Beloved: Symbols Analysis

Beloved, Toni Morrison’s novel, is considered a most representative work. The novel tells the story of a runaway slave Sethe who kills her daughter in order to get her out of slavery. Beloved is the name that Sethe gave her dead daughter. The most striking artistic feature of this novel is that the author uses a lot of metaphors in the book. These metaphors become important verbal tools throughout the novel and the main thread of the story development. This paper aims to reveal the historical legacy of slavery and its impact on people's psychology by analyzing the metaphors of trees, name of characters, and color.

The image of 'tree' appears frequently. In literary works, it is often endowed with different connotations. In Beloved, the tree is the main character and source of protection. Paul D believes that trees are objects that can be trusted and approached. So he chose a special tree and named it brother. When he had finished all the hard work, he often came to the tree and talked to it, seeing it as a refuge for him to relax. Denver is another important character in the novel. Trees have also had an important impact on her life. Denver and her mother lived in a lonely house haunted by ghosts all year round. Therefore, it is necessary for her to find a safe haven from the harsh reality. As a result, the 'emerald closet' in the boxwood became a place that brought her peace. In addition, the 'tree' on Sethe's back was given a different meaning. For example, Denver saw the treelike scar on Sethe's back as a 'bitter cherry tree' and told Sethe that a whole tree had grown on her back and was blossoming. For Amy, 'tree' also has some deep meaning, it symbolizes hope and light. Because Amy knew so little about Sethe's past life, she saw the tree as a symbol of warmth and happiness. Sethe and Amy both saw a bright future in Denver's birth. When Denver told Sethe about her positive attitude toward the tree, Sethe felt love and strength, too. At that time, she was confident and optimistic, at the same time, she also changed her view of trees. From this point of view, it can be concluded that the trees here represent vitality and energy. For Paul D, the word 'tree' on sethe's back had a more complex meaning. When Sethe first talked to Paul D about it, his eagerness to find evidence reminded him of his bitter experience at sweet home. There, slave owners treated slaves as animals rather than people. In other words, slaves only existed for the labor they provided. So for Paul D and many, the tree on sethe's back was a mark of painful memories of past lives.

In Beloved, most of the characters' names have obscure meanings. For example the “schoolteacher”, which is full of irony. However, it is not difficult to see from the novel Beloved that Morrison gave Mr. Garner a very meaningful name -- 'schoolteacher' when he helped him manage the slave owner's manor. These self-righteous 'schoolteachers' never consider the opinions of blacks and educate them in a variety of ways. The character 'schoolteacher' shows the oppression and blasphemy of black people by white people. Through the detailed description of 'schoolteacher', Morrison shows that if black people want to be free, they must have their own thoughts, and cannot let white people's colonial and hegemonic thoughts control their thoughts. The figure Beloved is a metaphor for the slaves on the slave ships from Africa to North America, and the name beloved is a metaphor for those who died in slavery. Beloved has multiple identities. Readers can see the theme of the novel through the name of the novel in the reading process. To a large extent, beloved has become a mirror in black history. Plug wire as the most typical heroines in the novel, she is proud and have a strong self-esteem, the author at

the time of its name, refer to the 'bible' in the fourth chapter 25, plug wire metaphor under the name of the plug wire deep maternal love, to the children through the plug wire the character image can reflect the whole race of mother image in Africa. Sethe loved her children too much, she would rather kill their own children than let them become slaves, which shows Sethe's deep love for the children.

Colors mean different things to different people and different cultures. Therefore, in the evaluation of color symbols in literary works, it is necessary to recognize the different meanings of colors in different cultures. Generally speaking, in western civilization, blue is considered conservative and green is harvested and planted. Metaphor achieves its beauty and mystery through the use of color symbols. Color symbol contains the profound meaning of the text, it can express the abstract connotation through the concrete image. As an effective means of creating environment and characters, color has been widely used to express the author's emotion. In beloved, for example, different colors are frequently used throughout the novel. In addition to obvious colors like black and white, Morrison also uses colors like pink and green, each color has not only a literal meaning, but also an implicit meaning. One color that often appears in books is green. It symbolizes growth and rebirth. For example, 'Bent low, Denver could crawl into this room, and once there she could stand all the way up in emerald light.'The return of this' rebuked dead sister signals of Denver 's outgrowing of this sanctuary. The bower serves its purpose, nurturing Denver and allowing it grow in the symbolically green because green symbolizes hope and the future. The green light illuminates Denver's future and makes her an independent woman.

Beloved tells a story of infanticide. A black woman, Sethe killed her daughter to stop her from becoming a slave. Morrison's beloved is unique in its clever use of metaphor. In the novel, these numerous symbolic means are used to reveal the sufferings of slaves.

This paper makes a systematic and detailed interpretation of the symbols in the novel, and explains how symbolism transforms the vague image into vivid image, thus further clarifying and deepening the theme of the novel. Revealing the hidden meanings of colors, trees and names is crucial. Through abundant symbols, the multifaceted theme is demonstrated. In beloved, Morrison focuses on the racial status and inner conflict of black people in the face of the sad past. Therefore, in order to better understand the novel, we need to clearly understand the symbolic meaning of these images.