

Romanticizing the South in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*

اضفاء طابع رومنسي على الجنوب الامريكى في رواية "ذهب مع الريح" لمارقاريت ميتشل

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Abstract:

After the South was vanquished in the American Civil War (1861-1865), Southerners could not help live with defeat and its consequences. The South as a region has long been different than the North of the United States, and such a difference brought forth throughout the years, the war and its destruction. After Reconstruction, many Southerners believed that they have to fight again, but this time not with weapons and ammunitions, but with pens and belle letters. Margaret Mitchell, the well-known writer did just that with her work, *Gone With the Wind* (1936) which became an embodiment of the Southern Civil War novel for at least five decades since its publication.

The novel glorifies the Old South, in that focusing on the Southern cavalier, the Southern aristocratic lifestyles, and the feeling of nostalgia to the past.

Keywords: Romanticizing the American South; Southerners; The Civil War; Margaret Mitchell; *Gone With the Wind*.

ملخص البحث

بعد أن تمت هزيمة الجنوب في الحرب الاهلية الامريكية (1861-1865) لم يستطع سكان الجنوب الأمريكي تقبل الهزيمة ولا التعايش مع نتائج الحرب, حيث ان الجنوب كمنطقة يختلف عن الشمال في الولايات المتحدة الامريكية منذ بداية تأسيس الدولة في عدة مجالات. هذا الاختلاف مع مرور السنين أدى الى الحرب وعواقبها المدمرة. حيث انه بعد مرحلة إعادة البناء قرر الجنوبيون الامريكيون مواصلة المعركة ولكن هذه المرة ليس بالذخيرة والأسلحة بل بالأقلام والكتابة في الادب.

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ورواية "ذهب مع الريح" تعظم الجنوب القديم وسكانه في مرحلة ما قبل الحرب مركزة على الفروسية وأسلوب الحياة الارستقراطي بالإضافة الى الحنين الى الماضي. اما الامريكيون الشماليون فقد صورتهم الرواية على انهم يغيضون محتلون وهدفهم لم يكن توحيد ولم شمل الدولة بل احتلال الجنوب ونتيجة لهذا كرههم الجنوبيون وكرهوا من يتعامل معهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إعطاء طابع رومانسي للجنوب الأمريكي؛ الجنوبيون؛ الحرب الأهلية؛ مارقايت ميتشل؛ ذهب مع الريح؛



Introduction

The South of the United States played a hub for legends at least for the last century. Myths and stories about such a region have continued unabated with such titles as "The Southern Enigma," (Fraser and Moore, 1983) "The Southern Mystique," (Zinn, 1959) "The South—A Central Theme?" (Billington, 1969) to mention a few, were products of Southerners on their region.

The defeat of the South was ironically, a revival of the antebellum South especially in literature, it was a glorification of the 'Lost Cause'. The Southern ego even long after the war did not cease to exist, it probably got even more dominant than it was before the Civil War. Southern authors wrote about their region, and such writings even boomed especially in the 1930s, after a vehement attack on the South as a land of sterile cultural production by Henry L. Mencken.

Attitudes of Southerners and their way of life was very much complicated. As we see in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, a kind of celebration of slavery and its acceptance on both sides white and black alike. For instance, Scarlett, the Southern belle-protagonist sees slaves as inferior and thinks they cannot do things right. They have no aim for their personal lives, and field slaves were almost not depicted at all, since they are the ones who suffered most from slavery, as Frederick Douglas, told the world in his book, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) how overseers could kill slaves in cold blood just to set an example to the other slaves. Still, The Yankees, the liberators of slaves are the bad guys, and the slaves, victims as they were in the 'peculiar institution', were suddenly turned into criminals, attacking white people. This paper seeks to shed light on the representation of the Old South in *Gone With the Wind*, and how the

latter was romanticized regarding the glorification of the myth of aristocracy and happy darkies.

1- Mapping out the background preceding *Gone With the Wind*

According to Mr. William Taylor of Harvard, who wrote *Cavalier and Yankee*, the literary legend of the pre-cotton South dates back to 1817 when *Letters from the South* was published by the New York novelist James Kirke Paulding. He argues that the myth started with men who did not even live on the plantation. It first appeared with the *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* in 1817, by William Wirt. Thomas Jefferson, though helped with the work, did not approve of it as he noted that it was “a poor book, written in bad taste,” and expressed “an imperfect idea of Patrick Henry,” who was far less educated than his biographer claimed him to be. (Wilson, 1962: 439-441)

However, long before him was Sir Walter Scott, the Scottish novelist, poet, playwright, and historian, who seems to have affected the South considerably. Sir Walter Scott was a romancier who wrote about the mediaeval epoch. There is probably no worse a period than the Middle Ages in Europe. However, Scott somehow romanticized it by imaginings, and “the naturally romantic South fell victim to them.” (Eckenrode, 1917, p. 599). His genius transformed the darkness of the Middle Ages, through his writing into the Golden Age affecting the South considerably, as Eckenrode noted, “The planters, who had welcomed the doctrine of equality a couple of decades before, were now convinced aristocrats.” (p. 600)

Southern writers acted as meditators between readers and the South. These authors wanted to explain the South, that even despite its military defeat, was able to nurture some values that did not exist elsewhere in the country. (Ayers, 1995)

Mark Twain was also amongst the pioneers who linked the Civil War strongly to the South. In his *Life in the Mississippi*, he described the significance of the war to both the North and the South. He argued that in the North, people hear of the war very occasionally once per month, or at most once a week “as a distinct subject for talk, it has long ago been relieved of duty.” On the other hand, the situation is very different down South, he concluded, “There, every man you meet was in the war; and every lady you meet saw the war... In the South, the war is what AD is elsewhere: they date from it.” (Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883, p.317)

Much of the post-war Southern literature followed Pendleton Kennedy's lead of celebrating plantation life in Virginia in his *Swallow Barn* (1832). His writings portrayed the Virginian planter with his cavalry virtues

such as pride in family and land, honor, courage, good treatment of women, and even owning slaves (Bryant Jr, 1997, p11). Another Southern writer, Thomas Nelson Page, is also regarded by many as one of the main fore founders of establishing the tradition of plantation fiction which provided the ground for the chauvinistic southern writers. Page gave an aspect of the myth in the Edenic South where men were gallant and women gorgeous, while their slaves were satisfied, happy darkies in serving their masters. His first short story, "Marse Chan" (1884) provided the first story in his well-known book *Ole Virginia* (1887). For instance, while the Southern aristocrats are noble and chivalrous, the slave in this story has an unflagging admiration for his owner.

The boom in Southern literature was somehow a reaction to H. L. Mencken's characterization of the South as the "Sahara of the Bozart" which was a mockery of the South as unproductive like a desert in culture and art. Henry L. Mencken first published his essay, 'The Sahara of Bozart' in 1917, mocking the French word "beaux art" as if it lost its shape and value in the South (Sahara). He wrote that the South "is almost as sterile artistically, intellectually, culturally, as the Sahara Desert," maintaining that it was not possible throughout history "to match so complete a drying-up of a civilization." He went on saying that it is difficult to find a writer from the South who could actually write. (Mencken, 1920, p.136-137)

By the end of the 1920s up to the beginning of the 1940s, the Southern renaissance in literature was blooming. Faulkner produced *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, and *The Hamlet*. Still, Thomas Wolfe published his famous *Look Homeward, Angel*, *Of Time and the River*, and two other posthumous novels that were edited. The first book of poems to Robert Penn Warren came out as well as his first novel. *Gone With the Wind*, came out and was turned into a movie.

A Southern critic commented on Mencken's metaphor that it was "all wrong... The South was, in fact, a cultural jungle." (Ayers, 1995, 224) Yet, in less than a decade, Mencken noticed a development in the South's critical spirit that he remarked in 1925, "Just what had happened down there I don't know, but there has been an immense change of late...the new southern writers are reexamining the civilization they live under, and striking out boldly." (cited in Brinkley, Jr. 2004, p.149) Louis D. Rubin, explained this clearly when he noted that much of the 1930s American writing was Southern, "it does seem undeniable that a disproportionate share of the more impressive literature by Americans during the depression years was written by southern authors." (Rubin, Jr. 1982, p.97)

2-Romanticizing the South in Mitchell's novel

In glorifying the South, the Southerners, and the Cause of the war were major themes in the novel. Southern men are almost all brave, they enlisted as soldiers in the Confederacy, they competed to enlist in the Confederacy; they were loyal to their land; and their people and the Cause they believed in, even though sometimes they knew in their hearts that it was lost before it started like Ashley and especially Rhett Butler. Mitchell wrote,

"The South was intoxicated with enthusiasm and excitement. Everyone knew that one battle would end the war and every young man hastened to enlist before the war should end—hastened to marry his sweetheart before he rushed off to Virginia to strike a blow at the Yankees." (Mitchell, p.123-124)

Southerners rhapsodized the war and expected too much from their region and their countrymen in regard to the war. Their pride, chivalry, and way of life led them to think that they would "lick" the Yankees in no time. For instance, Dr. Meade, fallibly argued with Butler with a strong Southern pride that "the numerical difference between our troops and those of the Yankees has never mattered. One Confederate is worth a dozen Yankees." (Mitchell, p.278)

They did not even accept anyone who would fact-check their potential as Rhett Butler did, since believing in the "invincibility" of the confederacy was "a sacred duty," and those who do not do so were "traitorous" and should at least keep it to themselves. (p.279)

Edmund Wilson, in his great work, *Patriotic Gore*, commented on the glory of the Old South which justifies its Lost Cause pitted against the Armageddonlike vision of the North that emanates from the theology to set the slaves free and bring the unrighteous masters to justice. As he wrote, "If the Northerners were acting the Will of God, the Southerners were rescuing a hallowed ideal of gallantry, aristocratic freedom, fine manners and luxurious living from the materialism and vulgarity of the mercantile Northern society." (Wilson, 1962, p.438) thus, Southerners were defending—not just in fiction but also in battlefields— their gallant, aristocratic South and its values against the Northerners' Armageddonlike war to free slaves.

Clement Eaton, in *The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860* wrote about *Gone With The Wind*, that it was "an escape from the tensions and frustrations of a machine-dominated age...." *Gone With the Wind*, and Stark Young's *So Red the Rose*, for Eaton, "gave a particularly appealing version of the romantic stereotype of the Old South." (as cited in Mathews, 1967, p. 467)

2-1 The sense of Southern-ess: a place not like any other

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The antebellum South, for many critics, seems to be that place of cultured, refined planters of aristocratic descent. For Margaret Mitchell also, the South is more than just a place, it is more like a state of mind. Aristocrats living in the South with their slaves and plantations loved the South, and its way of life that they went to war to fight for a Lost Cause. Gerald O'Hara migrated all the way from Ireland and settled in Georgia, and became an ardent Southerner that even during his mental shock, he remained faithful to the South when one of his daughters wanted him to admit that he did not resist the Yankees for some money compensation. In addition, Rhett Butler was a rich man, who travelled a lot in and outside the United States, but this did not tempt him to stay abroad even if it was within his means. Scarlett articulated it as she addressed him, "you have seen the hotels and the museums and the balls and the gambling houses. And you have come home believing that there's no place like the South." (Mitchell, p.106) No place is like the South excludes other places, and parts of the world, including the north to be worth of staying in, and makes the very South a legendary place where one goes around the globe only to come back to the majestic South.

Mitchell often praised the South as a region to help create the legendary image of the Old South, and then endorse it in the minds of the readers, and probably particularly Northerners,

"The South was too beautiful a place to be let go without a struggle, too loved to be trampled by Yankees who hated Southerners enough to enjoy grinding them into the dirt too dear a homeland to be turned over to ignorant negroes drunk with whisky and freedom." (Mitchell, p.617) Lord Charnwood in his biography of Lincoln pointed out that the South was "proud of its aristocracy and of the permeating influence of aristocratic manners and traditions," (Charnwood, 2009, p.62) that a considerable number of Southerners felt themselves as "ladies and gentlemen" and the Northerners were in no way like them.

Ashley's life before the war had "a perfection and a completeness" that for him, "living in Twelve Oaks, there was a real beauty to living." (501) He was chosen as a Captain since he was amongst the best riders in the County. However, after the coming of the war such a life was destroyed and Ashley would not even know how to face life without the tradition of the Old South. Rhett Butler's words here seem to be true when he commented on Ashley, "Whenever the world upends, his kind is the first to perish. And why not? They don't deserve to survive because they won't fight—don't know how to fight." (765) Ashley could not fight for survival; the only life he was able to handle was the one preceding the Civil War in the Old South. Butler

understood Ashley very well, and his analysis of him is stunning, either because they both come from the aristocratic Old South, or probably his jealousy made Ashley's personality an object of examination; either way, he unraveled neatly the secret of Ashley Wilkes to Scarlett. However, by the end of the novel when Scarlett realized that she fell in love with a picture of a handsome knight and clothed it, and instead she loved Rhett Butler, the latter had already made up his mind that he would no longer give a damn.

2-2 Southern chivalry and traits in *Gone With the Wind*

As stated earlier, most of the Southern chivalry emanated from Sir Walter Scott's philosophy works. They were fostered as an embodiment of the Old South. Such was Ashley Wilkes. He was much romanticized as a 'cavalier' in the plantation legend in that he was honorable, noble, well-read, well-educated, and he even intended to free his slaves. He lingered in Scarlett's memory as a knight when he once, "had ridden up the long avenue, dressed in gray broadcloth... He had alighted and tossed his bridle reins to a pickaninny and stood looking at her, his drowsy gray eyes wide with a smile and the sun so bright on his blond hair that it seemed like a cap of shining silver" (Mitchell, p.24) Ashley as a male character, for most of the novel, was romanticized and cherished by Scarlett, as a white, aristocrat, cavalier of the Old South, until the last pages of the novel.

However, Mitchell described the Southerners as brave, who face defeat with unwavering strength "even when it stared them in the face." The same feature Scarlett would use in her plan to get Rhett back again, since once she sets her mind on a man, she would get him for sure. Again, it is the same feature by which she survived hunger during the Civil War, and even profited in the middle of such chaos. In addition, *Gone With the Wind*, shows that a traditional society cannot be destroyed just because its machinery were destroyed.

Furthermore, Mitchell praised the Southern skill of shooting with guns in the antebellum South, "There was no need to teach any of the men to shoot. Most Southerners were born with guns in their hands, and lives spent in hunting had made marksmen of them all." (p19) Southerners with their antebellum way of life were too skilled to be trained for war. They were already knights and fighters who were endowed with the talent of shooting since they practice hunting. Therefore, this probably gave them the arrogance and confidence to enlist in the army of the Confederacy, and rush to the war, and believe deeply that they could beat the Yankees, which was far from being true.

The legend of the Old South has preoccupied many critics as to its way of life before the Civil War and how people actually lived in the Old South. W. J. Cash wrote in his *The Mind of the South*, describing the myth of the Old South how they lived in,

“large and stately mansions, preferably white and with columns and Grecian entablature. Their estates were feudal baronies, their slaves quite too numerous ever to be counted, and their social life a thing of the Old World splendor and delicacy...” (Cash, 1991, xlix)

Cash maintained that such southern values, sentiments, and habits were especially used in Sir Walter Scott related to the Cavalier and gentleman. Of course, they reverberated throughout the South as quality, gallant, aristocratic, and chivalry, happy darkies, that these came to be identified with the South.

2-3 The portrayal of darkies in the novel

White Southerners seem to address the Northerners about slavery saying, “we’re used to living around ‘em. You Northerners aren’t. You don’t know anything about ‘em.” (Abbott, 2017, p. 74) Slaves were thought of as less than humans, or as if born to work for whites, and therefore, they could not match the supremacy, and highness of the Southern aristocratic society. For instance, Scarlett could not resist working the farm under the Ladies’ Hospital Committee likening herself to slaves, “It was never fun to be around Mrs. Merriwether and Mrs. Elsing and Mrs. Whiting and have them boss you like you were one of the darkies. And have to listen to them brag about how popular their daughters were.” (Mitchel, p153) Scarlett complains of the treatment of Mrs. Merriwether and the ladies since she labors hard as a slave, thus, acknowledging the misery of slaves, and hence, abhorring it. Yet, this only contradicts the novel’s claim of slaves’ happiness and satisfaction, for had they been so happy why liken Scarlett to them when she was unhappy and working hard.

Most Americans regarded blacks to be an inferior race, and white people vacillate as how to treat them. They are “children in need of food and clothing and the knowledge of God, but they are also savages.” (Abbott, 2017, p. 89) Even long after the Civil War in the 1930s, some authors like the historian Frank Owsley described the black race as “barely rehabilitated cannibals” (Abbott, 89) The portrayal of blacks and slavery as less important reflects Mitchell’s racial perspectives, according to Pyron, that despite depicting blacks as individuals—Dilcey, Pork, Mammy, Uncle Peter—rather than masses, yet slavery as an institution with field hands is almost nonexistent in the novel. Moreover, the aristocratic slaves that Mitchell depicted were more ornamental, and economically sterile and even slowed

down the economy particularly at Tara in Scarlett's post-Sherman career. (Pyron, 1980, p14-15) The white-slave relationship was a hyper complicated one in the South. Edmund Wilson stated Albion W. Tourgée's interpretation of the Northern idea of slavery as morally, politically, and economically wrong. The north only put up with it for the sake of peace-keeping, and "the Negro is a man" who has equal rights just like the white folks. On the other hand, he also stated the Southern idea of slaves, that they "are fit only for slavery. It is sanctioned by the Bible, and it must be right; or, if not exactly right, is unavoidable, now that the race is among us. We cannot live among them in any other condition." (Wilson,1962, 537). As Tourgée was a Northerner, to borrow Wilson's words, who 'resembled Southerners', he knew the South very well and how they treat and consider blacks. It is no wonder that even when Scarlett wanted to give credit to Pork for helping her family with bringing home food in times of war and food shortage, she insulted him. Scarlett protested, "Negroes were provoking sometimes and stupid and lazy, but there was loyalty in them that money couldn't buy, a feeling of oneness with their white folks which made them risk their lives to keep food on the table." (Margaret, 446) Even through giving credit to the darkies, this very credit has to also be equaled with some insults of being stupid and bone idle. Mitchell showed that the darkies had no problem in dedicating their lives for their 'white folks' that Pork's face 'beamed under the praise.' (Mitchell, p.447)

Scarlett's treatment of slaves was somehow tough, despite the fact that Mitchell wanted to justify her actions for making the slaves appear to be too dumb to be useful. When Scarlett was looking for a midwife to help Melanie give birth, Prissy, the slave, told her that she can help but turned out to be as ignorant as Scarlett was. The latter got mad, and though she never hit a slave before, "now she slapped the black cheek with all the force in her tired arm." (Mitchell, p.345) Scolding darkies to their faces was one thing that Scarlett adhered to, despite her mother's insistence on the mild treatment of them. Scarlett, it seemed in the novel, suffered a great deal with her house slave Prissy, for whenever she needed her help, Prissy let her down. When she asked her to help out with the cow, Prissy replied, "Ah's sceered of cows...Ah ain' no yard nigger. Ah's a house nigger." Scarlett furiously chided her "you're a fool nigger, and the worst day's work Pa ever did was to buy you." And then she promised to beat her once she recovers from her arm, "I'll wear this whip out on you." (Mitchell, p.379) Yet, both field hands, and house-servant darkies are faithful to death to their owners.

Darkies in the novel cannot handle freedom, since they do not know what they want nor what to do with their freedom, let alone their lives. They are referred to as lost animals in chaos, and since they could not read nor write, they would ask whites to write their masters, and get them out of this 'wild' freedom,

"Abandoned negro children run like frightened animals about the town until kind-hearted white people took them into their kitchens to raise. Aged county darkies, deserted by their children bewildered and panic-stricken...cried to the ladies who passed: 'Mistis, please, Ma'm, writ my old Marster down in Fayette County dat Ah's up hyah. He'll come tek dis ole nigger home agin. 'Fo' Gawd, Ah done got nuff of dis freedom!'" (Mitchell, p.622-623)

As if freedom does not suit them, and they cannot do without the white man's enslavement. Mitchell's depiction of the freed slaves after the Emancipation and Reconstruction, shows the attitudes of the white Southerners not only at the time but also during the time of writing the book, since these attitudes have reverberated for decades in the South, until the coming of the Civil Rights Movement, and the end of segregation.

3-The novel's aspects of aristocracy in the antebellum South

In *Gone With the Wind*, both Ellen O'Hara, and the Wilkes' home, Twelve Oaks, were the only instances of aristocracy in the novel. Twelve Oaks, "had a stately beauty, a mellowed dignity that Gerald's house did not possess," (Mitchell, p.86) Mitchell makes a distinction between the classes of society in the South. Aristocrats as Ellen O'Hara, who was a Robillard from Savannah, Georgia, as a "Coast aristocrat" (p.80), the Wilkes, and the new rich planters. And the two types of destitute whites, poor whites, and lazy poor white-trash who live on charity. She gave an example of the white trash in the Slatterys who dislike hard work, and the wealthy neighbors as well as their slaves. On the other hand, Able Wynder and Will Benteen, exemplify poor whites who work hard and do not wait for charity. (Wright, 2005, p. 513)

However, Ashley Wilkes and his wife Melanie Hamilton represent the old order, and the traditional life in the South. The Wilkeses buy books of poetry, travel to Europe, and marry amongst themselves. Twelve Oaks, their plantation is an embodiment of romanticizing the Old South. (Drake, Jr., 1958, p.143-144) Ashley's aristocratic background, probably denied him survival during Reconstruction after the war. He was lost without the old days of the Old South. But Mitchell did not intend her book to be misunderstood with the movie *Gone With the Wind*, since she had a different objective in mind, she wrote to a friend about the South,

“with few slaveholders, yeoman farmers, rambling, comfortable houses just fifty years away from log cabins, until Gabriel blows his horn—and everyone would go on believing in the Hollywood version... North Georgia wasn’t all white columns and singing darkies and magnolias.... But people believe what they like to believe and the mythical Old South has too strong a hold on their imaginations to be altered by the mere reading of a 1,037-page book.” (as cited in Walker, 1993, p.431)

Edmund Wilson considered the novel to be a top reaction of the North’s own “wartime vituperation”, in that “having devastated the feudal South, the Northerners wanted to be told of its glamor, of its old-time courtesy and grace.” (Wilson, 1962, p.605) It seems that despite Mitchell’s intentions, and the dire circumstances which surrounded the novel’s production—the Great Depression, both Northerners and Southerners were hungry for a romanticized, mystique South, and *Gone With the Wind* came just in time.

4-Criticism of *Gone With The Wind*

The novel was criticized for presenting a gallant, romantic view of the South. Ridgely commented on the book that it was a novel where “the Old South and its Lost Cause were glamorized, sanitized, and merchandised.” (Ridgely, 1980, 116) While Cowley views *Gone With the Wind* as “an encyclopedia of the plantation legend” however, this very legend, according to Cowley, is “false in part and silly in part and vicious in its general effect on Southern life today.” (as cited in Adams, 2007, p.59-60) For Ransom, Mitchell did not succeed since her form and style were sentimental and also because, as a woman, she did not unequivocally scrutinize the politics of the Civil War and Reconstruction. (see Adams, 2007, p.63)

Watkins (1970) stated that the novel was false both to the historical fact as well as to the human heart, and therefore, is doomed to be a poor, ‘bad’ novel despite its immediate popularity. For, it makes myths, and also creates a propaganda for history. Watkins continued that it “fails to grasp the depths and complexities of human evil and the significances of those who prevail.” (p. 89)

However, Louis D. Rubin, said about the novel that it is “a work for which I have a qualified but considerable admiration.” (Rubin, 1982, p.112) Hellen Taylor also wrote in 1989 that more than thirty thousand books treated the subject of the Civil War, among which, at least, two thousand were novels; and *Gone With the Wind*, without a doubt is the most well-known of them all. Taylor uses Barbara Melosh words that Mitchell’s book has “shape[d] the popular view of the Civil War and Reconstruction than all of

the scholarly works in that notably sophisticated and well-developed field.” (cited in Condé, 1996, p.210)

On Mitchell's cunning skills of portraying the Southern culture and tradition, Pyron, declared that her pleasure in professional psychology is a reflection of her originality and avantgarde in the national and intellectual culture which, “represents a unique ability to translate national culture into Southern terms, and Southern culture into national values. She was, in effect, bi-cultural—Southern and American.” (Pyron, 1980, p.16)

5-Conclusion

Gone With the Wind, as Mitchell intended it, was meant to embody the theme of survival of Southerners during and after the war. Whether she intended to romanticize the South or not, the novel still remains a seminal work of the Civil War, and the South.

Romanticizing the South is probably most obvious, in my opinion, in the treatment of Tara and the South as a place. Since Scarlett's dad, Gerald O'Hara, advised her to love the land, as it is an Irish tradition that runs through their blood, Scarlett always found comfort in going back to Tara. Replace Tara with the South, as a region, you find the source of strength not just for Scarlett, but for Rhett too, who goes around the globe and comes back to the South, and probably the case is true for many other Southerners too.

According to G. Glenwood Clark's review of the novel, it is “a study in timeliness and a brilliant sermon on idealism, *Gone With the Wind* is a prose epic;—a story of yesterday for today with meanings for tomorrow.” (Clark, 1937, p.134) On reading the novel, and the treatment of the happy darkies, and the gallant, aristocratic South, one forgets all about the cruelties of slavery and sympathizes with the South against the North. Though this was a falsified portrayal, yet the novel exceeded all records of bestselling.

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