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**Masculinity, Femininity and the Subversion of  
Gender Roles in  
Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936)**

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## **Dedications**

To

My family, my step family, my husband and daughter  
Eline

And to all the people that  
helped and  
supported me.

Sonia

To

My family, my step family, my husband Massinissa

And to all the people that  
helped and  
supported me

Rachida

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## **Abstract**

This research paper aims at exploring masculinity, femininity and gender roles in Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936). For its theoretical bearings, we have relied on Judith Butler's theory of *Performativity*, developed in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). We intend to draw on some of its concepts such as "drag" and the "subversion of identity" that are mirrored through the novel's characters. We have focused on the analysis of the development of the characters focusing on their manners and behaviors. Yet, our dissertation was not restricted to a superficial study of Mitchell's characters, but we have also depended on the changing of their gender roles. Our analysis is revolved around what pushed them to change their gender roles and how they violate the social norms during and after the American Civil War (1861-1865) and Reconstruction (1863-1877). This study has reached some of the following conclusions. The first is that the characters of the novel are divided into two categories that reflect reality in South America during and after the Civil War. The second conclusion is that femininity and masculinity is related on the characters' performance not on their sex, besides the masculine has become feminine and the feminine has become masculine. The third and the last conclusion is that the subversion of the social norms caused by the Civil War gives birth to new femininity and masculinity in the South.

## **Introduction:**

The novel *Gone with the Wind* by the American writer Margaret Mitchell was published in 1936. It belongs to the Southern plantation fiction, which is primarily regarded as a romantic story, focusing on the love between the two main characters, Scarlet O'Hara and Rhett Butler. It took place during the American Civil War (1861-1863) and the Reconstruction Era (1863-1877). However, it can be claimed that Margaret Mitchell, in her historical saga, provides a detailed description of life in the South from 1861 to 1871. She depicts the life of the aristocratic society and above all, she carefully portrays the main characters.

Indeed, the Civil War brings drastic changes in society to both men and women from all social position. In her novel, Mitchell focuses more on life of Southern Belle and Beau more than the actual politics and horror of the American Civil War .In this dissertation we intend to study the violation and the changing in relation to social and economic life experienced by the characters during the Civil War and the subsequent years of Reconstruction.

The aim of our dissertation is to analyze the characters' development, behavior and manners in relation to the harsh conditions of the war. These issues drew large attention among scholars who studied them from different points of view. Therefore, this present work is meant to analyze six main characters within Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936) who seems to experience the changing of the gender roles at that period through their self representation, as well as life experiences. Our study draws upon on Judith Butler's theory of "Performativity" (1990) developed in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

## **A-Review of the Literature:**

Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936) explores a feminist issue which tells the story of the strong-willed daughter of a Georgia plantation owner, Scarlett O'Hara. She is the main character who remains faithful to South America against the backdrop of the American Civil War and Reconstruction periods. From our review of some of the critical studies written about Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, we have noticed that this work has received much attention and literary criticism from different perspectives.

To start with, *Gone with the Wind* was specifically forced-out from the Civil War fiction; De Voto in "*Fiction Fights the Civil War*" belittles Margaret Mitchell as a war novelist:

*Gone with the Wind documents very well the daily life of a society at war and under Reconstruction, but its ideas are rudimentary, its author has no eye and feeling for human character, and its page by page reliance on all for the formulas of sentimental romance and all the effects of melodrama is offensive.*<sup>1</sup>

De Voto tries to explain that Margaret Mitchell's thoughts and ideas are undeveloped, even if she is reporting everyday life during the Civil War and the following years of reconstruction, because Margaret Mitchell does not give any importance to character's affection and her novel is considered by De Voto as a formulaic exercise in chivalry and melodrama with the absence of literary value. In other words, the writer of the novel ignores the characters' feelings while she concentrates on life problems.

*Gone with the Wind* has been criticized Civil War myths and black stereotypes, David Reynolds asserts that: "*The white women are elegant, their men folk noble or at least dashing. And, in the background, the black slaves are mostly dutiful and content clearly incapable of an independent existence*".<sup>2</sup>

David Reynolds associated *Gone with the Wind* to *The Birth of Nation* and other re-thinking of the South during the period of isolation in which Southerners are depicted as preservers of traditions, and disregarding the most important issue which is slavery.

Elizabeth Young, in her book *Disarming the Nation: Women's Writing and the American Civil War*, asserts that *Gone with the Wind* is a Civil War novel. She claims:

*Yet if analyses of the novel that celebrate Scarlett whitewash the story's racism, then interpretations of *Gone with the Wind* that focus on the depiction of black characters leave untouched its central romance plot. While *Gone with the Wind* is clearly racist in its depiction of black people, analysis of the text's racial formation should not stop there.<sup>3</sup>*

Young explains how Margaret Mitchell's depiction of her characters shows clearly that *Gone with the Wind* is a racist novel.

### **B-Issue and Working Hypothesis:**

From the above review of literature, one can notice that Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* has received great attention and criticism. According to the best of our knowledge, most of the critical studies have focused on themes and style, neglecting an important aspect which is the issue of woman, man and the changing of gender roles during the war. Therefore, it remains our task to explore the issue of femininity, masculinity and gender roles within the selected novel.

Our interest in the study arises from the fact that despite the hard conditions during Civil War and the strict social norms in the South, Margaret Mitchell doesn't hesitate to show her feminist view and deconstructing the gender roles of the conservative society through her characters development. Mitchell masculinizes the feminine and feminizes the masculine.

Our main concern in this dissertation is to show how the main characters of the novel grow through time and also how they violate their gender roles relying on Judith Butler's

theory of *Performativity* developed in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990).

### **C-Methodological Outline:**

At the methodological level, our research paper follows the IMRAD method. Our dissertation is composed of four sections. It starts with a general introduction that states our main purpose, and it includes a review of literature written on Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. Then it raises our issue and working hypothesis. The Methods and Material section provide a brief summary of Judith Butler's theory of *Performativity*. In Materials, we will explore Margaret Mitchell's biography, then the historical background and the summary of her novel *Gone with the Wind*. . The Result section sums up the findings of our work.

The discussion is divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with the study of the characters' development, behaviors and manners influenced by the Civil War; focusing on the female protagonist, Scarlet O'Hara. The second chapter is devoted to the study of the changing of the gender roles through the analysis of the characters. Our dissertation ends with a general conclusion that restates the main issues tackled within this piece of research.

## **II. Methods and Material:**

### **1-Method:**

This section of our dissertation deals with the theoretical approach used in our research work, as we intend to tackle the issues of femininity, masculinity and gender roles in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936). For the sake of relevance, we have borrowed Judith Butler's theory of *Performativity* explored in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). Our choice of this theory is to explore the issue of women in the novel and for a better understanding the way gender roles of women and men were changed, and how they were seen during the Civil War in the South.

### **Judith Butler's Theory**

Judith Butler is an American philosopher who is well known as a theorist of power, gender, sexuality and identity. She is a feminist who participates in the cultural, political currents surrounding the advocacy of the rights of women<sup>4</sup>.

In her book, *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler focuses on social, economic and political equality for men and women. She reinforces the idea of binary view of gender relations in which human being are separated into two categories: women and men, but everyone has the right to choose his or her own identity without any pressure. Butler says: "*There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results*"<sup>5</sup>. That means gender is a performance; it is what a person has to do in order to construct his or her own identity.

Butler has made a distinction between sex and gender in order to argue that there is no sex that is not always already gender. All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence. Thus, we conclude that gender is not something one is, but it is something one does. Butler asserts: "*Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of*

*repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender anthologies*”<sup>6</sup>

In fact, our focus will be mainly on some concepts relevant to our issue. One of Butler’s central points of *Gender Trouble* is drag. It is an interesting concept that Butler uses to describe the subversion of gender norms. The concept of drag can be understood as denaturalization of feminine and masculine subjects and performing one’s nature rather than what is expected of our genders. That means some interior truth is exteriorized in performance. For instance, wearing clothes associated with the opposite sex as performance, or as solution to the gender to be accepted naturally. Butler asserts: “*Drag is an example that is meant to establish that reality is not fixed as we generally assume it to be. The purpose of the example is to expose the tenuousness of gender reality in order to counter the violence performed by gender norms*”<sup>6</sup>

Butler emphasizes on the subversion of identity, which means the undermining of the power and the violation of the imposed rules. The case of women, it is the deviation from the paternal law which oppresses her freedom and reduces her ability to act or make decisions in her society. According to Butler, male domination is caused by the prejudice about women, she affirms:

*The female body that is freed from the shackles of the paternal law may well prove to be yet another incarnation of that law, posing as subversive but operating in the service of that law’s self-amplification and proliferation. In order to avoid the emancipation of the oppressor in the name of the oppressed, it is necessary to take into account the full complexity and subtlety of the law and to cure ourselves of the illusion of a true body beyond the law...*<sup>8</sup>

Butler’s central argument is that there is no natural basis to gender and no inherent link between gender and someone’s sex; social conventions about dress and behavior give the appearance of a natural basis, this reflects that masculine behavior is natural for men. Butler sees this understanding of naturalness as coming from society as a whole and comes from

every body's actions. It is people acting in certain expected ways that makes gender "real", men and women acting as expected makes masculinity and femininity<sup>9</sup>

She adds that acts, gestures and enactments are performative and the gendered body is performative. According to her without these acts there would be no gender at all. She claims that gender attributes, however, are "not expressive but performative"<sup>10</sup>, whereas the way a body shows or produces its cultural signification, is performative.

## **2-Material**

### **a-Biography of Margaret Mitchell:**

Margaret Mitchell was born on November 8, 1900 in Georgia into an Irish catholic and wealthy family. Mitchell is a Southern American author and journalist native of Atlanta, Georgia. Her father Eugene Muss Mitchell was an attorney, her mother Marry Isabelle (Mary belle) Stephens was a suffragist .She had two brothers Russell Stephens Mitchell who died in infancy 1894, and Alexander Stephens Mitchell born in 1896.

Margaret Mitchell spent her early childhood on Jackson Hill east of Downtown. Mitchell positioned herself in a world where there was no place for a lady. She joined the boys' baseball team and learned to swear and shot. As a passionate fan of theatre, she performed maleroles. Mitchell interest in the Civil War brought her into a world of men, her costume allowed her to inhabit and witness the performance of masculinity.

She was raised in an era when children were seen and not heard. Mitchell was not allowed to express her personality, she began making up stories before she could write, dictating them to her mother. Later, she wrote her own books with cardboard covers and

filled them with adventure stories using her friends, relatives and herself as characters. A few hundred tales that she wrote have survived including two Civil War tales. The young Mitchell attended the Tenth Street School and later Woodberry School, a private school. She branched out to writing directing and performing in plays. From 1914 to 1918, Mitchell attended the Washington Seminary, a prestigious Atlanta finishing school, when America entered World War One (1914- 1918). The seminary girls were in demand at dances. In 1918, Mitchell met Clifford Henry a wealthy and socially prominent New Yorker. The two fell in love and became engaged.

In 1926, Mitchell began to write *Gone with the Wind*. She completed the majority of the book in three years. She wrote the last chapter and the other chapters in no particular order. When visitors appeared, she covered her work with a towel keeping her novel a secret<sup>11</sup>.

#### **b- Historical Background**

The events of *Gone with the Wind* are set in a critical period of time in the American history. Mitchell didn't witness the Civil War which had happened sixty years earlier, but her novel gives a great expression of this War. Indeed, she witnessed what Americans knew as the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, in which America shifted from the rural life to the urban one. The American Civil War was a national conflict fought in the United States from 1861 to 1865 between the North and the South.

Economically speaking, a fundamental difference existed between the Northern and Southern states. In the North, manufacturing industry was well established and agriculture was mostly limited to small scale farms. The economy of the Southern states was based on farming, but depended on the labor of black slaves to grow certain crops, especially cotton and tobacco. In the spring of 1861, decades of simmering tension between the Northern and Southern over issues, including States Rights versus Federal Authority, Westward expansion

and slavery exploded into Civil War. The election of the anti-slavery Republican, Abraham Lincoln as a president in 1860, caused the Southern States to secede from the Union to form the Confederate States of America.<sup>12</sup>

The South is a special region with distinct culture, way of life, values and history. The events of *Gone with the Wind* are set in the Southern states of America, mainly in Georgia with its red hills and large cotton field plantation, where Tara, the O'Hara family plantation is situated.<sup>13</sup>

Society in the antebellum South was different from the rest of the United States, 40% were slaves. In her book, Margaret Mitchell focuses on a particular social class, the planter society and the members of the same class living in Atlanta. She describes the residents of the county as different types of people coming from various parts, not only of the states and other parts of Georgia. But also from Europe especially from Ireland as Gerald O'Hara, who is originated from Irish Ancestry.<sup>14</sup>

People's reasons for settling there were various, some of them wanted to become rich, some were members of poor families and came to Georgia seeking new places for settlement. The majority were coming from other parts of the states because of the development of the plantation at that time. Cotton became a highly profitable farming product of the 19th century. The region was very rich thanks to cotton boom; people had time and money to entertain them and they really liked meeting neighbors, organizing balls, barbecue, hunting and horseracing.

This way of life during the pre war was reflected by Margaret Mitchell through the O'Hara family. Gerald liked the South and its people and he adopted new ideas and customs. Gerald considered himself a Southerner and was conscious that people liked him even though southern people were distrustful to foreigners. They hated people from the North because of

their negative attitude toward slavery. This attitude was the major cause for the beginning of the Civil War.

The War itself and the subsequent years of Reconstruction radically changed the South. The Civil War was a real massacre in which many women became widows. Many women lost their sons and other members of their families. They faced suffering and death in hospitals, especially the blacks who became victims of job discrimination. Finally the Civil War ended, so it was possible to rebuild a United Nation based on freedom and respect even if this task was very hard to attain.<sup>15</sup>

### ***c- Synopsis of *Gone with the Wind****

*Gone with the wind* depicts the history of the Civil War. It is divided into four main sections: pre-war, Civil War, Reconstruction and post Reconstruction. The story takes place in Tara, the O'Hara's family plantation, in Georgia. The novel opens with information about Scarlett O'Hara as a protagonist of the novel. She is a selfish sixteen years old from the South who cares mostly about parties. She flirts with the young men of her class to get a husband, but she is secretly in love with a neighbor's intellectual, Ashley Wilkes. Suddenly, she discovers the news of his engagement to his cousin Melanie Hamilton, so she decides to tell him the truth that she loves him, and asks him to elope with her.

Afterward, Margaret Mitchell moves to Rhett Butler, the novel's male hero, who is listening in the room unobserved while Scarlett makes her declaration to Ashley. She becomes angry and upset after being rejected, she fails in convincing Ashley. She is disturbed and furiously makes decision to avenge by engaging to Charles Hamilton, Melanie's brother. But Charles died in the Confederate Army, and Scarlett became a depressed widow with a child in her charge, Wade Hampton Hamilton.

As the story goes on, Scarlet becomes depressed because she is mourning and can't enjoy her parties anymore. She is obliged to wear black clothes in order to be a widow, Scarlett then is sent by her mother, Ellen, to Atlanta to stay with Melanie and her aunt, Pittypat. During her stay in Atlanta, Scarlet doesn't respect her status as a widow; this makes her relatives shocked.

As a turning point, the burning of Atlanta and Melanie's sickness make Scarlett feel afraid. She sees that it is too dangerous to stay there. So, she asks Rhett to bring a horse to return to Tara. Her arrival at Tara surprised her a lot. She finds her mother dead, her two sisters Suellen and Careen suffering from typhoid, and her father Gerald has gone mad from grief. Everything is destroyed, it is a devastated South.

As a result, the Yankees have taken just about everything and most of the slaves have left. Scarlett finds herself responsible of the household in Tara, and manages to survive with the surviving members of her family. She swears never to be hungry again. Southerners work hard in order to rebuild and cultivate the cotton field. Even Scarlett works with them. Unluckily, new taxes are demanded upon Tara by the Victors. As a solution, Scarlett decides to go to Atlanta searching for Rhett Butler to give her money to pay taxes.

Once there, she finds him in jail, after a short discussion between them, Butler understands rapidly the aim of Scarlett's visit. Unfortunately, Butler cannot use his money because of the political situation. After she leaves him, she meets Franck Kennedy who has good financial situation in Atlanta. She lies for him about her sister, Suellen, that she is engaged with another man in Tara in order to marry him and pay taxes

Frank Kennedy is Scarlett's second husband, with whom she uses an aggressive method in managing his store. But, he always wants her to be happy and radiant. Frank gives her money to pay taxes, then, she learns that she is pregnant. Scarlett convinces Ashley Wilkes to come to Atlanta to work with her at Melanie's insistence.

Scarlett's third marriage was with Rhett Butler. With this rich man, Scarlett O'Hara gets all that she wants. She enjoys parties again as in the past, barbecues and balls. Then, she gives birth to Bonnie Butler; her daughter who is considered as a turning point in her life.

Finally, Melanie Hamilton dies from miscarriage, and Scarlett realizes that she doesn't hate her, but loves and relies on her. With the death of Melanie Hamilton, Rhett Butler thinks that Scarlett will return back to Ashley Wilkes because their marriage is not a success. At last, Scarlett realizes that Ashley is a loser and she doesn't care about him. Thus, she realizes that she really loves Rhett.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth, Young. *Disarming the Nation: Women's Writing and the American Civil War*. London: University of Chicago press, 1999, p 234

<sup>2</sup>Elit, Rookie (1999) Judith Butler's Biography. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Judith-Butler>. Accessed October, 2017

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth, Young. *Disarming the Nation: Women's Writing and the American Civil War*. London: University of Chicago press, 1999, p 236

<sup>4</sup>Cristopher, Riches. (2015) Queer Theory Definition. <http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/queer-theory>. Accessed on September, 2017

<sup>5</sup>Judith, Butler. *Gender Trouble :Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990, p26

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, P23

<sup>7</sup>.Cristopher, Riches (2015) Queer Theory Definition <http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/queer-theory>. Accessed on September, 2017

<sup>8</sup>Judith, Butler. *Gender Trouble :Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London. 1990

<sup>9</sup>Team, Smith-laing. *An Analysis of Judith Butler's Gender Trouble*. Abingdon: Routledge. 1999

<sup>10</sup> George, Yancy (2002) *Good Reads*. <https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/5231.Judith-Butler>. Accessed September, 2017.

<sup>11</sup>Biography.com Editors. (2014) *Margaret Mitchell Biography*. <https://languages.oup.com/research/oxford-english-dictionary/>. Accessed on October, 20

<sup>12</sup>George , Yancy(2002)*Good Reads*. <https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/5231.Judith-Butler> .Accessed on September, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Konečná,Hanna. “*Gone with the Wind:Changes in the Southern Society Brought by the Civil War especially Changing the Role and Status of Women*”.Czech Republic:Masaryk University.2010

<sup>4</sup>ibid.,P20

<sup>15</sup> ibid.,P2

### **III-Results:**

In this part of our dissertation, we will shed light on the findings reached throughout the study of the issue of femininity, masculinity and gender roles in Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936). To reach our purpose, we have relied on Judith Butler's theory of *Performativity*, from her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). For a better comprehension of the issue cited above, we have focussed mainly on Margaret Mitchell's portrayal of her characters.

In the first chapter entitled Characters' Development, Behaviours and Manners, we have discussed the growth of the six main characters: Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, Ashley Wilkes, Melanie Hamilton, Gerald O'Hara and Ellen O'Hara. Our exploration of the work under study has shown that Margaret Mitchell describes the characters by following their development through time, focusing on the era of the American Civil War and Reconstruction. We have noticed that the characters of the novel are divided into two categories. The first category is those who are faithful to the Southern traditions and way of life. They did not accept to change their behaviors and manners. The second category is about those who want to bring new behaviors to change the mode of life which means New South. Thus, when focusing on the development of the characters, we have noticed that Margaret Mitchell masculinizes the female character, Scarlett O'Hara, and feminizes the male one, Ashley Wilkes.

In the second and last chapter, called The Changing of Gender Roles in *Gone with the Wind*, we present how lives of a Southern woman and man are transformed during this period, and what new roles both sexes had to adopt in order to survive and how they coped with the changed situation. Through our reading of Judith Butler's theory, we have learned that masculinity and femininity do not necessarily correspond to male and female, but they depend on their performance. Moreover, analyzing the characters social performance, we

have noticed the subversion of the social norms, especially by the female protagonist Scarlett O'Hara gives birth to new femininity in the South. In addition to this, men are portrayed as passive performers to their gender, especially Ashley Wilkes.

Our analysis of the work has shown that Mitchell portrayed the gender roles of her characters in relation to the values of that period; we have noticed that those characters are stereotypically represented since they are experiencing gender inequalities.

## **Discussion:**

It has been decided to rely on Judith Butler's theory of *Performativity* in this research. This choice is based on the belief that Butler is one of the leading forces in many fields, especially literary studies, philosophy, feminism and gender. Queer theorist, Judith Butler also provided excellent resources for our research. Her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* details the performative aspects of femininity and the concept of drag.

The life of Margaret Mitchell's characters refers to the American society in the period of the Civil War and the subsequent years of Reconstruction. During this period, economy, politic and social life has known great changes. This influences characters' gender roles and their growth through the novel *Gone with the Wind*.

Moreover, through the analysis of the development of the characters and their behaviors, we have noticed that the Civil War forced some of them to change their gender roles. In this case, the characters are separated into two categories, the new men and the new women who violate the social norms, and the old women and men who preserve the Southern traditions by keeping their gender roles imposed on them. The ideas explained above will be the focus of our dissertation.

## **Chapter I: Characters' Development, Behaviors and Manners**

### **1-Scarlett O'Hara:**

Scarlett O'Hara is the model of a Southern Belle, who fits most of the requirements for Southern femininity. Yet, she only fulfills them because she has to perform her duty as a planter's daughter and Belle. Scarlett learns that she can use the new conditions of life in the South to her advantage and spends her entire life opposing the system and social traditions of the Southern society. In other words, she lives her life the way she feels possible because she has a rebellious spirit, she hides her intelligence and other masculine characteristics through playing her feminine skills. This work aims at showing that the female protagonist Scarlett O'Hara violates the feminine imposed role and behaves in a masculine way.

Scarlett O'Hara is usually the first character people think of when they think about *Gone with the Wind*. She is a white Southern Belle and the female protagonist of the novel. She is in love with Ashley Wilkes, a respectful man, who enjoys reading literary books. Before the tumult of the Civil War, Scarlett, like the other Southern Belles, is coddled, having no mental image of dread and suffering or famine. She thinks about beautiful clothes, parties and barbecues, and getting married with Ashley.

After the beginning of the Civil War, everything is transformed from strong to weak. There are no entertainments, beautiful clothes or delicious food anymore, but there's only suffering, anguish and death. Nearly all her family members are dead at the same time, her sisters are sick and her father becomes crazy. In this case, Scarlett finds herself obliged to give help by providing the necessities of life, but she has to fight and resist surviving and saving the O'Hara plantation. At the same time from danger, and mainly to make

Ashley lives well. Scarlett changes her behavior and her doings; she tries to solve each problem without caring about her status in the Southern society.

Scarlett is resourceful in doing things, and she is different from women of her time. She is not like the Southern women who obey the social codes, Scarlett violates them. It is the Civil War that makes Scarlett discover her ability to perform. She says: “*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*”<sup>16</sup>. Scarlett does not know this at such a young age, but now she does whatever she wants and doesn’t care about the opinions of the others. Her rebellion against the rules imposed on her; begin just after she becomes a widow.

During the Civil War, Scarlett has witnessed criminal acts which made her courageous and strong in the face of different situations. For instance, she protects her sister in law, Melanie, and her child without attention to indications of bad consequences, and without caring for her own life. She also provides assistance and aid to the wounded combatants in Atlanta hospital.

After many years of suffering, hardship and anguish, she goes back to Tara, her family plantation. She is aware of her mother’s death. It’s at that period that she discovers her ability to face the hard situation. She behaves in a masculine way in order to save her home, Tara, to feed her relatives and get money like a man. Scarlett knows that everything is transformed by the Civil War, even the status of women is changed, and from now a woman can act and behave in a masculine way.<sup>17</sup>

*The little town was gone and the face of the rapidly growing city was animated with never-ceasing energy and bustle. The sight of so much hurrying made Scarlett, fresh from rural leisure and quiet, almost breathless, but she liked it. There was exciting atmosphere about the place that uplifted her. It was as if she could actually feel the accelerated steady pulse of the town’s heart beating in time with her own.*<sup>18</sup>

Focusing more on her behavior and manners, we should speak about Scarlett as a realistic character. With her exceptional and strong personality, she is a pure realistic woman.

Scarlett has bourgeois features, and some cases of her through the novel confirm her realistic personality.

Her first realistic act is when she tries to seduce Rhett Butler. After the defeat of the South, all social rules have been changed. North government begins collecting taxes from Southern plantation owners. Scarlett doesn't have enough money to pay Tara taxes, so Rhett is the last solution for her. She plans directly if she can persuade him to marry her, she can get the money to save her homeland problems. Unfortunately, she fails to coax him that is why she fails to get money.<sup>19</sup>

*Wait!" cried Scarlett. "I have something for you!" The ring came off and, as she started to throw it into the basket, heaped up with chains, watches, rings, pins and bracelets, she caught Rhett Butler's eye. His lips were twisted in a slight smile. Defiantly, she tossed the ring onto the top of the pile.*

*"Oh, my darling!" whispered Molly, clutching her arm, her eyes blazing with love and pride. "You brave, brave girl! Wait—please, wait, Lieutenant Picard! I have something for you, too!"<sup>20</sup>*

Her second realistic act is when she tries to seduce Franck Kennedy after her hopeless and disappointment with Rhett. She thinks to find another solution because she cannot return back Tara hands-free. Coincidentally, she comes across an old friend Franck Kennedy, a business man who loves her sister Suellen. Scarlett has a confused thought; she thinks of her sister future and a critical situation in which Tara is floundering and herself at the same time. After a deep thought, she makes a decision in order to get money. She changes her personality, and let him believe that she is a perfect woman to seduce him and achieve her objective. Her main goal is to marry him and exploit his fortune to make an end to Tara problems. At the end, her efforts were crowned with success by her marriage to Franck Kennedy that means saving Tara.<sup>21</sup>

*"Mr. Kennedy, I'm so surprised to see you. I know I've been a bad girl, not keeping up with old friends, but I didn't know you were here in Atlanta. I thought somebody told me you were in Marietta." "I do business in Marietta, a lot of business," he said. "Didn't Miss Suellen tell you I had settled in Atlanta? Didn't she tell you about my store?"*<sup>22</sup>

Analyzing these realistic acts, we can notice that Scarlett has a unique personality; she is very different from the other women of the South. She does not care about anyone when she wants to achieve a goal, especially when it concerns her land Tara and her family. That is to say, she has no doubt to violate the laws imposed to the Southern women in order to get what she wants.

Through her novel, Margaret Mitchell shows that Scarlett lives in a society that limits her freedom, because of her gender. Scarlett's ill treatment toward her three children is judged severely by the Southern people, she is judged for being a selfish woman. She does not care about what the others say about that *"For Heaven's sake, Melly, who cares if you're bad"*.<sup>23</sup> She carries working outside, so she doesn't give any importance to her three children, she doesn't invite them to parties and they are suffering from fear of her hard character<sup>24</sup>. For this reason, her three husbands judge her behavior and discourse with her three children and criticizing her as a bad mother. For example she doesn't show any emotion or tenderness. Scarlett learns to reserve her love from her mother and shows her love through hard work and feeding.<sup>25</sup>

Mammy is a nanny for Scarlett's children, but she cannot complete and occupy her maternal instinct. Scarlett finds pregnancy and motherhood as annoyance and harmful thing not a chivalry at all, because she has masculine qualities<sup>26</sup>. Scarlett doesn't raise her children, she hands them over to Mammy as soon as they are born. For her, having children is stupidity<sup>27</sup>. *"When she hears that one of her slaves has given birth, she thinks "Babies, babies,*

*babies. Why did God make so many babies? But no, God didn't make them. Stupid people make them.*"<sup>28</sup> The best example we can give of her negligence of her children is her son Charles Wade Hamilton, she considers him disturbing and bothering, even his voice is annoying her<sup>29</sup> Contrary to her children ignorance, Scarlett's love for her relatives is shown through her hard work outside. Unfortunately, her three husbands judge her for being against the social norms, she works hard at Tara and then at Kennedy's store in order to give food to her family. These are things the ladies of her status should not do.<sup>30</sup>The exploration of Scarlett's mothering in the novel reveals the kind of mothering that she had been taught by her own mother Ellen O'Hara.<sup>31</sup> Scarlett was deeply influenced by her mother, she has a maternal guidance from the beginning of the novel.

Scarlett is a Southern Belle who wants to be the centre of everything and she finds many norms and rules to practice. On one hand, she was forced to obey her mother and her nursemaid, Mammy. On the other hand, she has to resist or become defiant toward this authority while the situation is starting to get hard in the South.

Scarlett continues her rebellion against any social rule imposed on her and the female category. She loves her mother Ellen and sees her as something holy she never met before, because of her unselfishness, patience and kindness with her and with all the Southern people<sup>32</sup>. The novel female protagonist was influenced by her mother in an indirect way, on how to nurture her children through working hard. Scarlett finds support in her mother presence because Ellen is a source of power and great strength to face the difficult situations. But after Scarlett's return to Tara, she finds her mother dead, her mother who has always provided guidance for her.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, according to Scarlett, motherhood is taking care rather than expressing emotions. She tries to be a good mother by showing her affection to Bonnie, Rhett Butler's daughter. But, she was too busy during the babyhood; she was crowded with business

affairs<sup>34</sup>. Scarlett tries again to be a good mother to Bonnie but after her death, she becomes disinterested in mothering.

At last, even Scarlett was criticized for being a bad mother, but this influence positively. She attempts to develop her own mothering role; she is a mother who proves her affection through hard working<sup>35</sup>. She challenges assigned women's roles of her time. The story's driving force continues to be Scarlett's ongoing internal conflict between her feelings and the expected behavior for women of her age class.

To conclude with, Scarlett may be the most well known of the Belle characters, she is not the epitome of Southern femininity. Her personality and behavior are significantly more radical than any other character in *Gone with the Wind*. Scarlett O'Hara remains problematic for the traditional model of Southern femininity. Despite her traditionally feminine appearance and manners, her refusal to be submissive to masculine power and her insistence on taking control of her own life have made her personality as subversive, a masculine woman, in other words the new woman.

## **2-Melanie:**

Melanie is one of the most tender and wholehearted in the novel, she is represented by Mitchell as "*infant and ordinary, as simple as earth, as good as bread, as transparent as spring water*"<sup>36</sup>. She is the second female protagonist –Scarlett O'Hara's sister in law- who becomes her close female friend. She is from a wealthy family that estimates the value of education.

As the novel progresses, we can notice her affability with everybody; Melanie's courage is shown through the novel. She gives assistance and relief to injuries as a volunteer nurse in the hospital. She shows her strength in nursing the wounded soldiers without boredom. She is always smiling in front of them, and she helps Scarlett in picking cotton.<sup>37</sup>It

is her kindness and grace that make her so strong. She forgives and she is completely accepting people from different walks of life. Unlike many other people, Melanie treats Belle Watling, a prostitute, and outcast, like a human being. Belle Watling to Melanie:

*“Mrs Wilkes, there ain’t never been a woman in town that’s been nice to me the way you was; i mean about the money for the hospitals, you know, and i don’t forget a kindness, i got to thinkin’ about you bein’ left a widow, with a little boy. he’s a nice little boy, your boy, Mrs Wikes. i got a boy myself”*<sup>38</sup>

Despite her frail health, she nursed the wounded soldiers and worked in the fields like a slave to keep herself and her friends alive. Melanie is slight and feeble on her face; however, she has high internal quality, she is a substance individual who tries to have a cheerful existence with Ashley.

Melanie focus is on fighting the Northern forces by keeping the old Southern family system, and imitating the traditional women such as Ellen O’Hara. She knows that the second pregnancy will hurt her but she sacrifices herself for the South. Despite the circumstances, she engages to deliver more children who perhaps one day re-establish the past world she admires. She declares: *“It would be better to have a son even if he did get killed that to never have one”*<sup>39</sup> *“Oh Scarlett want a baby so bad! I know you think i’m hurried to say it right out, but it is true”*<sup>40</sup>

Melanie has the face of an innocent child; she behaves in a kind way with everybody<sup>41</sup>. Her acts reflect her kindness even with Scarlett O’Hara who is considered as a close friend and sister in law, although the other belles treat her with jealousy<sup>42</sup>. She encourages those around her, while she hates those who caused the misery for Atlanta.

### **3-Gerald O’Hara:**

He is Scarlett’s father who was the owner of the plantation; he came to America from Ireland at the age of 21. He was obliged to withdraw from Ireland to America because of his

crime, he killed a British Tax collector. Immediately, after his arrival, he found his brothers in his service. He was the youngest brother and he followed the pattern of chain migration across the Atlantic Ocean. He carried out in the wake of his older brothers joining them in their merchant business in Savannah. Gerald adapted quickly with the new life and became a Southerner.<sup>43</sup>

*Gerald remained Gerald. His habits of living and his ideas changed, but his manners he would not change them. He admired the drawling elegance of the wealthy rice and cotton planters, who rode into Savannah from their moss-hung Kingdoms, mounted through bred horses and followed by the carriages of their equally elegant ladies and the wagons of their slaves<sup>44</sup>*

Gerald gained Southerner's love and trust through his serious work in the county. Then, he succeeded to convince Robilliards family to marry their daughter Ellen.<sup>45</sup>

*The urgent need of a wife became clear to him, one morning when he was dressing to ride to town for Court Day. Pork brought for his favorite ruffled shirt, so inexpertly mended by the chambermaid as to be unbearable except his valet*

*"Mist Gerald", said Pork gratefully rolling up the shirt as Gerald fumed, "What you need is a wife and a wife whut has got plen'y of house niggers"<sup>46</sup>*

He married because he needed a good and descent woman who knew how to run a household. His wife, Ellen, was a faithful representation of a true Lady of the Old South of America .Consequently; the death of Ellen O'Hara greatly affected Gerald. She was the companion of his life and rock the world he knew before the Civil War. Gerald represented an Irish American man, unlike the hundreds who arrived in South to face years of hardship. He married to a readymade family unit. He achieved his goal by providing a stable work and access to private land which investigate family stability.

By the time of his death, he was a man with three identities "a fighting Irish man, and a southern gentleman and as a loyal a confederate as ever lived"<sup>47</sup> "To anyone with a drop of Irish blood in them the land they live on is like their mother...I will come to you this love of the land. There's no getting away from it, if you're Irish"<sup>48</sup>Gerald has three daughters but

Scarlett is his favorite one, he treated her in a masculine way because she behaved like him, both of them are headstrong and characterized by being aggressive, he was proud of his family and wealth.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4- Ellen O'Hara:**

She is known in the county as a great lady, she is stereotypically feminine. Mitchell portrays her as being quiet, well mannered, ladylike and chivalrous. She presents every behavior of an ideal Southern lady, and she permits no repose or laziness in her life. She is always nursing soldiers or her close friends and neighbors at Tara.<sup>50</sup>

Ellen O'Hara is the ideal example of women's role in the South which other female characters in the novel take as a model to follow. This kind of women is prominent in history, her place in her house and her job is to be loving wife and mother, she does her job without complaint and is content with her place in her society. Ellen has a special authority, she orders without shouting and without using severity, she always tries to equal between the disputations, she acts fairly on the basis of equality. As she is described by Mitchell "*she was a thrifty and kind mistress, a good mother and a devoted wife*"<sup>51</sup>. Ellen not only gives a boost to her family and friends, but also to all the indigent poor neighbors.<sup>52</sup> Her nature is generous, aristocratic and honorable, even after her death Ellen remains as a pattern to imitate<sup>53</sup>

Ellen O'Hara the mistress of the cotton plantation who brought order, honorability and grace into the household by giving to the plantation a beauty that never had before. When Scarlett was a child, she confuses her mother Ellen with Virgin Mary, and when she grows old, she doesn't change her opinion, and Scarlett longs to be like her.<sup>54</sup>

#### **5- Rhett Butler**

He is the dashing young blockade runner denied by his parents and forced out from Charleston for his unfavorable behavior.<sup>55</sup> His wild dark beauty and his special behavior are

the source of ladies appreciation for him, the most important thing in life for him is sexuality. He is convinced that sex should be enjoyed as much as possible, that's why he followed Scarlett to be his mistress. He was attracted by her beauty and cleverness. In addition, Butler admires her spirited nature eventually falling in love with her and convincing her to marry him with his charming manners and sense of fun used with her.

*It was so exciting to go out with him for he was so handsome. Somehow she had never given his looks a thought before, and in Atlanta everyone had been too preoccupied with his shortcomings ever to talk about his appearance. But here in New Orleans she could see how the eyes of other women followed him and how they fluttered when he bent over their hands. The realization that other women attracted by her husband, and perhaps envied her, made her suddenly proud to be seen by his side.<sup>56</sup>*

Rhett expresses himself well, and explains his own thoughts and views, even though his personality still difficult to be understood. In his conversations with Scarlett, he criticizes Ashley behavior and thinking, in other word, conventionalism. For Rhett, the old customs and traditions are dying principles and adapting a changing world is more than indispensable. Rhett uses the war in his favor; he makes his fortune and the economic conditions for his advantage.<sup>57</sup>

The war ended, but Rhett still sticking to his opinion and his defiance of the Southern culture, he marries Scarlett who gives birth to their daughter, Bonnie. This girl was a turning point in their lives. Rhett is Scarlett's third husband. Years before their marriage, he falls in love with her because of his admiration for her hard business dealing and calculating mind

*No, he hadn't married her for any of the usual reasons men marry women. He had married her solely because he wanted her and couldn't get her any other way. He had admitted as much the night he proposed to her. He had wanted her, just as he had wanted Belle Watling.<sup>58</sup>*

## 6-Ashley Wilkes

Ashley Wilkes is Melanie's husband who has the capacity for the higher forms of knowledge, he is the man who characterized by intelligence or mental capacity. He is a pure Southern gentleman.

Ashley is a symbol of a dying culture. He is characterized by his weakness and fear, and he is a man who ultimately lacks the courage and always looking backward to what he has lost. Ashley lived with his wife Melanie to struggle against starvation and death during the darkest days of Reconstruction that followed the defeat of the South during the War. He is both ruthless and practical, and he is willing to do whatever he must to survive.<sup>59</sup> He couldn't accept the new society and his powerlessness becomes noticeable. The Civil War that changed the South forever, affected him negatively. Ashley longs for the past when life was easy and beautiful.<sup>60</sup>

*"But, Ashley, what are you afraid of?"*

*'Oh, nameless things. Things which sound very silly when they are put into words. Mostly of having life suddenly become too real, of being brought into personal, too personal, contact with some of the simple facts of life. It isn't that I mind splitting logs here in the mud, but I do mind what it stands for. I do mind, very much, the loss of the beauty of the old life I loved. Scarlett, before the war, life was beautiful. There was a glamor to it, a perfection and a completeness and a symmetry to it like Grecian art. Maybe it wasn't so to everyone. I know that now. But to me, living at Twelve Oaks, there was a real beauty to living. I belonged in that life. I was a part of it. And now it is gone and I am out of place in this new life, and I am afraid. 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 too real, too vital. I resented their intrusion.'*

Ashley speaks to an informed powerless character. He can't be solid and willful from inside like Rhett Butler. He and Scarlett have little in common, like manners. In reality the characteristic of respect on her is the one that makes her despise Melanie. Ashley is unfit to change over, he sees no impulse to revoke family and culture and even his appreciation for Scarlett's vitality is a decline of that culture<sup>62</sup>. After his returning from the War, he faced more years of physical hardship and suffering. His relation with Melanie is good from the beginning of the novel till the end; they loved and cherished each other.

Ashley Wilkes is an interesting character in the novel, while Scarlett O'Hara is a masculine woman, he is a feminine man. His relationship with Melanie, despite her two pregnancies appears more cerebral than sexual. They are kindred characters who understand each and they represent the old South.

As a conclusion, we have noticed that Mitchell feminizes the male protagonist, Ashley Wilkes, even as she masculinizes her female heroin, Scarlett O'Hara. She re-embodies Southern masculinity in the form of her white heroin...

## Endnotes:

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<sup>17</sup>Tang Lu, *Tomorrow. Is Another Day. A Simple Analysis about the Realistic Character of Scarlett in Gone with the Wind*. International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science. Ed, vol4.N09. School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University.2016, P71-73

<sup>18</sup>Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*, 1936. P133.

<sup>19</sup>Sandra Brooke Ross, *Bad Mothers:A Comparaison of Scarlett O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind And Sethe in Tonimorrison's Beloved*. Greenville:East Carolina University.2014,P73

<sup>20</sup>Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*.1936, P168-169.

<sup>21</sup>Sandra Brooke Ross, *Bad Mothers*. Greenville:East Carolina University.2014 ,P74

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*, 1936.P547

<sup>23</sup>ibid:P354

<sup>24</sup> Sandra Brooke, Ross. *Bad Mothers*. Greenville :East Carolina University.2014.P1

<sup>25</sup>ibid

<sup>26</sup> Catherine, Staley. *Mothers at Work :Recontruction and Deconstruction of Patriarchy in Gone with the Wind*. Huntington: Marshall University.2012.P14

<sup>27</sup> ibid

<sup>28</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*.1936,P402

<sup>29</sup>Sandra Brooke Ross. *Bad Mothers*. Greenville: East Carolina University.2014 ,P5

<sup>30</sup> ibid:P6

<sup>31</sup> ibid

<sup>32</sup>ibid :p4

<sup>33</sup>ibid

<sup>34</sup> ibid.8

<sup>35</sup> ibid.8

<sup>36</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*. 1936,P89

<sup>37</sup>Gail NashTunnell. *Shades of Scarlett: Cultural Image of Historical Southern Women*.  
Arlington: The University of Texas.2007,P13-14

<sup>38</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*. 1936,P233

<sup>39</sup>ibid,257.

<sup>40</sup> ibid

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Willa Staley. *Mothers at Work*. Huntington: Marshall University.2012,P50

<sup>42</sup> ibid:51

<sup>43</sup>Konečná. *Gone with the Wind:Changes in the Southern Society*.MASARYK  
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<sup>44</sup> Margaret Mitchell.*Gone with the Wind*.P41.New York:The Macmillan Company, 1936.

<sup>45</sup>Konečná. *Gone with the Wind: Changes in the Southern Society*.MASARYK  
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<sup>46</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*. 1936,P47

<sup>47</sup> ibid:663

<sup>48</sup> ibid:55

<sup>49</sup> Launa, Deeks. *Scarlett O'Hara, the classical "guetting type"*. 1997,P313-314

<sup>50</sup>Fandom, Lora. *Characters: Ellen* .[https://gonewiththewind.wikia.com/wiki/Elle\\_n\\_0%27Hara](https://gonewiththewind.wikia.com/wiki/Elle_n_0%27Hara).Accessed on March,2018.

<sup>51</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*. 1936,P51

<sup>52</sup>Georgieva Hristov. *Gone with the Wind and the Southern Way of life: the CivilWar as described in Margaret Mitchell's Novel*. China: Peking University. 2013,P18

<sup>53</sup> ibid:19

<sup>54</sup> Pragia, Shukla. *A Whiff of Familiarity in Margaret Mitchell's 'Gone with the Wind'*<https://m.grin.com/document/180678>.

<sup>55</sup>kardiogi.(2000)<http://romanceeternal.org/category/keyword-articles/gone-wind>.Accessed on January, 2018.

<sup>57</sup>Cody Rentz,*In Another Day:the Historical and Cultural Relevance of Gone with the Wind*. Britain: oxford university .2014,p32

<sup>58</sup>Mitchell.*GonewiththeWind*.1936,P822

<sup>59</sup>Ruff,Dr.KSC.*TheBestNoteson GoneWiththeWind*.[https://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Gone\\_with\\_the\\_Wind/Gone\\_With\\_The\\_Wind34.html](https://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Gone_with_the_Wind/Gone_With_The_Wind34.html).Accessed January, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Fandom, Lora.*Community Lifestyle* <http://humanscience.wikia.com/wiki/GWTW>.Accessed on March,2018.

<sup>61</sup> Mitchell .*Gone with the Wind*. 1936,P248

<sup>62</sup> Fandom, Lora.*Community Lifestyle* <http://humanscience.wikia.com/wiki/GWTW>.Accessed on March,2018.

<sup>63</sup>Ruff,Dr.KSC.*TheBestNoteson GoneWiththeWind*.[https://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Gone  
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## **2. Chapter Two: The Changing of Gender Roles in *Gone with the Wind***

Our intention in the following chapter is to present the changing gender roles provoked by the war, concentrating on the female character, Scarlett O'Hara, and how life has undergone radical changes. This chapter analyzes the gender trouble as experienced by the characters of Mitchell's novel, specifically Scarlett O'Hara, as well as the other secondary characters. We intend to demonstrate that experiencing the war and the gender troubles keep the characters past continuously haunting their present, that means the changing of the gender role is caused by the harsh events of the Civil War and Reconstruction, they live a state of despair as a result of the shocking events they experienced. In our analysis we will use some concepts from Judith Butler theory from her famous book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) which are corresponding with our study.

### **What is a Gender Role?**

Gender role is a pattern of behavior which imposes for both male and female behaviors and attitudes that should be obeyed or refused in a given society. This term has relation with a set of behaviors which are attained in society with both male and female which means that some acts are allowed either for men or women<sup>64</sup>.

As it is common in the traditional way of living, men's area is outside the home, but women's one are at home and give birth to children and bearing them, which means that she is not allowed to go outside to work. The difference between the two areas is the social view on gender which is used as an attitude or makes difference between both sexes. Women are said to be weak, lack the power either to act physically or intellectually in comparing them to men who are stronger than them.<sup>65</sup>

All over the world, women went through difficult stages as they were oppressed in patriarchal society. They are excluded almost from all domains mainly economic and politica

ones. They are not able to make decisions because they are seen inferior to men. It is man who has the authority, but there are some codes to measure in order to respect and to be passive to.<sup>66</sup>

*Gone with the Wind* is a tale of the drama of the American Civil War and Reconstruction, in which Margaret Mitchell portrays the gender relations and women's role. It is a tale of Scarlett O'Hara-the manipulative daughter-who takes a stand against the traditional roles of women.

In our dissertation, we try to analyze the changing of the gender roles in the novel by using the performative theory of Judith Butler developed in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) in which she outlines important ideas about social justice and honoring the diversity and dignity of each person in society. The concept of gender is exposed to particular norms in society and pushes people to think about binary opposition, such as male and female, man and woman, some gender forms are imposed on people.

Butler asserts that "*If gender is the cultural meaning that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way*"<sup>67</sup>, By this Butler means that masculinity and femininity do not necessarily corresponds to male and female respectively, but are ideas that are free to be adopted to a body despite its sex.

When analyzing the experience of the female in the Southern American Civil War, we can use Butler's concept of subversion from her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), to understand how women are forced to a new gender roles under social control in order to adapt and survive in the new conditions of life. In her book, Butler demonstrates that subversion is used to resist the social oppression and gender roles expectation. Butler's concept of subversion underlined in *Gender Trouble*, call to social

actions for the individuals and encourage refusing male and female categorization by rejecting submission to the roles imposed to them. In other words, she supposes that subversion is used mainly to struggle social stressors.

According to Butler, it must be possible to evaluate some sexual practices that exist as minority and make them considerable in the matter of gender, because the reproduction of gender roles within the feminist theory drags itself to an exclusive attitude. *“Briefly, one is a woman, according to this framework, to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame and to call the frame into question is perhaps to lose something of one’s sense of place in gender”*<sup>68</sup>. That is to say, the sovereignty of heterosexuality that exists in society is powerful enough to determine the functions of man and woman. In the event that a person questions this, it threatens the man and the woman - especially the woman - in the matter of decreasing or disappearing of the sense of belonging.

Mitchell’s novel deals with how women survive the war, and how their roles changed. That’s why she chooses Scarlett O’Hara as a female protagonist who faced with an extreme hardship. She was obliged to look for solutions in order to save the situation and solve her problems. But as a woman, she was incapable to do that, she wanted to be a man and fulfilling masculine gender roles in order to be the head of the ruined Tara. The difficulties helped her grow and gained a sense of leadership, responsibility and independence<sup>69</sup>.

Scarlett O’Hara is a headstrong daughter who has violated the gender roles of her time; she broke the social economic rules and also behavioral codes that should be obeyed by all women. Many rules and codes should be respected by women because their freedom of acting and making decisions is limited.

First, a daughter should obey her parents and a daughter of a lady should behave like a lady. At the beginning of the novel; Scarlett does not act like a lady, this later should be gentle and nice, but Scarlett fails to fulfill these criteria. She does not have a close female friends, she

occupies her time only with boys that is why her mother Ellen finds difficulties to teach her how to become a lady, her only aim is to have a beau to be married with. Scarlett thinks that marriage will give her more freedom to do whatever she wants; she believes that a married woman's life is empty of obedience and rules and filled with pleasure<sup>70</sup>:

*I wish to heaven I was married" she said resentfully as she attacked the yams with loathing. I'm tired of ever lastingly being immature and never doing anything I want to do.I'm tired of acting like I don't eat more than a bird, and walking when I want to run and saying I feel faint after a waltz when I could dance for two days and never get tired .I'm tired of saying "haw wonderful you are" to feel men who haven't got one half the sense ,I've got, and I'm tired of pretending I don't know anything ,so men can tell me things and feel important while they're doing it<sup>71</sup>.*

Second, Scarlett doesn't realize that in being married she will not be allowed to do what she wants. However, the pampered girl doesn't succeed to be an obedient daughter, this is shown when she refuses her father suggestion to marry one of the three plantation owners who are gentlemen from an old family, but she doesn't accept them because she falls in love with Ashley Wilkes<sup>72</sup>:

*what would you be doing with a husband like Ashley? This moonstruck they all are ,all the wilkes.when I was mentioning the Tarleton the while ago.i wasn't pushing them they are fine lads but if it's Cade Calvert ,you 're setting your capafter ;why,tis the same with me the culverts are good folks, all of the , for all the old man marrying a Yankee .and ,when I'm gone-whist ,darlin listen to me!i'll lave Tara to you and Cade-*"

*"I wouldn't have Cade o a silver try," cried Scarlett in a fury. "I wish you'd quit pushing him at me !<sup>73</sup>.*

From the quotation, Scarlett's refusal of Gerald proposal is noticeable. She is a woman who does what she has to do without worrying about what other people will think. She doesn't obey the behavioral codes of that period when it is a custom for the parents to marry their daughter. The father is responsible for his daughter's life since women are seen as subordinate to men; this acceptance is a sign of obedience and submissiveness.

Third, when speaking about motherhood, there are rules that a mother should obey, woman shouldn't show her pregnancy in public, but Scarlett shows herself more and more when she is pregnant, so she doesn't accept these rules.

In addition, a married woman should have children but Scarlett evolves from belle to businesswoman, not from belle to mother. She refuses to bear children, one child for each husband<sup>74</sup>:

*I'll never have another one*

*I'm not going to be like other women and have a baby every year .good Lord that would mean six months out of the year when I'd have to be away from the mills !and I see how I can't afford to be away from them even one day<sup>75</sup>*

She added:

*proud!" she cried in a strangled voice. "proud –ugh"*

*Aren't you proud to be having a child*

*Oh dear God, no! I-I hate babies!*

*You mean -Frank's baby.*

*No-anybody's baby<sup>76</sup>*

In Gender Trouble Judith Butler shows that giving birth is not what the entire the child need:

*According to Judith,, the act of giving birth does not successfully re-establish that continuous relation prior to individuation because the infant invariably suffers the prohibition on incest and is separated off as a discrete identity. In the case of mother's separation from the girl-child, the result is melancholy for both, for the separation is never fully completed<sup>77</sup>*

Scarlett is far from motherhood characteristics that are imposed in the South during that time. Thus, Scarlett is unlike the other women, her ability to survive and her constant rebellion toward the traditional roles women were forced into, her intelligence and independence let her making decisions about business matters without asking anybody's opinion. Despite her husband's fortune, she is independent of him as she becomes a successful business woman. She uses money in order to rebuild Tara and ran it. Scarlett is not interested in political discussions or anything like that, but her first goal in starting

her business was to insure that her family never had to face starvation again. She is forced to mature from sixteen years old into a self-sufficient woman, who is capable of surviving difficult time period.

In her book, Judith Butler details the performative femininity itself, indicating that femininity in any form can be read as performance<sup>78</sup>. In *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlett uses her femininity to her advantage, controlling the actions of her many beaux, she plays a dominant role with each of the three husbands she marries. As a wife, there are some rules that she should follow, but she shows her rejection to do the role of the submissive wife not only to Frank Kennedy but also to Rhett Butler and Charles Hamilton.

During the Victorian period, man has the right to control his wife as men have much authority and power, so, women are obliged to submit to him. As a case of her second husband Frank Kennedy-a store owner and her sister's fiancé -with whom she plays the dominant role when she possesses Frank's wealth. Though, possession is forbidden for women at that period, so it's Frank who plays submissive role, and not Scarlett, this shows that Scarlett refuses any social code imposed<sup>79</sup>.

Judith Butler is an influential theorist whose work focuses on the way gender is conceived and discussed. In her preface to *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), she aimed at opening up the filled of possibilities for gender and sought to oppose those views that restricted the meaning of gender to settled notions of masculinity and femininity.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Butler investigates the concept of gender as shifting and contextual phenomenon which does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations.<sup>81</sup>

Gender is therefore dependant on its context, the historical moments and social situation, as it is mentioned in Mitchell's work *Gone with the Wind* focused mainly on Scarlett's role changes, from being a Southern lady who had everything

at her disposal without making any effort, to a hardworking woman who does everything to support her father and her family. She broke the social rules by being a working woman. After the war, through the strong personality of Scarlett O'Hara, Mitchell depicts the transformation of the Southern culture. In this novel, gender roles take a large part, before the war gender roles are divided, men were the head of the family and the chiefs of everything and women were given the job of proving how aristocratic everybody was, that means, to attract wealthy men and raise children and take care of their homes. Women have no right to ask questions about their husband's business.<sup>82</sup>

The perfect example of the perfect lady is Scarlett's mother Ellen:

*It was a man's world and she accepted it as such. The man owned the property, and the women managed it. The man took the credit for the management and the women praised her cleverness. The man roared like a bull when a splinter was in his finger and the woman muffled the moans of childbirth, lest she disturbed him. Men were rough of speech and often drunk. Women ignored the lapses of speech and put the drunkards to bed without bitter words. Men were rude and outspoken, women were always kind, gracious and forgiving*<sup>83</sup>

Women in the Southern society were supposed to concentrate only on their men, but Scarlett makes noticeable difference in gender roles. She represented the women who wouldn't fit the categories and options given to her. Her refusal to be submissive to masculine power and her insistence on taking control of her own life have made her rebellious and revolted lady, her different breeding is the reason which build her strong personality. She spends her childhood as a boy near her father who treats her in a masculine way.<sup>84</sup>

Scarlett cannot comply to the traditional female roles of her society; she is simply not interested in women's minds. The masculine world of war, violence, and politics seems to be equally irrational and incomprehensible for her. The logical and predictability of business life prove to be her true sphere and she uses the rules of calculation and planning in her emotional life as well. She is an individualist who trusts her own skills, Margaret Mitchell

says: “*Why, why*’, her mind stuttered, *I believe women could manage everything in the world without men’s help—except having babies, and God knows, no woman in her right mind would have babies if she could help it*”<sup>85</sup>

Gender roles in the Antebellum South differ from those of Reconstruction era. According to *Oxford Dictionary*, Reconstruction is “the period 1865-77 following the American Civil War, during which the Southern states of the confederacy were controlled by Federal government and social legislation including the granting of new rights black people, was introduced”<sup>86</sup>

Southern economy in the Antebellum Era focused on the plantation, social roles at that time were clearly divided. Plantations were entrusted to men’s care, and the household were occupied by women. But with the beginning of the Reconstruction era, gender roles began to change. Women’s role of occupying the household were changed, now, they are obliged to work outdoor in order to help their husbands<sup>87</sup>

*If women were so unfortunate as to be compelled to make a little money to assist their families in these hard times, they made it in quit womanly ways-baking as Mrs. Merriweather was doing, or painting china and sewing and keeping boarders, like Mrs.Elsing or Fanny, or teaching school like Mrs. Meade or giving music lessons like Mrs.Bonnell. These ladies made money but they kept themselves at homes while they did it, as a woman should*<sup>88</sup>

After the defeat of the Civil War, the Reconstruction Era brought changes to the South that still attached to the old traditions of nobility. Now, industrialization began to cover the economic system of the South, the republican governments aim was to transform its plantation agriculture into family farms.<sup>89</sup>

From beginning to end of *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell portrays the gender roles of the Civil War era in relation to the values of that period. Through her novel, one of the most important goals is to depict the position of gender roles during the nineteenth century.

Women's position in the society began to change, bad economic conditions pushed them to be more active in society, and this is portrayed in the novel through the roles of Scarlett O'Hara, Melanie, Mammy and Ellen<sup>90</sup>

Thanks to women's active role in society, the South goes out from the Civil War. Scarlett succeeded to portray the real picture of a great lady; she hides her intelligence behind her weak emotions and simplicity. One of the detailed descriptions of Scarlett O'Hara in the novel:

*She knew how to smile so that her dimples leaped, how to walk pigeon bed so that her wide hoop skirts swayed entrancingly, how to look up into a man's face and then dropher eyes and bat the lids rapidly so that she seemed a-tremble with gentle emotion. Most of all she learned how to conceal from men a sharp intelligence beneath a face as sweet and bland as babies*

*The man owned the property and the woman managed it. The man took the credit for the management, and the women praised his cleverness. The man roared like a bull when a splinter was in his finger, and the woman muffled the moans of childbirth, lest she disturbed him<sup>91</sup>*

Society at that period estimates women's beauty, simplicity and submissiveness, that Scarlett struggles with all this and tries to be strong; she imposes herself in society through her serious work. The war brings drastic changes, Scarlett's mother death and her father madness obliged her to make physical efforts and make difficult decisions, and this behaviour confirmed that Scarlett becomes the man of the home.

The first line of the novel presenting Scarlett as someone who "was not beautiful"<sup>92</sup>; indicates that the novel will essentially be concerned with gender, then we have seen the focus of the author on the changing of gender roles caused mainly by the War, but these changing gender roles are not limited to women, we should also talk of male role in the novel. The Southern society before the war, consider man as strong and thanks to him the South is built, and many activities are limited to him such as hunting and drinking, simply he is a protagonist. All the characteristics of the man mentioned before are fulfilled in the

characters of the novel, but they seem as simple as Scarlett can manipulate them as she wants<sup>93</sup>. Mitchell portrays how Southern manhood could be negotiated and reconstructed during these times of crises.

Ashley Wilkes, the young man who lives in the Twelve Oaks:

*He was courteous always, but aloof, remote. No one could ever tell what he was thinking about, Scarlett least of all. In a neighbourhood where everyone said exactly what he thought as soon as he thought it, Ashley's quality of reserve was exasperating. He was as proficient any other young men in the usual County diversions, hunting, gambling, dancing and politics, and was the best rider of them all; but he differed from all the rest in that these pleasant activities were not the end and aim of life to him. And he stood alone in his interest in books and music and his fondness for writing poetry.*<sup>94</sup>

Through the few lines above, Margaret Mitchell describes Ashley Wilkes as a gentleman who performs in a society where respecting the principles of honor ensure the true character and social status. Ashley has all these criteria and respects them, so he represents the Old Southern man. But with the beginning of the war, these values are changed. Even though, Ashley still adheres to his old status, his role in society was limited because he was not active, he was thinker more than doer “*For Ashley was born of a line of man who used their leisure for thinking, not doing, for spinning brightly colored dreams that had in them no touch of reality*”<sup>95</sup>, he is performing masculinity only by wearing the uniform of the Confederate forces, because his real personality is characterized by weakness. About that, Butler asserts that not all that is seen is real, in every person another reality should be hidden: “*If one thinks that one sees a man dressed as a woman or a woman dressed as a man, then one takes the first term of each of these perceptions as the “reality” of gender: the gender that is introduced through the simile lacks “reality” and is taken to constitute an illusory appearance*”<sup>96</sup>

In addition to his physical appearance which show more his weakness and femininity compared to Rhett Butler. Through the novel, Mitchell shows that Ashley's role was weak; he rejects any masculine role given to him, for example when he rejects Scarlett proposition to go far and begin new life with him:

*Let's run away-leave them all! I'm tired of working for the folks.  
Somebody will take care of them. There's always somebody who takes  
Of people who can't take care of themselves. Oh, Ashley, let's run away,  
You and I. We could go to Mexico-they want officers in the Mexican Army  
And we could be so happy there<sup>97</sup>*

Ashley is shown as a passive performer of his gender role because he refuses to engage in society or accept responsibilities. In this regard, Butler adds the concept of drag to the concept of performativity, she said “*Drag is an example that is meant to establish that ‘reality’ is not fixed as we generally assume it to be. The purpose of the example is to expose the tenuousness of gender ‘reality’ in order to counter the violence performed by gender norms*”<sup>98</sup>

We can notice that, gender is not what you are but what you perform. Rhett Butler and Ashley Wilkes play these roles but they differ in the way they see the South, Rhett does not give any importance to the South; he does not make any effort during the war. In addition to Ashley who is more interested in literature and not in the masculine business.

## Endnotes:

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<sup>66</sup> Fandom, Lora. *Gender Roles*. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_role](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_role).  
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<sup>67</sup> Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*  
London: Routledge. 1990, p. 10

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*: 11

<sup>69</sup> Konečná. *Gone with the Wind: Changes in the Southern Society*. MASARYK  
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<sup>70</sup> Lestari, Steyoati. *Gender Ideals Violation in Domestic and Economic Life*.  
Pasuruan. 2017, p. 168

<sup>71</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, p. 80

<sup>72</sup> Lestari. *Gender Ideals Violation in Domestic and Economic Life*. Pasuruan. 2017, p. 168

<sup>73</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, p. 98

<sup>74</sup> Lestari, Steyoati. *Gender Ideals Violation*. Pasuruan. 2017, p. 168

<sup>75</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, p. 53

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*

<sup>77</sup> Butler. *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge. 1990, p. 10

<sup>78</sup> Salih Sara. *On Judith Butler and Performativity*. 2002. p. 56

<sup>79</sup>Lestari, Steyoati. *Gender Ideals Violation*. Pasuruan. 2017, p167

<sup>80</sup> Butler. *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge. 1990, p.13

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* P255

<sup>82</sup> Novel, Guide. (1999) *Analysis on Gone With the Wind*. <http://www.novelguide.com/GonewiththeWind/index.html>. Accessed on April, 2018

<sup>83</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, P61

<sup>84</sup> Theolivers (2008) *Analysis on Gone with the Wind*. <https://theoliviers.livejournal.com/28152.html>. Accessed on April, 2018

<sup>85</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, P60

<sup>86</sup> Rentz, Cody. *In Another Day: The Historical and Cultural Relevance of Gone with the Wind*, Oxford: University of Mississippi. 2014, p34

<sup>87</sup> Theolivers (2008) *Analysis on Gone with the Wind*. <https://theoliviers.livejournal.com/28152.html>. Accessed on April, 2018

<sup>88</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, P628

<sup>89</sup> Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*. London: University of Pennsylvania. 1985

<sup>90</sup> Cody, Rentz. *In Another Day: The Historical and Cultural Relevance of Gone with the Wind*, Oxford: University of Mississippi. 2014, p34

<sup>91</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, P128

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.* 18

<sup>93</sup> Tang Lu, *Tomorrow Is Another Day*. China: West Normal University. 2016, p75

<sup>94</sup> Mitchell. *Gone with the Wind*. 1936, P24

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*P25

<sup>96</sup> Butler. *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge. 1990, p.22

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*23

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*,23-2

## **Conclusion:**

This research presents the impact of the American Civil War (1861-1865) on the changing of gender roles in the Southern society. The novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936) written by Margaret Mitchell is a cultural icon that reflects reality and living conditions at that time.

This dissertation has studied the main characters' development, behavior and manners. It has explored how gender roles are changed in an era of difficult conditions like suffering and starvation that Margaret Mitchell mirrors in her novel *Gone with the Wind*. Those conditions have affected the individuals' life, especially the female character Scarlett O'Hara. Scarlett has made a plan to remove herself from the traditional way of life and the world around her to build an identity of her own.

Analyzing the changing of gender roles has been the main focus in this work that highlights the life experiences of the main characters: Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Hamilton. These characters belong to two different categories: those who remain devoted to the past and those who want to change. The aim of our dissertation was to discuss how Mitchell presents life, status and roles of Southern women and men of high society during the Civil War and the subsequent years. In this regard, we have treated how elite women perceived the war and its consequences focusing on the characters of Melanie and Scarlett by analyzing their different behaviors and their abilities to survive. Moreover, we have noticed that Scarlett represents a woman trying to free herself from the traditional role. The lady O'Hara is considered as a model of the idea of feminism. She is the independent woman who becomes the head of the house and who works to ensure her family survival. Through our research, we have recognized that Scarlett defies the restrictions placed

upon her gender and enters the world of men. She refuses to act under social codes as a daughter, sister, mother and widow. Scarlett violates social rules and changes her gender role in order to be a woman who faces new conditions of life and independent from male domination, because she cannot adjust herself to the traditional female roles of her society.

Discussing the changing of gender roles in Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind*, we have examined the way the novel deal with Gender Trouble relying on Butler's concepts of performativity and drag. Butler comes to the conclusion that the expressions of gender performativity must offer coherence within social life in order to satisfy the binary logic of men and women, in order to organize social life itself.

We don't have the opportunity to work on the many other interesting issues of Margaret Mitchell's novel, so we invite other students to study *Gone with the Wind* from other points of view.

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