

Jane Austen: A Creative Writer of the highest intellectual quality...

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ABSTRACT: Jane Austen was one of the greatest women novelists of the nineteenth century. She wrote six novels in all, and all her novels bear the stamp of her craft. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of W.L. Cross. "She is one of the sincerest examples in our literature of Art For Art's Sake". She wrote her novels with great care and constantly revised them. When we compare Jane Austen's work with that of Scott, we find Scott's writing with the hastiness of a man who had not the breathing time, while Jane Austen did her work with the dexterity of a skilled artist having plenty of time at her leisure. As a master of her craft she outshined all her contemporary novelists. Jane Austen is a realistic writer who has the highest intellectual quality with a great record of literary sensibility. Jane Austen limited her view to the world she knew. She drew all her material from her own experience. She never went outside her experience, with the result that all her scenes belong to South England where she had spent a considerable middle class, neither very high nor very low, and they have no great adventures. A picnic, a dance or at the most an elopement are the outstanding event. It is said about her novel that two men are never left alone, there are always ladies present. The stories are always told from a woman's point of view. Her own experiences of everyday life reconstruct the plot of her creations which are rooted in the web of English sensibility to evoke images of life which trend the fictional space of the novel. Jane Austen registers all the sounds of her creative imagination to explore a real world. The present paper is an honest attempt to attract the attention of the readers towards the academic excellence of Jane Austen who is a realistic writer and who is having the highest intellectual quality with a great record of literary sensibility.

Key Words: women novelist, highest intellectual quality, literary sensibility, fictional space

Introduction:

Jane Austen might be one of the most well-known names in British literature today, but during her lifetime, no one would have guessed that this proper daughter of an English clergyman could have possessed such ironic humor, keen insight, and biting wit regarding the social lives of those in her pre-Victorian era. No one would have guessed it, and indeed very few besides her family and close friends even knew. During the early 1800s, when Jane Austen was composing and publishing her works, fictional novels were frowned upon by some segments of society, and novels written by women were especially shunned. In fact, many of Austen's works went to print with no name on the title page to avoid linking her to the negative stigma of female authorship. Although anonymity and lack of recognition and fame characterized her life, Jane Austen's novels have since become celebrated, enjoyed, and studied for their humorous and pointed observations of societal life, lively character interaction, and detailed style.

Objectives:

Following are the objectives of the present research:

- To study various literary facets of Jane Austen's personality as a significant novelist and a creative writer of high quality.
- To study the upper-middle class complexity in the existence of modern culture.
- To analyze the cultural and familial traditions in Western perspectives.
- To estimate Jane Austen as a novelist of high repute.
- To study her works went to print with no name on the title page to avoid linking her to the negative stigma of female authorship.

Austen's use of symbols:

Austen's use of symbols throughout her books serves to empower her female protagonists and condemn the social standards of dress, occupation, and status. In the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth arrives at the Bindley's in a dirty petticoat in order to tend to her sister. The snobbish Miss Bingley makes a tremendous fuss out of this, commenting how Mr. Darcy wouldn't want to see his sister "make such an exhibition" (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 36). This shows the importance of the petticoat— or simply, clothing — as a symbol for social standards. In On Pettiness and Petticoats: The Significance of the Petticoat

in *Pride and Prejudice*, Efrat Margalit states that "Jane Austen's readers would have attributed the dirty petticoat to [...] sexual indecency". "*Pride and Prejudice*" is remarkably free of explicit symbolism, which perhaps has something to do with the novel's reliance on dialogue over description. Nevertheless, Pemberley, Darcy's estate, sits at the center of the novel, literally and figuratively, as a geographic symbol of the man who owns it. Elizabeth visits it at a time when her feelings toward Darcy are beginning to warm; she is enchanted by its beauty and charm, and by the picturesque countryside, just as she will be charmed, increasingly, by the gifts of its owner. Austen makes the connection explicit when she describes the stream that flows beside the mansion. "In front," she writes, "a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance." Darcy possesses a "natural importance" that is "swelled" by his arrogance, but which coexists with a genuine honesty and lack of "artificial appearance." Like the stream, he is neither "formal, nor falsely adorned." Pemberley even offers a symbol-within-a-symbol for their budding romance: when Elizabeth encounters Darcy on the estate, she is crossing a small bridge, suggesting the broad gulf of misunderstanding and class prejudice that lies between them—and the bridge that their love will build across it.

Jane Austen was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life. Her novels do not represent the stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. In her novels we don't have the atmosphere which Emily Bronte created in '*Wuthering Heights*'. She chose a limited background and her novels would be recognized as "domestic" or "*The Tea Table*" novels. There is hardly any feeling for external nature in her stories and there is little passion in the pictures of her life. While symbols represent outside forces for her protagonists, Austen's prolific use of dialogue and free indirect discourse serves as their inner power.

She was supreme realist among the novelists of her age. Her stories are all drawn from the life she knew. All her stories turn on personal relationships between friends, between parents and children, between men and women in love. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his dairy; "That Young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with. The big borrow I can do myself but the exquisite touch which renders common place things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me.

Austen's great skill:

Jane Austen's great skill lies in plot construction. Her novels have an exactness of structure and a symmetry of form. Her plots are not simple, but compound. As the story of the plot moves on, we find that incident is more or less eliminated from them. The place of section is taken up by conversation. Her stories are meticulously integrated, not a character, not an episode but makes its necessary contribution to the development of the plot. *Pride and Prejudice* has not only the humor of Shakespearean Comedy, but also its technique. The characters of Jane Austen are minutely portrayed and accurately described. Her characters are living beings. They are not types but individuals. Her male characters have a certain softness of temper, but her female characters are almost perfect. She shows her characters not in moments of crisis but in the trivial incidents of everyday life.

She does not idealise her characters. She presents them with their voice and virtues: she is satirist as well as moralist. In her novels we come across many clergymen such as Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice* and Thorpe in Northanger Abbey. She developed the dramatic method both in the presentation of her plots and characters. Instead of describing or analyzing her characters she makes them reveal themselves in their action and speeches. Her characters present themselves through the medium of dialogue.

Her attitude towards life, as presented in her novels, is of the humorist. As her imagination starts of functioning, a smile begins to spread itself across her features. Folly is the chief source of laughter in the novels of Jane Austen and she creates comic characters who produce nothing but laughter. Her comic characters are Mrs. Bennet, Sir Walter Eliot, Mrs. Norris Collins and Mr. Woodhouse. She laughs at each one of them because of their foolish actions.

Satire, Humor and Comic in the Work of Jane Austen:

One of Jane Austen most valuable characteristic as a writer but also as a human being which couldn't be ignored washer great sense of humor, and her sense for comic, satire and burlesque. She had delicate sense for irony, and ready wit. It appeared not only in her novels but also in her correspondence, especially between her and her sister. We could also place Jane Austen to the line of great humorist writer . Her humor is usually gentle and not cruel . She didn't sneer or laugh at human faults with any bad or cruel intentions. She was not afraid to be whimsical but she pointed out with her with the ridiculous elements of human nature by her clever and tender sense of humor. "Free from illusion about

humanity, she did not condemn or despise it with cynical sneer, nor on the other hand make use of sentiment to cloak what she saw was to be vile. Her love of what is lovable is as clearly expressed as her contempt for what is despicable.

Her main works:

Her main works are '*Sense and Sensibility*', '*Pride; and Prejudice*', '*Mansfield park*', '*Emma*', '*Northanger Abbey*' and '*Persuasion*'. All her novels are modelled on one particular pattern, but in '*Mansfield Park*', '*Emma*' and '*Persuasion*' she grew graver than her previous attempts. It is difficult to decide which is the best of her novels, because they are all good and each one has its devoted admirers. According to Macaulay '*Mansfield Park*' is her greatest achievement while others prefer '*Emma*' or '*Pride and Prejudice*', and today most look upon '*Persuasion*' as her most exquisite finished work.

Summing Up:

To sum up, we can say that Jane Austen is undoubtedly the greatest woman novelist as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist. Her stories may not be exciting and thrilling, but the picture of the life that she presents have all the charm of vivid narration. Her characters do not appear as shadows, but men of flesh and blood leading a normal life of zest and enthusiasm. She presents remarkable psychological studies of men and women. Her novels have a distinct normal purpose which she seeks to enforce through mild irony or gentle satire. The research scholar has tried to explain the main aspects and abilities of Jane Austen's creative writing which has placed her in a different category of women novelist of high repute. In the present paper; the research scholar has tried prove that Jane Austen is a great novelist and she is having the highest intellectual quality with a great record of literary sensibility.

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