



PRUDENCE AND SENTIMENTS IN JANE AUSTEN'S SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Dr.Kakasaheb Dhondiba Dhaygude

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sant Ramdas Arts, Commerce & Science College, Ghansawangi, Dist. Jalna. (M.S.)

INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen is one of the well-known female literary personalities who popularised the oft considered common events in the middle and upper class society through her fictions. She is one of the prominent English writers in 18th century. Almost all her works revolve around the social and matrimonial issues which are quite dear to the people of her times. Her main focus is on the life and issues of the aristocratic class that is the landed gentry which is hypocrite as well as materialistic. Her fictional world is dominated by the matrimonial issues which are quite interesting for women as they believe good marriage is surety for better prospects. The nuptial knots, the women expect are can bring the better prospect for them, it will facilitate in enhancing their social and financial position. It is the materialistic attitude towards marriage which is the major concern of all the female characters of Jane Austen's novels. The reader while navigating in the world of the novelist comes close to the current trends of the 18th and 19th century. The Victorian ideas regarding women are thoroughly dealt by her. The Victorians consider the woman as pure, chaste, cultured and ethical. There is always a mild conflict between the sentimentalism and the common sense. Most of the Victorian's give preference to sense and generally avoids the sentiments. So the novelist also follows the current trend of her times by giving upper hand to sense. The novelist as well as the writers of other forms of writings also appreciates the reason, logic and mind. They give subsidiary place to the uncontrolled emotions and eccentricity. So the romantic spirit somewhat finds missing or given a marginal place in the work of the 18th century writers. The writers emphasise the themes and ideas which are close to the life of the people of their times. As every writer is the product of his or her age, they cannot totally disregard the happenings of his or her times. The major events, conflicts and happenings are presented through their characters. So Jane Austen is not an exception to it. She also follows the current trends of her times and allows the proper space in her fictional word to the times of 18th century England. She depicts characters, their emotions, thoughts and endeavours for sustenance. Her major concern is not the humble persons or lower class as keeps distance from these people. She depicts issues that are related to the life of people who are mostly from privileged class or the aristocratic landed gentry who have lot of time and financial resources. Their life is not poverty ridden life so their concerns are quite different from that of the life of the labourers and common people. While dealing with the upper strata of society her main focus is of its familial life. We do not see a faint politics and ecclesiastical angle in her narration. She restricts herself with the domestic life that is mostly found in the four walls of affluent and prosperous people whose petty

issues become more important. Her major protagonists are the women and girls who expect better prospect in married life. They do not deviate from the accepted social norms of their times. She rewards the central character which carries forward her ideology and those who are aberrations learn to follow the traditions and reshape themselves they will not be considered as social outcast. They always avoid extreme and succumb to the demands of moderation and self-control. She always tries her best to avoid ruthless sentimentalism in her work. The final victors are the characters that owe their allegation to logic and sense. Those who ignore the reason are mostly seen as sufferers. Jane Austen even ignores sentimentalism terror and violence she replaces with the domestic world of men and women who believe in merrymaking throughout their life.

Her well known work *Sense and sensibility* presents the world which is filled with some persons who are emotional where as others are die hard practical. The events of this work take place in this serene domestic life of the middle as well as that of the upper class that is landed gentry. Through the protagonist like Marianne the novelist alarms the readers about the possible problems that are going to take place because of undue insistence on sentiments and emotions. The novelist brings together the concerns that have major impact on human life, she gives preference to the complex human nature and that is exhibited in domestic issues. Through this work the novelist tells her readers that the present world is so complex where survival and sustenance has become a major issue, so one should be practical throughout his or her life. Too much sentimentalism or undue preference to emotions does not ensure a secure and successful life. So one must ignore the heart and always attentive towards the mind. The person who prefers the sense will ultimately succeed in life whereas the emotional being will invite trouble and difficulties. The everlasting harmonious relationship is the result of the preference to reason and mind. Jane Austen presents her philosophy through the two marriageable girls; one is emotional and another is practical. These two sisters are different from one another. Because of her sentimental nature Marianne faces problems.

While delineating the matrimonial issues the novelist sheds light on the greed and lust for money. It is presented through the Dashwood family who has to make their ends meet in limited sources. There are good persons like Henry from the Dashwood family who is a genuine person concerned about the welfare of the members of his family. The unending greed is presented by the novelist through the persons like John and his wife Fanny. Despite of his father's request to enhance the pecuniary support

to Mrs Dashwood and her three daughters, John who is totally under the influence of his wife ignores his father. Although he receives good fortune from his ancestors but his lust for affluence blinds him. The novelist through the portrayal of these kinds of persons presents the degenerated world where most of the people are judged according to their financial capacity and stature. There are persons like John and Fanny who do not have to worry about their future and they have enough financial resources, still their greed never allows them to look beyond materialism. His wife Fanny who is a selfish and opportunist lady succeeds in poisoning her husband's mind who is initially thinking about increasing the pecuniary support.

She tells him that these Dashwood sisters will receive handsome amount after their mother's death. It shows the utter wickedness and inhumanity on the part of the woman who being a woman ignores her counterpart. It shows that most of the women are victimised by the women themselves. Such kinds of women are unable to understand the extent of grief of support less women. She convinces her husband that a fixed annuity improves the life expectancy of an individual. It shows that the present world has become so perverse that it does not respect the human relations. Everything becomes marketable and bartered commodity which is easily bought and sold. The logic of reducing the annuity by citing her own experience regarding the annuity issue of her maid Fanny symbolises the inhuman world where emotions like love and compaction have no place. This world becomes so materialistic that the morals and ethics have become aliens in this world. Most of the characters are interested in the material things like the financial resources, outfits, movable and immovable property. Even the males are not different from the female who give almost importance to the financial background which they believe will help in improving their social and financial standing. Every marriage is seen through the pecuniary object. It does not mean that the persons who are prudent are only materialist even the sentimental people are also transform themselves in such a way that the reader will not differentiate between them. The materialistic infection is equally visible in rural as well as urban population. Jane Austen explicitly presents the degeneration which is wide spread everywhere.

Her works hesitate to celebrate the victory of individuals against the societal norms and restrictions. She depicts such characters who are mostly interested in achieving their respirations and while doing this they also follow the traditions and customs of society. So her women characters are opportunities and selfish but they are not rebel which are not found in many works of the prominent writers of her times. They respect as well as follow the traditions of the times and also move forward in realising their dreams. While deciding their future partners, the girls agree only when they are tested. There are some exceptions like Elizabeth who never accepts that the social security is the only and major criterion in the selection of her future partner. There are some girls who prefer financial security and comfort in deciding the matrimonial matters. The literary world of Jane Austen is such a varied world where some prefer money and financial security and there are others who believe that money does not provide a reason for the eternal bond but love and

mutual respect is must for the loving relations. There are some girls like Elinor who loves the man despite of his moderate financial background and the bleak future which is the result of his mother's displeasure. Such contradictory ideas are found in Jane Austen's novels where some girls prefer property and where some pay more attention to feelings and emotions. It is the genius of the novelist that plays crucial role in establishing harmonious relations between the sentimentality and prudence. She succeeds in making good equilibrium in sense as well as sensibility. The imprints of the time in which the writer exist are seen more or less in the works of these writers. Jane Austen follows the current trends like individualism in her works. as far as the concord between sense and sensibility is concerned the novelist moves a bit forward. She prefers prudence to emotions and feelings. It is through the day today human and domestic experiences the story of Jane Austen's fictions move forward. Although the domestic life found in her works is not without problems and difficulties but she presents the conflicts which have lower intensity. Her world is not a world of utter grief and misery where protagonist tries to topple the current unjust order. It is through their interaction with other persons, the novelist tries to present the inner as well as external state of her characters. These people interact as well as share their ideas and thoughts with their near and dear ones which provide an opportunity to the novelist to peep into their personality. She confines to the issues that are experienced by the middle as well the persons belong to the landed gentry of her times. She never claims that she writes for all the sections of society. Major concern of her personal endeavour is man woman relations which mostly culminate in their matrimonial knots.

CONCLUSION

In this way despite of the limited world of Jane Austen one can sense universality as far as her portrayal of human experience is concerned. Though her men and women are of her age i.e. 18th century England, these people are still found in our contemporary world. They are more or less visible among the people of all generations irrespective of their race region and nationality.

REFERENCES

1. Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000.
2. Bradbook, Frank. *Jane Austen and her Predecessors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
3. Clark, Robert. ed. *Sense And Sensibility and Pride And Prejudice: Jane Austen*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994.
4. Laski, Marghanita. *Jane Austen and Her World*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969.