

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S WEDDING JOURNEY IN JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS

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Abstract:

Jane Austen was one of the prominent woman writers in the 19th century British literature. She was the first writer who brought distinct characters of ordinary life into lime light. God created the world with many wonders in nature. He created man and woman to live on it. Apart from all the creations he himself wondered on the personality of woman. Motherhood in her makes the world survive for ages. Marriage plays a vital part in everyone's life of course, yet woman's life totally alters in this society. This phenomenon occurs everywhere with different traditions and beliefs. The word 'wedding' attracts human hearts especially the youngsters as it is the turning point in their life. Many writers have written about marriages in their works, yet Jane Austen of 19th century English novelist had inspired people through her writings on the theme of wedding. She is the representative of her age reflecting the stage of women in late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century England through her handful of six famous novels. Though she revolves round the feminine world, her centre of attraction is always a young maiden before her marriage. She brings out the enjoyment of spinster life in very common manner and also satirizes the financial motivations in married life in her novels.

Keywords: *Woman, Love, Marriage and Society.*

Introduction

God created the world with many wonders in nature. He created man and woman to live on it. Apart from all the creations he himself wondered on the personality of woman. She is the one who renders her body and soul for the welfare of others. Motherhood in her makes the world survive for ages. Such a beautiful creation undergoes many changes after her marriage. Marriage plays a vital part in everyone's life of course, yet woman's life totally alters in this society. She has to forsake her own parents and siblings and adopts a new family as her relatives. This phenomenon occurs everywhere with different traditions and beliefs. The word 'wedding' attracts human hearts especially the youngsters as it is the turning point in their life. Many writers have written about marriages in their works, yet Jane Austen of 19th century English novelists had inspired people through her writings on the theme of wedding. She is the representative of her age reflecting the stage of women in late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century England through her handful of six famous novels. Though she revolves round the feminine world, her centre of attraction is always a young maiden before her marriage. The spinster life is very much enjoyed and experienced by Jane Austen; therefore she never goes beyond it at any cost and that she reveals, "Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want" (1).

In 19th century, marriage was a big issue facing women and men of her time. Financial considerations were paramount in deciding marriages. Jane has satirized these financial motivations. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice* the mother is ridiculed for her ambitions to marry her daughters for maximum financial remuneration. Jane, herself remained single throughout her life. Apart from brief flirtations, Jane remained unmarried and seemed to have little interest in getting married.

Analysis of Women's Wedding Journey

Usually Jane's heroines and her sisters fall in love before their marriage and finally marry their lovers. Meanwhile the heroines are departed from their heroes due to various hindrances and misunderstandings. Though Jane Austen's world is small, she is capable to produce variety of women characters in her novels. Even though she creates weak characters like Mrs Bennet, her creations of heroines are awesome. Her heroines are always good and attractive. Elizabeth firmly repudiates Collins. Fanny Price rejects Crawford. Anne Elliot refuses to have her crafty cousin. The words in which they express themselves are not less eloquent than their actions. Similarly, Emma, Catherine and Marianne Dashwood are in no way less noble than the other heroines. None of her heroines are persuaded by the wish of heroes. They are the decision makers of their future with firm determination.

Jane Austen pictures Elizabeth Bennet as a strong and brilliant heroine. Her strength of character, moral integrity, great intelligence and an attractive personality make her unique among other characters in the novel. The strength of her personal integrity is highly evident in her refusal of Darcy's first marriage proposal. Darcy too finds her bewitching because she is so different from other women. No doubt many women he knows covet his wealth and status. They flatter him and agree with him to gain his favour. But Elizabeth wants to marry for *love* and is unimpressed by Darcy's material possession and social status. She discovers Caroline Bingley's hypocrisy that interrupts the union of her sister Jane with Bingley. She also prevents degeneration of Lydia's character and morals, and the consequent endangering of her family's respectability. Finally she realizes the generosity and heroism of Darcy and agrees to marry him.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, Elinor stands for Sense and Marianne stands for Sensibility. These two characters are finely designed by Jane Austen. She balances both of the sisters' nature as to weave the lengthy, interesting two different love stories blended in a nut shell. Both of them meet disappointments in love but each of them handles the situation in different way. When Elinor comes to know of Edward's engagement with Lucy, she is undoubtedly amazed, astonished, bewildered and shocked. But she recovers from this very soon and regains her mental and emotional balance. When Marianne receives Willoughby's letter informing her about his marriage with another girl, Marianne is prostrated by grief. Her emotional intensity leads her to severe illness that she seems to be on the verge of death. Only towards the end we find her recovered enough to judge things in a normal manner.

Fanny Price, the heroine of *Mansfield Park* starts her life in a very lower middle class family in Portsmouth and at the end of the novel she is effectively accepted as the mistress of Mansfield Park. When she is lonely and isolated in Mansfield Park, it is Edmund Bertram who treats her tenderly and affectionately. This genuine nature makes Fanny to love Edmund constantly. She seems to be timid and weak but as a woman of strong mental stability she attracts Edmund who loves Mary Crawford. Fanny is tempted by Henry who strives hard to win her heart. But her everlasting love for Edmund finally leads her to marry him.

Emma Woodhouse, the heroine of *Emma* suffers from several faults in the beginning. She is extremely snobbish. She has too high an opinion of her own judgement and understanding. She misunderstands Mr. Elton, Frank, Jane Fairfax and Harriet. She tries to make matches for marriage but all her attempts prove vain and finally Mr. Knightley who knows Emma well, loves her and marries her.

Anne Elliot, the heroine of *Persuasion*, is an 'elegant little woman of twenty in seven, with beauty and without bloom, with gentle manners yet with passive nature. Her love for Frederick Wentworth at the age of nineteen has been persuaded by Lady Russell and Sir Walter Elliot. She considers that penniless marriage won't give happiness to both of them. Angered by this decision, Frederick goes to sea, earns more, and becomes the Captain in Navy. Meanwhile Anne loses her bloom and spirits staying in home. When Charles Musgrove proposes to marry her at the age of twenty-two, she refuses to marriage and allows her sister Mary to marry him. She loves Frederick even when all hope is gone. She meets him again after eight years and her wounded love gets spirits even though Wentworth tries to divert his attention to

Musgrove's sisters. Her constancy in love unites her with Frederick after a series of occurrences in their life.

Catherine Morland, the heroine of *Northanger Abbey* is a girl of fifteen years who has many romantic ideas popularized by the Gothic novel. Her companion is Henry Tilney who guides her and helps her to come out of her Gothic dream finally marries her. She is the youngest heroine of Jane Austen. Henry Tilney is the youngest of her clergymen and one who takes his clerical duties more seriously than many others.

Conclusion

This analysis comes to an end with that almost all the women characters along with heroines other than the old woman characters fall in love and marry in the end. Jane Austen spins the love web with beautiful incident threads and presents it as a lovable creation. Moreover the novel of manners was also refined into the social satire exactly in the hands of Jane Austen.

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