two novels. Thus, this provides an important way to probe into the relations between Morrison's works and the *Bible*.

Bible has a deep influence on Morrison's creation.

In 1620, with the arrival of May Flower, the first immigrants landed on New England and started the American history. In addition to the economic factor, the reason that the first immigrants come to American Continent is to escape the religious persecution and pursuit religious freedom. Most of them are puritans who are persecuted in Europe. They live and work in America in a puritan way and found their own family, and thus form their own culture. Therefore, the religious civilization at the beginning has filtered into the pulse of American culture until the birth of American literature. From Benjamin Franklin's abstention and virtue, Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism to Emily Dickinson's poems, all of them carry the religious emotion. Bernard.W.Bell once in his monograph *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* writes that in the tradition of Afro-American black novels, the *Holy Bible* was of equal importance with abolitionism. (Bernard.W.Bell, 2000:48)The 20th century is the most mature and flourish period of American literature. However, during this period, writers still couldn't break away from the influence of the *Bible*. Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner and following writers are all deeply affected by the tradition of the *Bible*. Toni Morrison is also one of them.

Toni Morrison was born on February 18th, 1931 and brought up in a black family in Ohio where most of her novels were set. Her parents move here from southern Alabama. Her grandparents are ever slaves. In this way, her family has a strong national antipathy towards whites and Morrison grows up in such an atmosphere of respecting black culture and tradition, which lays a foundation for her later literary creation, namely, the emphasis on her people. Thus, the visualization of the black intellectual of "having to use their heads to get ahead" (*Beloved*, 198) and "the weight of the whole race sitting there" (*Beloved*, 237) in *Beloved* is actually her own portraiture.

Morrison employs many symbolically mythic archetypes in her novels—not only imitates classic narrative mode, but also has such factors of western, African and Afro-

American folk faith, myth, spirit and magic mixed together. (Wilfred D. Samuels & Clenora Hudson-Weems, 1990:41) Then is Morrison's creation influenced by the *Bible*? The answer is definite. Morrison has ever systematically received western education, which makes her possess rich European and American literary knowledge. After her graduation from university, she served as a senior editor and literary professor. Thus, she is familiar with western literature and philosophical classics as well as the *Bible*. In particular, the *Bible* influences her greatly, if not the most. During her creation, she would make use of a series of symbolic archetypes from the *Bible*, consciously or unconsciously. She not only refers to allusions and concrete images from the *Bible*, but also imitates the thematic subject, plot, characters and narrative mode corresponding to the *Bible*. In a conversation, she frankly says, "*Bible* is part of my life, not just my reading." (Luauus, 1995:205) "I use the names from the *Bible* to express its influence on blacks' life. Their reverence and respect for the *Bible* is associated with the power I use for them. I also use some names before Christ to present the feeling of several worlds' complexion." (LeClair, 1994:28) "Too many things make Christianity interesting...and the *Bible* attracts them" (Taylor, 1994:116).

Meanwhile, Morrison's application of the *Bible* is also the production of the trend of modernism. Modernism appears on stage in a stance of anti-tradition. However, none of literary schools can completely get rid of historical and cultural tradition and create a hundred percent original works from nihility. Modernism objects to the simple and stereotype artistic technique of realism and it goes in for the reform and development in artistic technique. As for the ideology, modernism basically starts from Nietzsche who declares "God dies", and requests "re-evaluating", which enounces the fact that traditional way of life and concept fall to pieces and a new value system is pressing for the establishment. Although modernists are looking forward in an artistic technique, yet their thought and concept are still backward. They once grieve over the death of God, but still scale their crazy world in a standard of once live God. They even look for new techniques from ancient classics, like Greek myth and *Bible* as a starting point, such as symbols, allusions, metaphors and irony etc.. W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot have ever extensively employed biblical allusions in their poems, which use ancient legendary to convey modern fables. James Joyce and Williams Faulkner conceive their stories from

complicated plots in the *Bible*. Even absurdist John Steinbeck has some dark biblical application in his novels. In this way, Morrison is also one of modernists.

Morrison's black novels represent her achievement of creation. The following is going to discuss how Morrison's black novels echo the *Bible*.

My thesis consists of five parts.

Part One is an introduction to the researches that have been done on Morrison in the past years at home and abroad and the structure of the thesis.

Part Two discusses the themes in Morrison's novels which often refer to decadency of the old families in the south, racial conflict between blacks and whites and intrusion of capitalist forces. However, all these are just skin-deep. From the perspective of the *Bible*, each of his novels permeates the elegy of lost paradise, the consciousness of original sin and the prodigal son, which are closely linked to the basic theme of human beings' survival.

The *Holy Bible* consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Morrison's novels, the consciousness of the Old Testament and the New Testament is mingled together. Even if it is the most evil, there is still hope; and if it is the most optimistic, there is still sin. Thus the spread of sin and the gleam of salvation coexist in her novels at the same time. In this way, her novels are influenced by the consciousness of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Part Three is mainly concerned with the archetypes related to the *Bible* in Morrison's novels. Besides the influence of consciousness of the *Holy Bible*, Morrison also extensively uses character archetype, plotting mode, character relation mode and images from the *Holy Bible* in her works so as to look for parallelisms between the *Holy Bible* and her stories, which adds a special artistic effect to her novels.

Part Four focuses on the unique effect by employing the biblical archetypes. Morrison not only simulates the contents of the *Bible* but also its form. This thesis is going to discuss the unique effect by the employment of the *Bible* as a whole. It may boil down to three aspects as follows: simulation of the form of the *Bible*, objective and ironical effect by cutting the meaning of allusions and correlation between Morrison's apprehension of the *Bible* and the source of her story.

Part Five is the conclusion of the thesis summarizing the main argument of the paper.

Chapter 1 The Theme and Consciousness from *Holy Bible*

The themes in Morrison's novels often refer to the decadency of the old families in the south, racial conflict between blacks and whites and intrusion of capitalist forces. However, the themes of Morrison's novels referred above are just lip-deep. In the tradition of Afro-African black novels, the *Holy Bible* plays an important role in black novels. In an interview with Morrison, she says, "In that place (Christianity), everything is performing in a framework people can accept. There is some knowledge in it. It is an attractive and dramatic religion. Some words (*Holy Bible*) sometimes impress blacks the most." (Luaus, 1995:224) So it is not difficult to find that from the angle of the *Holy Bible*, all Morrison's novels permeate the elegy of lost garden, the consciousness of original sin and the journey of the prodigal son, which are closely linked with the basic theme of human beings' survival.

1.1 Theme from *Holy Bible*

1.1.1 Theme One: Elegy of Lost Garden and Depravation of Women

The Lost Garden is a story in the Genesis of the *Holy Bible*. In the traditional western literature, the Lost Garden is not only a continuous theme, but also a complex. Milton once writes this story in the form of poetic drama. But on the eve of modern society, the soul of human beings is still embraced by God. It is until 20th century that the soul of human beings begin to resonate with the situation of Lost Garden: "If we say the 19th American literature manifested the imagery of biblical garden, then we can consider that western modern literature reproduced depressed mood of our ancestors after losing Garden. Since the twentieth century, two world wars, economic crisis and widespread national liberation movement made a lot of bourgeois feel disappointed with freedom, equality and fraternity. Finally, shattered dreams and vanished reason were naturally replaced with pessimism, absurdity and irrationality. The disillusioned dreams and dismayed spirit coincide with the situation of human beings' ancestors being expelled from the Eden."(Liang Gong, 1990: 394) Thus, there are many novels reflecting the theme of Lost Garden, such as Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels, Thomas Stearns Eliot's *The Waste Land* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* etc. in western literature all the time. Besides, D.H.Lawrence and E.M.Foster are also inclined to write such themes in their

works. As a matter of fact, the *Bible* has always been one of the sources of black literature as well, and it has been influenced by the myth of Eden since black literature formed. (Jiang Yanhui, 2006:5)

In the story of Lost Garden, human beings degenerate because of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thus are driven out of Eden. However, the question of the relationship between eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and human nature's degeneration has long been a hot topic for theologians and philosophers, and opinions vary. Later, people allude "eating the forbidden tree" to sexual sin. Because it is Eve who first eats the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "Lost Garden" is thus naturally connected with women's sexual corruption.

Many of Morrison's novels mingle the story of women's depravation with the elegy of Lost Garden. "The idea of a wanton woman is something I have inserted into almost all of my books," Morrison says. "An outlaw figure who is disallowed in the community because of her imagination or activity or status—that kind of anarchic figure has always fascinated me. And the benefits they bring with them, in spite of the fact that they are either dismissed or upbraided—something about their presence is constructive in the long run."(On *Love*, 2003) *Sula*, for instance, is a story which is related to a girl's corruption and her community's tragedy. Sula "worships freedom and independence" (Wang Shouren,1999:62) and violates every community norm blacks have to follow, including going to church without wearing underwear, relishing nothing and exclaiming over no one's ribs or cobbler as well as showing disobedience to her grandmother and having casual sex with the willing men of the Bottom and also white men. These acts intentionally or accidentally allude to the story of Lost Garden. Sula's going to church without underclothing symbolizes her lost virginity. Centered on the Sula's lost virginity, Sula's mother, Hannah Peace dies in a fiery accident; her playmate Chicken Little drowns in the river, and Ferry chokes to death while gnawing at chicken etc.. The whole Bottom considers Sula as the root of all misfortune and calamity and thus rejects her. From this point, *Sula* shows that when a community rejects its own members, it also destroys itself. Of course, Morrison has recognized the defects of black community, yet she doesn't blame the decadency of black community in the south of America on women's corruption. However,

there are indeed connections reflecting the relationship between the backward of black community and sexual degeneration of women.

Although the fall pattern informs all Toni Morrison's novels, *Tar Baby* employs it more explicitly than any other narrative. Son, an outsider of Caribbean island, is an authentic configuration of blackness. His appearance destabilizes the superficial harmony. Son initially approaches the Streets' house to find food, but he stays there, hiding, because he is so attracted to Jadine. However, on one hand, Jadine rejects Son because he is black; on the other hand, she seduces him because he can possess the self-consciousness to transform surroundings. Jadine and Son bear the consequences of self-knowledge. The fall motif in *Tar Baby* makes Morrison's work considerably more substantial and meaningful than some critics have contended. To be sure, Morrison partly follows in the tradition of American literature by depicting the essential conflict between permissiveness and civilization, the rural and the urban—redskin and paleface. But beyond this conventional dialectic, *Tar Baby* describes the passage from innocence to experience with biblical and theological overtones—garden images, references to the serpent, expressions of guilt and lost innocence, a yearning to return to the garden.

Paradise implicitly comments on and extends both European and African American literary traditions. The title echoes the last of Dante's works in his *Divine Comedy*, *Paradiso*. The religious imagery adopts a few Dantean touches, such as intercession by divine female figures. The religious sensibility, however, differs drastically. Morrison views the earthly and the spiritual world as inextricably mixed. *Paradise* conveys an African, feminist religious sensibility. In *Paradise*, the inchoate people are four homeless women who live in the Convent, an abbey not far from the town Ruby. In the eye of men in the Ruby, town Ruby is a utopian paradise; while Convent is an anti-utopian hell. And women living there are the root of evil, which poses a threat to people's survival in the town. Women's infamy in the Convent is the reason "why this deliberately beautiful town governed by responsible men couldn't remain so: stable, prosperous with no talk-back young people." (Morrison, 1999:277) They behave improperly, stir up trouble and fight for each other naked in the street. Altogether, "drawing folks out there like flies to shit and everybody who goes near them is maimed somehow." (Morrison, 1999: 276) The separation of Ruby from outsiders is supposed to keep

its blood pure. Whatever this illusory purity is supposed to consist of, it can't really be purely African. One of Haven's founders has an American Indian name, Drum Blackhorse. Straight hair appears in Soane and Dovey, then in Soane's twins. Further, the South America-born Consolata immediately connects Ruby's founders with her early companions: "And although they were living there in a hamlet, not in a loud city full of glittering black people, Consolata knew she knew them." (Morrison, 1999: 226) The artificial oppositions of separatism can never hold because reality is composed of mixtures, analogues, and connections. Ruby belongs to the world and the world to it.

This is Morrison's last novel, which has a tone of optimism. After despair world in her previous novels, Morrison returns to her lost "Paradise". Writing so many stories of lost garden, Morrison finally depicts a picture of paradise in her mind. Of course, there are signs reflecting some recalling of lost garden. Founders in the Ruby think that Ruby, a town being inhabited by pure blacks, is a paradise without sins. However, youths and many women there live a repressive life, and some of them eventually leave the town. For women in the Convent, it is a paradise where they can rehabilitate and recuperate both physically and mentally. In contrast, for those founders in the town, it is a hell, the origin of all sins. Morrison ends the story with such words: another ship, perhaps, but different, heading to port, crew and passengers, lost and saved, atremble, for they have been disconsolate for some time. Now they will rest before shouldering the endless work they were created to do down here in Paradise. (Morrison, 1999: 318) Here, the last word "Paradise" alludes to Eden, which is destroyed by human beings' desires. Just as Morrison says, "The story ends with the word Paradise. And its meaning is that we pull down the paradise from its high position and make it become a place everyone can patronize.....I wish readers change the capitalized letter P in 'Paradise' into small letter." (Cui Ting, 2006:143) Morrison's words seem to tell us that "Paradise" is no longer a privileged terrain for some people; instead it should be a place where all people can enjoy. An unearthly and perfect paradise is inexistent. Though the way of Jesus redemption in the novel is idealized, however, Morrison suggests that only through unremitting efforts by all blacks can Afro-Americans as well as human beings make the land we are living better. Here still implies an irretrievable trend, a faint foreordination and implicit elegy.

1.1.2 Theme Two: Original Sin and Its Tribulation

After eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve degenerate into corrupt human beings. For this, their descendants thus live in the fallen world with original sin. All ideas against God are considered sin. In *Holy Bible. Romans*¹, it says that “They were filled with every kind of wickedness, strife, deceit, craftiness; they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” (Romans: 29-31) From Adam and Eve to all men in the world, original sin is characterized by inheritance from ancestors to descendants. The evil in people’s heart leads to envy, competition, fight and war. Some of the world’s tribulations come from the fact that men in the world treat each other cruelly. And the tribulations from others are divided into two parts, one from our ancestors; the other from people of the same time.

In the *Holy Bible, Exodus 20:5*, it says, “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.”(Exodus 20:5) *Beloved* is a best exemplified example for these curses. The influence of Sethe’s infanticide makes her children suffer a lot. The dead baby’s soul haunts the whole family, just as the beginning of the novel writes “124 was spiteful. Full of a baby’s venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead, and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old—as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard).” “Neither boy waited to see more,” “Nor did they wait for one of the relief periods: the weeks, months even, when nothing was disturbed.”(*Beloved*: 3) Daughter Denver develops into an unsociable and pent-up character. The life of Sethe’s children, of course including herself, seems to have been destroyed by Sethe’s evil act—killing her own child. The life of Sethe’s family is hopeless; they are simply waiting for the coming of predetermined disaster.

The theme of parents’ sin passing down to children’s tribulation still has an animated telling in *Sula*. The life of characters of next generations in *Sula*, such as Hannah Peace, Sula

Peace and Plum, is fragmentary and chilly. Their fate is closely connected with their parents' breach of duty. Eva Peace, Sula's grandmother leaves her children with a neighbor in a sudden and is gone for eighteen months. She returns with only one leg, but a purse full of money. It is rumored that she lets a train amputate her leg for the insurance money. The ignominious way of mutilating herself for a life change is thus despised by her daughter and granddaughter. Of course, Eva's mutilation is active and positive. It is a way to show the value of blacks. To be sure, as a mother, her model has bad impact on her posterity, especially when she purposely burns her son Plum to death rather than accept his drug addiction. This is why later Hannah Peace and Sula Peace wallow in degeneration to have casual sex with men for pleasure and sustenance. Hannah Peace, Sula's mother, has none of her mother's independence or vigor. Her chief activity consists of having casual sex with the willing men of the Bottom. What is worse, unaware that Sula is within earshot; Hannah unwittingly destroys her daughter's peace of mind by revealing to a friend that she does not like her daughter. This leads to Sula's hatred and impiety towards her mother and even her grandmother. Thus, Sula watches her mother burn to death with no apparent grief, only interest in the way that Hannah is "dancing". When her grandmother is old, she even shows indifference to Eva and sends her to the rest home. She violates every community norm, including the prohibition against black women sleeping with white men. Even on her deathbed, she remains unrepentant. To some extent, the three generations' life seems to have long been destroyed by sins committed by their ancestors.

In addition, this kind of vertical tribulation is not only a problem existing among generations, but also a history problem: the shadow of slavery of the south is the root of many evils. The failure of the Civil War is predetermined. Sethe and her children are caught by their slave owners because her neighbors still can't get rid of the enslaved ideas. Thus, Denver realizes at last that the ingrained old tradition of the south is the cause of the failure of the Civil War. Only solidarity as solution can save African Americans.

The past of the south brings unfortunates of the present. It is also easy to find the scourge from mother to children, from the past to the present in Morrison's novels. The sin caused by ancestors leads to offspring's tribulation, while the same sin by others can also bring sufferings. A twelve-year-old girl, Pecola Breedlove is a victim of others. Just because she is a black girl, she receives unjust treatment everywhere. The black community and individual black people

absorb the wider culture's racist pictures of themselves; they focus their self-hatred on the most vulnerable character, Pecola. Thus, Pecola bears the dream to have a pair of blue eyes wholeheartedly until she dies. For her, people surrounding her are like demons in the hell. In this way, Pecola's tragedy is the culmination of many other tragedies. Morrison reproduces a set of extremely cruel scenes in an onlooking and dispassionate brushwork.

As for tribulation, Morrison has her own experience. Every word between the lines is embedded with profound and resigned foreordination. She doesn't agree with such pretext that the suffering of blacks is cursed by God to shirk the responsibility the whites should shoulder, which shows Morrison's courage to envisage reality and history of the South. But Morrison's early novels carry a kind of ineluctable hue, which seems to foreshadow the ending. In a word, where there is suffering, there is sin in Morrison's novels. It seems that tribulation is the punishment of sin.

1.1.3 Theme Three: The Prodigal Son

The archetype of initiation stories can be traced back to ancestors of human beings—Adam and Eve. (Rui Yuping, 2004:111) Thus, the *Holy Bible* is a dialectic book filled with good and evil. Since Adam and Eve violate Heaven's commandments, the world has been a process of fight for good and evil. There is no good without evil. Based on this cognition, the heroes in the western literature works often undergo different kinds of evils on the journey of growing up. Thus comes out the initiation genre, which has been a constant and frequent topic and the everlasting theme in literature. In Morrison's novels, she also continually probes into this theme—how people can resist evil temptation and fight against it. Nathaniel Hawthorne once says that the journey of growing up is a metaphor of "black hole". Everyone has to go through such a black hole representing evils, and some people never come out when they are going into it; while those coming out from it are the real *Homo sapiens* who are good at drawing lessons from evil experiences.

Song of Solomon is a typical black Bildungsroman (initiation) in America. It is a story combining elements of a young person's growth and the mystery genre in Milkman's quest to understand his nature, his family, and his place in the world. The main character Milkman's initiation mainly consists of his awareness of racial, class and moral consciousness. His

dissatisfaction with the present makes him eager to undertake the journey to the South where he finds his spiritual heritage crucial to his family's history. However, the journey originates in the rift of the loss of a bag of gold between his father Macon Dead and his aunt Pilate Dead. Milkman thus travels south to recover this gold. As in a conventional mystery, the successful detective survives many dangers. On the journey south in search of the missing gold, Milkman never finds the gold. Instead, he finds liberating knowledge. As part of his learning, the city-bred Milkman learns his family's true history and matures into a responsible adult. There he acquires the traditional male skills of hunting and self-defense, and at last starts to consider others. When he accepts a sexual offer from Sweet, he treats her like a lover rather than an object. In the first test of his new self, Milkman accepts responsibility for his treatment of Hager. Similarly, he does what he can to comfort the dying Pilate. Just like Solomon in the *Bible* who finally gets a country while going out to look for his father, Milkman also gets some unexpected knowledge—his own identity and history of his family, and thus moves from a selfish and juvenile immaturity to a complex knowledge of adulthood.

Another child, Denver in *Beloved* can be said as a typical modern girl concerning the subject of the prodigal son. Morrison describes her trace of growing-up from innocence to maturity in a completely new perspective. As is biased, her childhood is quite lonely without any association with children of the same age because of her mother's guilt of killing her sister. Her mother even would not be willing to talk much with her. All these cause Denver to live a panic life and lose the pleasure and hearing she could enjoy. Yet though little, she tries herself to be strong enough that there is no difference between other children and her. She is keen on to be an ordinary girl instead of living a life with much prejudice by her patriots. However, shadow of sorrow will at length give way to reality. Denver's life begins to improve and becomes open-minded after *Beloved's* appearance. At the news of *Beloved's* real status, she tries everything to protect her from hurt again and gives her the best as long as she could so that helps her mother recover from the past wrongdoing and makes up for the harm brought to the whole black community. Thus weeding the garden, pulling vegetables, cooking and washing for others, she plots what to do and how. Here from Denver's change and maturity, it seems to make people assure that the future of the African American is bright. The generations of black slaves are giving their voice to the world.

The Bluest Eyes may be, if looked at it from the perspective of narrator-Claudia, also considered as an initiation story. After looking on the course of how Pecola being forced to bay by life, Claudia deepens her recognition on destiny, self-identity and society, and grows up to maturity. The opening words of the story remembered by Claudia imply the theme of the novel: marigold can't blossom out because of the problem of soil; while that Pecola can't normally grow up is also the problem of her surroundings. Claudia's consciousness of Pecola's tragedy also drops a hint that the consciousness of blacks is enhanced, silence is going to be broken.

Besides Milkman in *Song of Solomon*, Denver in *Beloved*, Sula in *Sula*, Claudia and Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Jadine in *Tar Baby* all have the plot of growing up. The only difference between them and Milkman and Denver is that the ending of former ones is tragic and losing themselves on the journey of pursuing self identity because the root of their tragedy lies in their unremitting fight without hope and victory (Mignel, 1972:17); while later ones' are soul-stirring and they find their own history and culture at last.

With regard to the theme, Morrison once says that a novel "should have something in it that enlightens; something in it that opens the door and points the way." (Rootedness, 1984:341) Morrison's novels can be said as a typical example of the same old stuff with a new label. By using modernists and post-modernists' poetic freedom and Gothic imagination, she refines history and truth. (Bernard· W· Bell, 2000: 337) Characters in Morrison's novels are confined to a situation where blacks' human nature is strictly set by their economy, gender and race myth, so they appear somewhat eccentric and defective. Even so, they still unremittingly strive for their self-respect, freedom and integrity.

1.2 The Alternate Existence of Two Consciousnesses

The *Holy Bible* consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament emphasizes justice by law, while the New Testament focuses on regeneration through salvation. The two consciousnesses of the Old Testament and the New Testament also interplay each other in Morrison's novels. On one hand, it looks down at the degenerate world from the perspective of God; on the other hand, it looks up at the heaven from the angle of Christ.

Morrison displays a roll of sin pictures from the view of God in her novels, which can be said as the minutest detail of human beings' sins refracted by microscope. Thus, the world in her novels is full of sins and corruption. According to the demonstration of struggle and resistance in the limit of survival space, Morrison gives us a deep reflection and all-round display of the history and the survival state of blacks in a perspective of modern tragedy. *The Bluest Eye* deals with Pecola's outsider identity in her own tragic circle of life; Sula in *Sula* is a typical social outcast in Morrison's novels; *Song of Solomon* tells of an African American man, Milkman being alienated from his family, his town and even the past of his ancestors; all characters in *Tar Baby* are completely segregated, and the novel ends with the two main heroes chained to their own world respectively; *Beloved* is full of evil forces and it seeks to fill a gap in our knowledge that how slaves with their terrible experiences become free, healthy people; in *Jazz*, a strong sense of loss makes Joe murderous and Violet mad; *Paradise* describe a group of blacks being expelled out of black community by their compatriots. These reflections even appear in Morrison's Nobel prize-winning speech: what on earth is margin? What's it about if there is no home here? (Zhu Xinfu, 2004: 54-60)

Though the world is degenerate in the eyes of God, yet Morrison seeks to search for blurred hope in this world and tries to break the boundless darkness with love and endurance. Even the salvation is just a hope; however, the comparative warmth in the cold and ruthless atmosphere helps blacks find a way out to some degree. Some characters in Morrison's novels make their efforts to create a world of their own, and the result is that they often "die on the Cross".

Song of Solomon mingles Pilate's hope and despair. As the critic Barbara Christian points out in *Black Women Novelists*, earlier African American women characters tend to be stereotypes such as the all-nurturing Mammy, the loose woman, or the tragic mulatta. Pilate exists completely outside of these categories, indeed outside almost all social categories. Pilate doesn't see her social marginalization as victimization or exclusion but as freedom to explore her self. Isolated from society, she maintains contact with the spiritual world. Her values provide an alternative for Milkman's imagination, which is stifled by his father's materialism and Guitar's single-minded politics. At the same time, Pilate consistently supports the weaker characters, like Ruth, Milkman and Hagar. In *Pilate*, Morrison has created a wise, strong,

earthy embodiment of African American spirituality. Nevertheless, she is the only character who never stops learning, loving and developing. Thus the image of Pilate highlights Morrison's conviction that black people, at the level of the personal self, have the capacity to "invent themselves".(Peach, 1995:4)

Sula is an epitome of completely degenerate world. Three generations of Sula's family wallow in degeneration because of the influence of their surrounding. Even so, there is still a ray of hope in the heart-rending sight. Sula's friend, Nel Wright Green, is a conventional person with kindness. Sula has a sexual relation with her husband, though Nel bears resentment on Sula, yet she never criticizes her. Instead, she forgives Sula, and even often misses her. What's more, she goes to visit her grandmother in a nursing home after her death. Here it tells us that there is still peace and kindness in the world even in sins.

Beloved gives a picture of doomsday. Everywhere is filled with venom and shadows of ghost. Slavery is best manifested in this story, and the relationship between whites and blacks seems to be never compatible. However, Morrison here gives a particular about a white character, sixteen-year-old Amy. Though her skin color represents a superior status; yet she doesn't prejudice blacks. On the way to Denver, Amy calls Sethe by the words that she has been taught, "nigger" among them, but she does her best to offer aid to Sethe. She massages Sethe's torn and bleeding feet back to feeling, for example. What's more important, she helps Sethe give birth to a daughter. Sethe even names the child Denver after the city that is Amy's destination. According to this detail, Morrison shows such introspection that if blacks and whites can give helpful hands to each other, the racial problem in America can be reduced and relieved. After all, human nature is always inclined to goodness.

In Morrison's novels, the consciousness of the Old Testament and the New Testament is mingled together. Even if it is the most evil, there is still hope and "Beauty, love... actually, I think, all the time that I write"; (Bakerman, 1977:41) and if it is the most optimistic, there is still sin. Thus the spread of sin and the gleam of salvation coexist in her novels at the same time. In this way, her novels are influenced by the consciousness of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Chapter 2 Archetypes from *Holy Bible*

Besides the influence of consciousness of the *Holy Bible*, Morrison also uses a lot of character archetype, plotting mode, character relation mode and images from the *Holy Bible* in her works so as to look for parallelisms between the *Holy Bible* and her stories. It is an obvious phenomenon in her creation using more or less quotations and references from the *Holy Bible*. This chapter is going to discuss these quotations related to the *Holy Bible* respectively from the aspects of character archetype, plotting mode, character relation mode and images.

2.1 Character Archetype

To some extent, some characters in Morrison's novels have archetypes in the *Holy Bible*. Often some characteristics related to Jesus are embodied in the main heroes. In *Pilate of Song of Solomon*, Morrison has created one of the great original characters of American literature. Milkman thinks at one point that he has never met anyone else like her, and the reader is likely to share his reaction. As the critic Barbara Christian points out in *Black Women Novelist*, earlier African women characters tend to be stereotypes such as the all-nurturing Mammy, the loose woman, or the tragic mulatto (woman of racially mixed blood). Pilate exists completely outside of these categories, indeed outside almost all social categories. Actually Pilate's name is entitled by her illiterate father who hopes her daughter like a big tree—a big tree in Eden which can protect any little life though he later learns that this name in the *Holy Bible* refers to the man who betrays Jesus. But many examples prove that Pilate is not a man of mould and has some fantastic elements—she is born after her mother's death and unlike every other human being, she has no navel. "It was the absence of a navel that convinced people that she had not come into this world through normal channels; had never lain, floated, or grown in some warm and liquid place connected by tissue-thin tube to a reliable source of human nourishment." (Morrison, 1998:27-28) She even can get rid of worries and help to overcome difficulties innately for others—she can tame a drunkard others can't make it; she can communicate with the dead; she is illiterate, but she is effortlessly skilful in the words in *Holy Bible*. In a word, Pilate's magic can be found everywhere. Even Milkman's life is given by her because Macon is unwilling to have a baby with a woman he doesn't like at all. Besides, Pilate's transcendental power not only helps Milkman's naissance, but also is a spiritual prop

during the journey of his growing-up. Thus it can be seen that Pilate is incarnation of benevolent Jesus who is embodied with wisdom, courage and confidence.

Besides Jesus archetype, other character archetypes appear in Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. For example, Ruth is a woman without self and is controlled by others all her life. Before marrying Macon, she follows what her father arranges for her; then after marriage, she turns to be manipulated by her husband and even Pilate. This is identical with the counterpart Ruth in *Holy Bible* who is an obedient Christian for her mother-in-law. Hagar in *Song of Solomon* is also parallel to Hagar in the *Holy Bible*, both of whom are driven out by their masters.

Sula in *Sula* is endowed with several character archetypes from the *Holy Bible*. First, she has a quality of Isaac from the *Holy Bible*. According to Genesis 22, God wants to test Abraham's loyalty and asks him to provide the lamb of a burnt offering. Since Abraham fear God, he takes Isaac to the place that God has shown him. At the time of killing his son, the angel of the Lord stops him because God believes his loyalty. Then Abraham goes and takes the ram and offers it up as a burnt offering to God instead of his son Isaac. Thus the image of scapegoat comes down. In *Sula*, Sula is undoubtedly a scapegoat of the Bottom. She violates every community norm, including the prohibition against black women sleeping with white men. Thus she is considered as incarnation of evil and the root of all misfortunes of her community. Even Sula's death is regarded as fuse of the literal death of almost a third of the Bottom. However, Sula as a scapegoat is quite different from traditional images. Instead, she deconstructs traditional ones. What Sula shows is a challenge to traditional social ethic and marital system of the Bottom—black community.

Besides the image of scapegoat, Sula still refracts the archetype of Satan. Firstly, her appearance has some kind of relation to Satan—a uraeus birthmark in her forehead. She strongly refuses her grandmother's indoctrination that Sula should get married and give birth to a baby instead of "strolling about with no man" (*Sula*, 87). Yet, she retorts, "I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself." (*Sula*, 87) Obviously, Sula is a demon from the perspective of Frye. But like Satan, she has never given up in the pursuit of what she wants to do. Instead, her dissatisfaction dander towards the reality makes her want to "tear the town into half". (*Sula*, 88) In a word, there are many details representing Sula's "Satan's spirit" in *Sula*.

For example, she ruthlessly sends her grandmother making in her to lunatic beadhouse run by whites when she returns to the Bottom. Based on the analysis mentioned above, Sula seems to be a realistic and imaginative evil representative in black community; but actually she is a more liberated representative of modern black women. It is because black females are restricted by their community and by the outer society that Morrison intends to make Sula an ambitious person so as to arouse others' emotional ambivalence including non-dramatic author herself.

In *Paradise*, the object of scapegoat becomes a group of people—women sheltering in Convent. In the heart of those weird people in the town Ruby, it “is not a convent but a coven.”(*Paradise*, 276) People take different and absurd reasons for aiming at women in the Convent. Some people want to rinse the disgrace of being discarded; some blame them because brothers on their side take up arms and others bear grudges on losing girlfriends. All in all, founders in Ruby think that the women in the Convent are witches. In order to safeguard their peaceful kingdom, they have to raid the Convent and drive away jailbait. Thus, the Ruby town permeates an atmosphere of suspense and anxiety till its final eruption, women in the Convent become scapegoats who are target of giving vent to anger.

2.2 Plotting Mode and Character Relation Mode

In Morrison's works, there are some stories corresponding to those in *Holy Bible* as a whole. *Paradise* is a story of Paradise Lost as well as Exodus. A group of social outcasts move west because they can't bear racial discrimination from the whites, and create their own all-black community, which in their mind is a paradise. But as time goes on, there appear many things which puzzle the black citizens, such as gradations of skin color, the loss of traditional values, conflicts between the old forces and new ones, violence etc. For the founders in Ruby, the original purpose of creating the “paradise” is to avoid racial discrimination, but Ruby pays greatly for maintaining such a “paradise” on the earth: isolated from the outside world, backwardness, and ignorance of the group.

Genesis 47 records, “...Do not bury me in Egypt. When I lie down with my ancestors, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” The story of Exodus is also reflected in *Song of Solomon*. Milkman was born in a middle-class family. He enjoys the comforts his father has provided, but alienated from the present (his family and community) and ignorant of

the past. His dissatisfaction makes him eager to undertake the journey to the South where he finds his spiritual heritage in the southern settings crucial to his family's history—his ancestors are African blacks. Thus, his grandfather Solomon's spirit endures and helps Milkman complete the journey home to Africa.

Besides the plot mode deriving from the *Holy Bible*, there also exists character relation mode. The relationship of Son, Jadine and Valerian Street corresponds to that of Adam, Eve and Satan in the *Holy Bible*. The only "good" deed Valerian Street does in his life is that he sends Jadine to New York to accept education of whites' culture. Son's appearance in his house doesn't bring him antipathy; instead he puts on the airs of welcoming "honored guest". Sometimes, Son becomes a person subordinate to Valerian Street in his family. As a matter of fact, he has long set a trap for this intruder. Jadine is the decoy for attracting him. It may be said that at the start Valerian Street has known the result of the game: Jadine and Son will be attracted to each other. At the same time, both of them will also suffer from their own identity, white or black. In Morrison's writing, Valerian Street is the representative of whites—hypocritical, cruel and immoral and the embodiment of farm owner.

2.3 Special Numbers Relating to *Holy Bible*

Numbers in some of Morrison's novels have special equivalence to those in the *Holy Bible*. For example, "3" refers to "Trinity": Holy Father—God, Holy Son—Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. They are three-in-one. Since Jesus enters Jerusalem on Sunday and dies on Friday until his resurrection next Sunday, it is just a week (seven days) called Jesus's suffering week. 7 thus refers to perfection and creation.

Beloved has subtle reflection of Trinity. Morrison divides the whole story into three chapters with each beginning with "124 was spiteful" (*Beloved*, 3); "124 was loud" (*Beloved*, 169); "124 was quiet." (*Beloved*, 239) "124" is made up of three individual numbers, which represents Sethe's three children. At the same time, the novel itself is composed of three parts. This leads to reader wonder whether it is a coincidence or Morrison's intentional design. Three numbers constitute 124, which not only represents three people, but also implies that 124 can achieve certain balance and harmony when there are only three people living here. At first, Baby Suggs, Sethe and Denver live in 124. After Baby Suggs dies, *Beloved's* ghost replaces

her. Here it can be said that 124 still lives three people. Then Paul D comes to 124 and he forcefully drives away Beloved's ghost and helps Sethe temporarily forget her past. At this time, 124 is filled with harmony. Since driven out of 124 by Paul D, Beloved revives from death and comes back to this house again. Trinity is stricken, previous balance and harmony is then broken. In order to possess Sethe's love, Paul D is finally expelled. And 124 recovers the state of three-in-one once again. Besides, the summation of 1, 2 and 4 is 7, which implies that 124 is the witness of the scourge of Sethe's family.

Besides, "Sweet Home" lives three brothers, Paul A, Paul D and Paul F. They form a strong triangle, providing power and support for each other. "School Teacher" and his two nephews also form a three-in-one. In contrast, they are endowed with the mask of villains representing evil forces of tyrannizing blacks.

In *Sula*, Eva treats boys in a state of mind of motherhood which can be seen from boys' reliance on her. The three discarded orphans adopted by Eve are all named Dewey though they are different in appearance and age. Eva treats them just as one. Gradually, the three children's own quality is completely obliterated. They become three-in-one under the control of Eva, "they speak with one voice and think with one brain." (*Sula*, 39) They have grown up; however, their disposition doesn't develop well, which becomes Eva's victim for disdaining individuality.

Number 7 is fully expressed in *Beloved*, too. When Sixo is caught to death after failure of escape, he shouts seven-o. In the *Holy Bible*, God creates the world in seven days, thus 7 means creation. While seven-o in *Beloved* refers to Sixo's baby because Thirty-Mile Woman has been pregnant when she and Sixo escape. The implied meaning is that "his blossoming seed" (Wang Xiaogang & Huang Zhen. 2002:98) will continue.

Number 28 seems to have no relation to any profound meaning, but it is seven's multiple. From another perspective, it denotes a cycle of birth, death and rebirth, which tallies with the suffering week of Jesus. In addition, number 1 and 2 and 4 is seven; the number of Carpenter's Road is 7 and the word Beloved is also made up of seven letters. And there are seven significant changes in Jazz. All these show that "seven day" is a full journey of tribulation signifying the completion of a cycle, perfect order.

In a word, these special numbers from the *Holy Bible* demonstrate that the *Holy Bible* has deep influence on Morrison. She lets her stories circle round the lingering sound of ancient

stories in the *Holy Bible*; she lets biblical allusions go through the tunnel of one thousand and nine hundred years and revive in her works. Among them, many images in the *Holy Bible* also frequently appear in her works, which represents immemorial meaning.

2.4 Images from *Holy Bible*

In Morrison's works, many special images are frequently employed, among which are often used in the *Holy Bible*. However, images in Morrison's works overlapping with those in the *Holy Bible* are not coincidence. Instead, every biblical image will produce certain meaning in certain text. The biblical images in Morrison's works are generally as follows: snake, water, fire, blood, tree, Noah's Ark and rain etc..

Snake is a symbol of evil in the *Holy Bible*, which also represents temptation, origin of calamity and a mark of lost paradise. There is appearance of serpent in *Sula*—a uraeus birthmark in Sula's forehead. The inherent mark drops a hint that Sula's family is doomed to come down and the tragic destiny of all members of her family is predetermined.

Water symbolizes purification in the *Holy Bible*. Matthew 3 records that John the Baptist baptizes those penitents with water along the Jordan. In the Old Testament, cleansing with water is closely related to lustration. Israel is strict with the lustration of priests, "you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water."(Exodus 40:12) "He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed; as the LORD had commanded Moses."(Exodus 40:30-32) Frye thinks that "the theme of purgation with water is produced by a series of stories, which include Noah's Ark, Israelite's crossing Red Sea and symbol of baptism with the baptized being divided into two, the half of morality being immersed, the other half of immorality fleeing."(Frye, 1998: 248) Peter 3 in *Holy Bible* also expresses the same meaning, "he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you" (Peter 3:19-21) There are many images concerning water in *Beloved*. As a female slave in the day of plantation, Sethe and other slaves

live in white's plantation and have an indescribable past. She "had secrets—things she wouldn't tell; things she halfway told."(*Beloved*, 38) At the beginning of the novel, Sethe lives in a forgettable memory, "she worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe."(Peter 3: 6) Morrison thus explains to us the root of her psychology of paradox and oppression with the image of water. When she stands in front of the pump, the chamomile covered with her legs inevitably brings her memory back to Sweet Home. Water washes away her shame and sin, the past scene becomes more clear after cleansing of memory, just as she feels, "suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty."(*Beloved*, 38) It is obvious that Sethe wants to wash away her sin with water, yet, she doesn't make it until her killed baby Beloved relives and comes back to her from another water world.

At the same time, water also carries the meaning of nihility and sinking into degradation. Before God creates the heaven 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 waters."(Genesis 1:2) In *Sula*, Sula's playmate Chicken Little slips from her grasp and finally drowns in the river, which symbolizes that Chicken Little embraces darkness and belongs to the world of nihility. And it is because she accidentally throws Chicken Little into the river that she always feels guilty. But what makes Sula get rid of the anxiety in her mind and saves her at last is still water. "She knows that water is near her ...water will take her away and scour off her tired body forever. ..." (Guo Jide, 2002:192) Here, water leads her to a thorough release from the hateful world and makes her gain eternal life in the fantastic water.

In addition, floodwater in the *Holy Bible* is somewhat different from water in general. It refers to the punishment for human beings from God. Genesis records, "the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."(Genesis 6:6) At that time, Noah obeys the God's torah to make a boat so as to avoid the floodwater that God conjures to destroy the evil human world. Forty-day's flood inundates all lives on the earth. Only Noah's family and his poultry survive blessed by God in an ark. In *Beloved*, it rains one month straight. Dipping in the marsh and mist, Georgia seems lifeless—no snake, no pigeon, no dog and no white people. Everything holy, worldly, good, evil, beautiful and ugly no longer

exists. "The flood rains of a month ago had turned everything to steam and blossoms."(*Beloved*, 112) Rain and flood foreshadow the theatrical plot of the story. According to the *Holy Bible*, when the fact that people on the earth are corrupt is beyond endurance, God will open the skylight, watch rain and flood wash away human beings' sins without lending a hand and let kindness and piety revive after baptism. Thus, the image of water in *Beloved* is "the strength of life indicating therapy, cleansing, destruction and rebirth." (Beverly, 1997:456) By means of water, Morrison makes Sethe break through the strobe of memory and open the close history. Here, water becomes a force of destruction; but at the same time, it gestates life, which foretelling the eradication of evils and the beginning of new life.

Fire is another biblical image in Morrison's works. Fire in the *Holy Bible* has different meanings. For example, it can refer to God's reverence and glory. When Moses sees God on Mount Sinai, "the appearance of the glory of the God was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel."(Exodus 24:17) Besides, it also indicates God's crushing strength of destroying human beings who are carried with sins. In Ezekiel, Lord God gives explicit instructions to Ezekiel, "I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched by it."(Ezekiel 20:47) Amos also records, "This is what the Lord God showed me: the Lord God was calling for a shower of fire, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land."(Amos 7:4) In *Sula*, worrying about his son Plum not growing up to be a successful person and atrophying into a baby, Eva sets a fire on house and burns his son. Seeing her mother stranded in fire, Sula looks on her helplessly without trying to save her. In both Eva and Sula's eyes, fire has the function of burying darkness, tribulation and evil. Although the act of Eva's cremation and Sula's indifference to her mother's death is a kind of sin, yet in virtue of the destruction of fire, a new life is regenerated. At this time, sin and punishment dislocate, but the existence of fire symbolizes baptism of sin. No wonder before his death, Plum fancies the gasoline he pours on himself as "baptism" and "bless". (*Sula*, 47) The scene implies that fire can also be endued with meaning of purification and rebirth.

When Eva's authority is challenged by Sula, she is hopping mad. Both of them won't bend and their confrontation nearly develops into two balls of fire. At that time, the image of fire comes to Sula. She knows that Eva may burn her one day because of her grandmother's

arrogance and ruthlessness though Eva doesn't say such words to her. Thus, Sula sends Eva to the rest home for fearing as well as getting rid of a stumbling block fettering her pursuit of freedom. According to this, fire is a kind of baptism towards sin.

Blood is also an image frequently appearing in Morrison's works. According to *Holy Bible*, blood bears the meaning of redemption. "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."(Hebrews 9:22) *Holy Bible* also records that Jesus relieves others with his own blood, "when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come...with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."(Hebrews 9:11-12) Jesus is pinned on crucifix to death; therefore, his redemption for others with his own blood is obviously related to sufferings. In chapter four "一九二二" of *Sula*, in order to protect her friend Nel from being bullied by white children, the main character Sula cuts one of her fingers with a knife and bleeds to frighten away them. These details have somewhat correspondence to the story of Jesus' suffering.

The similar details can also be seen in *Paradise*. At first, when Seneca's mother takes a French leave, Seneca thinks that her mother would be back as long as she is well-behaved. Then she brushes her milk tooth to bleed in the hope of her mother's return. When she is in her teens, she stabs herself to bleed in order to seek her adoptive mother's sympathy. After that, whenever feeling no understanding and solicitude from others, she begins to make himself bleed because "it thrilled her" and "it steadied her". (*Paradise*, 261) Maybe bleeding is her only way of calling for cleansing the filthy world.

Tree in *Beloved* is an important image. It also has its origin in the *Holy Bible*, saying "His shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like that of Lebanon. They shall again live beneath my shadow, they shall blossom like the vine, and their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon."(Hosea 14:6-7) Referring to the tree on her mother's back, Denver describes like this. "It's a tree, Lu. A chokecherry tree. See, here's the trunk—it's red and split wide open, full of sap, and this here's the parting for the branches. You got a mighty lot of branches. Leaves, too, look like, and dern if these ain't blossoms. Tiny little cherry blossoms, just as white. Your back got a whole tree on it. In bloom. What God have in mind, I wonder. I had me some whippings, but I don't remember like this."(*Beloved*, 79) By

this token, Denver seems to admire the scar-tree on her mother's back because in Denver's eye, it is granted by God for relief from suffering.

According to the analysis of character archetype, plotting mode, character relation mode as well as numbers and images from the *Holy Bible*, we can see that there are obvious traces from the *Holy Bible* in Morrison's works. These traces leave their imprint on Morrison's works between the lines, which add a special artistic effect to her novels. Besides, it is also a technique often used by Morrison in her creation, which gives readers a fresh ingenuity from both microcosmic and macroscopic perspectives. However, these images appearing in Morrison's novels are just superficial, what they really present is that it is a kind of opposition, survival instinct and a way of seeking self-identity, freedom and individuality for blacks under the pressure and control of white-dominating society.

Chapter 3 Unique Effect by Application of *Holy Bible*

In western countries, western writers' creation has a long tradition of the complex of the *Holy Bible*. Thus, there is a profound Christian culture background in American literature. Modern literature also applies mythical mode. Under the religious background of American literature and the tide of modernism, Morrison is not the first, nor the last. Then how does Morrison get out of the influence of others and make use of the biblical resources in her own unique way? Like her seniors one hundred year ago-Nathaniel Hawthorne, Morrison bears heavy burden of family, religion and history. And also like her counterpart of the same generation, John Steinbeck, there are too many similarities in the usage of biblical allusions. In addition, the employment of mythical mode is more or less influenced by James Joyce. From the scope of the whole world, there are deeper religious meanings in modern poet John Keats and T·S·Eliot's poems; Russian novels have close connections with the tradition of Orthodoxy. In such a forest of schools, Morrison finds a proper place for herself.

Firstly, unlike John Bunyan and Lev Tolstoy whose motif in their works is to advocate Christianity or internal spirit, Morrison isn't a Christian writer in a strict sense. Instead, she makes her stories more excellent by virtue of ideas and allusions from the *Bible*.

Secondly, her mythical mode isn't the reproduction of James Joyce. Instead, she stands in her own mythical kingdom. Joyce's *Ulysses* mechanically applies the framework of Homer's epic *Odyssey*. Though Morrison uses the framework of the *Bible*, however, unlike Joyce, Morrison's biblical mode ranges from small images, numbers and allusions microcosmically to narrative angles and integrated structures macroscopically. This shows a quality of complex and magnificence as well as her ability to get rid of the bondage of any framework. Once there is the sign of being bounded up by certain framework during her creation, she will stop using it and employ the technique of fragments.

Thirdly, in dealing with narrative techniques like narrative technique from multiple angles and special relationship between whole and parts, Morrison is different from Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Steinbeck.

Anyway, it may be the best way to grasp the unique effect of using the *Bible* as a whole; and it may boil down to three aspects as follows: simulation of the form of the *Holy Bible*,

objective and ironical effect by cutting the meaning of allusions and correlation between Morrison's apprehension of the *Bible* and the source of her story. The following part is going to analyze them respectively.

3.1 Simulation of the Form of *Holy Bible*

According to Morrison's autobiography, two important facts about Morrison's education combined suggest that archetypal criticism might be a particularly rich approach to her novels because she writes her master's thesis on two of the great modernist writers, William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf, who are good at adopting resources from the *Bible* and other classics. Thus, Faulkner has great influence on Morrison's later creation. However, she not only inherits Faulkner's creative technique in form, but also surpasses him in content. In *Sound and Fury* (1929), Faulkner applies the narrative perspective of four Evangelists, respectively telling the story of the depravity of Katty and her mother from the angle of Benjy, Quentin, Jason and the omniscient narrator, which shows the formal simulation of the *Bible*.

In Morrison's works, she also widely applies the simulation of biblical form, especially in her trilogy—*Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise*. First of all, the prominent one is the simulation of narrative methods. The typical novel is *Beloved*. *Beloved* applies the narrative perspective of four Evangelists in the New Testament: *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*. The same story concerning Jesus' preaching and suffering is respectively narrated by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John from different perspectives. Four Evangelists may be seen as the earliest story employing multiple narrative perspectives. *Beloved* also tells us the same story of Sethe's family's experiences and vicissitudes from the perspectives of Sethe, Denver, Beloved and the omniscient narrator. The original description is as follows:

BELOVED, she my daughter. She mine.(200)

BELOVED is my sister. (205)

I am BELOVED and she is mine. (210)

In these sentences, Morrison seems to act as the omniscient narrator, who can peek into the three women's inner world. Morrison makes the three different voices appear alternately, yet doesn't give any hints who articulate these words. Morrison's narrative technique tells readers to find the why in the how, which serves to add weight to the story and makes us think

from an original perspective on the trials and miseries of slavery, that is, the unspeakable psychological trauma.

Here it can be seen that the significance of multiple narratives lies in the fact that it can maneuver actively readers' subjectively in their reading. Since the response to and description of the same thing vary from person to person, readers are required to make their own judgments through serious pondering integrated with their own life experience. Therefore, taking part in this process of recreation, readers will deepen their understanding of the text. Since same events are described from multiple points-of-views, readers can enter the real world in the narrators' minds and distinguish the true from the false in their speeches.

Besides multiple narrative perspectives in the simulation of the *Bible*, there is another narrative technique—related narrative method. The most thought-provoking in *Jazz* is its narrators. American black critic Henry Louis Gates once comments that *Jazz* presented tremendous possibilities in its narrative perspective (Wang Jiexiang, 2006:438), as there is a narrator running through the whole story, sometimes the voice seems to be an anonymous first person, sometimes an omniscient third person. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator says subjectively in the first person. After the following recounting, there appears another all-knowing and objective anonymous third narrator. The narrator constantly changes her identity, tone and mood, which seems to suggest the blacks' uncertain identity in a white-dominating society. The alternate narration of objective and subjective visual angles also appears in *Paradise*. *Paradise* is mainly described in the third person, but sometimes leaped to the part of being narrated. In the chapter of Consolata, for instance, when Pallas wipes her tears, Morrison turns into her interior monologue in a sudden, then returns to the third person again. Such kinds of examples of changing visual angles frequently exist in many other chapters, which is an important feature of the novel. It is by unique narrative way that Morrison reveals her distinctive charm different from other novels.

The above-mentioned is Morrison's simulation of biblical narrative technique. However, concerning the simulation of the form of the *Bible*, Morrison still simulates the special organized method of the *Bible*. The *Holy Bible* is a text of patch-work. In a strict sense, it isn't a book; instead it is a collection of sixty six volumes written by more than forty authors and lasting over 1,600 years. (Here is based on the *Holy Bible* of Protestantism.) The whole book

consists of a more magnificent system with each volume having its own value. Thus from Genesis to Revelation, the *Bible* is characterized by its oneness and integrality. Morrison inherits this organized method which is seemingly independent but actually united. In her five long novels, she establishes ties of each of her story with a related main character. Thus each of these novels concentrates on a different but related factor in the oppression of African people, all are symbiotically related. In fact, each serves as a stepping stone that enables Morrison to move on to the next level of discovery. For example, in Morrison's novels each character is a development of the preceding one: The twelve-year old Pecola becomes the twelve-year old Sula; the thirty-year old Sula becomes the thirty-one year old Milkman; the conscious Milkman who flies away unburdened by the material objects of the capitalist world becomes the Son who unencumbered and single-handedly tries to politically educate the people of L'Arbre de la Croix; the unsuccessful Son becomes the Paul D who defies defeat by returning again and again to struggle for his people. Nearly all the background of Morrison's novels sets in the same region-Mississippi and Ohio, the plantation in South. Though characters and places are similar, yet each story has its own emphasis on content. And the structure analogous to the *Bible* is actually Morrison's outstanding feature in her creation.

In his great monograph, *The Great Code*, Northrop Frye says that the whole narrative structure of *Bible* is "roughly U-shaped, the apostasy being followed by a descent into disaster and bondage, which in turn is followed by repentance, then by a rise through deliverance to a point more or less on the level from which the descent began. This U-shaped pattern, approximate as it is, recurs in literature as the standard shape of comedy, where a series of misfortunes and misunderstandings brings the action to a threateningly low point, after which some fortunate twist in the plot sends the conclusion up to a happy ending. The entire *Bible*, viewed as a "divine comedy", is contained within a U-shaped story of this sort, one in which man, as explained, loses the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and gets them back at the end of Revelation." (Frye, 1982:169) Generally speaking, the whole structure is evil-doing-degeneration-deliverance. Morrison's course of creation also follows such an order by and large. Her early works express a kind of elegy of lost garden, concerning the memory of the past, such as *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*; while her later works try to express the sense of regression of morality although the ending of those novels are not satisfactory.

However, it indicates Morrison's attention to deliverance. In *Paradise*, Morrison tries to solve the southern problems. The title *Paradise* implies that Morrison hopes characters in the story to help blacks with actual deeds just like Mose saves Israelites. In the process of retrospection of the history of tribulation in the Ruby and misfortunes of women in the convent, the novel implies an underlying clue: American blacks have never given up striving for racial equality. The last novel *Love* is considered as the continuation of *Paradise*. From the perspective of motif, *Love* is the further exploration of *Paradise* and the moral is stronger than the previous one. In a word, Morrison's early works are concentrated on the presentation of tribulation of blacks; while later works put emphasis on regression of morality.

3.2 Ironical Effect by Cutting the Meaning of Allusions

When making use of the *Bible*, Morrison employs the method of displacement (Frye, 1971:118) and magic modification to achieve the effect of irony. The famous concept of displacement is put forward by Canadian critic Northrop Frye. He says that: "Mythos in realistic fiction has to, if assumed to be true, involve some techniques which are accordantly called 'displacement'." (Frye, 1971:118) While modification is the simplest technique of displacement, namely, reversing the moral association to which certain archetype is habitually related. Some character archetypes in Morrison's novels are from those of the *Bible*, like Jesus, the LORD, Eve and Isaac etc.. All these archetypes are characterized by pure and lofty quality. When they are hooked to characters in reality, they are bound to form certain contrast and achieve the effect of irony. For example, Pilate in *Solomon* is incarnation of benevolent Jesus. When she echoes with the character in the *Bible* written one thousand year ago, the story will certainly produce a special effect. Eva in *Sula* represents the image of loving mother. Just as the foretelling of her name, she acts as a patron saint protecting her children and even her own nation and its history. In *Paradise*, people in the Ruby town have to "obey him" (*Paradise*, 93) because "he will take care of you." (*Paradise*, 16) However, what makes the story ironic is that here HE is not a person; instead, it is an Oven, which is personalized. In a word, images connected with Christ in Morrison's works would appear peculiarly colorless in front of the set of Christ's perfect morality.

Just as Joyce uses virtue of epic heroes to serve as a foil to fatigue of modern people in *Ulysses*, Morrison's novels also achieve the ironic effect in presenting a striking contrast between ancient and modern times. Subjectively, whether what Morrison wants to describe the south is a time without heroes, saints or love? Whether she wants to express that modern south is so corrupt that if Jesus returns to the world, he is just a criminal or a person escaping life? Or whether she wants to manifest that the reality of the south is not so splendid than the Israeli history before the birth of Christ? Or whether she wants to make use of Israeli legend and history to add to legendary meaning for the past and present of the south?

Firstly, Morrison loves the South. Although she realizes abuses of the South, such as Puritanism, racialism and patriarchy etc., yet south is the source of her imagination, a part of her own life. Since childhood, Morrison has abandoned herself to the ancient stories of the south; at the same time, she has always lived in the south. She criticizes the south not only because she deeply loves the place where she is born and lives, but also she exigently wants to change the condition of the south. Family is crucial to Morrison's sense of who she is. When she win the Nobel Prize in 1993, one of her first acts is to thank God that her mother is still alive to see that historical day. One of Morrison's early memories illustrates the centrality of family heritage to her sense of identity. Morrison seems to quite respect her mother and grandmother. She remembers the powerful personality of her great-grandmother, who could not read but was famous as a skilled midwife. Morrison has suggested that this memory might be connected to two themes in several of her novels: the relationship between three generations of women in a family, and portraits of strong women. It can be said that her grandmother is the archetype of Sethe, Eva etc.. Morrison applauds her grandmother more than accusation. Thus, it should not be ironic when these characters are associated with God.

Secondly, Morrison shows compassion for the images in her works. She has never mocked at their vulgar way of life and thinking and their sin. "This is the time for every artist in every genre to do what he or she does loudly and consistently. It doesn't matter to me what your position is. You've got to keep asserting the complexity and the originality of life, and the multiplicity of it, and the facets of it. This is about being a complex human being in the world, not about finding a villain." (On the Greater Good, 2003) In expressing the tragedy of those Christ characters in her fictions, Morrison does not pay attention to their moral defects, nor

care about their insignificance. Instead, she expresses their tragic fate with full compassion and sympathy.

Thirdly, Morrison won't dramatically simulate Christ's stories. In an interview with Morrison, she says, "*Bible* is part of my life, not just my reading matter." (Luaus, 1995:205) Maybe she thinks that Christ's story is one of the most beautiful stories in the world. She has no reason to think that her favorite Christ can only exist in the image of criminals and prostitutes in the south. At the same time, it is not evident that the present south would be much more degenerative than Israel two thousands years ago. *Song of Solomon* is the modern version of Christ story that the effect of irony can't be found in Pilate and Milkman.

Therefore, Morrison employs biblical allusions is not for the sake of irony. She is just making use of characters in the *Bible* to achieve the purpose of her narration and to gain the narrative effect. The narrative effect she hopes may be used to add some mythic colors for her heroes and to look for resonant circumstances for her tragic characters. Simply speaking, Morrison wants to find the overlaps and antitheses between the *Bible* and her novels, which can be seen from the method when she uses biblical allusions. As above mentioned, once the narrative framework constrains the development of creation, Morrison would immediately change the framework. Thus, the usage of the biblical allusions is characterized by fragment. American famous black critic Deborah McDowell once highly appraises in his monograph about *Sula* that the novel has exceeded all conventions established by usages. (McDowell, 1988:79) Thus, the characters in Morrison's novels only have common places under given circumstances. For example, the common place between Pilate and Jesus is her remarkable power of endurance and sacrificial spirit; the common place between women in the convent and Jesus is that they are betrayed and deserted by earthlings; and the common place between Pecola and Jesus is that she is willing to atone for others' crime. Normally, there is no common place between Sula and Jesus; however, when she is against the social morals designated for blacks, she is also a scapegoat of the her community: her mother doesn't like her; her grandmother disciplines her in a puritanical way, while her goal in her lifetime is to get rid of the bondage of the blacks and do what she wants to. In Jesus, there are many profound meanings in him, such as suffering, revelation, love propagation and no moral defect etc.. Morrison cuts the meanings embodied in Jesus and respectively employs them in specific

characters and circumstances, expressing certain symbolic meanings. Therefore, the way she uses biblical allusions is fragmentary and not integrated. If the relation between novels and the *Bible* is considered on the whole, it will instead produce the effect of modification and irony. Thus, Morrison gives the aura of sovereignty and honor to Eva by means of the image of LORD; and in Denver, Sethe is the tragic root of her children; according to the story of prodigal, Milkman is so eager to look for his own family and national history. As for the blacks in *Paradise*, corresponding to Exodus, it records blacks' pursuit of nice dream. The method of extracting part of its meaning from archetypes and then putting into certain works leads to the striking contrast between subjective intention and objective effect while Morrison uses biblical allusions.

The *Bible* is the classics of Christian culture, which has produced profound influence on western culture ranging from history, politics to philosophy. Some of the stories have formed rich meanings after generations' wide spreading. Each of circumstances, images and allusions has also produced certain aesthetic and emotional experiences on those who are exerted such cultural influence. According to the contrast between Morrison's novels and the archetypes in the *Bible*, Morrison adds abundant historical and cultural meaning to her characters and stories, which carries a kind of mythic, historical and legendary color.

3.3 Echoing between Morrison's Apprehension of the *Bible* and Novels

Jung says that all great artists are provided with strong mythic consciousness and imagination as well as the ability of expressing their experiences and feelings by means of primordial images. "Artists will resort to mythology in order to give his experience its most fitting expression." (Wilfred & Earle, 2004: 179)

When reading Morrison's novels, we can experience accumulation of her apprehension of the *Bible*. Each of characters, numbers, images and stories in the *Bible* becomes a kind of life experience and sensation close to the soul. Morrison also puts her apprehension of the *Bible* into her novels and lets her works flash the atmosphere of the *Bible* every now and then, just like the sound of clop-clop in the silent midnight which rings the echo of ancient history in the *Bible*. She hides the shadows of the *Bible* in the depth of her novels and occasionally shows up

a little, which brings people interrelated association. Thus, besides the surface of the story, there are also latent biblical echoes in her works.

Morrison seems to be good at arousing the biblical association in her black novels. For example, although the framework of *Paradise* is divided into nine separate parts instead of chapters, yet the design is similar to the *Bible*. For example, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all named after four saints. The difference is that each part in *Paradise* is named after nine women. In the world of *Paradise*, the convent is a place for women; its existence presupposes the absence of male authority. When race and gender are locked in a confrontation, the way of recording male stories from female angles manifests Morrison's active feminist stance: she exposes the violence and danger of racism while showing women's helplessness and despair; she sets off by contrast the close and rigidity of male-dominance while describing women's seeking multiple culture and values. That is the reason why she is proud of her identity as a female writer with different experiences in different ways from those of male writers, as she says: "I am valuable as a writer because I am a woman, because women, it seems to me, have some special knowledge about certain things" (McKey, 1988:54). Morrison is not writing biblical stories, however, some characters and scenes in the *Bible* rove in her novels like spirits. In this way, character archetype, plotting mode, numbers, images and even interrelated theme and consciousness from the *Bible* continually remind people of running back to the stories written one thousand nine hundred years ago.

In addition to the association, Morrison is also skilled at creating biblical atmosphere which some novels partly or wholly simulate. The words "Sixty Million and more" in *Beloved* is permeated with a kind of choky atmosphere at the beginning of the story in which is full of violence, rainstorm, flood and death. The scene is similar to the doomsday in Revelation. In *Paradise*, Morrison tells us the stories of familial evolution and their changes of prosperity or declination and honor or disgrace, which is characterized by magnificent vigor diachronically. The usage of some typical images from the *Bible* also adds similar atmosphere corresponding to the *Bible*. Just as above analyzed, Morrison can find correspondence for her specific circumstances from the *Bible* and then look for historical and cultural meaning for her characters by means of similarity of the circumstances.

Concerning the archetype, Frye thinks that archetype can be an image, symbol, theme, character as well as a structural unit, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience. They repeatedly appear in different works and are provided with established popular usages. Morrison extends the thought of reality into the ancient historical space and decorates the modern life and historical development with massive archetypes. The stories in the *Bible* are parallel to the characters, structure and plot in her novels, which forms a kind of contrapuntal structure and makes readers shuttle between two different times and spaces. Thus, each of her characters, stories and plots has a biblical shadow making Morrison's individual experience into universal sensibility of human beings. Yang Caixia says in her doctoral dissertation, "In virtue of ancient archetype subject, the records in the *Bible* reveal eternal motif of human beings' destiny. According to the reference and employment of related biblical contents, while appreciating the literary works, readers also carry the feeling of restless universal fate lasting from the ancient times between the lines."

(Yang Caixia, 2002:15-16.) The employment of the biblical prototype makes Morrison build the bridge of epic modern text between past and present times.

Conclusion: Creation of an Eternal Mythic Kingdom

As a writer, Morrison is seeking a different realistic mode. She refuses to separate legend, myth from realism. Instead, in merging the legends with modern-day phenomena and the living with the living-dead in articulating the quest for wholeness, Morrison has succeeded in creating works that can be read and reread for insights into human nature in general and into the human condition as it relates to race, class, and gender in particular. She considers creation of literary works as “a way of thinking” (Taylor, 1994:30). The reason she applies herself to writing is that she ponders much more over historical and realistic world than simulated world. She reconstructs history and reflects the realistic and imaginative world through writing. As a female black writer, Morrison bends herself to maintaining and developing black culture, and influenced profoundly by Faulkner, Morrison further explores the moral problems of both whites and blacks and the relationship between them more impartially in most of her works. She “constantly explores the complexity, fear and love in life of Afro-Americans.” (Kong Xiangping, 1994: 33) “Faulkner’s works, I think, can be named as local literature, yet his books are published all over the world. It is outstanding-cosmopolitan because it is about a particular world. This is what I hope to do.” (LeClair, 1994:4) Indeed, Morrison keeps to the thematic subjects during her creation and carries the aim of expressing universal experience of human beings. Her works are abundant in the concerns over the development of human beings, which makes her works related to the trait of eternity. Her black novels are concerned with topics of sex, race and class etc. Thus, she is not only “a representative artist and speaker,” (Harris, 1994:9) but also “the voice of human beings.” (Steiner, 1992:1) In this way, her works spread the universal meaning and enter into a sense of ubiquity and immutability. The tribulation of the south is part of the world; the spiritual journey of the southern people is also that of the whole world. The suffering in the past, the declination in the present and the alteration in the future is a fragment in the rising and falling history of human beings. The history of the south is the epitome of the history of human beings. Just as the *Bible* compares the Israeli legend and history to the origin and return journey of the human beings, Morrison also creates a small but all-knowing world.

Morrison inherits the literary traditions of James Joyce, William Faulkner and other predecessors and develops her own unique style, blending magic realism in Latin American literature with African American traditions rooted in her native soil. In her works she sets out to give voice to her people by shouldering the responsibilities of history and literature. "In addition to having to use their heads to get ahead, they had the weight of the whole race sitting there."(*Beloved*: 198) Indeed, Morrison is doing like that. In a conversation with Claudia Tate, she says, "When I view the world, perceive it, and write about it, it's a world of black people. It's not that I won't write about white people. I just know that when I'm trying to develop the various themes I write about, the people who best manifest those themes for me are the black people whom I invent" (Tate, 1983:157). She is concerned with the resonant subject related to human beings' destiny, in which is endowed with the humanitarian emotion. By means of employing the biblical archetype to achieve the artistic effect, it makes readers wonder whether she also wants to simulate the eternity of the *Bible* with her humble effort.

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