

The Marriage View of Scarlett in Gone with the Wind from the Perspective of Ecological Feminism

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Abstract. This research utilized Karen Warren's ecofeminist viewpoint to look into Scarlett O'Hara's marital concept in the setting of *Gone with the Wind*, after the collapse of the American South's plantation system at the end of the Civil War and throughout the Reconstruction period; the examination showed that Scarlett's three marital selections during the course of the story encompassed the contradictory essence of patriarchal systems, using marriage as a means of survival while at the same time upholding a strong female identity based on a land - centered morality with the Tara plantation being the ecological bedrock; this seeming contradiction illustrated the built - in inconsistencies in women's emancipation during times of social turmoil when the breaking down of repressive ideas was along with a battle to entirely escape from dominant ways of thinking; the article argued that by carefully analyzing the text and delving into theory, Scarlett's attitude towards marriage stood for not just a resistance to traditional gender norms but also an attempt to build one's own identity among ecological and patriarchal difficulties thus forming an example of ecofeminist activity.

Keywords: Karen Warren, ecological feminism, marriage concept, subjectivity

1. Introduction

Margaret Mitchell (1900 - 1949) became a vital person in American literature in the important time of the early 20th century, serving as a connection between the cultural divide that separated the Jazz Age and the Great Depression, and her great work, *Gone With The Wind*, was set against the background of the unstable American Civil War (1861 - 1865) and the subsequent Reconstruction period, showing a chaotic society where the leftovers of out - of - date wartime traditions clashed with new social structures.

The southern establishment of old stood on a plantation system symbolized by Tara in much the same way as if the Southern agricultural way of life could have gone on forever as long as it is kept up by a patriarchal structure with racial supremacy at its head and a system of slave labor [1]. The pre - Civil War Southern social system was best represented by the plantation system, with Tara being a perfect example, which was based on a male - dominated structure with a race - based hierarchy at the top and depended on enslaved people's labor to keep the agricultural way of life going, and in this society, white upper - class women were idealized, reaching a holy status as

symbols of cleanliness, devoutness, and self - giving, typical examples of Southern womanliness, but this elevation of women's status restricted them to a beautiful yet confining situation, turning them into tools for maintaining family tradition and financial stability, so their personal accomplishments were made less important than keeping the family line alive, and the Civil War broke this model when men went off to fight, the slavery system fell apart, and plantation economies collapsed, showing that the Southern gender order was wearing away, and after everything had fallen apart, Scarlett O'Hara came forward as a main character who changed from someone men admired to someone who took control of her own survival, and her marriages one after another to Charles Hamilton, Frank Kennedy, and Rhett Butler could be seen as a set of planned decisions, these relationships which were more about deals than romance showed not just personal likes but also ways to survive during the chaos of society falling apart.

Traditionally, academic exploration has probed into Scarlett O'Hara from the perspectives of feminism, psychology, and historical study, focusing on her self - centered defiance and capitalist isolation, yet this discussion neglects her deep connection to the land, which forms the essence of her existence, so Scarlett's inherent comprehension and mutually beneficial rapport with the earth are crucial to her self - hood, and ecological feminism is especially suited to close this interpretative deficiency, offering a theoretical framework that clarifies the interrelated systems of suppression influencing both women and the natural world, and this structure also uncovers the intricate manners in which Scarlett's marriage - related tactics both resist and sustain these repressive mechanisms.

2. Theoretical core: Ecofeminist framework - based on Karen Warren's theory

Philosopher of ecology, Ecofeminist Karen Warren does an organized systematic construction provides rich theoretical framework to comprehend the connection of ecological and gender oppressions. This part is about the main ideas of Warren's ecofeminist theory to get ready for understanding Scarlett's view of marriage in *Gone with the Wind*.

Warren's main point is about finding the reasonable pattern of ruling relationship. She identifies an oppressive conceptual framework with three elements. The value hierarchy, which establishes a rank ordering of what is valuable, with men, culture, and reason being placed at the top of the hierarchy, while women, nature, and emotion are placed at the bottom. So this hierarchy, then, is not one of classification but of judgement. Second, it divides the world into mutually exclusive opposites - culture vs. nature, mind vs. body, reason vs. emotion. This dualistic thinking does not just highlight the distinctions but creates these distinctions as oppositional relations [2]. Finally, the ruling logic, which is the necessary outcome of the first two features, provides a legitimization for oppression. Warren stresses that this ruling logic is what is truly oppressive, it naturally and through a rigorous process, derives ruling as legitimate from value presuppositions.

In the theoretical view of Warren woman and nature is connected in two aspects, namely symbol and material. Symbolically speaking, the metaphor of feminizing nature and naturalizing women in the West together create women and nature as objects to be controlled. It is not only an act of rhetoric, but a powerful discourse. On the material level, women are connected to the life and nature of the land through their roles as givers, nurturers, and caregivers [3]. When the environment gets worse, women often have to deal with the bad results first. This kind of material connection through survival experiences makes women more sensitive to the damage done to the environment, and more responsible for that damage.

Warren's theory goes beyond just finding problems and criticizing things [4]; instead, it basically builds an ethical model, and the discussion gets into the area of care - based ethics which focuses on relationships between people, emotional ties, and responsibilities rather than wide - ranging, general

principles, and this ethical view holds that we're all connected like parts of a complicated network from which morality comes about, while at the same time Warren stresses the significance of a contextualist method claiming that a complete analysis has to consider the historical and social situations along with overlapping elements like race, class, and gender.

Warren's ecofeminist framework basically forms a liberation practice which holds that liberation could be attained only via changing the leadership identity and breaking down the dominant rationalities so as to build respectful and empathetic relationships [5], meaning it involves freeing women from patriarchal systems and liberating nature from anthropocentric viewpoints as these things are inherently connected, and applying this theory provides new understandings regarding Scarlett O'Hara's attitudes towards marriage in *Gone with the Wind*, during the American Civil War, Scarlett went through a time when values were changing but no new ones came up and her marriage - related choices show the complex fight of women striving for independence in a constricting social environment, and her actions represent both the dominant reasoning and the resistance methods as described by Warren's ecofeminist theory, so the following discussion would use this theoretical perspective to carry out a detailed exploration of the contradictions in Scarlett's marriages and what they mean for liberation.

Her marriage choices show clearly the complicated process of woman trying to be free under such a restrictive idea during this period. Her behavior holds the ruling logic and resistance strategies best footnoted to Warren's theory. The following text is going to apply the theoretical framework into a deep analysis on Scarlett's marital contradiction and her liberation significance.

3. Deconstruction and reconstruction of scarletts marriage view from the perspective of ecological feminism

When applying Karen Warren's ecological feminism in our analysis of Scarlett O'Hara's marital philosophy within the world of *Gone With The Wind* we move past traditional feminist ideas. Within a larger ethical framework, it makes clear the complicated power relations and ecological impacts behind her marriage choices. Scarlett's three marriages are not simply personal emotions decisions, but contradictory acts that enable her to employ patriarchal logic for her own survival and to create anew a survival logic within historical patriarchy's collapse.

Scarlett's idea of marriage clearly shows us the "idea of oppression" which Warren criticizes. The Old South plantation culture constructed women as pure, submissive "other," and a woman's marital worth was determined by her position within the patriarchal exchange system [5]. And yet it is Scarlett's singularity, in having the conscious understanding of its machinations and proactiveness to change it for survival. Her marriage to Charles Hamilton was her last passive acceptance of a traditional marriage. Though it was for revenge on Ashley, the behavior still conformed to the expected behavior of a lady. However when the civil war started and all those social structures of the old south went out the window Scarlett realized that she would have to control her own fate. Then all her other marriages were to show that she could get men. She got Frank Kennedy when he was already promised to Tara so as not to lose her to Tara and she took Rhett Butler's marriage proposal just for the money. By making these decisions she placed herself on the top tier of value for the men in her life, using marriage and men to gain the status she desired. Subversive behavior seemed like a mirror image of the patriarchal rule logic, but this time her body had become the center of power. position of the person.

Warren believes that real freedom is to create new morals. Scarlett's unbreakable tie to Tara symbolizes ecofeminism's idea of relational existence [5]. "The land, the land is the only thing in the world that you own," she doesn't only show property devotion, but more important, a kind of deep

ecological consciousness – she sees people's life and the land are connected like one. This land-based ethics is complex within Scarlett's actions. One hand, her steadfast guardianship of Tara is a contextualized form of ethical care. She goes out of her way to guard her house and takes sides of people like Melanie and Wade that are weak, which reveals the benefit of being near someone, that goes past your personal dreams. On the other hand, in order to reach this purpose, she is using coercive actions, such as the use of forced laborers and unfair commercial competition [6]. This moral paradox is exactly Warren's "ethical dilemma of transition" - at the time when old ethics has already collapsed, but the new ones are still not established, people's decisions are always compromises between two sets of ethics.

Warren argues that ecofeminism has to be contextualist. Scarlett is placed within a historical moment, the time of the social transformation of Southern United States during the Civil War, that gave rise to an individual generative context of her peculiar marital perspective. The traditional behavioral codes of upper-class ladies could no longer guarantee their survival, but new female role models had not yet been found [5]. In this value vacuum, Scarlett's choice of marriage is pragmatic survival wisdom. Most notably, Scarlett is a cross-cutting oppressed person: She is an oppressed woman who is also marginalized in the South's economy post-slavery, as well as a group member at war [6]. In the midst of multiple oppressions, her strategy to get married is highly adaptable. Not only crossed the gender lines but also crossed class lines. Went from being a plantation's heir to being a business owner. This is the fluidity of her identity, which is also the practice of deconstruction of oppressive concepts.

4. The awakening of women's subjectivity and its reflection on the situation of modern women

Margaret Mitchell was a female writer from the South who became famous during the time known as the Jazz age. She experienced a period that was changing from old ways to new ones. She saw the breaking down of Victorian ladylike behavior as a new wave of women were entering the work force. Mitchell maintained some Southern aristocratic traits of Southern women in Scarlett but gave her a rebellious spirit that was beyond the time period. And most notably, Mitchell's rendering of Scarlett's choices concerning marriage demolished Southern romantic stories. Southern traditional literature often wrote women as a romantic love superiority, however, Scarlett was an extraordinary realist that tore down the romantic image. Her initial seeming devotion to Ashley was at first thought to be simply romantic but in reality it was her own way to protect herself from the psychological trauma much the same way ecofeminism brings out that women are usually taught to store all their emotions into the "safe" emotion of love. Scarlett comes to realize that her love for Ashley is just a self-conceived illusion, a symbol that women can be free from emotional isolation [7].

Scarlett's marriage philosophy is the best way to understand her survival strategy. She transforms from a passive recipient into an active one, making use of patriarchy to maintain her identity and land. Socially, it came from the revolutionary social chaos of the American Civil War. Pre-war southern plantation economy was ruled by the dual domination of nature and women; land and slave were transformed into commodities that could be used for exploitation, women were bound to the "plantation lady" myth as vessels of male lineage and property. The Civil Wars had an impact that broke apart this weak system, and from it new survival ethics appeared. Ecofeminist theory claims that new mentalities appear as the old ones lose their adaptability. Scarlett's marital philosophy is an example of such an adaptation – during the collapse of the traditional order and the economic order, she began the transition from romantic ethics to survival ethics [8]. Her three marriages follow this pattern: first marriage for social status, second for her home country, and third for money. This

wasn't about moral degeneration, it was a rational choice for a crumbling social ecosystem. Choice shows women can rewrite their relationship with the outside world in a crisis.

Scarlett's devotion to Tara goes beyond material love, representing an essential ecological link and ecological feminism holds that women have an inborn deep - seated relationship with the natural surroundings which includes both a physical and a spiritual aspect; when Scarlett handled the red soil and said she was free from hunger, her remark didn't show a concern about getting enough to eat all her life but was instead a declaration of her identity mixed up with the ecosystem which led her to choose her husband and the coming of this ecological consciousness spurred the growth of a new kind of female self - awareness; by getting married to get resources and protect her area, Scarlett is like a trailblazing resistance against the traditional view of women being inactive in marriage deals and she changes from being someone to be married off to being an active doer using the marriage system to carry out her will; she is no longer a commodity in the marriage market but rather an active subject who uses the marriage market to realize her own will [9]. This awakening of female self - awareness breaks down the male - dominated model where both women and nature are made into things allowing women to take control of their own destiny and become guardians of ecological groups.

Scarlett's view of marriage and its construction are important for us to understand how to deal with women's predicaments of today. Women in contemporary society can reach legal equality, but the same problem of contradictions still exists, women not only need to meet traditional gender roles, to participate in the field competition with "male" features, while women also hope to be different from the rest, they take up all the reproductive work [10]. This double - sided pressure was similar to what Scarlett had experienced and looking at her story from an eco - feminist point of view made one reflect on the real emancipation of women, stressing the necessity for institutional protections and a change in the mindset away from the logic of objectification which even included human feelings and life. Scarlett's tragedy was marked by the sacrifice of true emotion for the sake of survival advantages in a patriarchal world and this learning experience showed the continuous fight for self - betterment among the women involved, warning them to be watchful against the traps of capitalist patriarchy and fostering an ethos of connection and ethical conduct based on concern and mutual reliance.

5. Conclusion

This study methodically disassembles and examines Scarlett O'Hara's marital concepts in *Gone with the Wind* from an eco - feminist perspective, the examination showed that her successive marriages were examples of her defying patriarchal marital rules and her practical involvement with survival ethics, this academic effort improved our understanding of classical literature and clearly demonstrated the relevance of eco - feminism in literary criticism, Scarlett had a two - fold method where she both resisted traditional marital roles to control men for her own purposes and unintentionally followed and promoted male - dominated reasoning, this ambiguity was like the intricacies of the feminist liberation movement in which escaping from existing hierarchies was moderated by deeply rooted mental patterns, her continuous care for Tara indicated her strong bond with the land and emphasized her environmentally aware decision - making regarding her marriage selections, theoretically, this research effectively combined literary criticism with eco - feminist discussion, revealing how gender and class interactions related to ecological difficulties, it not only broadened the interpretative aspects of *Gone with the Wind* but also presented new angles in ecological feminist literary analysis, the character of Scarlett O'Hara broke through the limits of historical background, showing that a woman's liberation was incomplete without preserving her

dignity and shaping social views, future academic investigations could look into the connections between nature writing and gender politics in other literary works from an ecological feminist viewpoint, suggesting a promising area for further academic exploration.

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