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# 焦虑与拯救

## —原型批评视角下的《伦敦场地》解读

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# **ANXIETY AND REDEMPTION:**

## **AN ARCHETYPAL PERSPECTIVE ON *LONDON FIELDS* BY MARTIN AMIS**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to analyze Martin Amis's novel *London Fields* from the perspective of archetypal criticism. In this novel, Amis describes an apocalyptic scene of human depravity, faith crisis and the perversion of relationships at the end of the millennium. Readers will find prototypes of the Bible everywhere in the novel when they read it. The main female protagonist, whose prototype is Lucifer the fallen angel, has an evil nature and plans her own death positively and calmly. And at the same time, the author arranges the plot that three murder candidates whose prototype is the Trinity to murder her. There are also many familiar biblical images in the novel, while these images are completely subverted, which is quite ironic. Thus the novel shows that people in this world are barren in spirit, disordered in relationship and fallen in humanity. Throughout the whole book, *London Fields* portrays an apocalyptic scene as the "Revelation" in the Bible. Martin Amis points out the miserable condition of modern people in the sternest way to caution them, wishing them to introspect and stay away from the "spiritual" and "moral" wasteland. This shows Martin Amis's sense of moral mission and his salvation complex.

This thesis consists of five parts. The first part is the introduction. The second, third and fourth parts are the main parts of the thesis. The second part analyzes the archetypes of the main characters in *London Fields*. The murderee Nicola's archetype is Lucifer—the fallen angel. This is because they two share the same character, quality, power and experience. While the three murders in the article are predetermined, their prototype is the Trinity because of both the role they play and their duty in the novel. The third part analyzes the biblical images that appear in *London Fields*, which includes the images of God, Cross, Faith and so on, while these images are completely subverted and ironic. The fourth part macroscopically describes the perversion of all kinds of relationships, which includes the perversion of two genders, the abnormality of the relationship between two generations, the perversion of life and death and the perversion of good and evil. Through its characterization, images and description of perverted relationships, *London Fields* portrays a "doomsday" scene as the "Apocalypse" in

the Bible and shows Amis's deep concern and anxiety for the morality of contemporary British and Western society and his yearning and striving for redemption of the whole society.

**Key Words:** Archetypal Criticism; *London Fields*; Bible; Apocalypse



## 摘 要

本文试图从原型批评的角度分析马丁·艾米斯的长篇小说《伦敦场地》。在这部小说中，马丁·艾米斯勾勒了一幅千年末世景象图：人性堕落，信仰崩溃，各种与人相关的重要关系的倒错扭曲等等，整部小说宛如一部末世启示录。小说女主人公的原型可以看作是堕落天使路西弗，她秉性邪恶，积极冷静地策划着自己的死亡；三位候选谋杀者则可看作是三位一体的体现。小说中还出现了许多圣经中熟悉的意象，不过这些意象均被颠覆，由此具有了强烈的讽刺意味。《伦敦场地》以严厉的手法指出现代人的悲凉处境并予以警示，是希望人类可以自我反省，远离“精神”及“道德”荒原，在某种程度上体现了作者的道德使命感与救世情结。

本文由五部分组成。第一章是引言，第二、三、四章为本文的主体。第二章分析《伦敦场地》主要人物在《圣经》中的原型。其中被谋杀者妮科拉的圣经原型为堕落的天使一路西弗。因为二者具有相似的性格、品质、能力及经历。而文中三位既定的谋杀者，其原型是圣经中的“三位一体”。因为他们三者首先与上帝一般具有着双重角色：在“爱”的同时还有毁灭的力量；其次三者共同承担“谋杀”这一角色。第三章分析《伦敦场地》中出现的种种圣经意象，如“上帝”、“十字架”、“信仰”等等，但这些意象都被彻底颠覆，极具讽刺意味。第四章从宏观角度分析了小说中各种关系的倒错，包括两性的倒错、亲子关系的倒错、生与死的倒错以及善与恶的倒错等等。小说通过上述三个方面刻画出了一幅《启示录》般的“末世”景象图，显示了作者对当代英国社会乃至西方社会道德的深切关注与担忧，也体现了他通过作品警醒世人、拯救社会的渴望与努力。

**关键词：** 原型批评； 《伦敦场地》； 《圣经》； 启示录

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Martin Amis and his *London Fields***

Martin Louis Amis, who was born in 1949, is a British novelist. *Money* and *London Fields* are his best-known novels. Amis served as the Professor of Creative Writing at the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester until 2011 (Page 2). He has received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize because of his memoir *Experience*. And also he has been listed for the Booker Prize twice because of *Time's Arrow* and *Yellow Dog*. Martin Amis was named as one of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945 in 2008 by *The Times* ("The 50 greatest British writers").

Amis's works mainly focus on the Western society of the late capitalism. He often uses grotesque satires to satirize and is called the master of "the new unpleasantness" by the *New York Times*. He is so successful and influential that influenced many British novelists of the late 20th and early 21st centuries and he himself is influenced by Saul Bellow, James Joyce, and Vladimir Nabokov, as well as his father Kingsley Amis. Though his father always comments Martin's works are full of contrived vividness and his showing off for his language skill, the Book Marketing Committee rated him as one of the best young British novelists.

Since the early 1970's, Amis has published twelve novels. They are *The Rachel Papers* (1973), *Dead Babies* (1975), *Success* (1977), *Other People: A Mystery Story* (1981), *Money: A Suicide Note* (1984), *London Fields* (1989), *Time's Arrow* (1991), *The Information* (1995), *Night Train* (1997), *Yellow Dog* (2003) and *House of Meetings* (2006). Among these novels, *The Rachel Papers* won the Somerset Maugham Award and *Time's Arrow*, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. In 2010, after a long period of rewriting, editing and revision, Amis published his long-awaited new novel, *The Pregnant Widow*.

In the 2000s Amis produced little full-length fictions, while his non-fiction work was up in volume, which includes a memoir, a hybrid of semi-memoir and amateur political history,

and another journalism collection. His *Experience* was published in 2000, which mainly describes the strange relationship between him and his father Kingsley Amis. *Koba the Dread* was published in 2002 and it is a destructive history of Lenin and Stalin's crimes. And *Lionel Asbo: State of England* was published in 2012. Besides, Amis has also published two collections of short stories, four volumes of collected journalism and criticism, and a guide to 1980s space-themed arcade video-game machines.

Martin Amis's literary status has been established thanks to his novels *London Fields*, *Money: a suicide note* and *the Information*, which commonly called as his "London Trilogy" (Stringer 18). *London Fields* was published in 1989, which was regarded as probably his strongest novel by Amis's readership. And it is also his longest novel; its sales have amazingly reached over 30 million up to now. It is reported that *London Fields* was controversially deleted from the shortlist of Booker Prize in 1989 due to two of the panel members did not like Amis's treatment of his female characters. However, this article draws continuous attention because of its stylistic confounding.

As for *London Fields*, its title is highly symbolic. "London" reminds people of the modern society, while the "fields" often relates with rural images. Amis ingeniously puts them together paradoxically, which seemingly hints readers that the tragic story and the characters' tragic fate in the novel are exactly the sadness of the whole society, wherever it is in the city or the countryside. As for the plot of the story, *London Fields* is set in London in 1999 against a backdrop of environmental, social and moral degradation, and the looming threat of world instability and nuclear war. The story is a murder novel, which is narrated by Samson Young, an American writer living in London who has had writer's block for 20 years and is now terminally ill. And Nicola Six, the murderee, who knows she will be murdered a few minutes after midnight on 5 November 1999—her 35th birthday—and who goes in search of her killer. One morning, when she goes into a bar named Black Cross, Nicola meets her three murder candidates. The first one is Guy Clinch, who is a pious so-called upper gentleman. Then Keith Talent is a cheat and lower-class punk. And the last one is Samson Young, the narrator of this novel.



At the beginning of the novel, the murder seems to be defined by the title of the first chapter- “the murder”. The surprising thing is that readers don’t know who the murder is even when the story is coming to an end. The predetermined murder Keith Talent doesn’t perform the task of murder at last. Neither does Guy Clinch, who turns to be a total fool cheated by Nicola. Unexpectedly, the actual murder is Samson Young, the narrator. The tone of the novel “gradually shifts from high comedy, interspersed with deep personal introspections, to a dark sense of foreboding and eventually panic at the approach of the deadline, or ‘horror day’, the climactic scene alluded to on the very first page”(Diedrick 118).

## 1.2 The Scholarly Context

The studies in China on Martin Amis are much less than that in western countries. Up to now, several monographs have been published, which include John A. Dern’s *Martin Amis: Fiction, Form and the Postmodern* (1998), John Barns’ *Martin Amis* (1999), Nicolas Tredell’s *The Fiction of Martin Amis* (2000), Gavin Keulks’ *Father and Son: Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis, and the British Novel Since 1950* (2003), James Diedrick’s *Understanding Martin Amis* (2004), Gavin Keulks’ *Martin Amis: Postmodernism and Beyond* (2006), Bradford Richard’s *Martin Amis: the Biography, Pegasus* (2012), Bentley Nick’s *Martin Amis (Writers and Their Work)* (2013) and Brian Finney’s *Martin Amis (Routledge Guides to Literature)* (2013). Among these monographs, *Martin Amis: Fiction, Form and the Postmodern* reviews Martin Amis’ works from the point of postmodernism. When John A. Dern talks about *London Fields*, he selects the postmodern idea of metafiction (Dern 120-138). James Diedrick also reviews Martin Amis’ main works in *Understanding Martin Amis*, in which he refers *London Fields* to an “Apocalypse Now”. Gavin Keulks collects some reviews of Martin Amis’ main works in *Martin Amis: Postmodernism and Beyond*, in which two articles about *London Fields* are mentioned. Brian Finney’s *Martin Amis* mainly talks about Martin Amis’ background and the introduction to some of his significant works. It also summarizes the overseas study on Martin Amis, which includes the theme of late modernity, the intertextuality with Kingsley Amis, Saul

Bellow and Nabokov, postmodernism, characteristic, study of genre and gender, the relation between reader, author, narrator and narration and the linguistic inventiveness (Finney 28-35).

Besides the monographs, there are more than 50 English theses, comments and articles about Martin Amis that I find on the internet, which include seven comments and articles by Martin Amis himself. I study these articles and next I will classify them according to their different perspectives.

Most of the studies deal with Martin Amis' significant works, such as *London Fields*, *Money: a suicide note*, *Time's Arrow*, *Yellow Dog* and *Night Train*. Some of the articles summarize Martin Amis's writing style, such as character creation, narrative skills and postmodern strategy. Some of them make vertical comparisons about his different works. While others mostly focus on the contrast and analysis between Martin Amis and other authors, most of whom are Martin's father Kingsley Amis, American writers Saul Bellow and Vladimir Nabokov, whom Martin likes best and have enormous impact on Martin. There are several articles on Martin Amis' life experience in the end. As for his *London Fields*, most of its relative studies are about narrative skills and the nuclear fear theme, which inherits that of his short story *Einstein's Monsters*.

However, we find there are a few domestic studies on Martin Amis, who haven't got enough attention he deserved. Only three of his works are translated into Chinese, which are *Time's Arrow*, *London Fields* and *Night Train*. Among the dissertations and theses, there are two theses respectively discuss the postmodern narrative skills and a thematic study of *London Fields*. Yang Lirong published her thesis *Desolate New Millennium: Thematic Study on Martin Amis' London Fields* (Yang 2), and Xie Xin also wrote *Study on Realistic and Postmodernist in Martin Amis' Night Train*, which is based on the reader-response criticism theories and analyzed the narrative time, double voice and textual and contextual study of his novel (Xie 6).

And also there are about twenty articles and book reviews, among which there are six analyzing from the perspective of modernism and post modernism. There are also four comments on *Time's Arrow* and *Dead Babies*. The rest of the articles discuss the theme of *Money: a suicide note* and *Time's Arrow*, Martin Amis' exclusive postmodern strategy and the

overall features of his works. So we can draw a conclusion that most of the domestic study on Martin Amis focus on his writing techniques and forms. While there are still five articles which tend to study the themes of Martin Amis' works, which include violence, midlife crisis, emotion and death.

As for *London Fields*, there are three reviews and two Master's papers. We have mentioned *Desolate New Millennium: Thematic Study on Martin Amis' London Fields* which is written by Yang Lirong who analyzes three themes of the novel. Another one is Kong Fang's *Alienation and Remedy: the Sense of Worry in London Fields* in which she studies the novel from the perspective of theory of alienation and proves Martin Amis' strong sense of worry of the modern capitalist society (Kong 1). One of the reviews is *The Last Death of London Field – Review of London Fields* by Ruan Wei, in which he summarizes many kinds of "death", such as "dead flowers", "dead water", "dead cars" and "death of novel" and so on. He exclaims these death influence each other and they together produce a kind of death atmosphere and then deepen it (Ruan 74). Secondly, Wang Weixing also writes an article on *London Fields*, in which he analyzes its distinct narrative arts which includes dialogue with death and playing with time. Playing with time means the linear time is subverted and the narrative time is delayed by Martin Amis in the novel. Dialogue with death means the equal dialogue between texts, theory of "doomsday", the theory of the death of the writer and the death of novel (Wang 79-84). Liu Chunfang and Li zhengshuan's review *London Fields: The Ruined Capital of Modern People*, which points out that London fields is a prevailing dilemma of living in the postmodern and cruel environment and resembles a ruined capital unfolded (Liu, Li 17-21).

### **1.3 Archetypal Criticism**

Archetypal criticism is a very important criticism genre which was popular in the fifties and sixties of the 20th century in the West. Its main founder is Frye in Canada.

The theoretical bases of Archetypal criticism are mainly Jung's psychoanalytic theory and Fraser's anthropological theory. In criticizing, Archetypal criticism tries to find a variety of

images, narrative structure and character types which recur frequently in literature and identify the basic form behind them. Critics emphasize the myth type in works, think these myths are more basic prototypes compared with specific works and apply a series of prototypes in the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of works. Archetypal criticism argues that archetypes determine the form and function of literary works, which a text's meaning is shaped by cultural and psychological myths. Archetypes are the unknowable basic forms personified or concretized in recurring images, symbols, or patterns which may include motifs such as the quest or the heavenly ascent, recognizable character types. Archetypal critics find New Criticism too atomistic in ignoring intertextual elements and in approaching the text as if it existed in a vacuum. After all, we recognize story patterns and symbolic associations at least from other texts we have read.

In my thesis, I mainly quote Frye's archetypal criticism. Northrop Frye is a Canadian literary critic and theorist, and is considered the most influential critic in the 20th century. His lasting reputation rests mainly on the theory of literary criticism which is developed in *Anatomy of Criticism*, one of the most significant works of literary theory published in the twentieth century. Next I will introduce Frye's archetypal criticism from three aspects.

Firstly, one of his theories is the literary archetype. Frye does not think that literature is imitation and reproduction of the nature and society, but a concrete manifestation of myth and ritual. Literature is "displaced myth", the ancient religion and mythology displaced in recent times, the general plot of the novel, such as birth, development, victims, frustration or death, are associated with or similar to those of some certain mythological god. As the source of literary structure, Bible has affected Western literature a lot. Tolstoy's "Resurrection" and some of the works whose title is "Apocalypse" just use the vocabulary in the Bible. Maud Bodkin pointed out in "poetry prototype model" that Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" and the story of Jonah in the Bible are in the same category, which represents the prototype of "regeneration". Jonah disobeys God's command and refuses to go to Nineveh to preach, escaping in a boat, which causes a sea storm and thus people throw him into the sea. Later he is swallowed by a big fish. During the three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, he vows

to God and at last he is thrown on the shore and saved. The hero in *the old sailor* is also at sea, he is full of hatred and evil at first, killing an albatross, which leads to a series of disasters. Sailors on board all die and he is unable to move. At last he repents, begins to pray, and gains regeneration.

In constructing his literary theory, Frye displaces prototype. He displaces the prototype in the sense of the psychology or anthropology in the field of literature, and the prototype is given the literary meaning. The original prototype is fragmentary, incomplete cultural image, but after Frye's displacement, the prototype becomes literary image. For example, Frye believes that some common natural phenomena such as the sea, forests which repeatedly appear in literature, can not be considered as coincidence, on the contrary, this kind of repeat shows some kind of link in the nature and the literature is imitating this link. Thus Archetypal criticism doesn't see a poem as the imitation of the nature, but the whole natural order is imitated by an appropriate text order. So we can see the important difference between Frye and realistic imitation and reproduction theory from here. Narrative a work is actually a surface structure composed of images and a deep structure composed of prototypes consisting of a composition of intent, and to discover the works through the tips of prototypes.

The image of poetry is not only a revival of the original image, but also identical with or similar to the original myth. Much of what are described in literature is the same story, despite of the different names and deeds, but they represented the basic structure and spirit in the original myth. Literature is the result of "displaced" myth. Frye absorbs Freud's thought that literary is regarded as the "displacement" of instinctive impulse. Freud stresses the displacement of "Libido" laterally, while Frye stresses the relationship between the replacement and development of myth and literature vertically. Literature has a deep relationship with ritual, which exists generally in ancient Greek tragedy and comedy and the later drama in the West.

Secondly, his theory includes cycle development theory in literature. Inspired by the predecessor's theory, the cycle of life and nature, Frye thinks the evolution of literature is also such a cycle.

German philosopher Oswald Spengler published *Decline of the West* in 1918 and proposed history organic cycle theory. He thinks that the basic form of history is neither confusing combination of individual events, nor is stable linear development, but the social developmental formation of a series of what he called “culture” and opposes view that a new culture will surpass an older culture and a culture’s spirit must not be transferred to another culture. These cultures are like organisms which can grow, get mature, grow old and die. He believes that Western culture’s spring is in the Middle Ages and summer during the Renaissance, the fall in the 18th century, and winter begins with the French Revolution. Before that classical culture has gone through the same stages: the Homeric hero is equivalent of the medieval hero, the ancient Greek city-states era is equivalent of the Renaissance era, the flourished Athens era is equivalent of neoclassical era and Alexander era is the equivalent of the Napoleonic era.

Based on the archetypal theory, with the means of structuralism approach, Frye classifies Western literary experience and criticism practices. Just as the basis of the classification of biological science, literary criticism must proceed from the classification of literary works. First Frye divides Western literature into two categories: fictional and thematic works. The former describes mainly characters and their stories; the latter mainly conveys implication to readers. The difference is relative, and many types of transition exist between the two extremes. Frye mainly studies fictional works and according to comparison standard between characters in books and in the ordinary life proposed by Aristotle, the fictional work is divided into five basic modes: first, the myth, in which the figures are absolutely more powerful than ordinary people and can transcend the laws of nature; second, the romantic story, in which the figures are relatively more powerful than ordinary people but is subject to the laws of nature; third, high imitation, which imitates the ordinary people who is slightly more powerful than people in the real life, such as the leader story; fourth, low imitation, which imitates the ordinary people in the real life, such as realistic novel. Fifth, irony and satire, in which the characters are below the level of ordinary people. Then it returns to the mythology, such as Kafka’s novel *Ulysses*. Above is the literary circle. The second one is cycle of literary narrative structure. On

the whole, the narrative structure of Western literature is the imitation of cycle of natural movement. Cycle of the nature can be classified into four phases: morning, afternoon, evening and night or spring, summer, autumn, winter and so on. Correspondingly, literary narrative structure can be classified into four types: comedy corresponds to the spring; romance corresponds to the summer; tragedy corresponds to the fall, for it's bleak; irony corresponds to the winter, just as world without heroes, tending absurd. Frye believes the myth reflects the structure principles of literature. Western literature originates from mythology, and then turns to comedy, romance, tragedy, and finally evolves into irony and satire. And in the end, the trend of returning to the myth emerges. The third one is the cycle of the symbolic meaning: literature, description, form, myth and summary five phases.

Thirdly, it also includes the simple evaluation on the prototype theory. Frye observes the literature as a whole and the law of movement and development of literature itself, which has a significant meaning for us to understand the nature, origin, development and evolution of literature. Prototype accumulates wisdom and mental energy of generation to generation. Vertically, it makes us remain connected with our ancestors, laterally makes a nation or race connect with another nation or race and provides a new perspective for us observing the literary, a new method to analyzing literature (edu.cn).

#### **1.4 Research Significance and Structure of This Thesis**

*London Fields* is a masterpiece of Martin Amis who is one of the leaders of the postmodernism in contemporary literary world. This thesis attempts to analyze *London Fields* from the perspective of archetypal criticism; aims to find the prototypes in *London Fields* and analyze the biblical images appeared in this novel and to show that *London Fields* portrays an apocalyptic scene as the "Revelation" in the Bible. Thus this thesis tries to draw the conclusion that Martin Amis is a great author with moral mission and salvation complex.

Secondly, the literature review makes me happy to find that most of the studies on *London Fields* focus on the form skills of this contemporary literary masterpiece. Only a few of works study its theme, which includes the death, violence, nuclear fear or the

postmodernism. So it is wise of me and feasible to write my thesis from the perspective of archetypal criticism, and to explore the moral dimension. Thus the innovation of this thesis lies in the analyzing from the perspective of archetypal criticism.

This thesis consists of five parts. The first part is the introduction, which includes the introduction to Amis and his *London Fields*, the scholarly context, Archetypal Criticism and research significance and structure of this thesis. The second, third and fourth parts are the main parts of the thesis. The second part analyzes the archetypes of the main characters in *London Fields*. The murderess Nicola, is a woman (women are the symbols of fondness, kindness and beauty), just as the angel, whose fallen happens at the beginning of the works, and after that the fallen angels becomes Satan. Nicola has an evil nature and the ability of foreseeing. But with this ability, she foresees and plans her own death. So her archetype is Lucifer—the fallen angel. While the three murders in the article are predetermined. They generally have the dual roles like God: love and the power to destroy at the same time and from both the role of the three men characters plays and their duty in the novel, this chapter draws the conclusion that the three men characters' prototype is the Trinity. So the inevitability of Nicola's death can be glanced through this chapter. The third part analyzes the biblical images that appear in *London Fields*, which includes the images of God, Cross, Faith and so on, while these images are completely subverted, which is quite ironic. Thus people in this world are barren in spirit, disordered in relationship and fallen in humanity. Throughout the whole text, the fourth part describes the perversion of all kinds of relationships, which includes the perversion of two genders, the abnormality of the relationship between two generations, the perversion of life and death and the perversion of good and evil, portraying an apocalyptic scene as the "Revelation" in the Bible. The ultimate causes of this apocalyptic scene are the loss of traditional beliefs and the distortions and depravity of human nature, which are also the reasons of Nicola's death. The last chapter is the conclusion of this article.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ARCHETYPES OF CHARACTERS

In *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, according to Frye, *The Holy Bible* has profound influences on the imaginative tradition of Western literature. “These elements of the *Bible* had set up an imaginative framework—a mythical universes, as I call it—within which Western literature had operated down to the eighteen century and is to a large extent still operating” (“The Great Code” 11). The biblical myths are also compared by him as core myths because it offers such abundant scenes, narrative patterns, plots, symbols and character types, and they all reflect universal feelings and profound meanings. So it is quite reasonable that it is a major source for literary archetypes. These biblical symbols appear constantly in many literary works for hundreds of years and this tremendous collection of images have been used directly or indirectly by many writers.

We may find in the literature that many cross—cultural models appear constantly, such as scapegoat, God, Satan, resurrection and so on. If a person in literature reminds readers of that in religious story, we consider this person is shadowed and this shadowed person may speak some words cited from *The Holy Bible*, or may reverse that of a character in *The Holy Bible* because of his actions or emotional responses. This chapter will concentrate on analyzing the biblical archetypes related to the main characters in *London Fields* to uncover how Martin Amis effectively describes the main characters. Through some similar nature, actions and functions in the novel, Martin Amis associates the main characters Nicola, Keith, Guy and Samson with the biblical figures: Satan and the Trinity.

#### **2.1 Nicola: the Fallen Angel**

In *London Fields*, Nicola’s archetype is the Fallen Angel, for they share the same characters and the experience from up to down. Her whole life is on a tragic downward movement, from the perfect condition to her fall, which leads to her death. This chapter will illustrate this from two aspects: before her depravation and after her depravation.

### 2.1.1 Before Nicola's depravation

The main character in *London Fields* is a woman, of course. Through the ages, women are the exemplification of beauty, kindness, fondness and tenderness. According to the bible, angels are created by God to praise and serve him. The perfect organizations exist in the angles, for example, the charge angle is called the chief princess. "A mighty angle coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun and his legs like pillars of fire" (*New Revised Standard Bible*, Rev. 10.1). So angles are mighty and also the exemplification of kindness, brightness and hope. However, one of the leader angles, Lucifer, betrays God out of arrogance and jealousy, and is expelled from heaven, degenerated into a devil. After that, he seduces one third of the angels to follow him, all of whom become devils we called now.

The thirty-four-year-old Nicola is quite beautiful and sexy who is in good shape. All of the male characters are jealous to each other because of her. Despite of her physical advantage, Nicola has some advantages about her character, such as her calmness and cleverness. She can deal with everything calmly. The most important thing is that she has some kind of power. "She always knew what was going to happen next. Not all the time (the gift was not obsessively consulted), and not every little detail; but she knew what was going to happen next" (Amis 12).

The virtues, power and glory Nicola has resemble those of the angle.

### 2.1.2 After Nicola's depravation

People with special abilities must use it for good. But it not happened to both Nicola and the fallen angles. The leader angle, Lucifer, with great power, betrays God out of arrogance and jealousy, and is expelled from heaven, degenerated into a devil. As we all know that Lucifer has been endowed with great power and he knows the result of his betrayal, which is expelled from heaven. So it is himself who plans his own future which leads to eternal death. On the other hand, it seems that Lucifer degenerates as soon as the Bible begins.

Just as Lucifer, Nicola degenerates as soon as *London Fields* begins. She has evil nature of the devil. “About her parents she had no feelings one way or the other: this was her silent, inner secret. They both died, anyway, together, as she had always known they would. So why hate them? So why love them” (12)? About love, she has no belief in it, she has two firm assurances: that one would ever love her enough, and those that did were not worth being loved enough by. However, she maintains a sexual relationship with several men at the same time. All of the male characters are jealous to each other because of her. She can make any man fall in love with her and control them.

She had the power of inspiring love, almost anywhere. Forget about making strong men weep. Seven stone pacifists shouldered their way through riots to be home in case she called. Family men abandoned sick children to wait in the rain outside her flat. Semi-literate builders and bankers sent her sonnet sequences. She pauperized gigolos, she spayed studs, and she hospitalized heartbreakers. They were never the same again, they lost their heads. And the thing with her was that she had to receive this love and send it back in opposite form, not just cancelled but murdered.

(12)

In principle, she is leching. To some degree, her behavior is the symbol of liberation, the symbol of freedom in spirit, also the symbol of liberation out of men. She thinks she has no interest on sex, while she is proud of being skillful and passionless at the same time in the bed. Obviously, the sexual liberation movement in the 60<sup>th</sup> century has fully reflected on Nicola.

Another feature that makes her resemble the devil is that she has the power of foresee and more than that, she is planning her own death calmly. Nicola exactly knows her fate and she tries to complete this ending and fate. We know that *London Fields* is a novel about murder. In the story, on the one hand, three main men characters strive for being murderer and on the other hand, the heroine, Nicola is fear of not finding the suitable man who will rape and murder her, so she makes every effort to identify the best candidate to complete the mission of murder. Nicola knows where her destiny lay, just as the devil. Though they know what will happen next, they desperately plan their future which leads to death. Nicola and Lucifer share the viciousness which leads them to the wrong doing and destruction.

In all, whether before the depravation or after the depravation, Nicola shares the same character, quality, power and experience with the fallen angle—Lucifer.

## **2.2 Three Murder Candidates: Trinity**

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity defines God as three divine persons or hypostases: the Father, the Son(Jesus), and the Holy Spirit; one God in three persons. The three persons are distinct, yet are one “substance, essence or nature” (“Catechism of the Catholic Church” 253). In this context, a “nature” is what one is, while a “person” is who one is. According to this central mystery of most Christian faiths , there is only one God in three persons: while distinct from one another in their relations of origin and in their relations with one another, they are stated to be one in all else, co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial (234). Accordingly, the whole work of creation and grace is seen as a single operation common to all three divine persons, in which each shows forth what is proper to him in the Trinity, so that all things are “from the Father”, “through the Son” and “in the Holy Spirit” (253-267). Another way of referring to the Trinity is the Triune God and the Three-in-One. The Trinity is not three individuals who together make one God or three Gods joined together or three properties of God.

### **2.2.1 The prototype of the Trinity**

According to Frye, the religious and poetic identifications differ in intention only, the former being existential and the latter metaphorical. In medieval criticism the difference was of little importance, and the word “figura,” as applied to the identification of a symbol with Christ, usually implies both kinds (“Anatomy of Criticism” 142). In Christianity the concrete universal is applied to the divine world in the form of the Trinity. Christianity insists that, whatever dislocations of customary mental processes may be involved, God is three persons and yet one God. The conceptions of person and substance represent a few of the difficulties in extending metaphor to logic. In pure metaphor, of course, the unity of God could apply to five or seventeen or a million divine persons as easily as three, and we may find the divine concrete

universal in poetry outside the Trinitarian orbit. As for human society, the metaphor that we are all members of one body has organized most political theory from Plato to our own day. Milton's "A Commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth, and stature of an honest man" belongs to a Christianized version of this metaphorical statement "Christ is God and Man" is orthodox, and the Arian and Docetic statement in terms of simile or likeness condemned as heretical. Hobbes's *Leviathan*, with its original frontispiece depicting a number of manikins inside the body of a single giant, has also some connection with the same type of identification. Plato's *Republic*, in which the reason, will, and desire of the individual appear as the philosopher-king, guards, and artisans of the state, is also founded on this metaphor, which in fact we still use whenever we speak of a group or aggregate of human beings as a "body."

In sexual symbolism, of course, it is still easier to employ the "one flesh" metaphor of two bodies made into the same body by love. Donne's *The Extasie* is one of the many poems organized on this image, and Shakespeare's *Phoenix* and the *Turtle* makes great play with the outrage done to the 'reason' by such identity. Themes of loyalty, hero-worship, faithful followers, and the like also employ the same metaphor. (143)

In *London Fields*, the three main men characters strive for being murderer, which means the three murders in the article are fixed and they would play the same role. The three men are Keith Talent, Guy Clinch and Samson Young- the writer, also the first-person narrator. At the very beginning of the story, the murderer and the murdered seem to be established by the writer because of the name of the chapters, which are "the murderer" (the first chapter) and "the murdered" (the second chapter). In the first chapter, the writer introduces Keith Talent, who is really a rogue.

Keith talent was a bad guy. Keith talent was a very bad guy. You might even say that he was the worst guy. But not the worst, not the very worst ever. There were worse guys. Where? There in the hot light of CostCheck for example, with car keys, beige singlet, and a six-pack of Peculiar Brews, the scuffle at the door, the foul threat and the elbow in the black neck of the wailing lady, then the car with its rust and its waiting blonde, and off to do the next thing, whatever, whatever necessary. (Amis 6)

Keith lives by robbing but he is not that successful and then he takes up racketeering. In London, broadly speaking, racketeering means fighting about drugs; in the part of West London that Keith called home, racketeering means fighting about drugs with black people. The second candidate is Guy Clinch. “Guy Clinch was a good guy-or a nice one, anyway. He wanted for nothing and lacked everything. He had a tremendous amount of money, excellent health, handsomeness, height, a capriciously original mind; and he was lifeless. He was wide open” (18). Samson Young is an American writer, who becomes terminally ill. He comes to London, to the London fields to write the story of this murder before his death. He is not only a person in the play, but also jealous to others because of Nicola, just as the other two murder candidates, even has sex with her. So he is not only the creator, but also the participator of the story. But as the story is making progress, the readers’ expectancy is broken again and again. The murderous rogue Keith who is seen as the murderer at first does not become the murderer, nor is Guy Clinch, though gentle and timid he is, he is “favored” and chosen to murder by the murderee. But he failed in the process of competition. Surprisingly, Samson Young, the first-person narrator is “honored” to become the murderer.

So we can see that the three murder candidates’ prototype is the “Trinity” in the Bible. On the one hand, they are three persons. But they are a whole on the other hand; they share the same role in the story- to murder the murderee- Nicola. Though they are quite different from profession, appearance, characters, morality and so on, they are integrated, for the same role they played in the story. The plan that three men strive for being murderers on the woman they are having sex which embodies the human indifference and the death atmosphere.

### **2.2.2 The dual roles of the Trinity**

According to the Bible, “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them” (1Jn. 4.17). This doctrine can be explained as follows: Firstly, in Christianity, God not only created the world, but also created human beings, and it is according to his own likeness is the human beings created, which is a great grace for human beings. Secondly, although the human ancestors sinned, God did not therefore abandon the people, but developed

a great plan of salvation. God sent Jesus Christ who is his son, to the world and whosoever believes him can be saved and will not fall into hell because Jesus Christ bleed and risk his life on the cross. “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1Jn. 4.10).

Despite of the love that God gives, he also has the power to destroy at the same time. His love is reflected mainly by the salvation. As the theme of salvation, the theme of trial is filled in the whole Bible. The twin themes run through from Genesis to Revelation— judgment and salvation. This is because the salvation and judgment reflect the nature of God’s duplex features, which are justice and mercy. Therefore, it reflects the dual themes of justice, judgment and mercy, salvation can not be divided and indivisible. First of all, let’s see God’s judgment in the course of history. God’s judgment begins in Genesis. Because the devil entices Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. So God judges them and also has mercy on them. After that, God judges Cain, for he killed his brother. From this case, we can obviously see God plays a decisive role not only in the trial and punishment, but also provides protection for the fear of the future. In the days of Noah, “The Lord saw the wickedness of humankind on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6.5). The world corrupts before God, the earth is filled with violence. Such widespread corruption includes people’s thought and behavior. Moral motivation makes God make judgment and punishes the world with devastating floods. In the Chapter 19 of Genesis, God overthrows the cities in which Lot has settled because of the depravity. According to the records, the LORD rains on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. He uses the tools of nature to bring the punitive trial. He is the judge and the Destroyer of the wicked. God’s judgment and grace are also on Israel and other nations. So in a word, God’s grace and destruction coexist.

### **2.2.3 The dual roles of the three murders**

In *London Fields*, the three main men characters also play the dual roles, as what the trinity God has done to human beings. On the one hand, the three men love Nicola and they are

jealous to each other because of her. Keith is a rogue and keeps relationship with several women at the same time. Cunning and skillful as he is, he can control any woman but not Nicola. On the contrary, Nicola can control him. Guy is rich, with a rather smart wife. But he falls in love with Nicola and totally forgets himself and his family. We can see that he is totally head over heels to Nicola. Like the other two men, the writer Samson is also attracted by her. On the other hand, despite they love her and have sex with her, these three men are the murderer candidates. That means one of the three men will be sure to murder Nicola. In the story, in order to complete the plan and to complete the story Samson is writing, Nicola has to be murdered and be murdered by one of the three men who are attracted by her.

So above all, the three main men characters play the dual roles, which are love and destruction. And from the role of the three men characters play and their duty in the novel, this chapter draws the conclusion that the three men characters' prototype is the Trinity.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE BIBLICAL IMAGES IN LONDON FIELDS

In some fictions the environment is very important and in others the names of the people are vital. Because the environment can indicate the specific place, time and the environment in which the characters act. For example, the murder would happen in London field. So we all know the place of this story is London field. But why the name is "London fields"? This name



of the location and the work is highly symbolic. “London” will remind people of things related with city, while “field” is always associated with various rural images. Amis subtly puts these two paradoxes together to name the fiction, which may imply that the tragic story and the tragic fate of the characters in the story are precisely the woe of the whole society, no matter it is in the city or in countryside.

Environment is identified with image that makes part of the mythoi in Frye’s theory of archetype. And there are three imageries according to him, the demonic, the apocalyptic and the analogical. And mythos is in a circulation as the four seasons, which is represented by different images during different phase of the character’s movement.

In London Fields, there are many biblical images appear, but all of them are subverted and have the contrary meanings, which is quite ironic.

### **3.1 The Image of God: God the Barman**

In the Christian world, God is the center of their belief and he is mighty, supreme and holy who can not be desecrated.

In *London Fields*, there is also a God, but not the God we may think. This God is a waiter in a bar. After the first time Guy comes to the Black Cross bar, he cheers with Keith, and then Guy belongs. “He sailed in there almost with a swagger and summoned the barmen by name: God” (Amis 23). Keith has an interest, which is after having sex with women; he wants to tell others everything about that. But God the barman is the person who is wanted and needed to have the conversation. What’s more, he is like Keith has a peculiar difficulty with girls and the peculiar difficulty is: he raped them. Or he used to. God had spent a long time in prison for it.

In the world of London fields, the loss of faith makes blaspheming God becomes common. So that Nicola is interested in blaspheming God fearlessly and shamelessly. For example, the name of the eighth chapter is “Going out with God”. But this time, God is not that waiter. In order to give Nicola an interest in religion, she is made to spend in church long enough of her childhood. But she is certainly mighty interested in blasphemy. And so she often finds herself imagining that she is going out with God. “Or not going out with Him- not any

more. He had slept with her once, and once only: she did that to show Him what he would be missing for ever and ever. God cried in the street outside her apartment. He telephoned and telepathized. He followed her everywhere” (70). She also imagines that God gets Shakespeare and Dante working as a team to write her poems. He hires Parthenope, Ligeia to sing her lullabies and romantic ballads. But Nicola tells Him to get lost. Of course, there is another man in her life. His name is the Devil. Nicola does not see nearly as much of the Devil! As- in a perfect world- she would have liked. Sometimes, when the mood takes him, he calls her late and gets her round to his club after hours, and abuses her on stage while his friends look on and laugh. Nicola only does it as good fun and it makes God mad. In this world, God has “died”, we can even say that Nicola involved in this “God’s death” by herself. What she has thought and done means on the way of losing sanctity and transcendence, God has been equivalent to the mortals, or the mortals presumptuously regard themselves as God. Since God has “died”, so He is nothing, Nicola thinks she is what she thought to be. She can “fool” God, what else she can not do, or dare not do?

Though God has “died”, “love” or sex can not die easily, because if sex or “love” die just as God, Nicola’s highest goal in her life will not come true. So the “love” can not die temporarily, one of the three men who have the potential of “love” will help her to accomplish her death. That means the only value and meaning of her living is to accomplish her death in the “love” of sex, to reach the highest point of excitement in the “love” of sex.

### 3.2 The Image of Cross: “Black Cross”

Cross is an old symbol, which may have a lot of mystical significances. The cross existed as a universal symbol in ancient times and represented the sun. Cross is also a symbol of the tree of life. In addition, cross also appeared in Mexico, Peru, as well as in Central America, where it alludes to four kinds of wind, which are the source of making rain. Additionally, cross has long been connected with Christian.

The cross is an ancient instrument of torture used for the death penalty. It was especially popular in the Persian Empire, the Kingdom of Damascus, the Kingdom of Judah, the

Kingdom of Israel, Carthage and Rome. It was usually used to execute the rebels, infidels, slaves and disenfranchised people. At that time of the society, this punishment was a taboo. Because of the large consumption of resources, and therefore the number of people being punished was little. Except for the suspects, otherwise this sentence was not used. In Western literature, the cross is generally compared with suffering. Today, the cross is no longer a symbol of pain and shame, but a symbol of Christian faith. Catholics and Orthodox gesture cross before the chest or wear a cross to confirm their faith, clean their heart and to commemorate the death of Jesus for the salvation of all mankind. According to Christianity, Jesus was arrested by the authorities of Judaism to Roman governor Pilate in Judea and sentenced to death. He resurrected on the third day after his death and was taken up to heaven forty days after the resurrection. “For the message about the cross ... to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1Co. 1.18). So according to the bible, through the message of the cross God saves people’s life from sin and destruction, and changes the believers’ mind and action, so it is really the power of God. On the cross of Jesus Christ, there was a sign hanging above his head, where there were several words that he is the king. Although this is ironic, but it revealed he is really the king today, and his kingdom is throughout the world. According to the general point of view, one person died on the cross, and then he must be a failure. But Jesus Christ won the victory through the cross. Before he was crucified, he said, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (Jhn. 18.37). So the cross is the essence of Christianity and also the center of God’s revelation of salvation.

In *London Fields*, there is a bar called “black cross”. Firstly, the environment of it is quite chaotic. The place is ruined and innocuous in its northern light: a clutch of dudes and Rastas playing pool over the damp swipe of the baize, the fuming pie-warmer. It is a world of primitive desires, desires owned up to and hotly pursued and regularly gratified. “Daily fears having been put aside for the night: that was the idea. The desiderata included goods and services, sex and fights, money and more TV, and, above all, in fateful synergy, drink and darts” (Amis 212). The sweepers have to be alert enough to tackle the upended ashtrays and

the shattered glass. And the fight break out frequently; the vigorous and sanguinary of it are always horrendous. Secondly, the name of the bar is rather satiric. As we have known the cross means salvation in the Christianity, while black denies the possibility of salvation. Because in Western culture, black is generally the representative of derogatory, such as black day and “Black Friday”, which means sad day. Black is used to render the atmosphere of death and horror in painting, literature and film. In Ancient Greek mythology, there is a dark place that is hostile to life, negate and destroy life – Underworld. Hades is the god of this underground, who represents death. Underworld is black and dark, and is the residence of the soul after they died. In all, black represents death, grief, terror and underworld.

“Black cross” is also a place where Nicola meets Keith, Guy and Samson respectively. These three persons are the potential murderers. So this is a place of terror and death. On the other hand, the name of this bar- “black cross” is paradoxical, for the cross means salvation while black has denied the possibility of salvation. This implies that the salvation in the world of London fields is absolutely impossible. To the writer Amis, this filthy world, which is full of all kinds of desires, can not be saved. So he arranges Nicola’s death.

### **3.3 Other Images in *London Fields***

There are also some other biblical images in *London Fields*. For example, there is a hotel named “Mayflower Room” and a lounge named “Puritan”. Puritan has very high moral requirements. They can be regarded as the most holy Protestants and their lifestyle the most reverent lifestyle. They are restrained and advocate abstinence and frugality and always lead a kind of holy, rational life. So in this novel, the two opposite conceptions are always put together paradoxically, which is the bitter satire to the whole society by Martin Amis.

There is also the description of the president’s wife. She is very young and has golden hair. The president loves her deeply and it is because of her, does he go for the election campaign. The coincidental thing is that the name of the president’s wife is Faith. Faith is the rare good person in the novel, but her health is not quite well all along. The worse thing is that

she died at last. So Faith died. This is the exact mirror or portrait of that society. God has been blasphemed and died. Faith has disappeared and gone.

Nietzsche shouted that “God has died”. Eliot called world “the Waste Land” that has no spirit and do not distinguish good and evil, ugliness and beauty. Beckett was waiting for “Godot”. All these works expressed people’s fear of the material world and the fear of the helpless state of inner emptiness. Behind of this fear, is mankind’s avoiding of the plight that soul is homeless, also the revolt of the tragic fate of mankind, also the call for good and beauty. While in Martin’s *London Fields*, there is no such kind of fear. All of the people are in a state of numbness, having no reaction to everything in their life. They are not even afraid of death and do not know the purpose of life. Everything lost its value.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LONDON FIELDS: AN APOCALYPTIC SCENE AS THE “REVELATION”

*Revelation* is the last volume of the *Bible*; it is also the last prophecy. From the *Bible*, we all know the argument on the apocalypse and the so-called “final judgment”. *Revelation* describes a huge, tragic, yet magnificent contest between good and evil and human catastrophe that has a heavy price to pay. This fierce battle happened between the man called “the Lamb” with his saints and the so called “beast”. “Lamb” is clearly representative of the justice and the will of God. “Beast” is alleged to the desecration of God’s name. The evil party is led by a big Dragon. *Revelation* points that this Dragon is the old serpent, called the Devil or Satan. But he

rules a large part of the world. There is also a beast “rising out of the sea” and on its heads were a blasphemous name that is on the party of the evil, the “beast”, his head a blasphemous name. The place that is ruled by the “beast” is called “Babylon”. This Babylon is very splendid, with much wealth and numerous commodities, so that each country and all the merchants in the world can not resist its temptations. Knowing it is evil, filthy (the Bible called it “the great whore”), they do business with him and buy a variety of goods from him. And this Babylon “has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul birds, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast” (Rev.18.2). Of course, many people are captivated by the “beast” and committed a great sin, so humans will experience a huge disaster, which will be unprecedented. Originally these disasters are warned to teach people to repent of their sins immediately. But the *Revelation* also foresees that many people not only do not repent, but also become more blasphemous and have more resentment because of the disasters and pain they have suffered. Of course, the lamb and the Saints defeated the evil beast finally, while the once glorious “Babylon” collapsed in one day, thus all disasters came along. And the merchants of various countries and the king who once committed fornication with her were stunned, exclaimed what had happened. After that is “The Last Judgment” all sinners will experience and the sinners will be completely punished. Then, mankind will enter a new heaven and a new earth, which is wonderful with unprecedented peace and prosperity. *Revelation* is very long and quite mysterious, like a fairy tale entirely. But it is very affirmed

and serious in the end, warning people that this is true and will certainly happen. Actually, the whole *Bible* uses so many pages and seriously leaves people this prophecy, which is indeed thought-provoking.

The world of *London Fields* is just like Babylon in some sense. Both of them are full of foul spirits and evil people. The whole story is also like a disordered game and the disordered game itself is a total satire of the whole society and the perversion of emotion in this era at the end of the Millennium. This is also a satire to the British society in modern times by Martin Amis. The *New York Times* commented that this is a clownish murder story, an apocalyptic satire, a sickening yet profound and logical thinking on love, death and nuclear winter. All the traditional concepts are overthrown by the writer; the emotion of all the people is in a state of perversion, which seems to have left for the future an irreparable fear that will be swallowed by a "black hole" eventually. This chapter will be demonstrated from four aspects.

#### **4.1 The Perversion of Two Genders**

For ages, compared with women, men generally represent strength, masculinity and power and in turn women usually relate to fondness, gentleness and femininity. In *London Fields*, the appearance, disposition, ability and role of the two genders are completely subverted. This chapter will illustrate this from two aspects: masculinity's loss of power and domination of femininity's power.

##### **4.1.1 Masculinity's loss of power**

Martin Amis's characters always have the androgynous appearances, and the traditional normal characteristics of the two genders are always completely subverted. The main female character, Nicola has the quite strong male characteristics—there is a ring of black hair above her mouth and at the same time, she has a strong personality. In the relationship with men, she is initiative, strong and aggressive. While the men in *London Fields* have no masculine at all: Guy is cowardly, spineless and does not assertive. In the relationship with women, he is passive and weak. Keith is wild and simple, who is controlled by Nicola on the important

decision, and sometimes he is even protected by Nicola. There is also a man who is a bruiser and lagnesis. What's funny is that his name is Chick Purchase and the meaning of "Chick" is "girl". The series of gender confusion and perversion are just the exposure of the gender perversion of the whole society.

Amis always probes the change of male's power—the traditional strong force lost discourse right in the upheaval of society. While in *London Fields* men have lost their power completely. This loss of representative dominated force indicates the loss of traditional order in modern world, the confusion between two genders and the disorder of the modern society.

#### **4.1.2 Domination femininity's of power**

The men in the story become "aphasics" generally, while Nicola is the representativeness of power and force. She is looking for the murder calmly for herself and plans her own life methodically. This complete control over life and the domination of life is the representativeness of male chauvinism. In the triangular relationship with Keith and Guy, Nicola is in a traditional position of man. Nicola controls two men—Keith and Guy and makes them subject to herself. The brutal Keith becomes careful before Nicola. He not only relies on the money that Nicola cheated, but also becomes passive and weak on the issue of sex. What they staged is a story prototype that man conquered woman traditionally, while in this story the man and the woman interchanged. At the same time, the story between Nicola and Guy is about cheating and being cheated and Nicola becomes the cheating person, while Guy becomes the defenseless cheated, which subverted the tradition. In her eyes, the traditionally established social roles of women—daughter, wife, mother—are meaningless. The traditional qualities that history and society endowed to women are totally destroyed by Nicola. She is rather unfilial to her parents, let alone the sentiment for them. She has no concept of chastity and shame, subverted the tradition of men's dominating and became the real ruler. Her rebellion performs quite firm and she breaks through hierarchical relationship between male and female. She does not have the traditional image of women in hesitating and disguising. In the eyes of Martin Amis, if females resist the patriarchal society with the most indulgent and daring behavior, the



society will be chaotic. The brutal competition in modern society causes male's aphasia and female's dominance. This kind of abnormality of gender makes London fields in the postmodern context become a site of death without future.

Behind this complete perversion of two genders is the outrageous ugliness. When Keith fixes the closestool for Nicola for the first he goes to Nicola's apartment and his finger is hurt, his blood meanders through the dark of her waste. Nicola thinks this is quite disgusting. "Being disgusting" is the reflection of the nature of their relationship, also the reflection of all the relationships between men and women in the book. The three words "I love you" are only referred once, i.e. Nicola writes them down in the mud as sputum in a dry stream. This filthy relationship between man and woman indicates the perversion of two genders and their responsibility and the disorder of sex relation. The people in this kind of disordered state can not bear the responsibility of reforming the society. This madness may be a kind of escape, a kind of abandon of life.

The sex described by writer between men and women is extremely hideous and the sex is pervaded in the whole society and all people's lives, yet without a trail of love. This is just like Keith's life, which is full of violence and pornography. Nicola also knows that there is no sentiment in the pornography, because without love, sex only remains skill, standard and pure knowledge about sex, which is easy to learn. For example, Nicola's kisses can be divided into different kinds and have many subheads and subsections, many genres and phyla, such as "the Rosebud," "the Dry Application," "Anybody's," "Clash of the Incisors," "Repulsion," "the Turning Diesel," "Mouthwash," "the Tonsillectomy," "Lady Macbeth," "the Readied Pussy," "Youth," "the Needer," "the Gobbler," and "the Deliquescent Virgin." "And if love was dead or gone then the self was just self, and had nothing to do all day but work on sex. Oh, and hate. And death" (Amis 178). Pornography thus takes the place of love and sentiment without restraint and becomes the ugly ubiquitous presence and the proof of the "dooms day". The villain Keith has sex with women in different ages; Guy has affairs with his sister-in-law; Nicola has promiscuity with others as she pleases... The most shocking thing is the baby Marmaduke, "he is always goosing Melba and frenching Phoenix (and watch him splash his

way through the au pairs); but Lizzyboo is his sexual obsession. He shimmies up against her shins and drools into her cleavage. He won't have a bath unless she's there to watch. He is forever ramming his hand—or his head—up her skirt" (132). No matter how abnormal is the baby's favor and the adults' thought, this is an era of emotional perversion in all.

The reason of emotional perversion and pornography taking the place of sentiment is the death of love. Everything about love became the history, leaving only the meaningless acts and relationship itself, which does not include emotion at all. All should be ruled by rationality is the tradition of the Western ideological circle and the final purpose of Metaphysics. However, in the modern society, when the knowledge people mastered is growing rapidly, when rational analysis and logical analysis go into all areas, when the emotional and instinctive are destroyed completely, people are shocked to find the panic brought by rationality. What the rational knowledge brings us are the competitive success, the technical success and trading success, while at the same time what we lose are the truth of life, the fate of the soul, the authenticity of emotion and the final setting down. When this kind of emotion has been lost for a long time, it can not be found anywhere. In the world of *London Fields*, if the personal relationship can be called "emotion", it is a kind of reversed, disordered and lifeless "emotion".

#### **4.2 The Abnormality of the Relationship between Two Generations**

Not only the relationships between men and women become hideous, but also the relationships between two generations in the world of *London Fields* are quite abnormal. This can be represented from three relationships: the relationship between small Debbie and her mother, the relationship between Marmaduke and his father and the relationship between Kim and her father.

##### **4.2.1 The relationship between small Debbie and her mother**

Originally, the relationship between parents and children is the most natural and solid one. However, this is not true in *London Fields*, where the relation between them become sunprecedentedly indifferent and distorted. For example, Nicola is quite ruthless to her parents

and she has no sentiment to her parents at all. Since Nicola has the ability of foresee. When she foresaw that her parents would die soon, she didn't tell calmly.

If we can find any suitable words in the world to describe the relation between small Debbie and her mother, those are "betraying" and "being betrayed". The youngest one who keeps sexual relationship with Keith is Debbie. She is only twelve years old, who is only a teenager. The reason why he can do this is that her mother has "sold" her and as long as you give her mother money, you can do it.

Debbie was special. Dark, rounded, pouting, everything circular, ovoid, Debbie was special because Keith had been sleeping her since she was twelve years old. On the other hand, so had several other people. All completely because kosher and Bristol—fashion because she'd had her tubes done and you just gave cash gifts of seventy—five quid to her mum, who wasn't bad either... on the small bed, in the small room, its walls faded rendering the lost sprites and dwarfs and maidens of childhood; and the white smell of every young flesh. (31)

She is such a brutal mother and her daughter is her means of making money. Because of her "not bad mother", Debbie became a prostitute and lost her childhood since she was twelve years old. So in this world of London fields, there are no such things as family ties and affection. Relationship between mother and daughter is so incredible, not to mention other relationships.

#### **4.2.2 The relationship between Marmaduke and his father**

The relationship between Marmaduke and his father is quite deformed and ridiculous. You can read anything between them – hurt, mock, distrust, even hatred, but any emotion. Guy leads a very rich life and the birth of his son should have brought him happiness and felicity, but the fact is the birth of Marmaduke makes his life become a bloody and thrilling horror. Sometimes when Guy is making love with his wife, his son Marmaduke's twinned fists will thump down into his face. Sometimes when Guy picks up Marmaduke, he will embrace the opportunity to sink his teeth gum—deep into Guy's neck. He always sneezes into his father's face for great tear. Sometimes Marmaduke will poke his finger into Guy's candid orbits. Guy holds "the screaming child out in front of him like a rugby ball or a bag of plutonium" (48).

Marmaduke is always losing his tempter. They brought him to an expert on infant hypomania. But it was impossible for Marmaduke to relax and be his normal self and finally the doctor's right eye was injured by Marmaduke.

In conclusion, Marmaduke never brings Guy fun and happiness a child should do. He is just like a radioactive substance that makes his parents tremble. It seems that the purpose of his birth is to find the next target to destroy constantly. The relationship between Marmaduke and Guy is a symbol of human beings' self—development and self—devastation. People's emotion and thinking are in a state of perversion and disorder, which is regardless of the enemy, regardless of good and evil and there are violence and devastation. With the large consumption of energy, the large number of carnage because of modern wars and the precarious nuclear weapons that could destroy the earth for countless times... The human beings, the most brutal and ferocious animal point his final gun to himself. After the complete perversion of people's emotion, after a baby having become violence, every value and faith became rubbish. This kind of shocking disorder unequivocally validated the future Nicola had foreseen—an overall died world.

#### **4.2.3 The relationship between Kim and her father**

The relationship between Keith and his daughter Kim represents another kind of ugliness. Keith regards his daughter as dispensable. When Nicola asked whether he had a child or not, he unexpectedly answered no, but after a while he thought of he had a daughter, from which we can interpret his attitude to his daughter. In Keith's eyes, child is not deserved his love and affection and thus becomes the object to be cursed. Except for drunk, Keith never mentions his daughter. Home is Keith's secret. Nobody has ever been there before, except for the census people, rent men, the police and some cheating electricians. And also, his wife and his child are his secrets. Though often lost in praise of his dog Clive, he never mentions his girl Kim. Every time he is goaded or promoted, Keith would deign to denounce his wife Kath's idleness and lack of stamina, when she looks after the baby. When Keith and his daughter are in the living—room, Kim crawls to his father, Keith would step over her from the living—room to

the bedroom, or he would offer the smiling child to his wife who is often tired to death. However, he would call his dog "my son" and told his dog not to "sit around here in this fuckin old folks' home." When his wife wanted him to buy their daughter a bottle when he came back, he refused her. And thus Kath never bothered Keith with the baby except in the most drastic emergencies. He even still watched TV when his daughter was ill. He never did any duties as a father and the reason that "looking after baby is women's work" can help him to shirk everything and he would continue his sensuality and cheat and even more reckless. His daughter Kim's little body was full of scars because she was rarely taken good care of. As father and daughter, Keith and his child's relationship has become a kind of postmodern allegory, which implies the death of the last vestiges of human emotions. In the omnipresent death, the gentle emotion to child is the last thing to disappear. This kind of indifferent relationship between father and child is the most thorough estrangement and the most ruthless perversion in the postmodern context. In other words, the indifference and trample between father and child is more horrible than those of husband and wife because that means human's trample on his own future and difference to his own fate. The models of relationship between the two generations seems to prove more clearly that if the abnormality of relations in London fields spread unchecked, people will destruct their own future.

#### **4.3 The Perversion of Life and Death**

In *London Fields*, people subvert life and death in the traditional sense. The desire for life is replaced by the longing for death. And the fear of death is substituted by the detesting of life. This is clearly embodied in two aspects: the omnipresent death and death's replacement of life.

##### **4.3.1 The omnipresent death**

"An obvious example of repetitive narrative in *London Fields* is the repeat of 'death' and this word has appeared for many times" (Yu, Sun, Xiao 124). As soon as the story begins, Nicola foresees that she will die soon and she plans her own death. Though the final decisive character is the writer Samson Young, it is Nicola that controls every person. Even Samson

sleeps with her and conforms to every requirement of her—arranges the final murder scene. But what is the fundamental driving force? Or what is the ultimate reason for the murder in *London Fields*? Maybe we should find the reason in the losing of the traditional faith. In the world of *London Fields*, people are used to profaning God. Losing faith has reached such an extent that Nicola could have a great interest in profaning God without fear and shame. So in the times of Nicola, God has “died”, we can even say that It is Nicola herself that participates this “God’s death”. Though God has “died”, “love” or sex could not die easily. Because if “love” or sex died, the highest goal in Nicola’s life would not be achieved any more. But if that goal would be achieved finally, “love” would die. Moreover, there are more death in the novel, such as “dead flowers”, “dead water”, “dead cloud”, not only the writer died, but also Animism died, not only Faith died, but also the “love” died finally. All of these “death” are interrelated and influence and complement each other. They sprout in an ambiance of death, and conversely deepen and strengthen this ambiance.

It is not strange there are so many “death”, because the late 20th century is marked with general termination. So besides the variety of “death” above, there are still the terminations or “death” of “history, Europe, colonialism, modernism, Christianity, feminism and industrialism”. This general death means the arrival of the “doomsday”, or people have already lived in the doomsday. It was this apocalyptic ambiance that makes the death in *London Fields* have some kind of ontological meaning. If the “heaven” was not “normal”, the situation on the earth was out of control because of the general death.

It is probably because of this omnipresence of death, the three characters in the story will rush and scramble to be the murderer of Nicola. Accompanied with this omnipresence of death, is the omnipresence of the murderous intention. These two omnipresence make it possible for the eschatological view in the *London Fields*. *London Fields* selects the last year of the second millennium as the apocalypse seems to accord with the popular argument. But it does not matter whether the doomsday will come on the last year of the second millennium. What *London Fields* conveys is the omnipresence of death and the murderous intention themselves constitutes the doomsday. The doomsday is the last days in the sense of Christian. In *London*

*Fields*, it indicates not only the event of murder, but also a kind of process, a kind of society, politics, economy and a moral state. People exist in or experience this kind of process or state. It must be noted that the eschatological imagery in *London Fields* has a long history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The “instigator” should be T.S Eliot. His *Waste Lands* and *Four Quartets* also contain the eschatological imagery<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4.3.2 Death’s replacement of life

In a word, on the eve of the millennium, death becomes the most common phenomenon and it seems everything is dying. “the death of novel, the death of Animism, the death of plot, the death of planet, the death of God and the death of love.” In the omnipresence of death, the death of love is the last one and the cruelest one. The death of love declares the death of every “person”. Nicola’s expecting of love is the last ritual to pursue love. The result of her death demonstrates it is no vain to look for love.

Nicola foreseen her own death, prepares and plans her death calmly. The death did not bring any shock to her emotion, while she formulated the death plan calmly. Her process of dying is delicate and complex, which is a protest for the mechanical present and the horrible future and is a meticulously conceived “absent—mindedness” to cope with that world. Nicola always indulges in concerning her own behavior, even her waste. Her process of dying is indicating a kind of attitude and this kind of surreal act indicates she has broken away from the social system that she has created to a certain extent. The indifference, grimness and cynicism that she behaved are a kind of denial to the meaningless world and a kind of helpless response to the despair. She clearly grasps the steps of her death, during which she appears as a commander and a decider. This is a final protest to the emotionless and soulless society. She nailed the nails in her own coffin fiercely, which nailed actually the nails in the society. Her morbid wish to die is unwavering because the death is really an inviolable safe land. Her “masochism” is quite complete because she clearly understands this society is not suitable for people to survive. She meditates on her own existence, indulges in imaging the relation between “death” and herself, refuses to communicate with the society and converts herself into

pure self-referential symbol. Death makes her achieve the transparency and the final completion and satisfaction and she is even grateful to death. Thus life and death completely subvert the traditional sense in Martin Amis's work, life is not worth looking forward to while death is not scary at all, and the relation between life and death becomes utterly disordered: the murderer can appear before the murdered and death can be booked like hotel rooms. Human beings' future will lose everything that relates with tenderness and beauty and finally become a modern "deserted city". The future will be an unimaginable emptiness. Rationality and materialism expels all the emotion, love, and valuable things. The end of rationality connects with the death which means the future is the death. What remains in the future are only indifference and ugliness.

Besides Nicola who firmly wants the death, other characters are connected with death to different degrees. Their death expresses their inability to distinguish between good and evil, unknowing the value of life and the meaning of death, which are in a state of the Walking Dead. Though Guy Clinch leads a rich material life, he is as if lifeless. He feels his own life is closed with walls all around. The life he is looking for is death – the dead consciousness and the dead frankness. Guy is a kind of Prufrock style character—clutched a trace of residual and deformed dream, only to find that the modern society is not a world where the dream can be placed and will be probably like Prufrock who sank into the sea with the psychedelic song. Keith is a fanatic darts enthusiast. If he ever has any dream, that is to win money through darts. In order to stress the importance of the darts, Martin Amis draws a big dart board deliberately. What the darts represented is a kind of foolish chase that filter out all the emotions, and totally based on and dominated by the unreasonable figures. Those emotionless figures, emotionless scoring method, emotionless dream and emotionless spiritual sustenance will bring nothing but madness, perversion and spiritual death. This is the dart in Martin Amis' works—a kind of emotionless figure game and a kind of strong destructive power. While this sort of destructive game itself represents the disorder of the world, and it seems that game is murder and murder is game.



#### 4.4 The Perversion of Good and Evil

Many representatives of modern thought keenly criticized the aesthetic metamorphosis resulted from the missing of faith. Nietzsche shouted that "God has died". Eliot called world "the Waste Land" that has no spirit and do not distinguish good and evil, ugliness and beauty. Beckett was waiting for "Godot"(Yu 84). All these works expressed people's fear of the material world and the fear of the helpless state of inner emptiness. Behind of this fear, is mankind's avoiding of the plight that soul is homeless, also the revolt of the tragic fate of mankind, also the call for good and beauty. While in Martin's *London Fields*, there is no such kind of fear. All of the people are in a state of numbness, having no reaction to everything in their life. They are not even afraid of death and do not know the purpose of life. This means life is not worth looking forward to while death is no longer be eluded. The greatest tragedy of modern people is to have given up pursuing the beauty completely, or not knowing what is beauty. The fundamental point in Martin Amis' satire works is whether the beauty still remains after the depletion of emotion and the perversion of emotion. When genders are disordered, father and son become enemies, life and death becomes meaningless and beauty's reference object disappeared, how can the beauty be verified? If the beauty can not be verified, then what is the end of beauty?

In Martin Amis' works, not only the beauty has lost its reference object and has become the escaper in the post modern society, but also the ugliness or the evil leaped into the dominant force. In the religious tradition, God which represents human beings' save and virtue becomes the embodiment of ugliness. God can not only give people spiritual salvation, but also can not bring people the Nietzschean horror—when Nietzsche declared that "God has died", it represented without the spiritual guide, human beings' spiritual world will become the empty fear. While the God in *London Fields* seems to revive in Nietzsche's curse. But now the God has become a villain and no longer the representative of good. What is the final reason for this murder? Maybe the answer should be found in the losing of the traditional faith. The thorough subversion of the faith resulted in the present situation in London fields – a world in which the good and evil are completely subverted. There is everything here except beauty, good and love.

Maybe we can find the word “beauty”, but this type of “beauty” is not different from ugliness. Even the happiness is called “disgusting happiness” by Ruan Wei (Ruan 116-120).

If London is a cobweb, people in it are flies. And if cobweb represents the ugly society’s devastation to people’s pursue and dream, then the objects that are strangled are also ugly. In the traditional novels, when it represents people’s pursue and dream are strangled by the society, what we see is the good things are strangled. While in this novel, people’s pursue, people’s dream and people themselves have no meaning of existence. People or people’s act, pursue have no difference with the flies, filthy and shameless. Keith’s job is robbery with violence at first and then turn to cheating with nonviolence. The place they are about to burgle is all burgled out. “And burgling was clearly approaching a crisis.” (Amis 141). Burglars were finding that almost everywhere had been burgled. Burglars were being burgled by fellow burglars, and were doing the same thing back. Returning from burgling, burglars would discover that they had been burgled, sometimes by the very burglar that they themselves had just burgled. He carefully designed and cheated Mrs. Barnaby, which resulted in her death. The Portobello Road in which they lived was quite chaos: “the whole trench scuffed and frayed, falling apart, and full of rats. A queue of tramps had formed at the gates of the Salvation Army Hostel, waiting for soup or whatever was offered, the troops of the poor, conscripts, pressed men.” (85). Writer is no longer the “soul of the times”, Samson not only observes Nicola’s death from the sidelines from beginning to end, but also does it by himself in order to earn the remuneration from a resounding end when Keith and Guy escaped the responsibility to be a murderer. In the world where all the value judgments are lost, it only remains unprovoked hatred. The general emotion that “others are the hell” makes the whole society dispel the utopian ideals completely. It is this extremely inflated ego desire and giving up the truth and beauty that leads to the complete disorder – the black guy in a bar called himself “Shakespeare” and the villain like Keith who were addicted to pornography and dart was called “Talent”. People without the basic discrimination ability would hurt and distract each other and wait for the final extinction. This kind perversion of beauty and ugliness, good and evil is the precursor for mankind towards death in the Postmodernist context.

Zhang Helong points out that *London Fields* is a bleak image in the postmodern western world and people become anxious about facing the impending disasters such as the nuclear annihilation, environmental collapse and so on. And it is filled with a kind of "apocalyptic complex" leaded by death. So this novel is not shocking statement to attract attention, but a post-modern apocalypse related with human beings' own future and the world we exist in (Zhang 50).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzes *London Fields* from the perspective of archetypal criticism. Martin Amis's work *London Fields* includes a lot of prototypes in the Bible. The main female character Nicola's prototype is the devil because of her evil nature. And the prototype of the three men characters who act as the candidate murderers is the Trinity. Besides, a lot of important images in the Bible appear in *London Fields*, while these images are quite subversive which overturn the tradition. From these two aspects, the author concludes that the world of London fields is actually a spiritual wasteland where people lose their faith, do not have the basic discrimination ability and everything is meaningless for them. The fifth part describes the London fields macroscopically and shows it is just like an apocalyptic scene, which is illustrated from four aspects: the perversion of two genders, the abnormality of the relationship between two generations, the perversion of life and death and the perversion of good and evil. Martin Amis ends his novel with Nicola's death in such a disordered, Babylonian, obscene and eschatological scene, which is not accidental. Martin Amis arranges the plot that three candidate murders to murder Nicola and Nicola plans her own death calmly indicates the inevitability of her death and the "doomsday" for the spritualess modern society.

Martin Amis points out human beings' miserable condition in the future in the cruelest way and his purpose is not to wish human to be devastated, but to stimulate them to know themselves correctly, go back to emotion and get rid of extinction. This shows Martin Amis's moral mission and salvation complex.

## NOTES

1. T.S Eliot creates an eschatological atmosphere of death in the chapter of “Little Gidding” in *Four Quartets*, and at the same time, he presents “the recurrent end of the unending”. This kind of death image in time is actually continuing “doomsday” scene

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### 攻读学位期间取得的研究成果

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