

Scarlett's "Tomorrow Consciousness" and its Realistic Significance from the Perspective of Time Orientation

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Abstract: Scarlett is a main character in *Gone With the Wind* by American writer Margaret Mitchell. Through the description of Scarlett's survival experience, love entanglements and her mental course, her character traits of self-improvement and enterprise are shown by the novel. "Tomorrow consciousness" is one of Scarlett's important character traits, whose potential value originates from America's future time orientation. Based on the theory of time orientation, this paper interprets the rich content, profound value implication and practical significance of "tomorrow consciousness" from the three aspects of Scarlett's love experience, war experience and the psychology of equality between men and women.

1. Introduction

Gone With the Wind, take the meaning from the twenty-fourth chapter of the book, means that the main character's hometown has already "gone with the wind". The book tells the story of how Scarlett, the heroine, grows up and survives in the flood of history against the backdrop of the American Civil War, with the decline of the Southern plantation economy and the abolition of slavery. The misfortunes and disasters brought by the war are vividly displayed in the novel. The book has a disillusioning feel to it, which making Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" appear more sparkling and distinct. The "tomorrow consciousness" is the major theme in this work. Scarlett has an important character trait, that is, when she encounters despair, she always uses this "tomorrow consciousness" to comfort herself. Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" is mainly reflected in her experiences of love entanglement, war survival and the psychology of equality between men and women, and this paper discusses these three dimensions to interpret Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" and its realistic significance from the perspective of time orientation.

2. "Tomorrow Consciousness" and Time Orientation

The dictionary explains: "Ming" means light, bright, hope, brand new. In the human subconscious, "tomorrow" is synonymous with hope, beauty and happiness. No matter yesterday is brilliant or dismal, it belongs to the past after all, no matter today is happy or painful, we have to face it. Only tomorrow is forever untouchable. In such an eternal, abstract and unknown concept of time and space as tomorrow, it is full of infinite mystery and fantasy, in which people can obtain a trace of comfort and relief when they are confused, helpless, perplexed and at a loss.

In the 1960s, American anthropologists and Harvard professor Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck proposed six value orientation theories in their book *Variations in Value Orientations*, one of which is time orientation theory. Based on cultural values, the theory divides temporal orientations into three: past-orientation, which respects history and emphasizes tradition; present-orientation, which focuses on the present and the short term; and future-orientation, which emphasizes change and the long term^[1].

China is featured by a long history and cultural heritage, and is a typical country dominated by past time orientation, Chinese people generally have the mentality of revering the past and neglecting the present, and believing in the past and doubting the present. On the contrary, most of the western

countries are dominated by future time orientation, especially the United States. The past is not valued most by Americans, and the future is what they focused on, which is closely related to their history and religion, short history of development has enabled Americans to create new cultures while constantly pioneering a frontier and expanding the territory. Christianity is the dominant religion in the United States, and its doctrine of "original sin" and "eschatological judgment" warns believers that because human ancestors committed "original sin," going back to the past is like going to "original sin," and there is no hope, and only looking to the future offers the possibility of redemption, influenced by these factors, Americans value the future as a harbinger of expectation, promise and hope. Most of their education is future-oriented, they are not bound by tradition and history in their lives, they value change and innovation, they believe they can change the status quo if they work hard, and they believe they can manage the future, or the future is at least influenced by them. Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" in *Gone with the Wind* perfectly illustrates the future time orientation of America. After the disappointment in love, civil war, home reconstruction, the death of her daughter and the departure of her husband, she keeps using tomorrow to console herself, fully demonstrating the future-oriented, optimistic and self-improvement mentality of Americans. Thus, Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" is essentially a value of future time orientation.

3. "Tomorrow Consciousness" in Scarlett

3.1. Looking forward to Tomorrow's True Love

Scarlett's love line is a clear line of the work "*Gone with the Wind*". Before the war, Scarlett, who lived a carefree life, was deeply in love with Ashley, who lived in Twelve Oaks. After learning that the man of her dreams is engaged to someone else, her "tomorrow consciousness" has manifested itself, "*If she had used the wrong tactics with Ashley in the past—well, that was the past and done with. Today she would use different ones, the right ones. She wanted him and she had only a few hours in which to get him*^[2]." This is the plan of a sixteen-year-old girl, which shows that Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" has already taken shape as early as her teenage years. The author cleverly incorporates this consciousness into Scarlett's character traits, and it has been present throughout the work since then. Scarlett married three times, all not for great love, the first time she married because of gambling, she married Melanie's brother Charles, the second time she married Frank for money to keep her home, and the third time she married Rhett purely for money. Although Scarlett has been married three times, this does not mean that she does not desire pure love in her heart. She never forgets Ashley, and her love for Ashley never draws to an end. It is clear that in Scarlett's heart, love is pure, and her love for Ashley is generous and selfless. The author portrays Scarlett as an image of a person who is thirsty for true love and willing to devote herself to love, always hoping for the future.

Ashley's nostalgic image is in stark contrast to Scarlett's: "*Scarlett, before the war, life was beautiful. There was a glamour to it, a perfection and a completeness and a symmetry to it like Grecian art...Now, I know that in the old days it was a shadow show I watched. I avoided everything which was not shadowy, people and situations which were too real, too vital. I resented their intrusion. I tried to avoid you too, Scarlett. You were too full of living and too real and I was cowardly enough to prefer shadows and dreams*^[2]." The war exposed Ashley's cowardly and timid nature, Ashley was afraid of the harsh reality and wanted to avoid it. After Melanie's death, Scarlett realizes that she loves someone other than Ashley, and by the time she realizes that her true love is Rhett, Rhett is already exhausted by love and is leaving her. "*She silently watched him go up the stairs, feeling that she would strangle at the pain in her throat. With the sound of his feet dying away in the upper hall was dying the last thing in the world that mattered*^[2]." Rhett had left, realizing that she had truly lost her true love, Scarlett was doubly distressed, and she used her usual charm again – "*I'll think of it all tomorrow, at Tara. I can stand it then. Tomorrow, I'll think of some way to get him back. After all, tomorrow is another day*^[2]." The whole novel ends abruptly here, and the author, Margaret Mitchell, once told the publisher who asked her to change the end of her work: before creating the novel, she had already thought of the ending, except for this ending, she could change any other part. This ending is also in line with Scarlett's character trait: never into the dead corner of memory, but always in

tomorrow.

3.2. Looking forward to tomorrow's peace

Scarlett, who lived a carefree life in Tara before the war, hated it when men discussed the war because a war would destroy all the beautiful things she loved, the parties, the beautiful clothes, the suitors around her, her comfortable, peaceful life After the defeat of the South, she returns to her homeland, only to find it in shambles. The war brought her poverty and hunger, illness and death, separation and sadness, the death of her mother, her father's delirium, her sister's bedridden condition, and all the hardships that seemed to come her way, but Scarlett did not give up on life. She would stay at Tara and keep it, somehow, keep her father and her sisters, Melanie and Ashley's child, the negroes. *"Tomorrow—oh, tomorrow! Tomorrow she would fit the yoke about her neck. Tomorrow there would be so many things to do^[2]."* Once again, the "tomorrow consciousness" in her heart gave her hope in the midst of despair.

Scarlett, living in Atlanta far away from Tara, faced with so many newly built houses, so many unfamiliar faces, so much traffic, sometimes even overwhelmed, but she still longed for the life of Tara in the past. *"She loved Atlanta but—oh, for the sweet peace and country quiet of Tara, the red fields and the dark pines about it! Oh, to be back at Tara, no matter how hard the life might be^[2]!"* Once again, she had to rely on her usual charm of *"I'll think about these things tomorrow^[2]"* to keep her worries about poverty, fear of the Yankees, nostalgia for home, and thoughts of Ashley.

Scarlett hated war, longed for peace, and did not even care who won and who lost in the North and South, the war had forced her to become a strong person in life, in order to preserve the family's food, she recklessly shot and killed the Northern soldiers who came to rob, she put down her aristocratic stature to work in the fields, and her white hands had calluses as a result. How she longed for peace to come sooner! *"Next spring! Perhaps by next spring the war would be over and good times would be back. And whether the Confederacy won or lost, times would be better. Anything was better than the constant danger of raids from both armies. When the war was over, a plantation could earn an honest living. Oh, if the war were only over! Then people could plant crops with some certainty of reaping them!^[2]"* Scarlett puts all her hopes and expectations for a better life in all the tomorrows, in the author's writing. She never trapped in memories, once again shows the main theme of "tomorrow consciousness".

Scarlett tasted the hardships of survival in the war, and she spent her days running around just to be able to wake up from sleep again tomorrow, just to survive. Scarlett grows up in the war, she aspires to peace, hopes for the future, but she also dares to challenge and follow the trend of the times, growing from a noble girl in the plantation economy to a member of the bourgeoisie, a strong person in life. As Voltaire once said, "The most valuable treasure of mankind is 'hope', who eases our sorrows, who portrays in all our present pleasures and the pleasures of the future."

3.3. Looking forward to tomorrow's equality and freedom

Scarlett, the heroine of *Gone with the Wind*, has a clear feminist color, in the world she lives in, men are the center of power and money, both in the East and in the West, the old time society is characterized by the superiority of men over women. Traditional social customs and the needs of a male-dominated society have created stereotypes of women in people's minds. For a long time, a male-centered culture has permeated the ideology of all people, and people consciously or unconsciously maintain the male-centered social structure. Scarlett's mother is noble and elegant, hard-working and uncomplaining, just and kind, perfectly interpreting the typical image of a lady in the old Southern society. On the contrary, Scarlett shouted in response, *"Some day I'm going to do and say everything I want to do and say, and if people don't like it I don't care^[2]."* Scarlett's such thoughts also paved the way for her later experiences. She bravely pursued true love and chased after interests. Scarlett refused to preserve chastity after the death of her husband, went out and showed her face in public during her pregnancy, and even stole her sister's fiancé for monetary gain. For women in the mid-nineteenth century, when the women's movement was in its infancy, Scarlett's actions were a kind of rebel against the orthodoxy. The rules and regulations of the old society, people's pointing the finger of blame, for Scarlett who puts all her hopes in tomorrow, is unable to

bind her, is what she wants to resist, because the war has long shattered the order of the old times, Scarlett was just trying to adapt to a new era that is coming. In order to escape from hunger, poverty and disease, Scarlett put aside traditional thinking and old ideas, with men on an equal footing to talk business, in order to live an independent and real life, she took action to fight back the old concept of male superiority over women. She gained the appreciation of Rhett, “*You were a good risk, my dear; an interesting risk. Why? Because you didn’t plump yourself down on your male relatives and sob for the old days. You got out and hustled... Admirable things, all of them*”^[2].”

The great Shakespeare also once sighed: “*Frailty, thy name is woman!*” Women's strength and autonomy have been erased by the patriarchal culture, so that women themselves forget their own strength and doubt their own abilities. One of the most important things that Scarlett does in the novel to break the "weak" image is when she kills a soldier who comes to steal from Tara^[3]. In the patriarchal culture, women are the objects of protection, and women themselves have become timid and fearful under the influence of this culture, only screaming and helpless in the face of danger, and as a result, they become the victims of danger. Scarlett, facing the advancing Northern soldier, raises her weapon and defends herself bravely. It was not only the Northern soldier who fell with the bullet, but also the established archetype of female weakness in the patriarchal culture.

Gone with the Wind was written in the 1930s, and it was against this historical backdrop that Mitchell recognized that women had a long way to go in their struggle for equal rights with men^[4]. At the end of the novel, under the joint planning of Melanie and Rhett, Scarlett sells the sawmill, which represents her financial independence, to Ashley, Scarlett's daughter dies, and Rhett leaves Atlanta, which reflects the huge price paid by American women in the male-dominated society for their rights and the difficulties they have to face. No matter how far and how difficult the road to true equality between men and women may be, after the 19th century, American women in the 20th century are still fighting indefatigably in the economic, political, and educational fields, with the same hope in their hearts as Scarlett's never-ending belief that tomorrow is another day!

4. Realistic significance

Gone with the Wind recounts the events of the Civil War, which coincided with the depressed mood of the 1930s and the hope of reorganization. The main theme of "tomorrow" always gives people hope, inspiration and upward courage. By depicting Scarlett's courage to resist the old world's idea of male superiority and female inferiority, the author accuses the society of gender inequality; by depicting Scarlett's aversion to war, she accuses the evil of war; by depicting Scarlett's pursuit of money, she reflects the limitations of industrial civilization's distortion of human nature, resulting in doubts about capitalism's laws of survival. “*Hence it is that a squall lasts not a whole morning. A rainstorm continues not a whole day*”^[5].” Today is coming to an end, and no matter how much pain there is, it is already in the past, and tomorrow is another day. The significance of Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" can be developed from the following three aspects.

4.1. Courage to face difficulties

Scarlett's growth path is full of hardships and difficulties along the way. Even though her family is well off, she also has her own frustrations. Ashley did not accept her love but she did not give up, but to adjust her strategies, firmly believe that she can get the real love of her own; family decline, her mother's death, her father's mental health, she has to feed the rest of her family, life is difficult to continue, but she did not give up, with the love of the land in her blood, She stuck to the land of Tara and worked in the field herself, firmly believe that she can support the family, and finally Scarlett successfully rebuilt the home, establish a foothold in the chaos of the world. Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" inspires people not to give up when they encounter difficulties, *God helps those who help themselves*, and there is always a better tomorrow waiting for those who are willing to work hard.

4.2. Ability to seize the opportunities

Rhett once said to Scarlett, “*there were two times for making big money, one in the upbuilding of a country and the other in its destruction. Slow money on the upbuilding, fast money in the crack-*

up^[2].” Whether when her husband died, or when she was pregnant, facing the kidnapping of old ideas, Scarlett did not hesitate to throw off the shackles and seize the business opportunity, because only did so, could she seek material security for tomorrow, so that she had the ability to survive. Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" inspires people to dare to get rid of the shackles of tradition, to grasp the opportunity, only then can we win a better tomorrow.

4.3. Hope for bright tomorrow

Scarlett is a resilient woman who always maintains a positive attitude. With her efforts, her life has changed from poverty to subsistence and from subsistence to prosperity, and she is always looking forward to tomorrow. Life goes on, struggle goes on, every better tomorrow is a motivation for her struggle. Once people grasp the beautiful today, a better tomorrow A better tomorrow will become people's new expectations, as a result, their life will be more and more thriving. Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" inspires us to always be future-oriented, to keep an enterprising mind, to keep the awe and expectation of tomorrow, and to embrace a better tomorrow step by step under the inspiration of "tomorrow consciousness".

5. Conclusion

Gone with the Wind, which appeared in 1936 under the tentative title "*Tomorrow is a New Day*," is a good reflection of the novel's main theme of "tomorrow consciousness," and it has endured for more than 80 years. “*After all, tomorrow is another day.*”^[2] has had a profound impact on countless people who have encountered difficulties. The author uses the character Scarlett to express the emotion she wants to express - no matter how brilliant the past is, it has become the past after all, time can not be turned back, people can only change their fate and find a way out of life by forgetting the past and looking to the future, which is the specific embodiment of the American future time orientation. To sum up, Scarlett's "tomorrow consciousness" is the representative of future time orientation, which reflects the American time value orientation of looking at the future, paying attention to the future, and hoping for the future. This creed of "tomorrow consciousness", which is composed of courage to face difficulties and a positive attitude is applicable to any age and any period, and is a guide for people's life.

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