

Mr. Duroseau

Colloquy 3

23rd November 2023

Discussion on the genders of *Gone with the Wind*

A romantic tragedy set in a traditional Georgian community around the time of the American Civil War, Margaret Mitchell's book, *Gone with the Wind*, is set in this state. For Southerners, maintaining the customs of the past is important, especially when it comes to gender roles (Niklasson 2). Nevertheless, Scarlett, the protagonist, defies gender norms and acts as a counterpoint to the traditional feminine virtues (Eaklor). This essay will provide a summary of this book, and analyze how gender is shown in which women are expected as ignorant and relegated to a secondary, while men are viewed as responsible and sturdy. Furthermore, I connect with Scarlett through her tenacity and ability to take charge of her life, which serves to reinforce my beliefs about gender equality and the importance of independence.

The story begins at the O'Hara family cotton plantation in Tara, Georgia, as the Civil War approaches. Scarlett O'Hara is in love with Ashley Wilkes; however, he doesn't love her and marries Melanie Hamilton as his wife. To piss Ashley off, Scarlett marries Melanie's brother, Charles. However, Charles dies during the war, leaving her a widow and motivating Scarlett to move to Atlanta to live with Melanie. Sherman's army burns Atlanta to the ground, and Scarlett convinces Rhett, who loves her, to save them and take them back to Tara. However, Tara has been destroyed, and her family is in jeopardy. To gain enough

money to survive the crisis, Scarlett marries Frank Kennedy and pursues her business deals. After the death of Frank, Scarlett marries Rhett and has a daughter. After the death of their daughter, Scarlett realizes that the person she loves is Rhett instead of Ashley; however, it's far too late, as Rhett's love for her has died.

In the book, gender stereotypes are highlighted. To femininity, the girls are viewed as unnecessarily knowledgeable, since they're expected to be only "sweet and gentle and beautiful, without having an education to hamper her charms" (Mitchell 108). This is shown when Scarlett is socially isolated and criticized for showing her business acumen in an attempt to support her hometown, Tara. This marks the inequality in genders. Women are placed in a vulnerable secondary position, dependent on men, which pushes them to please men and portray themselves as dependent and weak so that men will find them attractive.

Except for women, men also need to follow their gender norms. The Tarleton twins embody masculinity through their appearances: embodying values of strength, tenderness, and respect for women (Gros 8). The twins who excel in these social norms underscore the values they hold as being educated, responsible, courteous, and sturdy. Their passion for war, a product of traditional gender stereotypes, reflects their duty to protect their loved ones and weaker ones, showcasing their courage and strength.

Even though people are limited by the harsh gender roles, Scarlett acts to challenge traditional gender roles and is unyielding, ambitious, and assertive. Scarlett's choice to act as a trailblazer who ventures out to pursue her business ventures and supports Tara plantation is considered unconventional during a period when women were supposed to stay at home. She highlights the capacity for achieving self-sufficiency and stability in the finances of women

and proves it is possible to own financial independence instead of depending on others for women. Furthermore, from the loss of her beloved Tara plantation to her struggles during the Civil War, Scarlett's capacity for adaptation, overcoming adversity, and perseverance are highlighted. Despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, women possess the power capacity as well as men.

Looking inward, I identify strongly with Scarlett as a gender equalizer. Since my childhood, my elders consistently encouraged me to work hard and be powerful and independent rather than weak and dependent on others. This aligns with traditional gender expectations for men. Furthermore, rather than having one parent assigned a specific family duty, my parents are jointly responsible for earning money and maintaining the house. My education seems to indicate that gender differences do not exist in terms of rights and responsibilities. Women are just as capable and have the same social responsibilities as men, and Scarlett, who acts like the person I've dreamed of being and was educated to be, reinforces this idea.

However, with a willingness to carve a place for myself in the world, I tend to protect myself from actual inequality in genders which raises my biggest fear: that I may one day be weak and have to depend on others, thus eliminating my voice. This is mainly because of the fact of gender inequality that women are still in a vulnerable secondary position and that gender equality has not been attained in the world where we live for centuries. From a worldwide perspective, it seems that anywhere, in any religion, and any culture (see Table 1), women are more likely to experience violence than men (see Table 2). To embrace my own agency, take charge of my destiny, and in a more pragmatic idea, protect myself from threats

and danger, I need to be independent and strong.

Characteristic	Male	Female	Total
Age(yrs)			
<29	601(40.2)	695(46.2)	1296(43.2)
30-39	406(27.1)	415(27.6)	821(27.4)
40-49	248(16.6)	256(17.0)	504(16.8)
50-59	145(9.7)	85(5.7)	230(7.7)
60-69	53(3.5)	24(1.6)	77(2.6)
>70	28(1.9)	13(0.9)	41(1.4)
Missing	15(1.0)	16(1.1)	31(1.0)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000
Tribe			
Igbo	520(34.8)	532(35.4)	1052(35.1)
Yoruba	511(34.2)	519(34.5)	1030(34.3)
Hausa	190(12.7)	228(15.2)	418(13.9)
Other Tribes	263(17.6)	202(13.4)	465(15.5)
Foreigners	4(0.27)	17(1.1)	21(0.7)
Missing	8(0.5)	6(0.4)	14(0.5)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000(100.0)
Religion			
Christianity	1058(70.7)	1135(75.5)	2193(73.1)
Islam	421(28.1)	355(23.6)	776(25.9)
Traditional/Others	14(0.96)	7(0.5)	21(0.7)
Missing	3(0.2)	7(0.5)	10(0.3)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000(100.0)
Marital Status			
Married	817(54.6)	922(61.3)	1739(58.0)
Single	614(41.0)	443(29.5)	1057(35.2)
Widowed	12(0.8)	70(4.7)	82(2.7)
Divorced	16(1.1)	27(1.8)	43(1.4)
Separated	24(1.6)	29(1.9)	53(1.8)
Missing	13(0.9)	13(0.9)	26(0.9)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000(100.0)
Level of Education			
No formal education	42(2.8)	99(6.6)	141(4.7)
Adult/Quranic	10(0.7)	20(1.3)	30(1.0)
Primary	170(11.4)	210(13.9)	380(12.7)
Secondary/High	459(30.7)	480(31.9)	939(31.3)
College/Tertiary	664(44.4)	648(43.1)	1312(43.7)
Others	7(0.5)	21(1.4)	28(0.9)
Missing	144(9.6)	35(2.3)	179(6.0)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000(100.0)
Occupation			
Artisans	406(27.1)	620(41.2)	1026(34.2)
Business/trading/Self employed	336(22.5)	158(10.5)	494(16.5)
Professionals	280(17.4)	178(11.8)	458(15.3)
Students	261(17.4)	269(17.9)	530(17.7)
Civil Servants	123(8.2)	121(8.0)	244(8.1)
Applicants	43(2.9)	33(2.2)	76(2.5)
Retiree	5(0.3)	9(0.6)	14(0.5)
Politicians	11(0.7)	1(0.07)	12(0.4)
Missing	31(2.1)	115(7.6)	146(4.9)
Total	1496(100.0)	1504(100.0)	3000(100.0)

Table 1.

Types of Violence	Female to Male		Male to Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Verbal abuse	751	50.2	851	56.6	1602	53.4
Slap on the face or ear	126	8.4	254	16.9	380	12.7
Throwing something at you	38	2.5	79	5.3	139	4.6
Pushing or shoving	116	7.8	127	8.4	243	8.1
No	1380	92.2	1376	91.6	2756	91.9
Biting	46	3.1	28	1.9	74	2.5
Tying Up	10	0.7	7	0.5	17	0.6
Pulling your hair	18	1.2	41	2.7	59	2.0
Beaten Up	63	4.2	217	14.4	280	9.4
Hitting with an object	34	2.3	47	3.1	81	2.7
Burning/Acid Attack	1	0.1	1	0.1	2	0.1
Choking	16	1.1	12	0.8	28	0.9
Stabbing	8	0.5	1	0.1	9	0.3
Thrown out of the house	38	2.5	78	5.2	116	3.9
Kicks/Blows on parts of the body	35	2.3	66	4.4	101	3.4
Denial of sex	195	13.1	105	7.0	300	10.0
Denial of house keeping allowance	31	2.1	153	10.2	184	6.1
Shoving	63	4.2	24	1.6	87	2.9
Dragging	57	3.8	157	10.5	112	3.7
Verbal Threat	174	11.6	157	10.5	331	11.0
Knife Threat	20	1.3	12	0.8	32	1.1
Gun Threat	4	0.3	2	0.1	6	0.2
Forced Sexual intercourse	30	2.0	62	4.1	92	3.1

Table 2.

In conclusion, the book *Gone with the Wind*, the “Old South” is a fantasy world that is deeply problematic, most people struggle to stay alive by clinging to stereotypical, even somewhat pedantic, perceptions of gender and the so-called pride of their identity as the owners of the plantations. With the background of the “Old South”, the traditional and typical gender stereotypes and gender norms for both masculinity and femininity can be shown clearly. However, this book challenges gender stereotypes through the protagonist, Scarlett, and reinforces the values I hold for gender equality and independence which are from my family education. Through *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell offers insightful perspectives on human nature and life's intricacies and encourages readers to consider their gender roles and find inspiration.

Works Cited

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Appendix

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