

# Research on the Writing of Heritage Inheritance Disturbance in *Vanity Fair*

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**Abstract:** Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* can be called a money story from a certain point of view, in which the author gives a lot of pen and ink to write around the inheritance event, and writes a succession of wonderful events, which fully shows the author's ironic humor art, and at the same time profoundly shows the dominant position of money in the secular society.

**Key words:** *Vanity Fair*; Heritage; Inherit

## 1. Introduction

*Vanity Fair* is known as the "classic of critical realism in the 19th century", which provides readers with "a typical picture of the vanity fair in upper class Victorian society", and "vividly shows the social living conditions of people at that time". Sharp, the heroine, is regarded as "the concentration of a morally decadent civilization on the individual". After graduating from the women's school, she came to Crowley as a tutor and soon came into contact with a special existence of the family - Miss Crowley. She has a wealth of 70000 pounds and has no children to inherit property, attracting the coveting of close relatives. She has two half brothers, one of whom has inherited the title of Baron, and has two sons. The other brother is the vicar of the parish. Faced with the inheritance of a huge legacy, there was a fierce tripartite competition between the Baron's two sons and the priest. This part of the content is written brilliantly, with climaxes, which is very expressive of dramatic conflict.

## 2. The first party to lose the opportunity

The first force in the struggle for inheritance was Roden, the Baron's second son, who was fully represented by Sharp. Sharp is alone and has no firm foothold in the world. Therefore, she has a very clear understanding of her situation and is determined to earn an outstanding future. In the early 19th century, women did not have the right to participate in social life generally. Schopenhauer believed that "women only survive for the reproduction of race." Gelda Lerner pointed out that "society has built a wall to close women in the circle of family life." This determines that when Sharp plans for the future, finding a husband with noble status and wealth is the top priority. She aimed at Roden, the Baron's second son, who was beloved by his aunt and was likely to inherit the majority of the estate.

During Miss Crawley's visit to Crowley, Sharp entertained the old lady with her witty tongue and took good care of her day and night, becoming the first popular person in front of the old lady. Sharp also made a secret deal to take over the prodigal of Roden and made him obey her. Who knows she just got married to Roden secretly, and then she got a proposal from Roden's father. Sharp's refusal to propose caused a great sensation and suspense. In the eyes of the old lady, she created an image of unswerving in the face of temptation and sticking to her love, which won the old lady's infinite sympathy and love. Sharp finally decided to elope after all kinds of deliberation. In her letter informing Roden of her decision, she wrote: "she sincerely said that she would treat little Rebecca like a daughter. I think she would be surprised when she heard our news, but don't be afraid after she's angry." She did not know that although the old lady advertised equality verbally and appreciated the romance of free love, she was actually just a follower of the new trend and had a deep view of family status. Sharp gave up her base camp and let the enemy take advantage of it to destroy it, which made the good image she had tried to create in the old lady disappear, and made the old lady abandon Roden completely. The Rodens took the lead to lose the battle for inheritance.

## 3. The second party who cut the beard halfway

The second force in the struggle for inheritance is the pastor represented by Mrs. Bede Crawley. The pastor's wife is a tough character. When she was a girl, she and her mother tricked the young pastor into being her husband. However, the pastor is fond of gambling, so the wife had to make more plans. Because the old lady wanted to see the tender picture of brothers and sisters getting along well, the priest who might have died of old age and did not communicate with the Baron became friendly. The secret love between Sharp and Roden did not escape the eyes of Mrs. Bede, who came up with a way to eradicate the largest possible beneficiary of the estate. Mrs. Bede created an opportunity for them to be alone. As a result, the two got married as expected.

Mrs. Bede not only knows everything about her husband's brother's family, but also can't miss the movements in her aunt's life circle. This time, she's got the informer, the old lady's maid, Fu Jin. Since the Baron proposed to Sharp but was rejected, Fujin sent a letter to Mrs. Bede that night. She read the reason for refusing to marry from it - Sharp and Roden were on good terms. When Mrs. Bede arrived, Sharp had just eloped and left. Mrs. Bede treated the two maids closest to the old lady with hypocrisy, promising them empty promises of benefits in exchange for their loyal follow.

Mrs. Bede conspired with them to tell the old lady about Sharp's marriage and elopement, creating suspense step by step. First they revealed the fact that Sharp was married. The old lady couldn't believe it. She wanted to call Sharp to face-to-face questioning, but was told that Sharp had left last night. Briggs told Sharp to leave a letter, just when she was about to say who Sharp was married, Mrs. Bede

interrupted her. The poor old lady was so anxious that she asked who it was. As soon as Briggs said that he belonged to the old lady's family, the old lady impatiently excluded her Baron brother. Finally, she heard Mrs. Bede spit out Roden's name. The old lady fell into hysteria due to the repeated suspense and the impact of the unveiling of the mystery. She felt deeply betrayed and accused Mrs. Bede of having a bad heart. Mrs. Bede pleaded that it was impossible to persuade Roden to marry the daughter of a poor painter. The old lady said that Sharp was a woman from a noble family, Mrs. Bede replied, "her mother is a singer in the opera house. She has been on the stage herself. Maybe she has done something more obscene." Finally, the powerful "shell" directly made the old lady faint.

At this point, Mrs. Bede has successfully put the enemy to the ground. What she has to do is to consolidate her victory. The old lady was beaten and fell ill in bed. Mrs. Bede became the principal. She closed the door to the outside world on the grounds that the old lady was seriously ill and needed to rest, and prevented Mr. and Mrs. Roden from having any chance to contact the old lady. She used the strong tactics of managing her own residence internally, confining the old lady in bed, and reforming her mind. The first step was to make her dislike Roden and his wife. Mrs. Bede broke up Roden's bad deeds and told them to the old lady. Mrs. Bede embellished and slandered Roden without any compunction in her heart. She was content with the act of insulting her relatives. She pulled the high sounding flag to cover up her crackling calculation, which was probably a kind of human nature Thackeray wanted to embody through this character. Sharp can't fall behind, of course. Mrs. Bede went to the girls' school where Sharp used to live to learn about the situation, and then went to the house where Sharp lived with her father before she went to the girls' school. She heard more about Sharp's life experience, education and character from the landlady. Mrs. Bede poured everything she had learned hard into the old lady, completely ending the future of the Rodens' inheritance from the old lady.

Thackeray made a precise comment on Mrs. Bede's nature in one sentence: "a righteous woman with a fierce temper often goes too far and has taken advantage of it, but she still doesn't go far enough." The greedy Mrs. Bede was like a tyrant, and the whole house was under her suffocating oppression. If Mrs. Bede cannot stay in power until she can force the old lady to revise her will, it is only because her family did not provide assistance to her, but instead dragged her back - her husband fell off the horse on horseback. In a hurry, Mrs. Bede had to go back to take care of her husband. As soon as she left the front foot, the rear foot of the old lady's residence ushered in a joyous liberation. Mrs. Bede's tyranny made her completely unpopular, and the second party's struggle for heritage represented by her left the scene.

#### 4. The third party of saving the country by curve

The last one on the stage was Roden's older brother, Mr. Pitt. Mr. Pitt had the experience of being a diplomat. He knew that he had never been in contact with his aunt. If he dared to come to the door and offer hospitality, he would directly reveal his intentions, so he needed foreign assistance. He focused on his fiancée. In a self-conscious speech he told his mother-in-law, it was fully explained: "If the technique is not careful enough, it may have the most serious impact on our hope for our aunt's property. Please remember that she has 70000 pounds, and she is very old and fragile, so she can't be stimulated. We'd better comfort her and don't make her afraid.... it's best to let our gentle Miss Jean accompany you." Mr. Pitt learned from the experience and lessons of the two forces, and took Mrs. Bede as a mirror in his strategy. He could not take it by force, but by attacking his heart. The old lady experienced Sharp's treachery and hated all false feelings. At the same time, her emotional emptiness needed solace. Mr. Pitt sent her a gentle and simple Miss Jean.

He designed to meet the old lady's female companion Briggs. She was a servant in a low position, but because she was around the old lady, she became the target of the three forces that coveted the heritage, hoping that she could act as a pitching stone. Mr. Pitt's flattering method is quite clever. He remembers that Briggs wrote a book, specially brought Miss Jean to "encounter" Briggs and paid a euphemistic compliment to her work. As expected, Briggs blew Miss Jean's benefits to the old lady's ears, which aroused her interest and politely invited Mr. Pitt to visit her aunt.

In this way, Mr. Pitt led his mother-in-law and fiancée to knock on the door of his aunt's house. On the one hand is the poor old lady who has been calculated by her family despite her wealth. On the other hand is the lonely young lady who is rarely cared by her family. The old lady has a true love for her, and she also takes out her heart to make friends with the old lady. Unexpectedly, there were complications again. James, Mrs. Bede's son, was sent to brush his favor in front of her aunt. His cousin pretended to be confidant and advised him to drink more, saying that "my aunt likes to let the guests at home be free", and the stupid young man made a fool of himself frequently. So far, after the long-lasting battle for heritage, the seemingly weak and deceptive Mr. Pitt held the old lady's heart with the help of his wife, and his opponent Roden also provided him with help, prompting the old lady to finally make the arrangement of heritage.

Although Roden and his wife were out early, they never gave up the hope of getting the understanding of their aunt. Sharp also instructed Roden to write a letter to her aunt. Her aunt saw that it was Sharp who controlled everything behind her, and thought sadly, "they are all thinking about my money. I wish I could die early." After Roden participated in the battle of Waterloo, the couple were very popular in Paris. When the French Revolution broke out, many nobles took refuge in Britain and were sheltered by the old lady. Sharp pulled the old lady's flag and made a show. The old lady heard that Sharp used her name to cheat, then learned that Sharp had a son, and finally made up her mind to make the final settlement of the property. She urged her nephew Pitt to hold a wedding and asked a lawyer to rewrite her will. After death, most of the estate belonged to the nephew and his wife.

The old lady probably didn't think of her impulsive behavior, which gave her a talisman. Before the will was implemented, the old lady was the God sought after by her brothers, sisters in law, nephews and nieces. Once the will is implemented, those who don't get well will only have resentment against her. As a winner of interests, Pitt only expects her to die early and collect her property. If the old lady had read Shakespeare's King Lear, she would have taken it as a warning to see the tragic outcome of King Lear's early delivery of property, which

quicken his own death. Unfortunately, she had no chance to learn a lesson, and soon died desolately.

## 5. Ostentatious fame and wealth

Although the fierce competition over property has ended, the redistribution of property has promoted the development of personnel relations. Pitt inherited his legacy and title and became the owner of Crawley building. The pastor's family and Mr. and Mrs. Roden, who had made a killing with him in the fight for property, courted him one after another. Sharp saw the benefits of flattery, and she even had the idea that Pitt seemed to be a short-lived man, and the benefits may have to fall on your own. Her idea came true. First, Pitt's only son died of illness, then Roden died, and then Pitt and Crawley's manor and title were inherited by Sharp's son. Thackeray's last words and phrases in the book annotated the scenes of good play: "Alas, fame and fortune are frivolous, and everything is empty! Who among us is really happy? Who is satisfied? Even if we fulfilled our wishes at that time, we will still be dissatisfied after that? Come on, children, pack up the stage and hide the puppet man. Our play is finished." Puppet show is a form of performance in which people manipulate and play inanimate dolls of people or animals to make them vivid and lifelike. Relatively speaking, it is a man-made illusion, and it is a recognized illusion. In this way, Thackeray equated fiction with illusion, "which played a revolutionary role in the development of Victorian novels."

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