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《八月之光》中威廉·福克纳的宗教观

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William Faulkner's Religious Attitude in *Light in August*

by

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摘要

福克纳是 20 世纪美国最杰出的小说家之一并获得了诺贝尔文学奖。因为生长在南方圣经地带，福克纳的作品里充满了对圣经典故和圣经结构的引用。在其最著名的小说《喧嚣与骚动》，《八月之光》中均有体现。本文通过分析《八月之光》中圣经意象，圣经叙事结构的援引和文中基督教人物来展现福克纳对基督教的态度和他的宗教观。福克纳一再强调他虽然引用大量圣经，但是他侧重的是“写人”。他借用圣经的框架结构来描绘黑暗残酷的现实，给人强烈的对比感，鼓励人们继续前行。

本文分三个部分。第一部分为序言，介绍了《八月之光》的研究现状，提出了本文要研究的问题和观点。

第二个部分的第一点把圣经中“水”和“火”的意象和《八月之光》中这两个意象做对比，使我们了解福克纳在创作中引用的圣经意象在文中的作用和意义以及体现出的福克纳对宗教的赞同的部分。第二点通过对作品中圣经叙事结构的分析来体现福克纳的宗教观。与圣经的叙事结构做比较，关于丽娜的叙述结构是圣经叙事模式中的 U 型模式，是一个典型的喜剧。关于克里斯莫斯的叙事结构则是倒置的 U 型结构。从宗教的环境中逃离出去之后再回到宗教环境中，最后被杀害，是一个典型的悲剧。通过两种叙事模式之间的对比，福克纳在《八月之光》中表明了自己反清教的思想。清教势利极大的扼杀了人性，导致了人性的扭曲，只有远离清教势利的荒野才是人性获得和谐发展的地方。第三点对文中的宗教式人物做分析。第一个是克里斯莫斯，圣经中耶稣基督受难在星期五，小说中克里斯莫斯的各个重大活动也在星期五。作者把克里斯莫斯与耶稣基督做类比，表明他是一个基督化的形象，他的悲剧不是自己造成的，而是这个宗教和社会造成的。他是人类罪孽的替罪羊。第二个是海因斯，克里斯莫斯的祖父。可以说克里斯莫斯的悲剧中他的影响是最大的。克里斯莫斯出生之前海因斯就害死了他的父母，使他成为孤儿。在他的童年又给他灌输他是黑人杂种的观点使他形成反叛的性格。即使在克里斯莫斯杀害伯顿小姐在摩滋镇被抓的时候，海因斯听到他的名字就想要杀死他。可以说海因斯一手造成了克里斯莫斯反叛冷酷的性格。第三个人物是麦克依琴，克里斯莫斯的养父。麦克依琴是一个狂热的清教徒。在收养克里斯莫斯的十几年一直逼迫他信教，最后克里斯莫斯出逃。最后一个人物是加尔文和伯顿小姐。加尔文是一个狂热的加尔文主义者。总是喝得醉醺醺的把孩子从床上拉起来要把仁慈的上帝打入他们。通过对几个极

端的宗教分子的描写，表达福克纳对清教主义和加尔文主义的反对。

第三部分为论文的结论，总结了论文的主要内容，通过对本文三个方面的论述，重申了论文论点，同时指出：福克纳对圣经的引用，圣经式叙事结构的援引和对基督式人物的刻画并不是为了讽刺，而是为了人类认识到对宗教中偏激的部分从而摒弃清教主义和加尔文主义中恶的部分，吸收宗教中善的部分指引我们继续前行。

关键词：福克纳；八月之光； 基督教； 清教主义； 加尔文主义

Abstract

Faulkner, who wins the Nobel Prize Laureate, is one of the most celebrated writers in the 20th Century. Because he lives in the Southern Bible Belt, Faulkner uses abundant allusions and references relating to the Bible in his works. In his most well-known novel *Sound and Fury* and *Light in August*, he quotes a set of scriptural images and allusions. By analyzing biblical images, biblical narrative structure and Christian characters, this thesis gradually reveals Faulkner's religious attitude. Faulkner mentions that his quotation from the *Bible* aims to depict people. He borrows the Biblical structure and images to depict the cruel reality. He gives us a hard comparison to encourage us to move ahead in our path.

This thesis contains three parts, The first chapter introduces the present research on this novel and the argument.

The first part of Chapter two makes a comparison between the biblical image water and fire and two images in *Light in August*. Through the analysis of the images, chapter one reveals the function of the images and Faulkner's approve of religion. The second part of Chapter two analyses the narrative structure. Compared with the biblical narrative structure, the story of Lena is a typical comedy and a U narrative structure. The story of Christmas is a typical tragedy. He moves out from the religious surroundings, but ultimately goes back to the township, the religious surroundings. According to the comparison between the narrative structures, we can understand Faulkner's anti-Puritan thought. Puritanism kills and distorts humanity. People can have a harmonious humanity by getting far away from Puritanism. The third part of Chapter Two is to deal with Christian characters. The first one is Christmas. The suffering of Jesus is on Friday. Christmas is killed on a Friday, too. Faulkner intentionally compares Joe Christmas with Jesus Christ. Christmas's tragedy is not made by himself, but the religion and the reality. He is the scapegoat of human being. The second Christian character is Hines who is Christmas' grandfather. He delivers a deep impact on

Christmas's character shaping. Before the birth of Christmas, Hines indirectly kills his parents and transports him to the orphan asylum. In the orphan asylum, he guards Christmas and tells him that he is a nigger. Even when Christmas is caught in Mottstown, Hines shouts to kill him. Hines shapes his cold and racist character. The third one is McEachern, Christmas' adoptive father. He is a crazy South Puritan. He compels Christmas to be a Puritan but finally Christmas runs away. The last one is Calvin Burden, who is the grandfather of Miss Burden. He is a crazy Calvinist. He always drinks whiskey and wakes up his kids to beat God in them. From the depiction on these extreme sectaries, Faulkner expresses his opposition to Calvinism and Puritanism.

Chapter three is the conclusion. This chapter concludes the main idea and the argument of this thesis paper and points out the citation of biblical imagery, biblical narrative structure and Christian characters are not done for satire, but for people's salvation from distorted Puritanism and Calvinism. People should absorb the good aspects from religion and abandon the distorted aspects.

Key words: Faulkner; *Light in August*; Christian; Puritanism; Calvinism

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Introduction

0.1 William Faulkner and his *Light in August*

William Faulkner is an American writer. He wins the Nobel Prize from Oxford. He is known by all people for his short stories and novels. Most of his novels have the same setting, i.e. the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, which is created by Faulkner based on Lafayette County. He spends a large amount of time in Lafayette County in his life and spends the other time of his life in Holly Springs/Marshall County. Faulkner is known to all the people when he received the 1949 Nobel Literature Prize. He also wins the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction by two of his works, *A Fable* and *The Reivers*. *The Reivers* is the last novel in his life. He published 13 novels and many short stories from the early 1920s to the outbreak of World War II. His works during that time layed a solid foundation for his reputation. Also, he wins the Nobel Prize by these works when he is already 52 years old. He writes such an abundant amount of works mainly because of the obscure need for money. Among these works, there are the most well-known novels such as *As I Lay Dying*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*. Faulkner also writes a lot of short stories.

His first short story collection, *These 13* contains many of his well-known (and most frequently anthologized) stories, including *A Rose for Emily*, *Red Leaves*, *That Evening Sun*, and *Dry September*. Faulkner sets many of his short stories and novels in Yoknapatawpha County—based on, and nearly geographically identical to Lafayette County. Most of the works are widely considered by critics as one of the most monumental fictional creations in the history of literature. Three novels, *The Hamlet*, *The Town* and *The Mansion*, known collectively as the Snopes Trilogy, document the town of Jefferson and its environs as an extended family headed by Flem Snopes.

Faulkner is known for his experimental style with meticulous attention to diction and cadence. In contrast to the minimalist understatement of his contemporary Ernest

Hemingway, Faulkner frequently uses of stream of consciousness in his works. He often writes highly emotional, subtle, cerebral, complex, and sometimes Gothic or grotesque stories of a wide variety of characters including former slaves or descendants of slaves, poor white, agrarian, or working-class Southerners, and Southern aristocrats.

In an interview with *The Paris Review* in 1956, Faulkner remarked: “Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no shortcut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error. The good artist believes that nobody is good enough to give him advice. He has supreme vanity. No matter how much he admires the old writer, he wants to beat him.” Another esteemed Southern writer, Flannery O'Connor, states that “the presence alone of Faulkner in our midst makes a great difference in what the writer can and cannot permit himself to do. Nobody wants his mule and wagon stalled on the same track the Dixie Limited is roaring down” (83).

Faulkner lives in south America which is called the Bible Belt. Then, he becomes the representative personage of Literature of American South. The American South became well-known Since 1920. Before the civil war, the economy developed fast because they held the plantation economy with slavery. White people lived rich and leisurely aristocratic life. After they lost the civil war, people there felt frustrated. Economy and culture there at that time stopped. Literature at that time stopped, too. In the early days of the 20th century, southern literature suddenly rose. A school of literature with distinctive features appeared in South America. It is called Southern Renaissance. It appeared after the low and quiet war time. Based on the devastated place, Southern writers wrote the after-war society and physic reality with heavy and serious sense. They tried to reveal what the war brings to people's mind and what the war brings to the society. Then, Southern America literature has its own creative system. Zhao Youbin says in *American Southern Literature Review*: “each of them has a special and a contradictory feel to south. On the one hand, they sentimentally attached to south

like their mother; on the other hand, they felt nervous and they knew exactly moral decadent would destroy the south. They hated the evil in south because they felt deep love in the south. They always depicted losers because the slavery. What's more, southern writers had many common points: their works were mainly based on southern history and society; people in their novels were always isolated with abnormal physical or mental shape; they deeply affected by the Freud psychoanalytic theory and Bergson philosophy. They liked the way of stream of consciousness to analyze people's mental state and to highlight one's inner world; they were good at multi-angle, symmetric structure and metaphor to add the novel's arrangement of ideas and realistic feel." These are common points of southern writers. These common points compose the basic style of southern literature. This kind of writing perspective and create motive make their works hard to understand.

Faulkner's works are the product of the South America writing style. It contains all the social lives of the South America after the civil war, especially the changes in people's mind. This is his so-called little postage stamp of native soil life which mainly contains the Yoknapatawpha County. But Faulkner digs a lot of deep and creative characters on this land. It is on this land that Faulkner reveals the social life and psychological state of South people in the changing history. Faulkner knows deeply what his is going to write about. On this faked land, he creates a lot of people in a long time and those people and time are always cross many novels. So, readers may easily find that it is believable. In Faulkner's works, he reveals many poor white people or the rich white people who lose his fortune. The social system, law and moral standard are all in a mess. Faulkner wants to introspect the Southern society deeply. All in all, Faulkner's works penetrate emerge, develop and die out of aristocratic system.

Faulkner's bold attempt in literature creation develops him to be the most important writer in South. He also does a lot contribution to the world literature. In American literature history, Faulkner becomes more and more important. It is said that, since 1980, the research papers and monographs on Faulkner are only less than those on

Shakespeare.

Light in August is one of Faulkner's representative works. It occupies an important position in Yoknapatawpha system. By describing ten days social life in Jefferson, the novel reflects people's true feelings, love, compassion, pride and sacrifice.

Light in August sets in the interwar period, the novel focuses on two strangers who arrive at different time in Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi. It is a fictional county based on Faulkner's home, Lafayette County, Mississippi. The plot first focuses on Lena Grove. She is a young pregnant white woman from Alabama looking for the father of her unborn child. Then the plot changes to explore the life of Joe Christmas who settles in Jefferson and lives as a white people. But he secretly believes he is a black. Then, the plot turns to Christmas's early life, he is abandoned at an orphan asylum. His grandfather is the janitor of this orphan asylum to guard him and curse him. Joe is caught by the female worker just because he finds out the female worker's love affair. After the intentional guide by the female worker, he is sent to his adoptive father. But his adoptive father is a Puritan. After Joe goes to his home, Joe is compelled to read *Bible* and believe in religion. Joe lives a hard life in his adoptive father's home and generally shapes his character which is cold and violent. He does not believe that anyone loves him. The writer uses a lot of chapter to depict Joe's first love. When he does not know the society, he loves a prostitute. And for the woman, he becomes more rebel to his adoptive father and finally he runs away from his so-called home. Then, the plot begins to tell his living and working with Lucas Burch who is the father of Lena's unborn child. He flees to Jefferson and changes his name when he find that Lena is pregnant. Joanna Burden is a descendant of Yankee abolitionists and she is hated by the citizens of Jefferson, is murdered. Before she is murdered, she falls in love with Joe. But because her own reason, she wants Joe to believe religion and take all her businesses. Joe does not want to believe in religion and he believes he is a black which is not accepted by Burden. Finally, Joe kills Burden. Burch thinks that Joe is the murderer and he says that Christmas has relationship with her and Joe is a black which

is implying that he is guilty of her murder. When Burch sits in jail waiting his reward for selling Joe, Lena is helped by Byron Bunch. Byron is a bachelor and falls in love with Lena. He seeks the help from another marginalized people in the town, the former minister Gail Hightower, to help Lena give birth to her baby and protect Joe. Hightower refuses to help Joe but he helps Lena. Joe escapes to Hightower's house, and then Joe is shot and castrated by a state guardsman. Burch leaves town without reward. An anonymous man recounting a story to his wife about some hitchhikers he met on the road to Tennessee—a woman with a child and a man who was not the father of the child, both they were looking for the child's father.

Hightower is a deposed Presbyterian pastor. He lives in his grandfather's shadow (southern cavalry of American civil war Allies). He shows indifference to the real world and turns a blind eye to parish and the congregation, even talks about his grandfather's glory in the pulpit. His indifference to his wife leads to her run away and eventually committed suicide. So Hightower finally quits the pastor's position, but he refuses to leave Jeff town. He lives solitude, dark and marginalized life. Hightower can be considered to be a moral "reflector", under the meaning of the symbol. Hightower and Lena Grove are vivid contrast. Lena is always on her way, Hightower always sits by the window; Lena always walks on the way to sunny while Hightower always lives in a dark room. Lena is young and energetic while Hightower is old and dark; Lena symbolizing fertility, Hightower symbolizes the poor without result. In addition, Hightower's loneliness and selfish is a perfect contrast with Lena's perfect. But at the end of the article, Hightower delivers Lena's child. He feels the vitality and joy of life, and breaks the traditional moral ideas, begins to understand Byron's love for Lena. Finally, he wakes up and realizes his own fault from the sleeping dream.

The narrative style is loose and unstructured. Faulkner draws from Christian allegory and oral storytelling. He explores themes of race, sex, class and religion in South America. He always focuses on the characters who do not get well with the other people, abandoned people, or marginalized people in their community. He is good at

portraying the clash between marginalized people who is constrained by the Puritans, prejudiced rural society. In his early time of life, this novel was criticized by some critics. They say Faulkner's style and subject are not good. But some other people appreciate it. As time flies, this novel is considered to be one of the most important novels and one of the best English-language novels of the 20th century.

Religion plays an important part in Faulkner's works, especially Puritanism and Calvinism. He lives in the Bible Belt and his early days emerges in religion fully. His literary imagine is based on religion frame. In his works, he widely uses Biblical allusions and images. As branches of christian, Calvinism and Puritanism are both positive and negative. The positive part is against the monopoly of church in theology and believes that people can have connected with God without the church. The negative part is excessively emphasis original sin and it is God who decide people's fate, i.e, go to heaven or hell. Faulkner criticizes the negative part in his works. He criticizes the protestant church which goes against human nature.

“Actually, he considers the Doxies of Christianity and Jesus stories as a principle and a moral code. This is not because he doesn't believe the Christian spirit. If he really distrust it, he could not consider it as social and moral critic standard” (Xiao Minghan 76).

In the late 1920s, American Southern society is in a new era of historical period, that is the Southern Renaissance. American social contradiction is particularly intense. This not only shows the struggle of religion, but also shows ethnicity, gender, emerging business contradictions with the traditional value concept and the results in the distortion and alienation of human nature and the review of history and reality. In the author's early work *Temple*, the reader can often see a dark heavy picture filled with anger, sick, and afraid of darkness. But *Light in August* has a very positive impact. Therefore, compared with the *Temple*, the structure of *Light in August* is more fastidious,

its violence is more implicative, even has some comedy plot and detective skill; Modified beginning and ending of *Temple* directly affect artistic quality of the beginning and the ending of *Light in August*. This is also clearly reflected from *Light in August* comment: the critic Canby who classify Faulkner as cruel a year ago, praised *Light in August* as a insightful and moving novel which is incredibly full of characters, sometimes vivid almost like poem. The novel is full of compassion which can rescue those who pay too much attention on hardship and despair of life. Another critic J. D. Adams said that due to the advent of the novel, the novels before rendered in some rough and pure violent impression is adjusted effectively, so it is hard to believe that it works in such a short time.

0.2 Literature Review

Since Faulkner fully established his reputation, *Light in August* is regarded as one of his greatest works. When *Light in August* is published in 1932, the reception is remarkably positive in America. Henry Seidel Canby praises it as it is incredibly rich in character studies, intensely vivid. It is a novel of extraordinary force and insight and filled with that spirit of compassion which saves those who look at life too closely from hardness and despair. He thinks that no one can deny it. The praise of life caught in its intensities are both good and bad. J. Donald Adams pays high tribute to it: “With this new novel, Mr. Faulkner has taken a tremendous stride forward. To say that *Light in August* is astonishing performance is not to use the word lightly” (Millgate 130). Donnell shares the same opinion with J. Donald Adams. However, several critics, like James T. Farrell, Herschel Brickell, Evan Shipman, Dorothy Van Doren and Frederic Thompson criticize its structure, style and characterization. Some of the British notices are abruptly dismissive. *English Review* says, “Faulkner’s new book has all the repulsive qualities that his public has learned to love” (Millgate 16). Several critics are impatient with what they see as the excesses of Faulkner’s style, Cecil Roberts in the

Sphere says “Page after page is filled with clumsy, ill-digested expressions, tortured sentence, and inappropriate adjectives” (200). On the contrary, Richard Church describes it in the *Spectator* as “a great book”, one that “bums throughout with a fierce indignation against cruelty, stupidity, and prejudice” (143). Richard Aldington calls it a “passionately honest dissection of the dark places in the human soul” (140). Some of the least perceptive and most hostile comments on Faulkner’s work indeed come from British critics and reviewers over the courses of his career, United Kingdom is more positive than the United States itself. But the reception of *Light in August* in the perceptive is much better than its reception in the United States. In 1935, two American critics, James Linn and Houghton Taylor, offers a remarkably close analysis of the book’s narrative technique. And the reviews are adverse during the late 1930s and the 1940s. Substantial criticism works on *Light in August* begin in the late 1940s with Phyllis Hirshleifer’s *As Whirlwinds in the South: An Analysis of Light in August*. Several important studies appears during the course of the 1950s. Ilse Lind, 1957, in his “the Calvinistic Burden of *Light in August*”, which is considered the most important one in this respect, shows that both Joe and Joanne are the victims of their puritanical up-bring. “*Light in August* presents three interwoven stories. They are, to begin with, three quite different types of narrative: a tragedy (Christmas’ story); a problem novel (the ordeal of Hightower); and a comedy (the Lena Grove- Byron Bunch romance). Each is distinct and is elaborated with extraordinary textual richness on its own conceptual principle” (22). Narrative type is noticed from then on. C. Hugh Holman’s “the Unity of Faulkner’s *Light in August*” stresses the important of Christian symbolism in the novel. *Joe Christmas: The Hero in the Modern World*, all essay by John L. Longley, Jr. represents the moral and religious values. Olga W.Vickery’s *The Novels of William Faulkner*, published in 1959, is the first, and one of the best, of a series of book—length general studies of Faulkner’s work that marks the next stage in the history of Faulkner criticism. Beach Langston’s essay “The meaning of Lena Grove ang Gail Hightower in *Light in August*” and Robert M. Slabey’s “Myth and Ritual in *Light in August*” in the

early 1960s are also concerned with mythic elements in the novel. Cleanth Brooks writes a book named *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha County* in 1963. Michael Millgate's book *The Achievement of William Faulkner* is published in 1966. These two books are the most important books in 1960s. By the 1970s, however, the need is increasingly for more extended and detailed treatments of the novel, and three works produced early in the decade made significant contributions in this respect. Francois Pitavy's *Faulkner's Light in August*, Carl Fichen's *A Textual and Critical Study of William Faulkner "Light in August"*, J and Regina K. Fadiman's *Faulkner "Light in August" A Description and Interpretation of the Revisions*. Some sense of the trends of *Light in August* criticism in 1980s can be conveniently gained from *William Faulkner's "Light in August": A Critical Casebook*, edited by Pitavy and published in 1982. Since the 1980s, there is a revival of research on religious issue in Faulkner's works. Scholars such as Charles Reagan Wilson, Alfred Kazin, and Richard H. King deal in their research and writing with religiosity, taking Faulkner's religion background and the general religious context of the South in consideration. Charles Reagan Wilson says "Calvinism was indeed a burden to Faulkner;s characters. Faulkner was a critic of Calvinism, saw it limiting human potential" (22). He sees Calvinism like "Calvinism teaches the absolute sovereignty of God and the depravity of human beings. They are unable to fathom God's purposes, nor can they dictate their own destinies" (22). In 1989 and 1990, 48 essays are published in *American Literature*, but after 1997, the monographs and essays about Faulkner study reduce remarkably and only a few essays are published.

Faulkner study in China, frankly speaking, is just in a preliminary or initiative stage. Since the reform and opening up, Chinese researchers research and translate American literature works in an abundant amount. Faulkner is an important novelist among the American writers. As early as 1930s, Chinese scholar Zhao Jia Bi and Ling Chang Yan began to introduce Faulkner, but the systematic research and translation began in 1970s. Since then, novels like *Sound and Fury*, *Light in August*, *As I Lay dying*, *Go Down*,

Moses, and so on begin to appear. In 20 years, Faulkner's 20 novels and more than 80 short stories are translated in Chinese. In 1980, Li Wen Jun roundly introduced Faulkner who was discussed and researched fully in America for the first time. It contains many important thesis paper on Faulkner and Faulkner's own words on his life and creation. It is a good material for other researchers. In 1991, Yao Nai Qiang translated *William Faulkner*. Some scholars do research on Faulkner's Southern complex like Zhang Shu Mei, she analyzes Faulkner's attitude toward southern racialism. Xiao Ming Han says that although Faulkner criticize southern racialism, he still brings southern complex to his novels. Faulkner uses a lot of religious quotation in his works, so Xiao Ming Han says in 1994 that Faulkner uses Christian quotation to build characters better. He says "Faulkner both inherits and criticizes Christian tradition. Christian has deep impact on him. He publicly says that he believes in God. On the other hand, he criticizes Puritan and Calvinism strongly"(79). Liu Jian Hua says that Faulkner's ability to change history into his works is embodied in his novels in 1997. Li Chang Lei says that Faulkner's time philosophy belongs to psychological time which combines the past, the present and the future in a cycle process. There are also many researchers do research on the religious aspect. Xiao Ming Han says in 1994 that Faulkner uses Christian allusion and image to build the characters better. The period from 1992 to the present day is the prosperous stage. Huge numbers of essay, articles and reviews come off press during this stage. It is roughly estimated that at least 90 articles are published in China's major academic journals from 1992 up to date. In 1998, Lan Ren Zhe translates the novel *Light in August* into Chinese. There are a large number of papers dealing with this novel and most of them focus on the theme racism and Calvinism.

Faulkner quotes a lot from *Bible*. "According to the status, direct and indirect cite from Bible reach 379 times. He quoted 183 times from Old Testament and 196 times from New Testament" (Jessie Coffee 183). Because Faulkner cites so many times on Bible, some critics says that "he stands firmly on the Calvinism side" (Robert Bath 11). But his is not. This thesis is going to discuss Faulkner's religious attitude based on the

biblical images in *Light in August*, the biblical narrative structure and Christian characters. He criticizes the extreme aspects of Puritanism and Calvinism, i.e. cruelty and selfishness from the deep of his heart but he still believes the good aspects of religion, i.e. tolerance and goodness.

Chapter One Image and Symbol

Image and Symbol are very important in literature works. It seems like that the two words are very similar with each other, but it's not true. Leland Rycken compiled a book called *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* which is an encyclopedic book on biblical research. It defines image and symbol in detail. Image is a word which defines a thing (such as a tree or a house) or an action (such as run). All the things or actions we can imagine are images. But symbol is an image which contains some other meanings besides its own meaning. According to this difference, image on *Bible* contains two requirements. i.e. to feel the image literally and mostly on sensory organ. Secondly, we must be very sensitive on the image. And, when symbol appears, we must define whether it is negative or positive because symbol contains more meanings besides the basic image meaning. So, image contains material level feature, and literary meaning is very important for image.

“Symbol is the further meaning beyond image’s material level. In a culture, symbol appears with the common language. i.e. Bible would not create a symbol for a certain situation” (Rycken, Wilhoit and Longman 725).

This chapter is going to discuss two important images in *Light in August* in biblical meanings, so we can know that biblical image is very important in Faulkner’s work. This shows that Faulkner is deeply affected by Christian thoughts because he is born in the Bible Belt.

1.1 The Image of Water and Its Embodiment in *Light in August*

The first image is water. In *Bible*, water is a very important image. At the

beginning of Genesis,

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so” (*Holy Bible* 1).

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads”(*Holy Bible* 2).

Water is the resource of life. It feeds people and divides Eden into four parts.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (*Holy Bible* 39).

Then God is going to kill all humankind by the flood except Noah. So, water is the image which can destroy humankind and their homeland.

“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered” (*Holy Bible* 7).

So, water can feed people, and it also can destroy all the things. The *Bible* gives water another meaning.i.e. to clean the evil and the world.

When Moses leads the people from Egypt, they are lack of water.

“I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel” (*Holy Bible* 81).

Water saves life on the way out of Egypt. People can live without food for several days but can not survive without water. Water is the thing which can clean evil and dirty. In *Bible*, many places mention this function. Such as:

“6The one who touches any such thing will be unclean till evening. He must not eat any of the sacred offerings unless he has bathed himself with water.” (*Holy Bible* 136). After using water to bath oneself, he will be clean. “When one of them dies and falls on something, that article, whatever its use, will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, hide or sackcloth. Put it in water; it will be unclean till evening, and then it will be clean” (*Holy Bible* 125).

In contrast to Old Testament, New Testament focuses more on the symbol meaning of salvation.

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (*Holy Bible* 959).

In Matthew, water and fire are both the things which can clean all the unclean things.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him” (*Holy Bible* 959).

The symbol of salvation is clear. After Jesus goes out of the water, the heaven is opened.

“And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove” (*Holy Bible* 997).

In the novel, the image of water appears many times. After Joe kills Burden, he runs away all along the river. In the last period, he is sitting against a tree beside a spring. With the head turning back, his hands putting upon his lap, he is weary but peaceful. On the third day after he runs away, he suddenly feels quiet next to the tree beside the river. The clarity of water washes his inner world and the tree makes him feel safe. On his way out, the writer always depicts that he washes his face and uses the razor. We can believe that he wants to wash his soul and begin a new life through the washing with clean water. He sleeps very little time a day. But this day he sleeps more than two hours, because the sun is shining down upon the spring, glinting and glancing upon the ceaseless water. He kneels beside the spring he shaves himself, using the water's surface for glass and stropping the long bright razor on his shoe. He can not fall asleep for a long time on his way. The sun shines down. A new day is beginning. In this chapter, Faulkner always implies the feel of something new and something bright. This is a distinct comparison with Joe's state of mind. He is in the final stage of his life, but the new day is still coming. It is a feeling of solemnity and tragedy.

When he is in the wild, he feels quiet and peaceful. That's a feel he never experiences. In the dawn and daylight: that gray and lonely suspension fills the peaceful

and tentative waking of birds. When he breathes, the air is like spring water. He breathes deep and slow, feeling each breath himself which is diffuse in the neutral grayness, and becoming one with loneliness and quietude that are never known as fury or despair. That is all he wants, he thinks in a quiet and slow amazement. That is all, for thirty years. That does not seem to be a whole lot to ask in thirty years. At the end of his life, he experiences the beauty of nature and the hope of life. But it is too late to enjoy his life.

When he sits beside the river, it's too dark to see his face clear in the water. So he waits beside the river until he can see himself better. Then, he patiently puts the cold and hard water on his face. He thinks this is to make him much more sober. He wants to see his face clearly in the water and then puts the water on his face. The adjective here is hard and cold. Joe is not a cool and merciless people. After he kills Burden, his inner world is not quiet. He wants to save himself and clean his heart by water, so he runs away along the river. Later, he takes out the razor, the brush and the soap from his pocket. But it is still too dark to see his face clearly in the water. On his way in the wild, he always cleans himself up. He does not want to die. Also, we can say that he is washing his soul by the water.

1.2 The Image of Fire and the Embodiment in *Light in August*

Fire is another common image in *Bible*. The same with water, fire can purify all evil and decayed things. Fire is the most powerful tool to eradicate evil. Cleansing and washing is the way water purify evil, like the flood Noah met. Fire has only one way i.e. to burn. Burning all the evil down, then new and beautiful things can survive. We can find fire everywhere in *Bible*. Fire and water always exist together. Offerings for God must be burnt, so God can get it.

“About three months later Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of

prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant." Judah said, "Bring her out and have her burned to death" (*Holy Bible* 48).

Here, fire can burn people to die.

“There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

3So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-why the bush does not burn up."

4When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

5"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

6Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God” (*Holy Bible* 66).

Here, to show his power to Moses, God burns the bush but not to burn it up. It symbolizes God can control any power in the world and his power is endless. But Moses said, "You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the Lord our God” (*Holy Bible* 76).

Things for God must be burnt. Then God can get it. Fire is a way to communicate with God. Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. God said that “Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you” (*Holy Bibl* 88).

From another aspect, this reveals fire is the only way to communicate with God.

“Then take them from their hands and burn them on the altar along with the burnt

offering for a pleasing aroma to the Lord , an offering made to the Lord by fire.” (*Holy Bible* 98).

“Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (*Holy Bible* 114).

God likes the aroma of burnt offerings i.e. washed inner parts and legs. Water is used to wash while fire is the way to communicate with God.

“He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.

4He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree” (*Holy Bible* 507) .

Here, David’s son Ahaz burns his son to try to please God. Here fire means the end of life.

In the novel, we know the fire from some other people’s mouth. One person shouts that it’s a big fire and from the person we know it is Burden’s house is on fire. Her house is big enough to make so much smoke. The writer does not depict the big fire directly. From other people, we can know that Burden’s house is on fire. This way makes us think more in our mind whether Burden gets hurt in the fire. Christmas burns Burden’s house and kills Burden. From then on, he begins to run away. Because of her connection with black people and her belief on religion, Burden is considered to be a person from other town, although she lives in Jefferson for a long time. At the time when Christmas and Burden live together and have close relationship, Christmas likes Burden. At last, Christmas kills Burden and burns her house. This image has the same

meaning with Bible. Fire is the symbol of death and destruction. He burns the house, and at the same time, kills himself. As a matter of fact, even Joe doesn't kill Burden, and Burden is going to kill him. She has two bullets in her gun. Her intention is very clear. i.e. to kill herself and Joe. Joe's killing Burden does not only mean to break with his traditional life, but also means the break with the northern people which are represented by Burden. To kill Burden preserves his dignity again. It also means the end of his life. Burden wants Joe to pray and study law to take her businesses. But Joe always does not want to do these things. We can know that Joe resists religion on a very high level. After seven days, he walks on the street in Mottstown. He cuts his hair and buys new shirt and tie. This means he looked forward to a new life, although this beginning means the end of his life. When he keeps close relationship with Burden, he still resists her. Burden wants him to pray with her, but he resists. In the end, he kills Burden and is sold out by Lucas, a Judas kind people. This experience is the same with Jesus. Judas sold out Jesus for money reason. Joe is sold out by Locus for 1000. Even Lucas and Judas's name are almost the same. The sheriff gets the dogs to trace Christmas, but he hates the dogs which can run faster than him. He shouts and curses the dogs and is afraid that the dogs can find Christmas first. He tells everyone it is he who reports Christmas first and he wants fair justice. But all he wants are the money with which he can live better. The snobbish character is depicted fully. The experiences of Joe and Jesus have something in common, but there are still something different. Jesus drops the last drop of blood for all the people while Joe is the tragedy of the time.

After Joe reaches Jefferson, he meets Burden. They have close relationship. When Burden tells him that she is pregnant, Joe is thinking he should go, and he should leave this town. He does not belong to anywhere, and has no home. But, just like any man in love, he does many things and has many excuses to stay. When Brown says that he is a nigger, he beats Brown with anger. Later, he hears other voices of times, names and places. Even he does not know these names, times and places, he seems like to be aware of those and they really exists in his life. He thinks that God may know him and

love him. God may see all his imagination. And God loves him. Then, when he lies down, he thinks that God loves him. When we read this, we may feel sad. He doesn't want to be a nigger in his deep heart, but he uses a violent way to say that he is not a nigger. At night, he thinks that God also loves him. Whether this is because that he is lonely, has no relative or has no people to truly love him. However, whether he is a nigger or not, in this whole novel, Faulkner does not clearly say. He can not fall asleep in the night, and often sleeps later than midnight. He thinks that all because Burden begins to pray over him. And then he suddenly begins to speak loud. It seems that he encourages himself to believe that the reason why he can not sleep is the pray from Burden. He thinks the basic reason he can not sleep is the pray of Miss Burden's pray. That he suddenly speaks loud means he is not confident with his own words. He wants to make himself believe this thought through this way. On one hand, he wants God love him. On the other hand, he stops Burden to pray over him and kills Burden for this reason. His inner world is very complicated. Finally, He is caught in Mottstown and he is killed.

Meanwhile, the fire also means hope and new life. After this big fire, Miss Burden gets a rebirth. The relationship with Joe makes her feel degenerated. When Joe refuses to pray with her, she knows that her life is hopeless. She can have a new life only after she dies. So, she prepares two bullets for herself and Joe. Meanwhile, Joe rebirth from his death. He has a chance to run away before he is caught by people. He even does not resist. He is killed by a crazy racist even Joe has a gun. He also wants to have a new birth after he dies. Hightower also walks in a new life after the fire. He changes totally. Before the fire, he does not want to communicate with other people. After the fire, he realizes people need connection with each other. Even when Joe is going to be killed by people, he helps Joe. This means Hightower's new start.

Joe's tragedy is inevitable. All the people treats him in a bad way. He is also very cruel. The prejudice and stubbornness lead to Joe's tragedy. Faulkner wants people to realize those prejudice and stubbornness and to correct them.

Chapter two Biblical Narrative Structure

Canadian culture critic, Northrop Frye, does a deep research on Bible and literature. His famous work *the Great code: the Bible and Literature* opens our mind on the relationship between Bible and literature. This book shows us how the Bible and literary works exert effects on our inner world and spirit. Religion and literary works mainly depict and reveal our inner world and spirit. In the second chapter of this book, Frye discussed the narrative structure of the Bible. He thinks that the Bible has narrative structure like a U:

“after people betrayed God, they suffered disaster and enslave. Then people regret and understand. Finally, people was saved at the previous level before they degenerated. This U structure is the standard comedy structure. We can consider the Holy Bible as a holy comedy. It contains such a U narrative structure: at the beginning of Genesis, people lost the tree of life and the water of life; they obtain them in the Revelation. In the middle part, it’s the story of Israel” (Northrop Frye 220).

In literary works, we can find this structure everywhere. The U structure can be called the original narrative structure. There is also a inversed U. It is called the standard tragedy.

This kind of narrative structure also exists in *Light in August*. Faulkner is good at depicting the conflict in people’s mind and spirit. This chapter is going to discuss the U narrative structure and the inversed U structure.

2.1 Lena---U Narrative Structure

The female protagonist in *Light in August* is Lena. In this novel, she seems to be on her way all the time. Although there is only one chapter totally focuses on her, she is

very important in this novel. She is also very important on the theme. It is she that gives this story a good turning point.

Lena Grove's surname "Grove" has the meaning of trees. It also implies the meaning of life. Lena Grove's pregnant history of finding her husband fits the image of forest goddess. Faulkner also wants to reflect the image of mother earth. We can say, Lena Grove in William Faulkner's work is the embodiment of the earth mother. Goddess of the earth mother is the Goddess of reproduction, a symbol of fertility, reproduction; and Lena Grove embodies the characters of life, peace, and body health. A kind of image feature of the earth mother is the meaning the author attempts to give to the readers. Many critics think Lena is the symbol of the Virgin Mary, Byron Bunch who has been helping with her is the symbol of Joseph. Lena appears in August which is the day of the Feast of Assumption in Caesar Augustus' age. She wears blue which is the color of the Virgin Mary, and she also takes a palm fan. We can see from the plot that Lena's pregnancy and finding her husband have something in common with Virgin Mary's receiving the spirit and pregnancy. Faulkner shapes the character of Lena, and he intends to shape the impersonal symbol which can last forever. Her travel in the novel not only builds a framework for the entire novel, but also hints a rural background of the simple life. She is shining with natural simplicity, her kind spirit, perseverant, optimistic and self spirit. We can say that she is the specific symbol of glory of 'light in August'.

Faulkner's characters are almost extreme. Most people have a hideous face. Contradictions, and constantly hurt each other, indifference, cruelty and violence (such as the *Temple* in particular), anxiety, these emotions always exist in the fiction. The female image, such as Lena, who is a perfect people which can often make people feel surprised. In his southern life, William Faulkner always depicts cruel and violent environment, this also is the main ingredient in his novels. And in order to balance the novel - perhaps in order to balance his beliefs, he creates such perfect Lena, almost as an angel. Such extreme shows an unreal way, also indirectly makes his novels a step closer to the myth.

Lena is a country girl. Although she wants to live in the city, she is still a country girl. She lives in a log house with three rooms and a hall and without screens. It's a room lighted by a bugswirled kerosene lamp. The floor is worn smoothly like old silver by naked feet. Her living condition is not good. Her mother and father died when she was young. She lives in her brother's house. When she finds that she is pregnant, she goes out to find her husband. She only takes a palm leaf fan and a small bundle tied neatly in a bandanna handkerchief. Meanwhile she has only thirty-five cents in nickels and dimes. With such little things, she goes on her way. She gets much help on her way to Jefferson. On her way, she meets Armstid whom she has never known before. He does not touch her and tells her that she can come and stay in his house for the night . Even his wife stays in house, but he is not afraid his wife will be unhappy and the womenfolks. He tells her that he will take her on to Varner's first thing in the morning and she can get a ride into town. Armstid keeps her staying at his house. When Ms. Armstid meets her, Ms. Armstid is not unhappy but helps her. She violently opens her drawer and produces a metal box and opens it with a key which is suspended on her neck and takes out a cloth sack which she opens and produces a small china effigy of rooster with a slot in its back. It jingles with coins when she moves it and shakes it violently on the top of the dresser, shaking it from the slot coins in a meagre dribbling. She gives her money to Lena. When Lena finally reaches Jefferson she finds that Lucas does not want to live with her. He runs away just after they meet each other again. Then, Lena finds that she must go on her way to find Lucas again. She walks on the country road again. The novel ends here. When she decides to go on her way again, her narrative structure raises again to the beginning, i.e. the country road. Here, her U structure finishes.

Lena's story embodies the U structure. The beginning and ending is the country road. The middle part is her experience in Jefferson. According to our analysis, the country road means the ideal living condition. Like the structure in the Bible, at the beginning of Genesis, people lost the tree of life and the water of life; they obtain them

in the Revelation. In the middle part, it's the story of Israel. In Faulkner's mind, Jefferson is controlled by Puritanism. Only when she goes back to the country road, she can get a free life.

Faulkner expresses he is anti-Puritanism from Lena's U structure. Lena comes to Jefferson to find Lucas who is the father of her child. He is a snobbish and selfish people. He sells Joe out when he finds he could get 1000 if he catches Joe. What he want is money. Finally, Lena leaves Jefferson. She goes back to the country road. We could find that the U structure embodies the conflict between Puritanism and anti-Puritanism. All these show Faulkner's conflict in mind. Anti-Puritanism wins. This novel begins with Lena and ends with Lena. Other people and other things are contained in this framework.

2.2 Joe---Inverted U Narrative Structure

Joe is the male protagonist in this novel. His story is an inverted U structure. His story covers the most part of the novel. So some critics think that *Light in August* is a story about him. Joe is very important in this novel, but this novel contains two stories, i.e. Lena and Joe. When we separate his story, we could find that his story is an inversed U structure. His life begins with the hand of heretic. His life also ends with the hand of heretic. In the middle time, he runs away in the outdoor field. Finally, he finds the real peace in mind. It is at that time that he reaches the highest stage in his life, i.e. the turning point.

In Faulkner's works, the light of human nature is achieved with two open clues and finally agreed in a line that is a pain, martyrdom natural line. Generally speaking Joe Christmas is the former. The torture and strike for thirty years and self searching and the pursuit of identity for thirty years end in pain and despair. As his name means, i.e. suffering and martyrdom. He is the contradiction offering of many social problems especially racism. In particular, he is also a burning lamp which can alert the folly and

intolerance secular spirit. They won't forget it. No matter how quiet valley is, no matter how quiet and pleasant beside the ancient river, or on any child's pure mirror-like face, they will remember the old disaster, and grow into a new hope. But Faulkner's understanding of the original meaning of people is still a warning on people who is still in confusion and still blindly guided by the force of alienation. All these are at the expense of the life. But Joe's understanding on the truth in the suffering and destruction is the original existence of people. The other line of the novel is Lena Grove's natural beauty. Lena Groove is the embodiment of brightness, beautiful, natural, and hopefulness, she is also the first ray of light in Faulkner's writing career. She is the modern spirit which is more ancient than the Christian civilization spirit. Her picture of travel on the road is just like the ancient paintings on the urn, moving without move since ancient times is the beauty of human nature which is praised by Faulkner. The beauty of human nature is the immortal courage, honor, hope, pride, compassion and pity and sacrifice. Lena is a person who has all these virtues. In the final moment of Joe Christmas, he also reveals all these virtues. The gun in his hand becomes the symbol of human power and forgiveness. Joe Christmas is Faulkner's victim of the social alienation. After struggling to inquire, he suddenly look back and at last find the his own identity, which perfectly coincides the embodiment of Lena Grove's virtue that is people's former glory. This is Faulkner's suggestion to the struggling spirit of modern people.

All Joe's life has close relationship with religion. His grandfather's behavior kills his mother and father, so he lost the love of parents. Then, he is sent to orphan asylum. His grandfather goes there to be a janitor. He lives a hard life in the orphan asylum. His grandfather guards him there in the name of God, waiting to send him to the hell. Five years later, he is taken by his adoptive father who is a cold-blooded Puritan. In his youth, nobody really cares about him. His adoptive mother treats him nicely, but she only wants him to suffer the atrocity silently like her. He becomes an individual since he fights with his adoptive father. Then, he left his home and wanders around. He arrive in

Jefferson where he meets his lover Joanna Burden. She is an old virgin. In Burden's mind, color of the skin is very important. She is deeply affected by her grandfather who is a Calvinist. Joe kills Burden and runs away again. Finally, he is caught by a man who castrates him and kills him. Joe's death does not only mean the end of life, but also mean forever darkness. In the novel, Puritanism is the core thought.

Compared with Lena's turning point, Joe's inversed U narrative structure turning point is Joe's leaving the town. In the wild country road, he feels calm and quiet. It is in that day that Lena walks in Jefferson. Joe walks in the wild. It is the only and last day he walks in the sun.

"It is just dawn, daylight: that gray and lonely suspension filled with the peaceful and tentative waking of birds. The air, inbreathed, is like spring water. He breathes deep and slow, feeling with each breath himself diffuse in the neutral grayness, becoming one with loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair. 'That was all I wanted,' he thinks in a quiet and slow amazement. 'That was all, for thirty years. That didn't seem to be a whole lot to ask in thirty years.'" (Faulkner 183).

After he runs away to the wild, the calmness in his inner world is the only thing he wants for thirty years. This narrative structure helps the writer express the anti-Puritanism. Joe's life is ruined by all the people around him. All the people around him are affected deeply by religion. He never has the chance to have connection with people like Lena. His life is controlled by religion. He does not know who he is and he is never going to know. To be him, the only way is to refuse all the people, i.e. be marginalized. He tries to live like a marginalized people, but no one agrees him. The root of his tragedy is that he does not know who he is and he is never going to know. This is the most tragic thing in the world. By this meaning, Faulkner borrows an inversed U narrative structure to create such a character. All these show how Puritanism and racialism affect people. Then, Faulkner's religious attitude appears, i.e. break the

darkness and evil by love and patience, then, people can be saved. Even there are many evils in the society and people's life, we still should believe the good things and leave the wrong so that we can get along our path well.

Chapter three Christian Characters in *Light in August*

There are many Christian characters in *Light in August*, like Puritan or Calvinist. Faulkner wants the readers to know that even life is hard and full of evil, people should still believe the good aspect and break the dark and evil by love and patience, like Lena. Lena always on her way and she is not in hurry. Her heart is full of love and patience. Other characters like Hines and McEachern, their hearts are full of evil. They receive the bad aspect of religion. This chapter purports to argue how the author installs the Puritan and Calvinist in the novel in order to criticize those characters, aiming at exposing the bad aspects of Puritanism and Calvinism as well as praising the good aspect of Christian.

3.1 Joe Christmas---the Scapegoat of Human Being

Joe Christmas is a Christian character in this novel. He is the scapegoat of human being. Christmas is abandoned before the orphan asylum around the Christmas, so he is named Christmas. The abbreviation of his name is the same as Jesus Christ. He comes to Jefferson when he is 33 years old. It is similar with Crucifixion of Jesus. Crucifixion happened when Jesus was 33 years old and Christmas walked in the last part of his life in his 33 years old. He comes to the town on a Friday. Jesus was nailed on cross on a Friday, too. It seems like that this hinted his tragedy at the beginning of this novel. When his grandfather abandons him before the orphan asylum, his grandfather works as a janitor in the orphan asylum to keep watch on his behavior. At the beginning of his life, he is threatened by hidden power. Five years later, he is sent to his adoptive father. His adoptive father keeps beating him. He believes that he could change Joe's mind to be a devout believer of Southern Puritan. When Joe is 33 years old, He comes to Jefferson. Byron Bunch witnesses his coming. They become so-called good friends. They sell wine secretly. After he kills his lover Burden, he runs away on a Friday. On his way he

always calculates the day of the week. It seems like that this is very urgent and important. It seems like that he is going to accomplish something important on a definite day or act. Before he sleeps, he always considers what day it is. He feels it is urgent to know what day it is. After he wakes up, he thinks that all the things are normal.

“What day of the week is this? Thursday? Friday? What? What day? I am not going to hurt you.”

“It’s Friday,” the negro says. “O Lawd God, it’s Friday.”

“Friday,” Christmas says. Again he jerks his head. “Get on.” The whip falls, the mules surge forward. This wagon too whirls from sight at a dead run, the whip rising and falling. But Christmas has already turned and entered the woods again” (Faulkner 186).

When he finally knows it is Friday, he feels good. “He feels dry and light. ‘I don’t have to bother about having to eat anymore,’ he thinks. ‘That’s what it is.’”. Seven days after he runs away, he thinks that the meaning of dead is free, and there is no need to think about what to eat. Then, on Friday when Jesus died, he chooses to die. We can think that the writer consciously does a comparison with Jesus’s story. On his way, he always counts the day and he chooses Friday to surrender himself in Mottztown. All the important days are Fridays. Lena’s baby is born on the morning of Monday, i.e. just after Joe’s death. Joe’s grandmother holds Lena’s baby and calls Joe. Everything begins again after his death. Lena’s child is born on the next morning. It’s a Sunday night.

Joe is a tragic character. All his life is affected deeply by Puritan and Calvinist.

3.2 Doc Hines

After writing his work in Jefferson, in the next chapter, the writer tells the story of

Joe's childhood. His grandfather is a cruel and crazy Puritan. He thinks that his cruelty is guided by God. He kills his daughter's boyfriend who is thought to be a black (but it's not clear whether he is really a black till the end) and he does not save his daughter when she gives birth to Christmas. However, he does not stop. He considers ruining Joe as his only purpose of life. He often says that all his action is guided by God. Such as,

"I know," he said. "I know evil. Ain't I made evil to get up and walk God's world? A walking pollution in God's own face I made it. Out of the mouths of little children He never concealed it. You have heard them. I never told them to say it, to call him in his rightful nature, by the name of his damnation. I never told them. They knowed. They was told, but it was not by me. I just waited, on His own good time, when He would see fitten to reveal it to His living world. And it's come now. This is the sign, wrote again in womansinning and bitchery" (Faulkner 71).

He never thinks that his behavior is not proper, although he is doing the most cruel thing in the world .i.e. to torture his own grandson. He uses the most malicious words to curse his daughter and his grandson just because his daughter has a baby with a black, and even nobody knows whether he is a black. All these show how Calvinism controls his mind and behavior, and how evil it is. When the dietician asks him how to cope with Joe, he says that she will wait as he waits. He waits there for five years to move and show his will to the Lord. The Lord does it and the dietician shall wait, too. When the Lord is ready for something, He will show his will to them. He sends Joe to the orphan asylum. And he goes there to be the janitor. At last, Joe is taken by his adopter.

Hines not only guards him when he is young but also tells him that is a nigger. When Joe is caught in Mottztown, he becomes crazy. Just when he hears Christmas' name, he calls all the people to kill him. "They had not stopped his mouth. 'Kill the bastard!' he cried. Kill him. Kill him" (Faulkner 191).

He wants to kill Joe not because Joe kills someone, but only because he is Joe, and

Joe is his grandson, the little baster and nigger. He not only tells Joe he is lower than other people when Joe is young, but also hates him when Joe is going to die. Although his words are opposed by Joe, Hines gives Joe a character of resistance. Hines's behavior is horrible. All these are because Puritanism in his mind.

According to his words to the woman, we can feel that Hines think that he is doing the rightest thing in the world. He thinks the justice is to torture Joe and to make him die in pain. He thinks he is making God's will come true. This crazy religion attitude kills his daughter and grandson. He thinks that black people are cursed by God and God is going to punish people who do not believe in him. He does not even realize there are many kinds of people with other colors of skin and many kinds of people have other beliefs. To kill a person just because his skin color and beliefs is what Faulkner wants to deny. Although this kind of prejudice may exist nowadays, we must realize it and correct it.

3.3 McEachern

Joe's adoptive father is a Puritan. All his atrocity is in the name of God with no emotion. He lashes Joe just like God in the Old Testament. Whenever Joe can not remember religious doctrine, he begins to strike him.

“Then the boy stood, his trousers collapsed about his feet, his legs revealed beneath his brief shirt. He stood, slight and erect. When the strap fell he did not flinch, no quiver passed over his face. He was looking straight ahead, with a rapt, calm expression like a monk in a picture. McEachern began to strike methodically, with slow and deliberate force, still without heat or anger. It would have been hard to say which face was the more rapt, more calm, more convinced” (Faulkner 83).

After Joe is taken by his adoptive father, his adoptive father also treats him in a bad

way. He always beats him. McEachern is a crazy Puritan.

“His voice was not unkind. It was not human, personal, at all. It was just cold, implacable, like written or printed words” (Faulkner 83).

Cold, implacable, as it is written or printed. These are the adjectives Faulkner uses to depict McEachern. When he is young he resists his adoptive father. McEachern is a cold-hearted person and a crazy Puritan. He compels Joe to read the Bible. But Joe resists it in a hard way. When McEachern beats him, he does not yield. Finally, he beats McEachern with a chair, but he runs away. McEachern wants Joe to obey his religion and bears his name. But Joe is not listening. He is not bothered about it. Especially, he does not care anymore than if the man says the day is hot when it is not. He doesn't even bother to say to himself, and his name is not McEachern. His name is Christmas. In the novel, McEachern says many times “take the book.”. All he wants is Joe's yield. He finishes, rises and jumps to his feet. The boy still kneels. He does not move at all. But his eyes are open (his face are never hidden or even lowered) and his face is quite calm, peaceful, and inscrutable. He hears the man fumbling at the table on which the lamp sits. A match is scraped with red and yellow flames spurting out of the fire. The flame steadies upon the wick, beneath the globe upon which the man's hand appears now as if it is dipped in blood. The shadows whirl and steadies McEachern lifts something from the table beside the lamp, the catechism. He looks down at the boy, a nose, a jutting cheek, granitelike skin, a bearded face and the spectacled eyesocket. “Take the book,” he says again. In his mind, Joe is not an individual but only material. Joe should do what he is told to. Otherwise, Joe is going to be beaten at once.

Mrs. McEachern treats him nice. she will secretly prepare dishes for him and insist on that he must eat those dishes secretly. Although he does not want to accept those dishes, he still finishes them. He is also afraid that McEachern is going to know it, but he also knows that McEachern does not care about this. At night, Ms. McEachern

begins to prepare dishes for him. He thinks that this will last forever till the end of his life. She is clumsy and does some efforts in vain. She is frustrated, fumble and dumb. He thinks that all her life is because her frustration, fumbling and dumb instinctly. He thinks that she is trying to make him cry, and then she thinks that they will have him. But his step-mother loves him like Jesus liked his people. She washes his feet and feeds

“Perhaps, if he were thinking at all, he believed that he had been guided and were now being propelled by some militant Michael Himself as he entered the room. Apparently his eyes were not even momentarily at fault with the sudden light and the motion as he thrust among bodies with turned heads as, followed by a wake of astonishment and incipient pandemonium, he ran toward the youth whom he had adopted of his own free will and whom he had tried to raise as he was convinced was right” (Faulkner 111).

From that night on, Mrs. McEachern begins to wash his feet. Faulkner uses a lot of Biblical stories and allusions. Washing feet is one of them. By using the allusions, the novel enriches a lot on culture and the content.

She kneels before Joe and tries to take off his shoes. Joe does not realize what she is going to do. But when he realizes, he puts her hands away and takes his shoes off by himself and holds the shoes in his hands. But she insists on stripping off his stockings. Then, she gets a basin of hot water immediately. Whoever seems to be this may know that she must prepare and wait for a whole day. He says that he has washes his feet on the previous day. But she does not answer and move on. She is a little clumsy and her hands fumble on his feet.

He didn't try to help her now. He didn't know what she was trying to do, not even when he was sitting with his cold feet in the warm water. He didn't know that that was all, because it felt too good. He was waiting for the rest of it to begin; the part that would not be pleasant, whatever it would be. This had never happened to him before

either” (Faulkner 93).

This depicted Mrs. McEachern washes her feet. In *Bible*, washing feet appears many times. In Numbers, we know

“For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. (*Holy Bible* 178).

In the last dinner, death is coming. This sign is the last words which the lord tells people: you must wash feet for each other. Washing feet means the love and pardon from God. Firstly, it means deep love and total pardon from God. He says he love all the people who belong to him, then he will love them forever. So, after the dinner, He washes feet for his follower. Washing feet for people is a menial work. Nevertheless, he loves his people, and washes feet for them. And at that time, the people does not understand what the Lord means and the order from God, so they fight for the status crazily. But the Lord still washes their feet and tells them to love each other. This means the Lord pardons them fully. If anyone regrets with his heart and soul, the Lord is going to save him. So, we must love each other and obey what the Lord says. Secondly, the Lord requires the followers to pursue holy and purely. The Lord says that everyone who takes a bath, and washes his feet, is going to be clean, otherwise, he is not clean. This means the Lord requires the followers to pursue a holy and pure life. When people receive the baptism from the Lord, then his guilt is going to get the pardon from the Lord. When he receives the feet washing, he receives the love and remind from the Lord. He can be holy and pure in his own power with the guide from the Holy Spirit, and it manifests the Lord's glory. Thirdly, it means the modest and care from the Lord. In the last dinner, the Lord takes His clothes off, and it means the Lord leaves the throne of glory and puts down his honorable status; and taking a handkerchief band on his waist like a servant to wash the feet for his followers. All these mean the modesty of the Lord.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (*Holy Bible* 981).

The Lord gives us an example from washing the feet. He comes to serve people but not to be served. He tells his followers even though the Lord washes their feet, they must wash feet for each other. The followers should study the Lord and be modest. They must help and serve each other without any complaint and make the church develop gradually and forever. Last, the Lord wants the followers be different from Him. When the Lord washes feet for the followers, Peter is not dare to receive the foot washing from the Lord because he knows deeply in his heart that the Lord is the teacher of him. Could any student receive the foot washing from his teacher? He says firmly that the Lord should never wash his feet. But the Lord says that what He have done they maybe can not understand at that time, but they are going to know one day. And He emphasizes if they does not wash, they would not have any different from Him. Then Peter changes his mind and says that he wants the Lord to wash his feet and his hand and head. We could see that he is deeply afraid to be the same with the Lord. So Foot Washing is different with the common washing. Only when people accept the Foot Washing can be different from the Lord.

McEachern shouts at his wife that she is a clumsier liar than Joe. His voice is harsh, measured and without heat. Joe lies in his bed but he is not listening. He shout “Kneel down. Kneel down. KNEEL DOWN, WOMAN. Ask grace and pardon of God; not of me.” (Faulkner 93). These words are said from a husband to his wife. McEachern treats his wife like she is not a people. He treats everyone like this.

3.4 Calvin Burden and Miss Burden

Another character is Burden’s grandfather who has an origin from New England. He is a theological fanaticism like Doc Hines. Bleikasten writes that Calvin is “the abolitionist’s militant Negro-philial and the white supremacist’s demented Negro-phobia

are antithetical rationalizations of the same racist delirium” (85).

He always drinks too much whiskey, especially on Saturday nights. He comes home with strong whiskey smell and with the sound of his own ranting. Then, he would wake up his children with his hard hand. The children's mother died when they were young, and left three girls lived with their father. To treat children in this way is hard to believe in our mind. But a crazy Calvinism could do it. So, in Miss Burden's mind, hatred is very important. Calvin tells the children to let the other people all go to their own benighted hell, but he will beat the loving God into the four children as long as he can raise his arm. He thinks that beating is a way of love. Ironically, he reads the Spanish Bible though he can not understand it. He learned Spanish from the priests in California when he was young. As soon as the child can walk, Calvin begins to read the Spanish Bible to the children in Spanish. He takes the Spanish Bible from California. The Spanish Bible is full of the fine, sonorous flowing of mysticism in a foreign tongue and harsh, extemporised dissertations which consists half of the bleak and bloodless logic which he remembered from his father on interminable New England Sundays. This is a good satire that Calvinist does not do what God tells them to do, but to cheat and make a fool of people. Their God is Calvinized God. When he was young, he turned Catholic. He even lived in a monastery for a year. Ten years later he reached Missouri from the west. He got married three weeks after he arrived. After the wedding he said that he thought he had better settle down. Then, he began to settle down that day. While the wedding celebration is still in progress, he begins to formally deny allegiance to the Catholic churches. He does this in a saloon. He insists that every one present must listen to him and state their objections; he is a little insistent on their objections, though nobody objects him, that is, up to the time he is led away by friends. The next day he says that he really means it. Anyhow, he would not belong to a church full of slaveholders. He thinks that his belief is very important to other people, but nobody pays attention to him. He buys a home in Saint Louis, and a year later he becomes a father. He says then that he denied the Catholic church a year ago for the sake of his

son's soul; almost as soon as the boy is born, he sets about to imbue the child with the religion of his New England forebears. There is no Unitarian meetinghouse available, and Burden could not read the English Bible. When the boy is about five, Burden kills a man in an argument over slavery and has to leave Saint Louis with his family. He kills a man just for an argument. We could know how important the slavery and religion are in his mind. The cold-blooded family education makes his son Nathaniel run away at the age of fourteen. Calvin also has profound influence on Miss Burden. The mission of family leads to Miss Burden's painful life. She has connection with black people and she always helps black people in her life. But in her deep thought she has prejudice on black people. She forgets her age and gender to help black people just because her mission of family which comes from her grandfather Calvin. She sits before the desk to write to young and old, talks to black women to be the listener in 40 years. She writes to female students in college and high school and their school mates in south to give them useful advice. She may leave home to those schools and talk to the students and teachers. During her first step with Joe, she behaves just like a man. Her mantrained muscles and the mantrained habit of thinking born of heritage and environment. Joe has to fight with those mantrained muscles and habits of thinking to the final instant. When she makes any decision, there is no feminine hesitation, no coyness of desire and intention to succumb at last. It seems that Joe is struggling physically with another man for an object of no actual value to wither, like that they are struggling on principle alone. She is just like a man because her 20-year lonely life. She forgets she is a woman or she could control her desire in a good way. On the very next day, when he is looking at her, being spoken to her, it seems that memory of less than twelve hours knew to be true could never happened. After she tells Joe about her family history and mission, their relationship develops to the second stage. She lost in sex in the night, but in the day time, she is still the manlike woman who is cold and detached. It seems that the oppressive desire disappeared. During that period (it could not be called a honeymoon) Christmas watches her pass through every avatar of a woman in love. She reveals an

unexpected and infallible instinct for intrigue. She insists on a place for concealing notes, letters. It is in a hollow fence post below the rotting stable. Joe never sees her put a note there, yet she insists on his visiting it daily; when he does so, the letter would be there. When he does not visit the place and lies to her, he would find that she has already set traps to catch him in the lie; she cries and weeps. In the second stage, she just likes a woman in love. She would hide in the bushes, waiting for Joe to find her and have sex with her. She is completely corrupted. Joe would have to seek her about the dark house until he finds her, hidden, in closets, in empty rooms, waiting, panting, her eyes in the dark glowing like the eyes of cats. Now and then she appoints trysts beneath certain shrubs about the grounds, where he would find her naked, or with her clothing half torn to ribbons upon her, in the wild throes of nymphomania, her body gleaming in the slow shifting from one to another of such formally erotic attitudes and gestures as a Beardsley of the time of Petronius might have drawn. All these are revenge and remedy for her loneliness. From the first stage to the second, Joe thinks that there are two poor people in her body. On the second stage, Burden wants to seek salvation, i.e. have a baby with Joe. But later, she finds she can not have a baby. Then, she turns to Joe. She wants Joe to acknowledge his black identity and help her save black people. Burden's behavior is strange and hard to understand. But all these are because of her strict family education and superior thought to be a white people. In old South, people think black people are low and dirty while white people are in a high grade. After the civil war, black people's political grade is gradually promoted. But white people still occupy the leading position. Although white people want to help black people, but they still think that white people takes the leading position. Her father grew hatred to black people in her mind when she was a little girl. She helps black people all her life, but in her deep thought, she discriminates against black people deeply in her heart. For her, black people are a curse by God. She thinks that it's her obligation to save them, but the black are never going to be equal with the white. So, when Joe refuses to study law and help black people, Burden wants to shot him. But, at last, she is killed by Joe. Burden is a

tragic character. She is blinded by family mission while she wants to be loved.

Conclusion

There are three people who have close relationship with Joe. All of them have close relationships with religion. His grandfather wants to torture him since his birth. He keeps watch on him when he is a child in the orphan asylum. When he is found in Mottztown, Hines also wants to kill him. Joe's adoptive father beats him with cold face because he does not want to read and recite *Bible*. Burden is killed by him because he does not want to pray with her and does not want to take her businesses. At last, he kills her and runs away. Although Joe does not believe in any religion, his life has close relationship with religion and he is always oppressed cruelly by it. Faulkner quotes a lot from *Bible* in many ways, like story, images, and so on. He publicly says that he believes in God. In his works, he rationally criticizes Calvinism which oppresses cruelly on human nature. This thesis discussed Faulkner's religious attitude based on the biblical images in *Light in August*, the biblical narrative structure and the Christian characters. He criticizes the extreme aspect of Puritanism and Calvinism, i.e. cruelty and selfishness from the deep of his heart but he still believes the good aspect of religion, i.e. tolerance and goodness. In all his works, he never consider God as the center of his write. As he himself emphasizes, he is consistently describing people. He always considers people as the beginning and the ending. So the core of his thought is humanism. Even there are many evils in the society and people's lives, we should still believe good things and left the wrong so that we can get along our path well. When he went to Japan in 1955, a journalist insisted on asking him which school he belongs to. He answered: "I want to say, and I hope the only school I belongs to and the only school I want to belongs to is humanism." (Robert Jelliffe 95).

In *Light in August*, Joe's tragedy is caused by religion. From the story of Joe, Faulkner wants to tell the reader that stubborn and rigid belief should not be kept in the way of religion. But from the story of Lena, Faulkner wants to tell the reader that life is bright and full of hope. People can be saved by love and patience. Lena comes all the

way to Jefferson, she is helped by many people, including Joe's grandmother. When Faulkner does his lecture in university of Virginia, he says that light in August is soft and transparent. It seems that the light is not come from the sky but comes from the ancient time, or maybe come from Greece, from the angle of forest or farming who comes from the mount of Olympic. Faulkner feels the light in August is the light which is older than the Christian civilization. He says that the light has connection with Lena. The story of Joe and Lena alternately moves on in this novel, and they are two lively comparison. They never meet each other, but they exist in the same novel. After Joe is killed, Lena gives birth to her baby. Faulkner wants to tell us that the society exists a very long time, and a generation of people may take the place of the previous generation. Some people may meet tragedies, but we could see hope in it. The end of one people is not the end of human being. After one tragedy, there is going to be more comedy. Religion is a part of people's life, but people are those who we should pay the most attention on. Faulkner puts Joe's many kinds of tragedies on the holy light in August. To public his tragedy, we can see the cruel of Puritanism and Calvinism and we can see clearly Joe's persistence to seek his identity. He encourages himself in the hopeless place. We can see his spirit when he is in the dark. This spirit shines in the dark place. It's even brighter than the light in August.

From the beginning to the end, the novel gives us a deep impression: Jefferson is closed backward American southern society participated by positive public with strong social public opinion. It is obvious that the spiritual pillar of the society is traditional moral ideas and the discipline of religious doctrine. It requires that the life of everyone act according to its specification. Any deviations by the standards of speech will be denounced by the public views of behavior. Such a society must be close, foreign exclusive, a hotbed of social prejudice and racial discrimination.

Through the discussion on the biblical images, Christian characters and the biblical narrative structure, we can know Faulkner's religious attitude clearly, i.e. human beings have a desperate longing for relief and salvation. People can get negative thought from

religion but still can get positive thought from religion. He criticizes the extreme aspects of Puritanism and Calvinism, i.e. cruelty and selfishness from the deep of his heart but he still believes the good aspects of religion, i.e. tolerance and goodness.

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