

The Decline of the Old Order in Andrew Lytle's "Jericho"

Kotani Koji
九州大学言語文化部

<https://doi.org/10.15017/1355857>

出版情報：英語英文学論叢. 44, pp.37-57, 1994-02. 九州大学英語英文学研究会
バージョン：
権利関係：

The Decline of the Old Order in Andrew Lytle's "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho"

Koji Kotani

The main theme of Andrew Lytle's "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho" is the decline of the old traditional order in Southern society. Lytle deals with this theme in his portrait of Kate McCowan on her deathbed at the age of eighty-seven. His basic narrative method is to make a symbolic contrast between Miss Kate, an embodiment of the old order, and Dick McCowan and his fiancée, Eva Callahan, who represent a new emerging society. Miss Kate devotes herself to running the Long Gourd plantation, showing her high regard for family and land. In contrast, her grandson Dick is not very interested in keeping the traditional value by running the plantation in the same way as Miss Kate has done, and Eva is a symbol of the new forces of industrialism which have brought about the changes called "the Bulldozer Revolution" in the South.

Miss Kate is not a stereotypical figure of the Southern lady in her unfeminine strength and bravery and her outspokenness in sexual matters. She is rather closer to the real picture of many Southern ladies who had to struggle through the Civil War, the Reconstruction, and the subsequent days because of the deaths or incurable injuries of their husbands. Nevertheless, her portrait does not undermine the cultural assumption of female submission to male will in the myth of the Southern lady as an ideological construction.

Lytle presents a glorified portrait of the yeomen farmer and his life in "The Hind Tit," an essay that he contributed to the manifesto of the Southern Agrarians, *I'll Take My Stand*. Although Miss Kate does not come under the category of the yeoman farmer, her characterization is deeply rooted in Lytle's agrarianism which emphasizes the significance of living in the strong ties with family, community, and land against the general tendency of Southern society toward capitalistic urban industrialism.

On her deathbed Miss Kate is afflicted with a feeling of guilt which comes from her acquisition of her neighbor's land in a lawful but perhaps morally dubious way. At the very last moment, however, she seems to justify the act of acquisition by throwing away her guilty conscience. This is a gesture of self-aggrandizement suggestive of the same gesture that Lytle detects in the spiritual decline of the will-swollen modern man since the Renaissance and the breakup of Christian morality. As the title of this short story suggests, Miss Kate's struggles on her plantation may be compared to Joshua's conquest of Jericho in the Old Testament. In terms of self-aggrandizement, however, the crumbling walls of Jericho symbolize the decline of the Long Gourd plantation and Miss Kate's ultimate defeat. Miss Kate is both Joshua and Jericho.