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# 厦 门 大 学

## 硕 士 学 位 论 文

### *Beloved: Female Gothic Elements, Unspeakable Traumas and Awakening of Self-consciousness*

### 《宠儿》：女性哥特元素、无法言语的创伤与自我意识觉醒

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## Abstract

Toni Morrison is a distinguished novelist in the 20th century American literary history. As the first black American writer winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, she puts Afro-African novels to a higher level, basing it on the black's unique history, folklore and reality. From then on, Afro-American literature strides forward toward the main trend of American literature. Generally, Morrison's works always pay close attention to the black women and their struggle course of antithesis cultural conflict between the white and the black. The dual role as a black and a woman leads Morrison to the inner depths of women's mind, enabling her to depict the grim struggle and distorted psychology of Afro-American women under "the triple oppression of class, race and gender" (Mbalia 625) in a minute and profound way.

*Beloved* is Toni Morrison's fifth novel. Since its publication, it became a best seller and received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988. It is broadly considered to be Morrison's greatest female gothic novel to date. Rooted in Afro-American cultural tradition and unique experiences of the black female, *Beloved* dwells on black women's unspeakable traumas caused by American slavery, goes into deeply the dark social reality and savage slavery system in the nineteenth century America. By employment of gothic narrative technique, Morrison draws a vivid picture of slaves' life and presents fierce criticism of reality by creating typical female gothic elements. For the sake of disclosing the subjects of hardship, trauma and awakening of self-consciousness, Morrison employs female gothic narrative technique in *Beloved* and furthermore attaches to the novel boundless suspension, marvelous illusions and profound social significance. A series of carefully cultivated female gothic heroines with distinct personalities add to the unspeakable spiritual traumas of black women under racial discrimination and sexual bias. In this sense, *Beloved* is quite a representative female gothic novel. In the work, *Beloved* stands for the history of Afro-American female whereas the respective attitude of Baby Suggs, Sethe and Denver towards *Beloved* symbolize three typical historical views of the African American women. At the end of the story, Denver manages to appease *Beloved*'s spirit and rescue her mother Sethe with the assistance of the black community. Morrison's essential intention here is to give the expression of her own historical viewpoint. In more specific words, black women should remember the miserable past but should not fall into it deeply. Instead, they are supposed to unite with all forces and move forward future with bravery.

Based on textual analysis, this paper makes full use of some female gothic images and heroines to probe into subjectivity establishment of female group as well as loss and regain of black female subjectivity. This thesis falls into five parts. In the first part, it gives a general introduction about gothic and female gothic, aiming to underline the values of this paper which in turn may arrest more attention to female gothic genre. Chapter One focuses on the female gothic images in *Beloved*, such as female gothic enclosure “Bluestone Road 124” and tree-shaped scar on Sethe’s back, which make a clear demonstration of the miserable life the Afro-American women lead under slavery and the indelible psychological traumas remaining in their mind after abolishment of slavery. Chapter Two makes an emphatic analysis on three important female gothic heroines who are of great mystery and complexity. Chapter Three discusses the unspeakable traumas of the Afro-American women, giving a detailed analysis on the gradual establishment of female subjective consciousness of the Afro-American women represented by three generations of Sethe’s family, hence disclosing the significance and positive influence of the female gothic application in *Beloved*. Moreover, it implies that the black women are on their way to win thorough liberation in body and mind through constant efforts from generation to generation. In the conclusion, the thesis gives a clear demonstration of contributions that Morrison has made for the awakening of self-consciousness and ethnic solidarity. It thinks highly of Morrison’s assertion on racial issue: In the white mainstream society, the black particularly the black women should bravely face up to the painful past traumas caused by American slavery. By reviewing the history and cultural tradition of the black, Morrison advocates that the Afro-Africans should establish their own self-consciousness so as to realize the ethnic solidarity.

**Key Words:** Female Gothic; Unspeakable Traumas; Awakening; Self-consciousness;  
Ethnic Solidarity

## 摘要

托尼·莫里森是 20 世纪美国文学史上杰出的黑人女作家。她于 1993 年荣膺诺贝尔文学奖，成为第一位获得该项殊荣的非洲裔美国女作家。作为一名黑人，托尼·莫里森植根于美国黑人独特的历史、传说和现实生活，将黑人小说推向一个新的高度，从而使黑人文学也由边缘迈进美国文学的主流。作为一名女性，她的作品长期以来更是关注黑人女性这一弱势社会群体及其在黑白两种对立文化冲突中的挣扎过程。同时，黑人和女性的双重身份又帮助莫里森深入到黑人女性的内心深处，深刻而细腻地展开了在种族主义和性别歧视的双重压迫下，黑人女性的痛苦挣扎和扭曲的心理状态。

《宠儿》是莫里森的第五部小说，出版于 1987 年，该部小说一问世便一举成为美国文学史上最畅销的小说之一，并于 1988 年荣获美国普利策小说奖，被广泛认为是迄今为止莫里森最伟大的女性哥特小说。《宠儿》植根于非裔美国文化传统和黑人女性独特经验，讲述了美国奴隶制对黑人尤其是黑人女性所造成的心理创伤，深刻揭示了 19 世纪美国黑暗的社会现实和残酷的社会制度。托妮·莫里森哥特式的文学技巧生动地描写出奴隶的生活，并将她对现实的批判渗透到女性哥特式意象的运用和塑造。为更好地揭示苦难、创伤、自我意识觉醒等主题，莫里森在小说中运用了独特的女性哥特式叙事手法，赋予了这部小说无尽的悬念、奇妙的幻想和深刻的现实意义。小说中一系列精心塑造、个性鲜明的女性哥特人物形象更加揭示了种族歧视和性别歧视下黑人妇女无法言说的精神创伤。从这个意义上来说，《宠儿》可以称得上是一部典型的女性哥特小说代表作。在作品中，宠儿代表着美国黑人女性历史，而贝比·萨格斯、塞丝和丹芙三代女性对待宠儿的态度则代表着三种典型的美国黑人女性主义历史观。最后通过设置丹芙在其黑人社区人们的帮助下成功平息宠儿的鬼魂和解救塞丝这一情节，托妮·莫里森表达了自己的历史观：既要记住悲惨的过去，又不能陷于其中不能自拔，而要团结众人的力量，勇敢地面向未来。

本论文以《宠儿》的女性哥特意象和女性哥特人物为突破口，通过文本分析，深入探讨了黑人女性主体性的丧失、回归以及女性群体主体性的构建等问题。全文分为五个部分：第一部分绪论介绍了哥特、女性哥特，从而引起人们对这一文学体裁的更多关注；第一章通过分析《宠儿》中封闭空间“蓝石路 124 号”和塞

思后背上“树型伤疤”这两个典型的女性哥特意象，揭露了美国黑人女性在奴隶制被废除前的悲惨生活以及奴隶制被废除后无法言说的精神创伤。第二章具体分析了《宠儿》中神秘复杂、扭曲变形的女性哥特人物以及他们之间的相互联系；第三章描写了美国黑人女性无法言说的创伤，通过展示以赛思一家为代表的三代美国黑人女性主体意识逐步确立的完整过程：从沉睡到觉醒，从自发到自觉，最终主动去建立自我主体身份，象征性地说明黑人女性正在通过一代又一代不断的努力来赢得身心的全面解放；从而展现了莫里森采用女性哥特文学体裁背后所蕴含的一种循序渐进、积极向上的思想精神。最后一部分充分肯定了莫里森在重建女性自我意识和民族和谐等方面所作出的成就，尤其推崇莫里森积极向上的种族主张：在白人主流社会里，尽管黑暗的奴隶制给美国黑人女性带来了无法诉说的内心创伤，但是黑人尤其是黑人女性应该勇敢正视美国奴隶制所带来的创伤，重审黑人历史与文化传统，建立非裔美国人的主体意识，从而达到她所倡导的民族和谐。

**关键词：**女性哥特；无法言语的创伤；觉醒；自我意识；民族和谐



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