

Interpretation of Scarlett's Land Complex in *Gone with the Wind* from the Perspective of Humanity

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Abstract: The famous novel *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell takes the Civil War as the background. With the three marriage experiences of Scarlett as the main line, her strong feeling of land complex runs through the whole book. The red land at Tara witnessed Scarlett's gradual growth and maturity, revealing the eternal blood ties between land and Scarlett. This paper, by analyzing Scarlett's life course, explores the development of the land complex which is a process from unconsciousness to fight for the land. Scarlett's land complex gave her a vivid image.

Key words: Scarlett; Tara; Land Complex

1. INTRODUCTION

Margaret Mitchell portrayed the vivid artistic images of *Gone with the Wind*, leaving a profound impression on the readers. One of the most noteworthy of all, naturally, is Scarlett who holds the new image of women: dare to love and hate, pursue persistently the value of self-existence. There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people's eyes. Critics have different attitudes towards Scarlett. Some think that she is a bad woman who is extremely selfish and unscrupulous for personal interests, even at the expense of the love and family. Some believe that she is a warrior who is an unpretentious, responsible, unafraid of difficulties, passionate about the land, and always defending their homeland. Scarlett's constant struggle earned her everything, but Rhett thought she had lost her soul. However, she went through the war and suffered setbacks and became a practical person. It was life that made her change. Human nature is the natural attribute of human, and the good and evil are cultural concepts, so human nature cannot be good or evil. Scarlett gradually enhanced the emotion to Tara in the process of her growth. Her emotion to Tara has the closest relationship with the instinct of human nature. Starting from the human instinct, along with the progress of the war, Scarlett's love towards Tara land became purer and purer.

2. SCARLETT'S LAND COMPLEX

(1). The Germination of Scarlett's Land Complex

At the beginning of *Gone with the Wind*, the author shows us a comfortable and beautiful picture of life. At that time the war had not yet broken out, the life in

Tara was leisurely and wealthy. In this context, a young girl who was just sixteen years old lived a carefree life without a single worry, and the only thing she thought of was how to attract the attention of men. She did not realize the importance of land at all.

When her father persuaded Scarlett to give up her obsession with Ashley and give Tara to her, she would not mind or even be hostile to the idea of being the master of the land. As her father gave her the generous gift, she said in fury, "I wouldn't have Cade on a silver tray," "And I wish you'd quit pushing him at me! I don't want Tara or any old plantation. Plantations don't amount to anything" Tara, which made her so comfortable, did not make her feel the significance of the red land to her at that time. Scarlett refused her father's estate, woman's body girdle and disliked living the same life as anyone else. She even thought her father sounded like an Irishman. The infatuation with Ashley was only because of the strong vanity, and Ashley was not like the other boys who had flirted with her, brought her flowers, and asked her to dances and parties. Under the cover of such feelings, her love of the land, even Scarlett herself did not notice. Even though Scarlett had not yet touched the land complex of her heart, it did not affect the rooting and sprouting of the land complex under the Irish ancestry. While waiting for her father at the road, she felt something in her heart. "Sunset and spring and new-fledged greenery were no miracle to Scarlett. Their beauty she accepted as casually as the air she breathed and the water she drank, for she had never consciously seen beauty in anything but women's faces, horses, silk dresses and like tangible things. Yet the serene half-light over Tara's well-kept acres brought a measure of quiet to her disturbed mind. She loved this land so much, without even knowing she loved it, loved it as she loved her mother's face under the lamp at prayer time." Thus, in her sub consciousness, the land was like a mother to her, deep in her heart. When she left Tara and lived in Atlanta, "now that she was away from Tara, she missed it dreadfully, missed the red fields and the springing green cotton and the sweet twilight silences. For the first time, she realized dimly what Gerald had meant when he said that the love of the land was in her blood." This is her deep love of

the land from the heart.

(2). The Eruption of Scarlett's Land Complex

Before the war, Tara was prosperous, and everyone lived an aristocratic life. When the Civil War broke out, Atlanta fell and everyone was displaced. As the flames of war approached, Scarlett was still thinking of Tara. "Cannon to the south! And to the south lay Jonesboro and Tara—and Ellen. Yankees perhaps at Tara, now, this minute!" When Atlanta was about to fall, Scarlett's heart had been flying to Tara early. At the time of the fall of Atlanta, Rhett had stolen an old horse for her, and asked where she was going, "But at his question she suddenly knew where she was going, knew that all this miserable day she had known where she was going. The only place." It was as if the door in her heart had been opened and the heart of returning to Tara's red land was so eager that when Rhett told her the danger of going back, she behaved hysterically and cried "I will go home! You can't stop me! I will go home! I want my mother! I'll kill you if you try to stop me! I will go home!" At this dangerous moment, Scarlett made such a cry of pain. The kind of homecoming feeling burned her soul like a wildfire, and the land complex hidden in her heart awakened. Scarlett, risking earth-shattering artillery, with the just-delivered mother, two children, a young silly black maid, at risk of life, had only one idea in mind - returning to the red land where she was raised and shepherded.

When Scarlett fled back to Tara in the flames of war, the white brick walls gave her infinite joy, but the joy quickly vanished when she saw the deserted land, burned houses, and almost unrecognizable Tara. Besides, dear mother died, father became silly, two sisters were sick in bed, black people ran away and there was nothing in the house... Faced with this dilemma, she took the responsibility of being the leader of the family. She could have allowed her family to take refuge in their relatives. But her stubborn and independent personality, especially her love for the red land, made her bear the burden without hesitation. "Her burdens were her own and burdens were for shoulders strong enough to bear them. She thought without surprise, looking down from her height, that her shoulders were strong enough to bear anything now, having borne the worst that could ever happen to her. She could not desert Tara; she belonged to the red acres far more than they could ever belong to her. Her roots went deep into the blood-colored soil and sucked up life, as did the cotton. She would stay at Tara and keep it, somehow, keep her father and her sisters, Melanie and Ashley's child, the negroes." On this red land, Scarlett was transformed from a young girl to a strong adult woman overnight. All the good qualities, such as gentleness, kindness, nobility, modesty and honesty were totally useless. She plowed personally, borrowed seeds and picked cotton out of the love for

the land. Only her feeling for Tara had not changed. She never came wearily home across the fields and saw the sprawling white house that her heart did not swell with love and the joy of homecoming. She never looked out of her window at green pastures and red fields and tall tangled swamp forest that a sense of beauty did not fill her.

Her love for Ashley was an illusion and only the love for Tara was real. Ashley knew this point clearer than Scarlett. He picked up a handful of red clay from the ground and pressed it into her hand, and told her "Something you love better than me, though you may not know it. You've still got Tara. At first, the words meant nothing and the clay was only red clay. But unbidden came the thought of the sea of red dirt which surrounded Tara and how very dear it was and how hard she had fought to keep it—how hard she was going to have to fight if she wished to keep it hereafter. She squeezed the clay so tightly it ran out from her clenched fist and she said over and over, parrot-like: 'I've still got this. Yes, I've still got this.'"

(3). The Strength of Scarlett's Land Complex

When Rhett returned home, Scarlett had a quarrel with him, and fell down the stairs causing an abortion. A month later, Scarlett, despite her weakness, decided to return to Tara. As she had been in the flames of war in Atlanta, she insisted on going back to her healing place, and she needed a strength to support herself through this difficulty. "It seemed that if she could only get back to the stillness and the green cotton fields of home, all her troubles would fall away and she would somehow be able to mold her shattered thoughts into something she could live by." Rhett also precisely described Scarlett, "Sometimes I think she's like the giant Antaeus who became stronger each time he touched Mother Earth. It doesn't do for Scarlett to stay away too long from the patch of red mud she loves. The sight of cotton growing will do her more good than all Dr. Meade's tonics." When Scarlett came back from Tara, the nourishment of the red earth made her sick face almost disappear, her cheeks plump and rosy, and her green eyes were again lively and bright. Obviously, Scarlett's life in Tara relieved Scarlett's psychological and physical trauma, making her full of strength, and she was strong enough to fight.

At the end of the novel, Scarlett finally realized that the person she really loved was Rhett, who really loved her. But Rhett chose to leave. Rhett's love for Scarlett had used up and he went away. "She thought of Tara and it was as if a gentle cool hand were stealing over her heart. She could see the white house gleaming welcome to her through the reddening autumn leaves, feel the quiet hush of the country twilight coming down over her like a benediction, feel the dews falling on the acres of green bushes starred with fleecy white, see the raw color of the red earth and the dismal dark beauty of the pines on the

rolling hills.”

3. THE CAUSE OF SCARLETT'S LAND COMPLEX

(1).Irish Descent and Plantation Economic Production Mode

Scarlett, as the eldest daughter, had an Irish blood flowing in her body and a love for the land. Moreover, she was born at Tara, followed the tradition of southerners. The economic production of plantations in the South determines that land is the guarantee for their survival. And Scarlett's Irish ancestry gave her more strong feelings towards the land from which Scarlett strong land complex came. According to Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, “the essential thing, psychologically, is that in dreams, fantasies, and other exceptional states of mind the most far-fetched mythological motifs and symbols can appear autochthonous at any time, often, apparently, as the result of particular influences, traditions, and excitations working on the individual, but more often without any sign of them. These “primordial images” or “archetypes,” belong to the basic stock of the unconscious psyche and cannot be explained as personal acquisitions. Together they make up that psychic stratum which has been called the collective unconscious. It is in the highest degree influenced by inherited presuppositions, quite apart from the unavoidable influences exerted upon it by the environment. The collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings. It is the matrix of all conscious psychic occurrences, and hence it exerts an influence that compromises the freedom of consciousness in the highest degree.” Scarlett's land complex can be said to be a manifestation of the “collective unconscious” of Irish national psychology and also a subtle result of the economy and culture in the South of the United States.

(2). Empathy Compensation Psychology

In life, there is no doubt that Scarlett is a strong woman. However, she is not good at thinking about problems. When she encountered problems, “tomorrow consciousness” appeared in her mind. Therefore, she was a loser about affection. It was not until Melanie's death that she realized that she should have treated Melanie better, and found that the man she loved was not Ashley, but Rhett. She has gone through three marriages in her life, all without love. Scarlett first got married with Charles just because she wanted to take revenge on Ashley due to Ashley's refusal; Because of the high tax, for the second time, she married herself to Frank on whom she usually looked upon. In order to avoid a poor life in the third marriage, she married Rhett. And at that time, she did not realize her love for Rhett. Although she had three marriages, she did not love the three husbands. In

order to compensate for the lack of love, she moved her love to the land of Tara. This is called compensation psychology. In psychology, compensation is a strategy whereby one covers up, consciously or unconsciously, weaknesses, frustrations, desires, or feelings of inadequacy or incompetence in one life area through the gratification or excellence in another area. Compensation can cover up either real or imagined deficiencies and personal or physical inferiority. This kind of compensation, in fact, is a psychological “shift”. Scarlett's three unhappy marriages, together with the unaccepted love for Ashley, led to the absence of love in her heart. At this time, land was the only source that gave her life strength.

4. CONCLUSION

Scarlett, who dares to love and hate, has many facets of character, and even she is full of contradictions. But her deep love for the red land was beyond doubt, and only the land could be the source of her strength. Just as the poem line goes “My eyes are often filled with tears for I love this land so deeply.” This poem line is also the portrayal of Scarlett's heart. At the end of the war, when the new society comes, things change, everything goes with the wind, only the land can last forever. She loved the red land. Even though she was accused of being isolated, she would not abandon it. Just like the piece of cotton, she has taken root in this red earth, absorbed nutrients and grew tenaciously.

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