

Depreciation of Women: A Study in Austen's Selected Novels

الانتقاص من المرأة: دراسة في روايات مختارة لـ جين أوستن

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1. Introduction

The historians have wrongly assumed that the words “Fiction” and “novel” are synonymous and interchangeable. At the heart of the confusion is the fact that the story is common to both. So as men have told stories there has been fiction, whether in verse or prose and only to this extent it is true to say that any work of fiction written before about 1670 in England is, in some sense, an ancestor of the novel. But the novel itself is something new (Walter Allen, 1954: p.13).

Like any other artists the novelist is a maker. He/she is making an imitation, an imitation of the life of man on earth. He is making, it might be said, a working model of life as he sees and feels it, his conclusions about it being expressed in the characters he invents, the situations in which he places them, and in the very words he chooses for those purposes. Novelists have given many reasons for writing novels: Richardson believed he did so to inculcate right conduct; Fielding to reform the manners of the age; Dickens to expose social evils; Trollope to make money by providing acceptable entertainment.

The novelist does much through his ‘choice’ of characters and the actions they undergo. The novelist is free to choose his material only in a limited sense, and his choice is governed by the deepest compulsions of his personality. It is these that dictate both the nature of his novels and the conclusions about life he

expresses through them. This is why in judging a novel we are forced with the task of assessing not only the author's ability to create characters, for instance, but also the values inherent in the characters and their behaviors. It is later which enables us to say that Jane Austen is a great novelist than such writers for all her generosity, breath of canvas or fidelity to the surface of observed life.

Part of the novelist's art is to mediate between his characters and the readers, and he does so with every word he puts on paper for every word he chooses furthers his expression of his attitude towards his characters and the total situation he is rendering, and in so much as every novel is an extended metaphor of the author's view of life – on life itself. He does so by his very choice of the characters he writes about, the thoughts and feelings he gives them, and the behavior and motives he attributes to them. Every novelist gives us, in his novels, his own personal idiosyncratic vision of the world. The vision is acted out by images of men and women (Ibid, pp.13-17).

The first great flowering of the English novel began in 1740 with Richardson, Smollett, Fielding and Sterne. They demonstrated "how to think and act justly and prudently in the common concerns of Human life" (Ibid, p.43). Their protest was in the name of religion and morality. They did much to elevate the position of women. The influence of them on later novelists has been huge as to be incalculable. For the first generation of the novel no writer of fiction could escape them. Their work was the more powerful artistic expression of the social conscience of the age. They saw themselves as moralists and satirists. They always strike the reader with surprise and pleasure. Behind every simple statement of them, we feel the force of a deep and varied experience of life which has not darkened the essential humanity of their nature.

Jane Austen was writing very much as a belated eighteenth-century moralist, but in its beginnings in the 18th century sensibility was something expectable than the self-indulgence of school-girls. She uses sensibility for moral and domestic virtues. The world she shows has undergone an enormous contraction, naturally enough; the range of vision is very much smaller, but the vision is also much more intense revealing a world composed not of a large movement and broad sweeps but of minute particulars, the world of ladies (Ibid, p.110).

Jane Austen was considered to be unequivocal advocate for women's emancipation. Austen may have found it necessary in her time to hide her dissatisfaction with women's states in a men-made and male-favoring world. The society Austen was living in was one which favored men, and in the late eighteenth /early nineteenth century women were too marginal in their society. Austen displays her acute awareness of her position as a woman trying to demarcate her own space in a man's world .She was fully aware of the fact that patriarchal society required women writers to produce a non – aristocratic kind of that was polite and particularly suitable for a female readership's some critics commend on the necessity for late eighteenth early nineteenth – century women writers to hide their intellectualism. They published anonymously, wrote under a male pseudonym or were self-deprecating, in the hope that [their] female audience would both need the messages between [their] lines and refrain from betraying what they deciphered.

Austen was struggling in the context of a patriarchal world which refers to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination. The social code for women ended submitting to patriarchal institutions such as marriage in order to survive financially. Austen deliberately hides her rebellion behind the façade of submission but that she submits to patriarchy because she has no other choice if she wants to survive in a male- dominated society.

Miss Austen adapted dramatic method of presenting action through a succession of short scenes in dialogue. She relied more on dialogue. Her fiction is as much steeped in irony, both in irony, both in language and situation. She is an example of the moralist and satirist. It is not quite true that for Miss Austen moral and manners are interchangeable, but the main emphasis in her works is on manners which she sees as morals in microcosm. There are, of course, standards of reference implicit in her novels by which manners are to be judged. In her novels, Jane satirized the society she was living in through her characters that served her as a tool for social and moral criticism. In her fiction, Jane uses irony ridicule to describe the social manners and behavior of her characters, and her novels run into a kind of comedy of manners.

There are, indeed, the criteria by which Miss Austen judges her characters: self- command, just consideration of others, knowledge of the heart and a principle of right derived from education. In Austen's world the errors and follies of the young are always, in part that any rate, the result of faulty upbringing: behind the wickedness of Lydia Bennet (in **Pride and Prejudice**) in her elopement with Wickham lies the foolishness of her mother and the irresponsibility of her father. Austen traces the consequences of lack of these qualities in characters set in as completely detailed a world as has been created in fiction. There is a whole large world outside it of which she says nothing, but that does not invalidate the world she has made. Her world is self-contained, but the large context is supplied by her continual awareness and scrutiny of the values that govern the one she creates.

Austen is praised for her delineation of characters, and it is superb in its excellence. It is through them, she expresses a discriminated view of life, a highly serious criticism of life expressed in terms of comedy, which deals with the conflict between illusion and reality; "know thyself" is the imperative of every comic writer. Austen began to write as a child and wrote

all her life. The source of her comedy is essentially the confusion in an immature mind between literature and life. Thence she proceeds to the dissection and exposure of the normal follies and illusions of mankind.

It is a dazzling example of her dialogue her economy of writing and her power of making her characters expose themselves in their own words so that we know them through and can imagine them in situations she has never described. The most popular of her novels has always been **“Pride and Prejudice”** because of the brilliant creation of Elizabeth, a heroine as witty as she is charming. Through her short literary career, Miss Austen’s mind grew graver; it is as though she could find folly, self – deception irresponsibility, silliness, the individual's lack of knowledge of himself, to longer merely funny, more and more as she realized their consequences they became contemptible even hateful to her. The expression of this contempt of this hatred is always controlled, and presented in comic terms; but it is there, and the comedy is more than ever the vehicle of moral judgment.

Today, lady novelists of some wit and concision, who concern themselves with those aspects of upper class life which can be viewed from the tea-table, are almost invariably compared to be reviewers to Jane Austen. It is very rare indeed they have anything in common with her tough eighteenth-century mind, her severity of values, and her miraculous sense of form. Her influence is rather diffused and indirect, she has become of the permanent point of references by which the achievements of other novelists are measured.

Miss Austen, by all standards, was so modest and uneventful that it offers very little to write about. Her novels and letters give us an altogether different impression. She appears to be a woman of sensitive, warm nature, capable of strong affection. Her novels

reveal a quickness of observation, a sense of the incongruous, and awareness of the comedy of society.

Austen's novels are highly socially-oriented. She closely describes a strict system of social and moral rules dominating people's lives in that period, a woman's position in that system, female life expectations; shows efforts of some trying to break established boundaries in order to improve their social status; adverts to social dangers that might ruin especially women's lives forever. She, however, focuses on a portrayal of the middle-class and upper-middle-class way of life.

Her novels are often characterized as domestic novels, depicting ordinary life she lived herself, choosing only few families to focus on in her novels. She depicted an ordinary life as the rural gentry that remained practically unaffected by the contemporary political situation. The moral life of her time is clear in her pages, although the history is social not national (S. Alexander, 1994: p.241). It's possible that Jane Austen was unaware of the ideology of her society and that she, therefore, remained a product of her times. This could possibly explain why her work consolidates the authority of the hierarchy of the patriarchal family. She feels not only accepted the limitations of women's scope but seems in her own life to have found happiness within them. She dealt sincerely with the background of the male-dominated and the male-favoring world in which she was living and writing and that leads to a new understanding of her awareness of the disempowerment of women in her society.

Women can be seen as persecuted victims of a patriarchal society. In this research we are going to discuss some complexities that women face in their lives depending on David Spring's speech, "in Jane Austen's novels, the major preoccupation was the fate of women in the society of her time" (David Ed. Monaghan, 1981: pp.17-20).

2. Social Class

The social class penetrates all the author's novels "**Pride and Prejudice**", "**Emma**" as well as "**Mansfield Park**". Social status was measured in terms of the family background, connections, reputation, and mainly fortune. Woolf writes about the role of money in Austen's work: "The social standards are almost entirely those of money and snobbery; it is remarkable to what an extent the plots and characters are dominated by questions of money" (Woolf, 1970: p.51). The novelist, however, focuses basically on a portrayal of the middle –class and the upper-class way of life. She seems to be not very interested by the nobility and aristocracy, or the lower ranks embodied in servants.

In Austen's times the social position was a crucial criterion for assessing both material and also values as many considered those of higher rank and considerable fortune "better" people, which meant that human beings were mostly judged in terms of the group they belonged to rather than in terms of their personal qualities. Nevertheless, Jane Austen did not approve of those beliefs, as Llewellyn (1977, p.83) writes: "people had to win their respect as individuals–rank did not help them." The theme of social class is inseparably connected with issues of social status, marriage, education, women's property, _ _ _etc, which will be analyzed as follows:

2-1. Marriage

Marriage is an issue widely discussed in Jane Austen's work on it plays a considerable role in her works. Marsh suggests that "Marriage was a woman's livelihood" and "her life's work" (Marsh, 1998, p.18). Similarly, Tomalin sees in women's getting married "a crowning point of their lives" (Tomalin, 2000, p.114).

Austen's fiction offers ideas on marriage that deviate the (patriarchal) norm: it appears to be critical of marrying for

money, shows that wives are often unfulfilled women, and portrays women who chase after men as ridiculous. Despite these criticisms Austen appears to support domesticity by ending her novels with marriage.

Austen could not escape the ideology she was born into when she appeared more willing to leave the world alone and deal with matters of courtship and marriage. Jane Austen considered marriage achieve all basic social and personal functions, thus it affects all societies and cultures. These functions can be all societies and cultures. These functions can be characterized as

..... Procreation and provision for sexual gratification and regulation, care of children and their education and socialization, regulation of lines of descent, division of labor between the sexes, economic production and consumption and provision for satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status and companionship (The New Encyclopedia Britannica,1985: p.871).

In Jane Austen's clashing conditions, the woman did not occupy any remarkable status. She was driven in the way the eighteenth century English mind wished to mould her as: passive, obedient, and unintellectual. The English social history was not accompanied by an improvement of the position of the English woman. She was aspired for one socially and legally acceptance goal that is marriage. Marriage and procreation were still the only justification for the existence (March Ed.Vincinus, 1972: p.X).

There were no available occupations for women except in being a governess or a teacher and people looked down upon a woman who worked for her own living. Although governessing, which means that the governess should live with the family whose children she was teaching, was the only proper or respectable situation for a woman, it was demeaning and "undefined for she was" not a guest, not a mistress, not a servant—but something made up of all. No one knew exactly how to treat her" (Abla Kathem Oda Al-Dujely, 1988: p.60)

Governess's situation was not much better than a servant being ill-paid, badly treated, and lodged uncomfortable. So, women were trained to think of marriage as their only desirable vocation. In comparison with being a dependent old spinster, marriage offered a route to financial security, or to escape an uncongenial family situation.

Marrying a rich man is a primary importance for each family wanting to marry their daughters. In order to achieve this goal, women of the middle-class and the aristocracy were taught the art of captivating suitable husbands by being "accomplished" ladies which mean to manage some of the following skills: ...To sing, play the piano, read, dance, and speak French, among other things. They also had to be well mannered and pretty and a large fortune always helped (Ibid)

Jane Austen satirized her society's management of marriage as a kind of business by presenting it as a game arranged with defined rules, in the sense that "money must marry money..... And the same held true for rank". Anything outside this rule, like love, affection, equality in intelligence was disregarded.

In Austen's novels "courtship and marriage constituted a woman's destiny and business," like Mrs. Bennett's in "**Pride and Prejudice**", and Emma wood-house's "**Emma**" (Deirdre David, 1987: p.77). Affected by social convections, some of Austen's female characters either found in marriage an outlet for change or escape or obtained security and position like Catherine Morland in "**Northanger Abby**" (1818), and Fanny Price in "**Mansfield Park**" (1814). The novelist depicted two sites in her works the site of monotony, constraint and frustration women experienced before marriage in a society bounded and guided by morality and convention: opposite that site she set marriage as uncertain of happiness but a possibility for securing woman from poverty and spinsterhood. The moral significance of marriage was summarized in the union of the hero and the heroine as a union of mutual understanding and love and a sharing role of

responsibility as in "**Pride and Prejudice**" as well as in "**Emma**" (Jane Miller, 1986: p.75).

Woolf notes that "the axis the plot in every novel (-----) is money and marriage or rank and marriage" (Leonard Woolf, 1970: pp.50-51). Tomalin sees in woman's getting married "a crowning point of their lives" (Tomalin, 2000:p.114). Marsh sees the author's characters "imprisoned within a rigid materialist system of courtship and marriage" (Nicholas Marsh, 1980: p.136). In the Author's times, the only possible for women to climb up the social ladder and thus ensure some financial security and more respectable social financial security and more respectable social position was to marry well, and the social standard, ideal, the duty of a woman is assumed to be to marry as high or rich as possible. To marry meant for a woman to reach her destiny, gain financial independence from her parents or relatives, and avoid the unpleasant fact of spinsterhood.

Any man and woman dreams or aspires to have such a reposeful union. Mutual love, compromise, respect, understanding, and generosity strengthened deepen martial relationship. Although marriage interrelates with many aspects of life such as the physical, mental, social, spiritual and financial, but it was not studied scientifically until the end of the First World War 1914–1918 (Lynne Aggress, 1972: p.5).

Austen studied the difficulties of marriage from different sides, since the society was divided into three classes and money were divided among them according to their social rank. Austen also paid much attention to the age element and its affection on each one's chances of getting a suitable partner. Also the education of each of the spouses was an important factor in increasing his/her chances.

As mentioned earlier Reasons for getting married were economically and socially determined. A married woman has to fulfill the expectations of society to avoided loneliness and

financial dependence on her own family or even poverty. Cecil writes: "It was wrong to marry for money, but it was silly to marry without it" (David Cecil, 1970:pp.33-34). Austen disapproves marriage without love, though she admits money as an important assumption, along with love, for a happy future life. David Cecil writes about the author: "love itself, though she understood its workings admirably, did not rouse her enthusiasm unless it was justified by reason, disciplined by self-control"(Cecil, 1970: p.34). Elizabeth, the heroine in **Pride and Prejudice**, was not driven only by her emotions but she also considered the material point of view. She also understands that marriage based primarily only on love and passion is not sufficient having seen atypical example in her parents' weary relationship. While Charlotte Lucas is aware of her limited prospects and being desperately afraid of her future loneliness and misery, she accepts the first man who proposes to her even though she is not in love with Mr. Collins at all. She explains her act to Elizabeth:

I am not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable house; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. (PP.1991:20)

People in, Austen's time pay much attention to money and poverty is regarded as really important. However, Austen apprehended the influential nexus between marriage and wealth, and between marriage and the social system. Her views on love and marriage were the outcome of her acute observation of woman's social position. Marriage, for her, was not a means to achieve wealth or rank as some shallow analyses of her novels had concluded. Austen satirized both the aristocracy's order of planned marriage and the mercenary people who aspired for material and social fulfillment through marriage. She did not neglect the Socio-economic factor and the personal sentiments as well as the realities of rigid propriety and morality that were

interrelated with matrimony and personal relations (Daniel Cotton, 1985: pp.84-86).

Jane Austen, as a pre-Feminist writer, does not agree with the idea of men being superior to women and expresses her attitude on the subject in her novels. Marsh notes, "Jane Austen understanding of the oppression of women, and her critical attitude towards male domination, in her society, are generally agreed among the critics" (Nicholas Marsh, 1998: p.261). Cowie once said, "Women, especially, are to be talked to as below men and above children," (L.W. Cowie, 1973). Their voices are ignored and their images are stereotyped.

2-2. Self-Knowledge

In Austen's novels there subtle references to what could be interpreted as her encouraging women to discover their own identities, against the prescription imposed on them by patriarchy. In **Mansfield Park** it appears that she perceives education to play a role in this regard: instead of teaching young girls how to become wives it should, partly at least, aim at equipping them with self-knowledge.

In Austen's work we can find early signs of what may be regarded as concern for the lack of self-knowledge among women. It could be argued that Austen is critical of domestic education, not only because it produces dull-witted women whose sole interests are their homes and their families, but also it keeps women from knowing their own minds.

Austen seems aware of women's educational deficit when she refers that higher education is a man's prerogative by mentioning that many of her male characters attended either a university or a private school. In **Mansfield Park** Austen seems to imply that being a woman means being deprived of a decent education.

The author implicitly draws attention to the absence of such a system for girls who were deprived a higher education equal to that of men. Linda Nochlin (1994: p.96) asks why the western world has failed to produce women writers, philosophers, composers and mathematicians equivalent to male artists. She displays that discrimination based on class, race and sex works effectively to keep women from developing their artistic capabilities.

...things as they are and as they have been, in the arts as in a hundred other areas, are stultifying, oppressive and discouraging to all those, women among them, who did not have the good fortune to be born white, preferably middle class and, above all, male. The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and education....

The novelist describes, in her novels, the limited options for women's education in the Victorian society. The education of women consists of the needlework, math, fine handwriting, enough music to be able to sing, some dances, drawing, and modern languages speaking and reading. All of their learning used to attract a husband and to be a wife. Jane Austen in "**Pride and Prejudice**" satirized the educational system especially the women's. In Jane Austen's day there was no centrally-organized system of state-supported education. There were local charity or church-run day schools, but these were not attended by the children of the "genteel" social levels that Jane Austen writes about. More or less the same is true of apprenticeships, another relatively less "respectable" mode of education. Some local "Grammar" schools did exist, teaching the educational basics including Greek and Latin to higher-class or upwardly mobile boys, but did not admit girls. The type of education depended on the preferences and financial resources of the parents in each family.

Austen shows that woman instead of educating themselves, they were received a practical and religious training for their domestic roles. The purpose of such accomplishments was often only to attract a husband. Until well into the nineteenth century education was not considered necessary, in fact it was felt to be rather a hindrance to their settlement in life. Miss Bingley said in this regard:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, and dancing, and the modern language, to deserve the word accomplished, and beside all this she must have a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word accomplished would behelf observed. (Jane Austen, **Pride and Prejudice**, 1813).

Education for boys in her novels is more elaborate than that of girls and usually proceeds from a private tutor to public school and university. Instead, 'genteel' children especially girls would be educated at home by their parents. The patriarchal society as depicted by Jane Austen in the character and conduct of her novels clearly reveal the discrimination meted out to the women who comprise a major section of the society. Austen has always been considered a writer who writer on domestic issues.

Austen seems aware of women's deficit when she says the fact that higher education is a man's prerogative. She seems to imply that woman was deprived of a decent education, and she draws attention to the absence of such a system for girls. She emphasizes the informal education girls receive at home. She implies that the tertiary education does not guarantee quick understanding, but guarantees a subordinate role in society.

The educational bias has had some long-term effects on women and their position in society. Because they were deprived of a higher education equal to that of men, women did not feature in literature for many years. Austen's work may help us understand the ways in which women were kept from developing

their intellectual abilities. It would seem plausible that contemporary women have no legacy of great women artists precisely because they were subjected to a prejudicial education system for many years.

Being rendered powerless is one of the first consequences of a poor education. Because men had privilege access to writing and producing knowledge, they were able to keep women subjugated and to maintain their powerful position in society. By reserving education solely for men, they were able to control what written and so doing keep women subordinated. It would appear that they suffer the consequences of a male-dominated education legacy.

Austen's novels depict a world in which men enjoy the privilege of having access to a higher education and a world in which women are subjected to an inferior education. The consequence of such an education system for women include not having access to the power of the pen, not being intellectually stimulated, being interested in only the domestic and the trivial, and finally being bored-especially within the marriage state. It can, therefore, be argued that by showing how a limited education debilitates women in many different ways, Austen creates an awareness of the importance of an equality of education between women and men. She notes that educating women not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings of domesticity, to make a woman desire to be what a prosperous man desires and that her desirability hinged upon an education in frugal domestic practices.

2-3. Woman's Status in Society

Austen's work shows how social status has the power to define individuals and thereby disrupt the stability of the community. In the rigid social system in which all human actions were judged in terms of an extent of adherence to its strict rules, reputation was, to gather with wealth, connections, and the

family background, a crucial criterion in measuring one's social status.

Men completely ignored the voices and images of women and prevented them from doing things that they wanted. Women are highly children of larger growth, a man only plays with them, he neither tells them about, nor trusts them with serious matters. The history has kept a lot of material about men, as great merchants, writers and officials while there were few remarks left for reference to the works of women only as pretty, good at cooking and things like these (Weijie Chen, 2010:pp.7-8).

Women's identity was decided by the society that has been born into. In Austen's time the image of women was formed by men. The educational subjects were introduced by the male-dominated government in the 18th century aimed at creating what is meant to be a desirable woman or as an "Angel of the house", and their main aim is to please their husbands. They were unable to achieve social status based on their efforts, but it might come by the status of their husbands or fathers (Elizabeth Kolman, 2003: pp.119-22).

Social status was measured according to the family background and mainly fortune. The upper-class always tried to keep their status high and insisted on the idea that only people of the same social status deserve each other. They did mock and humiliate people of other class.

Some scholars believed that Jane Austen wanted to address women's issues because she dissatisfied with the traditional status of women. She challenged the identity that patriarchy had created for women. They were not expected to participate in social actions and if they participated, they worked in jobs where no higher education is required. Men had portrayed women as emotional creatures in speech and writing. They associated mind in speech and writing. They associated mind and reason with men while body and emotion with women. Women have been considered illogical, irrational and less intelligence than men.

They remained powerless because late 18th century and early 19th century men believed that Woman's power was not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect not for invention or creation. Women were considered as objects or property. Several effects appeared in that time on females which covered four aspects: education, economy, society and politics. They had no equal education like men, and had no chance to involve in political issues.

Women were an "Oppressed Class" for many reasons. Firstly, all the property of a woman became her husband's after marriage which made her financially weak. Secondly, unmarried woman could not go out, there should be another woman usually an old woman, went with her to public places to look after her and make that she behaved correctly. Thirdly, she could not live alone but with her family or her relatives as a dependent. She was subordinated to the patriarchal system which referred to the social system of masculine domination over woman. She was also treated by the political, civil, religious forces as inferior.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries man was regarded the head of the house and the master over his wife. Woman should do the housework without any argument. Men expected their wives to do all the housework and take care of the children. Men treated their wives as servants. So there were equivocal things, at Austen's time, which damaged women's activity and creativity.

The upheaval in the English social history did not bring any refinement in the position of women. Early 19th century woman had the belief that writing was a man's domain and duty, and it was a very strange and unusual for women to write. So women were excluded from writing and producing knowledge. Miles (1987:p.6) once said, "..... by the nineteenth century the idea that the novel was man's "proper sphere" was so entrenched that the very idea of a "Lady novelist" was enough to rouse suspicious, scorn surprise or roguish gallantry on all sides". Women who were well educated enjoyed writing and wanted to have their books published, but there were two problems: the first one was

that publishing companies were controlled by men, and many of those men did not believe that women wrote as well as men. The other problem was that people thought it was not respectable for women to publish books. Earning money by writing was like doing a job, and it was shameful for a man if it looked like his wife or daughters had to earn money (www.macmillan English.com, 2004: p.1).

2- 4. Heritage and Property

Jane Austen portrays another problem women had to face when a male owner of a property died, the property passed to another male family member or relative. In **Sense and Sensibility** readers witness Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters' hardship as they are forced to move from their home after Mr. Dashwood's death, because the property was inherited by his son whose selfish spouse "degraded" the women "to the condition of visitors". Similarly in **Pride and Prejudice** Mrs. Bennet does not hesitate to vow Elizabeth to Mr. Collins, a distant relative of theirs, to save herself and her daughters from destitution supposing Mr. Bennet dies. Therefore, the financial situation was not easy for middle-class women. Those who did not marry, or had no one to support them, usually had to work as governess.

Another equivocal thing was the property rights of woman during Austen's time. The property rights of a married woman were governed by English common law which required that all the property of woman took into marriage whether money or lands passed into the ownership of their husbands. Furthermore, married women could not make wills of any property without their husband's consent. If the couple separated, whether initiated by the husband or wife, usually left the woman economically poor, because the law didn't offer her any right to marital property. The common law stated that after marriage all the wills of the wife in judgment of law is subjected to the will of the husband.

All these equivocal things made women equivocal beings that have no rights or respect as men. Their Society neglected them and did not give them importance like men because they were regarded as children of higher growth, and silly in everything-in conversation and in writing. So they subordinated to the world of home, domestic labor, motherhood, and family, and leaving matters of writing, politics and business to men. They should only marry, run a house, and bring up children (YuYun Wardatul Uyun, 2010: pp.59-60). Thus, daughters of wealthy fathers frequently became prey of fortune-seeking men, and daughters of fathers of limited fortunes often had difficulty in finding husbands at all.

3. Conclusion

Jane Austen is one of the few novelists who have tried to achieve the essential objectivity and impartiality in the delineation of their characters. Her world-view is essentially ironic. She is amused observer of the follies and Whimsicalities, incongruities and contradictions of human behavior, and she depicts with irreprovable candor whatever she observes. She would like to recommend as conducive to a healthy relationship between an individual and his society. She selected materials most malleable to her genius and her novels, in general, are delightfully comic vignettes of humanity. A.C. Bradley says about Jane Austen, "There are two great distinct stains in Jane Austen. She is a moralist and a humorist." Lord David Cecil points out that Jane Austen is "profoundly moral", describes her world-view as moral-realistic. Andrew H. Wright also talks of the "moral concern, perplexity and commitment" of Jane Austen.

Jane Austen is concerned with two kinds of world: the social world and the moral world-and their interaction, an interaction that is intimate, but also complex. She measured life from the conventional, social standards of the upper-middle class about which she writes and to which she belongs, and that this limits

her wider relevance and excludes her from the modern novel, one of the attributes of which is a greater range in its treatment of character and value. She had a firm belief in the organic unity of the society, and she mentioned that social conventions ought to be accepted and the individual libido be subordinated to the social good. She keeps close to the common incidents and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality that we never miss the excitement which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners and sentiments, greatly above our own. The young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to the readers the most wonderful. It is true that she is an ironist and a dedicated observer of life, but it does not mean that she lacks a moral concern. A certain level penetrates all the Austen's novels which significantly contribute to uncovering drawbacks faults and follies of the characters that she portrayed, and of the same time, it served the author as a tool for a satirical analysis of society or as a tool for social criticism against all established social standards.

Austen's novels draw our attention to issues such as women's (lack of) education, the effects of not being given access of knowledge, marriage as a patriarchal institution of entrapment, and woman's identity. Her novels the effects of educating women for a life of domesticity, and illustrate that such an education is biased, leaving women powerless and without any means of self protection in a male-dominated world.

Austen's novels also expose the economic and social system (of which education constitutes a major part) for enforcing marriage and for enfeebling women. In addition, they illustrate some of the realities and pitfalls of marriage. From her novels we can infer that male power is enshrined in the very structure of society, and this makes us aware of women's lack of power in her time.

Austen's novels, however, are not merely novels of powerlessness but of empowerment. By creating rounded women characters and by giving them the power to judge, to refuse and to write. Austen challenges the stereotyped view of woman as either empowering monster or weak and fragile angel. In addition, her novels seem to question women's inherited identity and to suggest that qualities such as emotionality and mothering are not natural aspects of being a woman. Because she suggest ways in which women might empower themselves, albeit within patriarchal parameters, one could argue that she contributes, in a small way, to the transformation of exiting power relations and to the eradication of women's servile position in society.

Abstract:-

The first flowering of the English novel started in 1740 with the great novelists of the 18th century: Richardson, Fielding, Sterne and Smollest. They used the novel to mention social and political issues, and psychological problems of the common man. At the end of the 18th century, after their death, the English novel was in an ailing condition because its feeble period of 20 years in which only few forms of novel were written. The only thing left was only to copy or imitate the masterpieces which were written by the previous great masters of the novel.

Jane Austen felt that she had a moral and social responsibility; therefore, she described the society as it was in order to make her readers realize the social injustice and denounce the evils of her time and the inadequate social system. She was the last and the finest flower of that century. Her fiction is as much steeped in irony, both in language and in situation.

Austen was profoundly moral. She thought that the first duty of everyone was to be sincere, unselfish, and disinterested. She succeeded admirably in expressing the gentler virtues of a civilized social order. She could accurately perceive and fastfully

portray a woman responses and conflicts within the circumscribed existence of a patriarchal society that exerted enormous social and economic pressure on her.

المستخلص:

بدأ ازدهار الرواية الانكليزية في عام ١٧٤٠م مع عظماء روائي القرن الثامن عشر- (ريچاردسن، فيلدنك، سترن، وسمولت). استعملوا هؤلاء الرواة الرواية لذكر القضايا الاجتماعية والسياسية وكذلك العضلات النفسية للإنسان المعاصر. وفي نهاية القرن الثامن عشر وبعد موتهم مرت الرواية الانكليزية بظرف مزر بسبب ركود المرحلة طوال عشرون عاما. كانت هناك أشكال روائية مكتوبة أما أن تكون نسخ أو تقليد لروائع الروايات المكتوبة من قبل أولئك الرواة العظام.

استشعرت الروائية جين أوستن المسؤولية الأخلاقية والاجتماعية فقد وصفت مجتمعا وكما هو كي يعرف قراؤها الظلم الاجتماعي وتكشف مساوئ وآفات عصرها والنظام الاجتماعي غير الملائم فكانت آخر وأفضل صفة لذلك العصر. انغمس أدبها بالسخرية والتهكم لغة وموقفا.

كانت جين أخلاقية بعمق مؤكدة أن من واجب الفرد أن يكون مخلصا كريما وهادئا. نجحت أوستن وعلى نحو رائع بالتعبير عن فضائل النظام الاجتماعي المتطور وأدركت وعلى نحو دقيق وراسخ استجابات وصراعات المرأة مع المجتمع الأبوي الذي مارس ضغوطات اجتماعية واقتصادية ونفسية هائلة بحق المرأة.

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