

Tribhuvan University

Social Realism in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Department of
English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

Radha Khanal

Roll. No. 400391/2068

T. U. Regd. No. 9-2-307-233-2007

April 2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled,
“Social Realism in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*”
is my own original work carried out as a Master’s student at the Department of
English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance
from others in the thesis design and conception or in presentation
style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly
cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the
award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational
institution, except where due acknowledgement
is made in the thesis.

Radha Khanal

8 April, 2017

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Social Realism in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*”
submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Radha
Khanal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee:

.....

Yadab Adhakari

Supervisor

.....

External Examiner

.....

Pradip Sharma

Head

Department of English

Date: 10 April, 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere and deep sense of gratitude to my respected research supervisor Yadab Adhikari, Lecturer at the Department of English, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, for his scholarly guidance and encouragement by providing valuable time from the very beginning to the end, which helped me to give the final shape of this thesis. I am also indebted to Pradip Sharma, Head, Department of English for the valuable directions in conducting the research. I also owe the highest level of thankfulness to my parents who are the constant source of inspiration for me to go ahead in the completion of any creative work. My sincere thanks also go to my all family members who did needful help to go on with my study.

I also think this moment to thank my all other friends and colleagues who extended their moral and academic support to my pursuit.

April 2017

Radha Khanal

Abstract

This research looks into Austen's *Northanger Abbey* from the perspective of Social Realism. Realities regarding political as well as social history of the eighteenth century AD England appear implicitly and tacitly in the novel. The victory of England in the Napoleonic war opens a new platform in which many youths got various opportunities to boost their economic foundation. Henry Tilney, who was once rejected by Catherine, gets the promotion to captainship and twenty five thousand pounds as a prize from the government for his valorous deed of besieging singlehandedly the port of French navy.

After his positions, both social and economic, increase, Catherine is tempted to renew and reexamine her feelings for Henry Tilney. Status and prosperity appear to be the ruling force of society. This realistic concern is implied by the choices and rejection of various characters. The rise of the middle class and the fall of gentry were the most important social phenomena of the eighteenth century English society. The gradual pauperization of Captain Tilney and George Tilney is an indicator of how the gentry gradually yielded to the emerging middle class. The assertiveness of Catherine and Isabella is a harbinger of how girls ask for freedom in the spheres where their personal choices matter a lot.

Contents

Declaration	ii
Letter of Approval	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter I: Jane Austen and Social Realism	1- 11
Chapter II: Theory of Social Realism	12-26
Chapter III: Social Realism in Jane Austen's <i>Northanger Abbey</i>	27-42
Chapter IV: Austen's Concern with the Humanity	43-45
Works Cited	

Chapter: I

Jane Austen and Social Realism

This thesis explores social realism in the novel, *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen. Most of the male characters in Austen's *Northanger Abbey* are egoistic, oppressive and calculative. Captain Tilney goes to the extent of invite James's fiancée, Isabella though he has no serious in her. Without any reason, Tilney fall victims to the expectation of traditional society. Captain Tilney takes mischievous interest in tempting other men's fiancée. He ruins James's engagement by abetting his fiancée to break her engagement with James. After she formally declares the dissolution of her engagement with James, Captain Tilney kicks Isabella, leaving her in a dreadful lurch. The pathos, extreme sufferings and miserable lives of characters are dramatized in Austen's novel.

In *Northanger Abbey*, Austen further cautions readers about the dangers of applying fiction to real life. Through the experiences of her protagonist Catherine Morland, Austen shows that fiction cannot be a substitute for actual experience. She also demonstrates that the incidents one reads about in novels should not be applied to life. At many points during the novel, Catherine's misappropriates novels to real situations. For example, when Catherine is walking along the river with Henry and Eleanor Tilney to Bath Beechan Hill, she says "I never look at it...without thinking of the south of France." (249) When Henry is surprised at her statement and asks her "You have been abroad then?" Catherine responds with "Oh! No, I only mean what I have read about. It always puts me in mind of the country that Emily and her father travelled through, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." (249) In revealing that she views what she has read in fiction as analogous to what she actually experiences in her life,

Catherine demonstrates extreme naivety as a character. Because novels are the source of her ignorance, Austen therefore depicts the genre as a harmful force.

In the absence of any opportunity to act out a play, for example, she attempts to recreate these experiences in her own life, by for example resisting seeing the river against Beechan Cliff for what it is really is. Catherine's desire to live out an adventure in her own life as demonstrated through such experiences both compromises her intelligence and rakes her emotions. For example, the prospect of seeing a real Gothic castle causes Catherine to abandon her engagement with the Tilneys and embark on the improper scheme of riding in open carriages with her brother, Isabella and John Thorpe.

In addition, in *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine has many characteristics of a typical heroine, and the Thorpes are very similar to traditional villains. However, the main flaw Austen alludes to the theater is that they are overly sensational mediums. Due to the very nature of these genres, they do not have the fully developed, authentic characters of realistic fiction. What makes these lifelike characters so compelling is that by reading about them, sharing their struggles and watching them mature, readers can develop an intimate relationship with them. Thus, such characters render the realistic novel a wholly absorbing and captivating form of literature and have helped made the novel become as incredibly popular and successful as it has been for the past few centuries.

Social realism, an international art movement, encompasses the work of painters, printmakers, photographers and filmmakers who draw attention to the everyday conditions of the working class and the poor. Social realists are critical of the social structures which maintain these conditions. While the movement's

characteristics vary from nation to nation, it almost always utilizes a form of descriptive or critical realism.

The Social Realist political movement and artistic explorations flourished primarily during the 1920s and 1930s, a time of global economic depression, heightened racial conflict, the rise of fascist regimes internationally and great optimism after both the Mexican and Russian revolutions. Social Realists created figurative and realistic images of the masses, a term that encompassed the lower and working classes, labor unionists and the politically disenfranchised. American artists became dissatisfied with the French avant-garde and their own isolation from greater society, which led them to search for a new vocabulary and a new social importance, they found their purpose in the belief that art was a weapon that could fight the capitalist exploitation of workers and stem the advance of international fascism.

Social Realism envisioned themselves to be workers and laborers, similar to those who toiled in the fields and factories. Often clad in overalls to symbolize unity with the working classes, the artists believed they were critical members of the whole of society, rather than elites living on the margins and working for the upper crust. While there was a variety of styles and subjects within Social Realism, the artists were united in their attack on the status quo and social power structure. Despite their stylistic variance, the artists were realists who focused on the human figure and human condition. Social Realists believed that the political content of their work made it modern.

Social Realism was popular in Russian art and literature. In the 20th century it became the main type of literature in the Soviet Union. It was also used by David Siqueiros to depict daily struggles of the people in his country, Mexico. Social realism is a style of art, fiction, movies and plays. It describes the daily life of workers and

poor people. Social realist artists try to show people and their lives in a realistic way. This means that they often show things which are not beautiful or attractive. They may show people who are elderly, sick, sad and insane or have a disability.

This does not mean that a Realist work of art or literature is ugly. It can be made beautiful by the way that the artist or writer creates it. Social realism art does not belong to one period of history, but has been the style of some artists in different centuries and different countries. Caravaggio, who was a late Renaissance artist, painted "Realist" pictures. Several Spanish painters were "Realists": Velazquez, Esteban Murillo and Francisco de Goya. There were many realist painters in the 19th century, including Gustave Courbet in France and Luke Fildes in England.

Because of the desperate economic and social conditions of the 1930s, artists developed a renewed interest in displaying the plights of laborers and disenfranchised individuals the Ashcan school had dealt with these themes earlier, at the turn of the 20th century. Social realism aimed is social change and the mural seemed uniquely able to argue for this as a very public art form. For many artists, mural painting was also a reaction against the decadence of art displayed in galleries and private homes, which seemed gratuitous in an era of extreme poverty. A number of muralists dealt with the social problems and suffering of the Depression era, but the majority of works embodied a naive form of social realism, inspiring Americans to reflect on their heritage of revolution, hard work and religion in an attempt to bring back prosperity. A smaller group of muralists, including Aaron Douglas, worked to highlight social problems and attack social injustices within the very fabric of American society.

Although social realism is defined primarily by its message and political leanings rather than its style. It is develop as a reaction against idealism and the exaggeration ego encourage by romanticism.

General Tilney, the father of Captain Tilney is the most callous and intimidating man. There is a rumor that General Tilney had killed his wife due to reasons that are not explicitly mentioned in the novel. But it is hinted that the General Tilney is incredibly murderous. He is capable of any kind of gruesome and callous action. That is why he has prevented everyone to enter the room in Tilney house where his wife is supposed to have died. General Tilney is overtly calculative. He does not bother to understand the trials of his sons hearts. General Tilney's another son Henry Tilney is sincerely in love with Catherine, a girl from humble socio-economic background.

The pathos, extreme sufferings and miserable lives of characters are dramatized in Austen's novel. The misery and pathos of the underclass workers enter Austen's novel. Their psychic responses are also recorded in a lifelike manner by Tilney. The miserable living conditions of workers and increasing suffering of characters develop in readers the need to renew England. At the same time this research tries to find out how the inability to resist hurdles and put General Tilney in the state of inner mental conflict. The subsequent effects of all these factors would be no less than the painful effects. The culture of not paying heed to the emotions and sentiments of children is held largely responsible for the harsh and intimidating activities of the General Tilney. Senior Tilney's endeavor to block his son's Marriage with Catherine belittles him irreparably. His ego is finally humbled to dust. Egocentric and arrogant attitude of both captain Tilney and General Tilney are the pivotal point of this research.

The inhumanity embodied in General Tilney and his son Captain Tilney is called into question. General Tilney is alleged to have murdered his wife for reasons which are not mentioned in the book. He keeps sinister atmosphere in the house he

lives in. He aggressively prevents his son, Henry, from marrying the girl of his choice. He counts girls in terms of their economic prospect. Captain Tilney acts treacherously in his relation with Isabella. The masculinity of both General and Captain is oppressive, callous and intimidating to female beings.

The major thrust of this research is to examine what is the position of characters in this novel. It is so because in this novel the researcher will find that the characters of this novel are treated as not being human. This idea is exclusively checked and then critically probed in this research. The significance of this research is to find out the quest for identity and position of character in Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey*. This research is strictly confined in how women are presented in the novel. It only related with the notion of social realism and inhumanity. It does not go beyond this issue.

Literature Review

Peter Smith says that *Northanger Abbey* is a novel which exhibits the manners and customs of people of the eighteenth century England. The question of Marriage exists at the heart of the novel. He illustrates:

Like all of Jane Austen's novels, *Northanger Abbey* is a novel of courtship and social manners. The majority of the book focuses on the question of Marriage who will marry whom and for what reasons will they marry love, practicality, or necessity? At the center of the narration is the title character, Catherine, who lives with her neighbor. Noted for her beauty and cleverness, Catherine is somewhat wasted in the small village of Fullerton but takes a great deal of pride in her prudential and penetrating skills. (43)

Unique among other women her age, Catherine has no particular need to Marry. She is not in the unique situation of not needing a husband to supply her fortune. The friendship between her and Henry Tilney does little good for either of them. Isabella indulges the worst qualities of her friends. She is fond of pulling others leg. She orients Catherine in this notorious line of social manner. Catherine in turn fills Henry Tilney with grand pretensions that do not suit her low situation in society.

Lucy Fisher says that *Northanger Abbey* is brimful of several issues which are inextricably joined together. Fisher claims that Marriage is treated as the fundamental issue of the then society. That is why it is treated seriously by Jane Austen in the novel. He points out:

As in all of Austen's novels, courtship and Marriage play major roles in *Northanger Abbey*. The entire novel is structured around various courtships and romantic connections, from Mr. Northrop and Tilney to John and James. All of the conflicts in the novel also revolve around this topic, particularly in terms of characters striving to find appropriate matches. In this way, Austen presents Marriage as a fundamental aspect of society during the time period. (24)

As claimed by Fisher, Marriage promotes families and serves romantic purposes. It also upholds the class structure of the community by ensuring that individuals Marry appropriately. At the same time, Austen also uses Marriage to highlight the social limitations faced by Catherine and other characters. In their small village, Marriage and courtship are the sole catalysts of excitement or conflict.

Elizabeth Brown Guillory detects the issue of the economic. Isabella typifies this sort of predicament. There is difference between Catherine and Isabella in terms

of their intelligence, emotion, reasoning and other skills. But the low economic status of weakened her tremendously. He argues:

As a heroine, Catherine possesses beauty, wealth, intelligence. But she comes from the poor class of clergy. However, Austen makes it clear that Catherine is unique in her position. Most of the women in the novel lack Catherine's rational cast of mind. She is above the temptations of money and other pragmatic concern. Other girls like Isabella are the victims of materialistic concern. General Tilney is presented as an example of this ingrained oppression of women. (21)

Although Catherine possesses all of the same personal qualities as Isabella, she lacks the property that could give her financial and social security. The only options available for her are Marriage or becoming a caretaker of home. Most of the other female characters in the novel are faced with a similar choice. Mr. James can either marry or continue to work at John Northrop's enterprise. Although Catherine is luckier than most, she has limited options for her future. She can either marry or act independently. The defeat of General Tilney is important.

Mobley Leefolt, the prominent critic of Jane Austen, says that characters are trapped in the confusions and uncertainty due to their inability to misunderstanding. Leefolt says that pride and arrogance resulting from the different social position of women actually creates troubles and distance amidst them. He argues:

Many of the major conflicts in the novel are a direct result of miscommunication between characters. One primary example is James's misguided courtship of Isabella during which James assumes that Isabella is really in love with him. This misconception is perpetuated when Isabella presents Catherine with a riddle. Because

there is no real communication between the three characters, the revelation of Henry's true feelings is much more problematic. Similar problems arise because of miscommunication between John and Catherine. (17)

While Isabella initially views John as her future husband, James is secretly engaged to Isabella. Even General Tilney engages in miscommunication by failing to reveal his dismissive and disdainful attitude. As such, Catherine assumes that Isabella and James are in love with each other. In each of these cases, the required formality of social interactions ends up causing nothing but confusion and hurt feelings.

Claire Tomalin is one of the leading critics of Jane Austen. She examines the peculiar attribute of the novels of Jane Austen. Tomalin is of the opinion that Austen's romances were somewhat different from other romances of her contemporaries. He points out:

Northanger Abbey, by Jane Austen, is a novel about youthful hubris and the perils of misconstrued romance. In her other novels, Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in Georgian-Regency England. She also creates a lively comedy of manners among her characters. The protagonist Catherine is also rather spoiled, headstrong and self-satisfied. (13)

As claimed by Tomalin, pride on the part of the jilted lover is the exclusive factor that keeps at bay the possibility of reunion or patch between the departed lovers. This sort of core message is reflected in the novel, *Northanger Abbey*. Annie greatly overestimates her own abilities to penetrate romantic overtures of men. That is why her suffering is in store for a decade of her life. Her imagination and perceptions often lead her astray.

Le Faye Deidre brings into light how *Northanger Abbey* differs from other works of Jane Austen. She says that *Northanger Abbey* is more pungent. The following observation of Deidre illustrates:

In many respects, *Northanger Abbey* marks a break with Austen's previous works. It differs in the more biting even irritable satire directed at some of the novel's characters and in the regretful, resigned outlook of its otherwise admirable heroine Catherine. It also differs in terms of its narrative strategy which is reflected in the first part of the story. Against this is set the energy and appeal of the Royal Navy. (31)

Deidre points out the basis on which *Northanger Abbey* differs from other novels of Austen. In terms of narrative strategy and satirical orientation. *Northanger Abbey* differs flatly for other novels of Austen. There seems to be lots of similarities between *Northanger Abbey* and other novels of Austen. But Austen's attack on the very superciliousness and gullibility of the female protagonist are innovatively fresh.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined the novel, *The Northanger Abbey*, from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of the social realism or none of them concentrated upon inhumanity. The issue of Social Realism is a new and distinct topic which is not hinted by any critic and reviewers. By using the perspective of the theory of the awareness of injustice, the researcher makes the thorough analysis of the Austin's *The Northanger Abbey*. The researcher makes use of Emmanuel Levinas theory of ethics and the notion of self in relation to the other.

This thesis is divided four chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In

the second chapter the researcher uses theory applying the tool of ethics and the notion of self in relation to the other. In the third chapter analysis thorough the text. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

Chapter II:

Theory of Social Realism

The presence of persons in the full force of their irreplaceable identity is automatically in the full force of their inevitable responsibility. One must refuse to be caught up in the tangle of abstractions. The presence of persons, proximity between persons is a milestone in the direction towards redemption. This living from is a matter of consumption. It is a matter of taking what is other and making it become a part of an individual. Emmanuel Levinas writes nourishment, as a means of invigoration, is the transmutation of the other into the same, which is the essence of enjoyment; an energy that is other, recognized as other, recognized as sustaining the very act that is directed upon it becomes. The self is subjected to the other who comes from on high to intrude upon my solitude and interrupt my egoist enjoyment.

The self feels the exterior in the guise of the other pass through its world. It is already obligated to respond to the transcendent other who holds the self-hostage. In turn, this means that the latent birth of the subject occurs in obligation where no commitment was made. The meaning of my being a self is found in opposition to the other, as an essential ability to respond to the other. This standing in the place of the other provides Levinas with one of his most powerful concepts, substitution.

Substitution arises directly from the self as held hostage by the other. It is the means by which my being responds to the other before I know that it does. Indeed, substitution is a sign of how other-directed the human being actually is. If Levinas is correct here, the meaning of being a social subject is primarily to be for the other person. Again, substitution is indicative of a sacrifice of self. It cannot be merely the idea of being in the place of the other person. One is held to bear the burden of others. The substitution is a passive effect. While it is true that Levinas is vague on the

essence of substitution, the suggestion seems to be that in being persecuted by another person.

Consideration for the other means being-considerate-for-the-other.

Substitution then is recognizing me in the place of the other, not with the force of a conceptual recognition. Substitution is the conversion of my being as subjection by the other into subjection for the other. There is no common measure between the idea of the infinite and the infinite of which it is the idea. The thought of the infinite does not take possession of the infinite of which it is the idea. The infinite is close to the idea of transcendence.

Ethics in the postmodern context has taken a new turn. It has already rejected the classical characteristics. Levinas goes on to argue that each of us has a desire for subjectivity. Subjectivity can only be confirmed by the separation of the 'I' from the not I. the desire for subjectivity can only be fulfilled when the 'I' maintains the separation between it and the other. It can do so by maintaining the radical alterative of the other, maintaining the other's otherness. The trouble is that the 'I' exists in the world as a being and has the tendency to totalize others, absorbing them into its being, its essence. He points out:

But this instantaneous transcendence through space does not manage to escape solitude. The light that permits encountering something other than the self makes it encountered as if this thing came from the ego. The light, brightness, is intelligibility itself; making everything come from me, it reduces every experience to an element of reminiscence. Reason is alone. And in this sense knowledge never encounters anything truly other in the world. This is the profound truth of idealism. (45)

The enjoyment in which I am absolutely for myself assuredly does not render the concrete man. This breaking away from egoist and solitary enjoyment is what makes my commerce with the other ethical.

Levinas says that self has to be ethical to the other. It is this responsibility that confirms the subjectivity of the self. The following extract throws light on Levinas's view regarding self's ethical responsibility to the other. He argues:

It is a matter of specifying what this relationship with the other can be. Some- one has objected to me that in my relationship with the other. It is not only the Other's future that I encounter, that the other as existent already has a past for me and, consequently, does not have a privilege over the future. This objection will allow me to approach the main part of my exposition here. (53)

Self would be responsible to the other by exposing itself to outrage, wounding. It would be responsible to the other by taking on the burden of others as a hostage who substitutes himself for the others. Self would be accountable and sensible by offering others even the bread out of one's own mouth.

Levinas does not want to propose laws or moral rules. It is a matter of an ethics of ethics. An ethics of ethics means the exploration of conditions of possibility of any interest in good actions or lives. In light of that, it can be said that Levinas is not writing an ethics at all. Instead, he is exploring the meaning of inter-subjectivity and lived immediacy in light of three themes transcendence, existence, and the human other. These three themes structure the present entry. At the core of Levinas's mature thought are descriptions of the encounter with another person. That encounter evinces a particular feature. Levinas argues:

It is only by showing in what way Eros differs from possession and

power that I can acknowledge a communication in egos. It is neither a struggle, nor a fusion, nor knowledge. One must recognize its exceptional place among relationships. It is a relationship with alterative, with mystery - that is to say, with the future, with what (in a world where there is everything) is never there, with what cannot be there when everything is there - not with a being that is not there, but with the very dimension of alterative.(56)

Ethics, then, deconstructs the being of the 'I' and reveals to it its subjectivity.

Fortunately, in my day to day commerce with my fellow beings, which is typically conducted in language, I already realize that they possess an alternative that cannot be absorbed into the totality of my being. The relationship of language implies transcendence, radical separatism, the revelation of the other to me. In day to day commerce, the other possesses a radical alterative, an absolute otherness that can confirm my subjectivity. All that self has to do is to make this commerce ethical.

When self and the other exist in a nonreciprocal relation, the totality can be uplifting. Levinas asserts that to contain more than one's capacity does not mean to embrace or to encompass the totality of being in thought or, at least, to be able to account for it after the fact by the inward play of constitutive thought. To contain more than one's capacity is to invite one's own doom. Philosophers have sought to express with the concept of act. This descent into the real would maintain only as a play of lights.

The act of thought would precede the thought. In this way, thinking or becoming conscious of an act would be uplifting only in one condition. The notion of act involves violence essentially. Self should stand in nonreciprocal state of fulfilling its responsibility to the other. Only then, the transcendence of thought remains closed

in itself despite all its adventures. The transcendence achieved this way diversifies the static position of human beings.

Sensibility is hailed by Levinas as the way to penetrate the veil of confusions and prejudices. Sensation is at the basis of sensible experience and intuition. It is not reducible to the clarity or the idea derived out of it. It would involve an opaque element resistant to the luminousness of the intelligible. He points out:

Finally, we may turn to a problem of more general concern, not restricted therefore to Buber's particular philosophy. It is one which confronts any epistemology which bases truth on a non-theoretical activity or on existence. And it places in question the existence of epistemology itself for it concerns 'the truth about the truth', i.e. it asks about the nature of the knowledge epistemology itself claims to have when it communicates the truth. It is here that the theoretical nature of philosophy becomes evident. (79)

The immediacy of the sensibility is the for-the-other of one's own materiality. The immediacy of the sensibility is the immediacy or the proximity of the other. The proximity of the other is the immediate opening up for the other of the immediacy of enjoyment, the immediacy of taste, materialization of matter, altered by the immediacy of contact. In the proximity of contact arises every committed freedom. It is termed finite by contrast with the freedom of choice of which consciousness is the essential modality. Yet the effort is made to reduce all commitment to freedom. Astonished to find it implicated in the world of objects. The theme of its free contemplation searches in its memory for the forgotten moment "in which unbeknownst to itself it allied itself with objects or consented to apperceive itself in union with them. Such a moment, when awakened by memory, would become, after

the event, the instant of an alliance made in full freedom.” (76) This reduction refuses the irreducible anarchy of responsibility for another. He illustrates:

Consciousness of consciousness, indirect, implicit and aimless, cannot function without any initiative that might refer back to an ego; passive like time passing and ageing me without my intervening. A 'non-intentional' consciousness to be distinguished from philosophical reflection, or the internal perception to which, indeed, non-intentional consciousness might easily offer itself as an internal object and for which it might substitute itself by making explicit the implicit messages it bears.(85)

The victim is the other whose accusing presence people can no longer shake off when it comes to our obligation to do something for that person. These conscious decisions or acts are a posteriori. They come after the experience in which an accusing presence obligates people. Corporeal lives of its life, in no way deny reason. Not everything is rational. Levinas is right—at least from the point of view of an Ethics of Liberation which is liberation of victims and not of the satisfied.

Responsibility for the victim is prior to dialogue. It is a persecuting obsession in which an identity individuates itself as unique without recourse to any system of references. There lies the impossibility of evading the assignment from the other—without experiencing blame. The representation of self-grasps the assignment. The absolution of the one who feels obligated and responds is neither an evasion nor an abstraction. Levinas makes the following remarks with regard to the puzzling nature of responsibility. He illustrates:

Responsibility for the other, for the naked face of the first individual to come along is mostly important. A responsibility that goes beyond

what I may or may not have done to the other or whatever acts I may or may not have committed, or more exactly, as if I had to answer for the other's death even before being is still elusive. A guiltless responsibility, it is as if the other established a relationship or a relationship was established who's whole. (89)

Subjectivity is vulnerable, exposed to affection. It is a sensibility more passive than any passivity. It is extreme patience. The hostage is exposed, exposed to expressing, to saying, and to giving. It is by virtue of its eidos possible only in sacrifice that is the approach of him for whom one is responsible. Communication with the other can be transcendent only as a dangerous life, a fine risk to be run.

The responsibility for another is an unlimited responsibility which the strict book-keeping of the free and non-free does not measure. It requires subjectivity as an irreplaceable hostage. This subjectivity denudes the ego in a passivity of persecution, repression and expulsion outside of essence. Levinas rejoins the following remarks.

He points out:

The one has not issued from its own initiative, as it claims in the plays and figures of consciousness on the way to the unity of an Idea. In that idea, coinciding with itself, free inasmuch as it is a totality which leaves nothing outside, and thus, fully reasonable, the oneself posits itself as an always convertible term in a relation, self-consciousness.

But the one is hypostasized in another way. (101)

Finite freedom is not simply an infinite freedom operating in a limited field.

Responsibility in fact is not a simple attribute of subjectivity. Subjectivity is not for itself. The proximity of the other is presented as the fact that the other is not simply close to self in space. It is a structure that resembles the intentional relation which in

knowledge attaches people to the object. Proximity does not revert to this intentionality. In particular, it does not revert to the fact that the other is known to the obtainer of experience. The tie with the other is knotted only as responsibility. The incarnation of human subjectivity guarantees its spirituality. These are extreme formulas which must not be detached from their context. In the concrete, many other considerations intervene and require justice even for me.

The human experience of having and being one's body cannot be governed by universal imperatives. The dignity of human corporeality already surpasses the robotics of human physiology. It is the body that tames the consciousness from its tendency to alienate itself. Through the body's direct access to matter, consciousness becomes directed to its real transcendental direction. Thus, a mutual respect between materiality and transcendence within the human subject is realized. Levinas elaborates the notion of ethics which is the ethics of ethics. Levinas argues:

The self as a creature is conceived in a passivity more passive still than the passivity of matter, that is, prior to the virtual coinciding of a term with itself. The one has to be conceived outside of all substantial coinciding of self with self. Contrary to Western thought which unites subjectivity and substantiality, here coinciding is not the norm that already commands all non-coinciding, in the quest it provokes. (109)

Subjective sensibility sanctifies human sentiency which is an attribute that makes the human being at par with the brutes. The other manifests itself by the absolute resistance of its defenseless eyes. The other person manifests himself by the absolute resistance of his defenseless eyes. The infinite in the face brings into question individual freedom. The nakedness of the face is destituteness. To recognize the other is to recognize a hunger.

According to Foucault, power is not always repressive; it bears the qualities of productivity and creative potential. It is not the ruthless domination of the weak by strong. For him, power does not move in one direction instead it circulates to all directions to and from all social levels all time. Power is never ending process and in the way of formation. In this regard, new historicist has great affinity with Foucault as he states:

Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere. Power comes from below, there are no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relation serves as a general matrix- no such duality extending from the top down. Where there is power, there is resistance. This resistance is never in position of exteriority in relation to power. One is always inside power. (95)

From this definition of power and its scopes, it is obvious that power does not get percolated hierarchically. It subverts the traditional concept of power as only tool for subjection and domination since it turns the negative concept of power upside down. This means to say that power is all pervasive and deserves equal weight.

Regarding how patriarchal power shapes the notion of gender, Foucault takes man and woman simply as the effects of prevailing social practices, codes and disciplines. Since no normative or natural code exist to guide man and his collective activities, human beings find themselves in deadlock if they are solely driven by Foucauldian thought. If sovereign power or sovereign state exists, only then the question of overthrowing it with suitable alternative comes. If power exists in several fragmented forms pervasively, how can the power of resistance move? Michel Walzer

delivers the following views regarding how thought of Foucault weakens the power of revolution. He illustrates:

Foucault is not a good revolutionary because he doesn't believe in the sovereign state or the ruling class, and therefore he doesn't believe in the take-over of the state or the replacement of the class. It is precisely the idea of society as a system, a set of institutions that must give way to something. When Foucault is an anarchist, he is a moral as well as a political anarchist. For him morality and politics go together. To abolish power systems is to abolish both moral and scientific categories. (61)

If man and woman is the product of social relations, how do they happen to get new insight and vision to go against establishment and status quo? How can the same system give birth to a new consciousness which is subversive? This question deserves deeper contemplation. Foucault has not given explanation about how a new vision and idea arise against that very system out of which these new vision and idea arise. Michael Walzer thinks that Foucault's thought does not inculcate belief in the possibility of revolution. Those who want to launch revolution should have firm footing in normative principles. But Foucault has already sabotaged normative values. That is why Walzer says that Foucault's thought does not seem to be conducive to revolution.

Productive power at the back of the various discursive representation of manifold sexuality is unknowingly and steadily harmful. It blocks the resistance from below. In the formation of manifold sexuality, the interest, emotions and basic expectation of the excluded group are not accommodated. The rebellious concern of those who resist from below is stunted and almost reduced to the level of

dysfunctionality.

A close reading of the literature available on the term 'realism', it becomes apparent that the term was confusingly used for two meanings. Few refer it as a narrative technique which denies the idealization, escapism and the extravert qualities of romantic literature and substituted it for the exploration of the actual problems of the society. It can be seen as a superficial signification of the term realism. The term has a social, cultural, poetical, historical and philosophical significance. Many modern critics insist that the realism is not just creating a simple life like situation in the novel but on the contrary it is an ideology which has affiliation with important philosophical movement humanism. In this literary tradition authors attempt to deal with social, racial and economic injustice.

Many of the critics define it as a stylistic tool used to describe the black side of urban center of development. They create the social and cultural portrait which unloving as it shows the social institutions like religion and marriage under the process of decline. Thus, the movement of Social realism not only in the context of America but in the context of world is influenced by the Russian revolution, Soviet communism and international Marxism. The authors of social realism in fact support these social movements by denouncing the repression of the poor workers and exploring the frustration of personal and collective aspirations in their work. (Oxford Dictionary)

In this art the major aim is to describe the social reality accurately. The influence of the social atmosphere over the individual's life and the understanding of the emotional and intellectual responses of an individual to the outer world require the knowledge of the social, political and cultural scene of the period in which the action of the novel took place and the psychological motivations which are suppressed in the

unconscious psyche of the man. Therefore, these authors can create the life with reality, omitting nothing that is ugly or painful, and idealizing nothing. The question of subjectivity and objectivity was also discussed and well debated in the context of the term reality in the literature of realism. The author of this tradition attempts to be an objective observer of the society who does not involve his ideals in his literary creations and therefore the method of realistic writer is photographic without any wonder, magic or mystery. Thus it is a manner of representing real life literature and a literary movement with the specific thematic concerns and well-defined literary motifs. In short, realism is a tendency of expressing real life with all its facets.

In the discussion of the term 'Realism' and its use in the literature, it is necessary to discuss certain significant definitions of the term which will allow us to point out the characteristic features of realism. In such kind of literature, author represents real life accurately without idealization of everyday life. Encyclopedia Britannica defines the term 'social realism' as:

Social realism is a trend in American art originating in about 1930 and referring in its narrowest sense of paintings dealing with social- protest themes. In a broader sense, the term may be taken to include the more general renderings of American life, usually categorized as American scene painting and regionalism, which may or may not manifest subtle critical comment. (82)

The above line says that social realism is an American art which is starting in 1930. It is related with the American art, painting which saves the social themes. It also relates with the life style of American people. Khwaja Ahmad Aabhas states:

Social realism is the acute awareness of the social forces that surround the individual, their power to influence the lives of men and women-

for better or for worse and the over-all interaction of the individual and the society. (98)

The definition focuses on the relation of individual and society. According to it literary realism means depicting the individual life in the social context. The literature shows the influence of the society on an individual.

Realism is the acknowledgment of the fact that a work of literature can rest neither on a lifeless average, as the naturalists suppose, nor on an individual principle which dissolves its own self into nothingness. The central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations. What makes a type a type is not its average quality, not its mere individual being, however profoundly conceived; what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and age. True realism depicts man and society as complete entities instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects. It is not just an echo but the real sound of an individual or society or jointly voice of their being. Mulk Raj Anand argues:

And I was confirmed in my hunch that, unlike Virginia Woolf, the novelist must confront the total reality, including its sordidness, if one was to survive in the world of tragic contrasts between the 'exalted and noble' vision of the blind bard Milton to encompass the eyes dimmed with tears of the many mute Miltons. As it is mentioned earlier that realism is three dimensional – an independent life, characters and human relationships. There is no place for emotions and intellectual.

All it opposes is the destruction of the completeness of the human personality and of the objective typicality of men and situations through an excessive cult of the momentary mood. The struggle against such tendencies acquired a critical importance in the realist literature. (5)

In this connection it will be worthwhile to understand the opinions of Raymond Williams which he has discussed in his famous essay, '*Realism and the Contemporary Novel*'. He points out:

The distinction of this tradition is that it offers a valuing creation of a whole way of life. A society, that is larger than any of the individuals composing it, and at the same time valuing creations of individual human beings, who while belonging to and affected by and helping to define this way of life in their own terms, absolute ends in themselves. The society is not a background against which the personal relationships are studied, nor are the individuals merely illustrations of aspects of the way of life. (22)

Williams focuses how the society plays a significant role in the life of an individual and therefore suggests that in a realistic narration the priority is neither society nor an individual. Further he sustains the argument that realism means not just "detailed stocking descriptions of shops or back-parlor or station waiting-rooms."(22)

The realistic novels can use it as setting of their action but the realistic description of these settings means not the essence of realism. Further in the essay he made a distinction between the social novel and personal novel. According to him in the social novel, the focus of an author is on the accurate observation and description of the general life whereas in the personal novel the author accurately observes and

describes persons. This comparison clearly points out that “each lacks a dimension, for the way of life is neither aggregation nor unit, but a whole invisible process.” (22)

Further he proposes a valid set of characteristic features of a ‘realist work’. Williams argues that there are four criteria under which a realist narrative can be evaluated and they are common to all the forms of realism. According to him the first characteristic feature of a realist text is that it should be secular. It means that man should not be judged with the established superstitions and mysticism which surrounds him in the context of society and culture. This separation of man from the superstitions he propelled towards reason and logic.

Therefore, according to him realist writing prefers to illustrate the ‘human truth’ instead of ‘divine truths’. The second criterion of realistic novel, according to him is that such novels should be grounded in the contemporary scenes in the terms of characters, setting and social issues. In third criteria he suggests that realist narrative should be the social extension. According to this criteria realist text tend to extend the range of characters and topics to include marginal or suppressed groups of the society. The fourth criteria of the realist text is the ‘intention of the author’. These criteria are useful to understand the development realism from nineteenth century to the twentieth century.

Chapter: III

Social Realism in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*

This research examines how the pride and pathos of characters in *Northanger Abbey* are determined by the then historical trends and socio-cultural practices. Though the impact of Napoleonic war and England's subsequent victory are not straightforwardly described. The private choices and ambitions of most of the important characters are affected by the historical events like England's victory in Napoleonic war. In a subtle and subterranean way, the felt impact of Franco-English war is hinted in *Northanger Abbey*. Some people get new platform to proceed ahead in the lives. In addition, the emerging benefits of expanding British colonialism are also hinted briefly. The society of Austen's time was on the point of gradual transformation. The effect of such a level of social transformation is noticeable in the assertive and assiduous choices of female characters.

After the enactment of the engagement with Catherine, Henry Tilney is optimistic about the beginning of his happy marital life with her. He begins to cherish a pleasing fantasy too. But things do not take that kind of turn which Henry Tilney expects. Contrary to his expectation, Catherine breaks the engagement. To his utter shock, Catherine publicly declares that she cannot Marry Tilney. Tilney is stunned and exposed to painful sense of mental enervation as he learns that Catherine breaks the engagement.

Actually, Catherine does not break the engagement out of her own volition. She is dissuaded from Marrying Tilney by her father, her sister and a woman who is the close relative of her mother. Catherine's father is a vain and supercilious man who is dreadfully cold and calculative. This lines point out:

The air of a gentlewoman, a great deal of quiet, inactive good temper, and a trifling turn of mind were all that could account for her being the choice of a sensible, intelligent man like Mr. Allen. Her father was growing distressed for money. She knew that when he now took up the Baronetage, it was to drive the heavy bills of his trade's people, and the unwelcome hints, his agent, from his thoughts. The Kellynch property was good, but not equal to Sir Walter's apprehension of the state required in its possessor. (11)

Catherine's father is a retired baron. He is cold and calculative. He judges a person in terms of money. He does not see other qualities and strength of his daughter's choice. He compels Catherine to break her engagement with Tilney on the ground that this match would be beneath family decorum and status. Catherine's father represents harsh practice of patriarchy. It is not wrong of Catherine's father to think about the economic prospect of his daughter's fiancée. But to compel her to break the engagement is a sheer act of intervention.

On the ground of Henry Tilney's weak economic background, he is rejected by Catherine. Enfeebled economic capability of Henry appears to be the sole reason for his romantic fiasco. The following extract states:

Very well, Catherine that is exactly he. I have not forgotten your description of Mr. Tilney a brown skin, with dark eyes and rather dark hair. Well, my taste is different. I prefer light eyes, and as to complexion—do you know—I like a sallow better than any other. You must not betray me, if you should ever meet with one of your acquaintance answering that description. Henry had no fortune. He had been lucky in his profession but spending freely, what had come freely,

had realized nothing. But he was confident that he should soon be rich full of life and ardor. (31)

At the fate of being discarded by the girl who had already got engaged with him, Henry is profoundly humiliated and harassed. He bears malice against her. His anger at her knows no bound. But he does not take any aggressive action. He endures it. He determines to make prosperity at any cost. With this conviction and confidence, he returns to the navy. After seven years he appears as the most dazzling and successful bachelor.

Catherine has rightly chosen a good man like Tilney but she is forced to reconsider her choice as she is manipulated badly by her father and sisters. There is a class of rank-conscious people in the time in which the author Jane Austen lived. Prestige, rank, status and various other things were very important to her. That class imposes patriarchal ideology harshly on women. Daughters are denied access the rights to choose their life-partners. Anne is deprived by her father and sisters to break the engagement. The extract exposes:

I shall not pay them any such compliment, I assure you. I have no notion of treating men with such respect. That is the way to spoil them. Catherine had nothing to oppose against such reasoning; and therefore, to show the independence of Miss Thorpe, and her resolution of humbling the sex, they set off immediately as fast as they could walk, in pursuit of the two young men. She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing: indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not a merely selfish caution, under which she acted, in putting an end to it. (32)

Anne accepts Catherine's proposition independently. But as her parent and sisters come to know about her choice, she is vehemently coerced to reject Henry. The trend to get one's daughter Married to a man of substantial economic worth had received momentum in Jane Austen's time. Reality concerning this trend is reflected in the novel.

Before Henry acquires a prestigious position in Navy, he was discarded even by Catherine's father. Now he becomes rich overnight due to his gallantry in besieging the sea port of French navy, everyone looks at him respectfully. Even Catherine's relatives are tempted to handover Catherine to him in Marriage. The choices and preferences of almost all the characters can be better understood in the then historical context and socio-cultural milieu.

After the dissolution of her engagement with Henry, Catherine lives solitary life. She expects a good guy to come in her hand asking for her hand. But none of the suitable man comes in her life. Seven years pass, none of the year turns out to be exciting and eventful to Catherine. Her charm and bloom fade gradually. It is almost destined that she would remain a spinster. She is desperate in her search for an eligible groom. In this way, seven years passed. After seven years, Henry appears as the most dazzling bachelor having 25000 thousand pounds as a prize from the government of Britain for his valorous accomplishment in Napoleonic war. In besieging the strategic site of French navy, Wentworth is given promotion and bulky amount of money as prize.

The rapid economic power of Henry enables him to compete with the position of Catherine's father. He flaunts his prosperity. He is in a safe position to catch any girl he prefers. The historical reality regarding Napoleonic war serves as a background in which the nearness between Catherine and Henry should be examined.

By the time Austen writes this novel, there was a trend to seek a job in navy. Many youths sought jobs in navy. Navy was a means to bring economic stability and security in the lives of poor boys who want to carve their destinies. Clergy is also another field where boys from impoverished background explore their professional destiny. In addition, some boys from weak financial backdrop used to woo a girl from the family with strong economic foundation.

James is very much engrossed in the art of sea warfare. He does not have time to come back to his home and look after his wife. Because England's strategic preparation for Napoleonic war make every senior army officer busy, James does not have time to return to his home. His wife suffers from sickness, which is not mentioned in the novel explicitly. James is much more preoccupation with war. But the reason of her death is not enumerated clearly. The lines argue:

Catherine, observing that Isabella's eyes were continually bent towards one door or the other, as in eager expectation, and remembering how often she had been falsely accused of being arch, thought the present a fine opportunity for being really so; and therefore gaily said, Do not be uneasy Isabella, James will soon be here. They had been a year or two waiting for fortune and promotion. Fortune came, his prize-money as lieutenant being great promotion too came at last but Isabella did not live to know it. She had died the preceding summer while he was at sea. (117)

Captains and lieutenants get prize, awards, recognition and promotion. But their houses already break. Though he is promoted and awarded honorably, his wife died. The death of his wife is robs all the happiness, no matter how big prize he gets. The promotions which captains, navy officers and lieutenants get have big price. They

have to witness the falling apart of their houses. In an oblique and opaque way, *Northanger Abbey* hints at this sort of reality which is painful to embrace no matter how charming it might seem.

Superficial trends like love, matchmaking, break up, holding a ball, gossiping in party, and several other hollow practices hide significant historical truths and social realities. In *Northanger Abbey*, many female characters deaths are mentioned. In the very beginning, it is reported that Sir Walter's wife is dead. Musgrove sister, Louisa, suffers from nervous breakdown. Catherine's youngest sister, Mary, degenerates into an attention-seeking fretful woman. The repeated pattern of female characters death and mortal sufferings are the serious issue that needs analytical contemplation. Directly or indirectly, patriarchal structure of society is largely responsible for the increasing numbers of female characters of the novel. The lines illustrate:

Many were the inquiries she was eager to make of Miss Tilney but so active were her thoughts that when these inquiries were answered. She was hardly more assured than before of *Northanger Abbey* having been a richly endowed convent at the time of the Reformation. Having fallen into the hands of an ancestor of the Tilneys on its dissolution, of a large portion of the ancient building still making a part of the present dwelling although the rest was decayed, or of its standing low in a valley, sheltered from the north and east by rising woods of oak. (116)

Due to the deaths of wives, many soldiers are mourning, though they are awarded with plenty of accolades and prospect of promotion. Bodily injury, disintegration of family following the death of wife or beloved is some of the darker sides of the eighteenth century British history. Due to the lacerating jolt of betrayal by her lover, Mary degenerates into a fretful attention seeking girl who's Marriage with Musgrove

suffers from sporadic outburst. Musgrove's sister, Louisa too suffers from bout of nervousness and depression. The repressive and interventionist approach of the then patriarchal society is wholly accountable for this sort of phenomena. The then Britain of Jane Austen's time put national glory and patriotism on the top list of priorities. That is why the micro social problems and gender issue are overpowered.

The system of inheritance is biased towards women. Sir Walter does not have any son of his own. He can choose any of his daughters as the heir to his estate. But he does not do so. Having seen his sonless uncle, Mr. Elliot, an estranged cousin of General Tilney, comes to strike a harmonious relation with the General. Everyone in Walter's house is impressed by the polite manners and harmonious disposition of Mr. Elliot. Mr. Eliot goes to the extent of wooing the heart of Catherine. Outwardly he seems to be genuinely concerned with the welfare of the General. He looks after him attentively. But soon, it becomes crystal clear that Mr. Elliot is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He has actually cast his covetous eyes on all the properties of Walter. His nearness with Anne is a hoax to put all of Walter's resources under his grip.

Catherine comes to know about the diabolic plan of Mr. Elliot from Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Smith reports Catherine that Mr. Elliot has gone to the extent of ruining his wife's life because his wife's family did not have secure economic foundation. The following extract examines how the faulty system of inheritance goads people to choose the path of dishonesty and fraud practice. It shows:

To Catherine herself it was most distressing to see Mr. Elliot enter the room; and quite painful to have him approach and speak to her. She had been used before to feel that he could not be always quite sincere, but now she saw insincerity in everything. His attentive deference to her father, contrasted with his former language was odious and when

she thought of his cruel conduct towards Mrs. Smith, she could hardly bear the sight of his present smiles and mildness, or the sound of his artificial good sentiments. (205)

In the beginning, Catherine is inclined to hold Mr. Elliot in high regard. She shows regard and respect to him. She is impressed by his polite and meek manners. Having impressed by his graceful manners, she had decided to take him as the alternative to Wentworth. But when his real face is revealed, Anne begins to hate him excessively. Before his real face is revealed he was a cynosure of Anne. Now he is no longer the object of her affection. He is the most odious object she loathes. Mr. Elliot's rapacious greed for Walter's property is the product of the faulty system of inheritance. The limitations of such a system are brought into light.

The eighteenth century concern of girls' maturity exposure to social mobility and interactions in the public is hinted in the novel. Catherine's maturity develops the more she comes out in an outing with other fellows to different places. So long as she is confined in the boundary of Kellynch Hall she is timid, shortsighted, enfeebled and gullible. She does not have an assertive and bold characteristic. But as she goes out in an outing to Upper cross and Lyme Regis, she happens to cultivate broader frame of mind. Her sojourn to Bath makes her increasingly aware of how shallow her father and sister are. Through exposure to outing, interaction and public gathering, women struggle to grow and attain maturity in their outlook and understanding. The following extract states:

Catherine and Henrietta, finding them the earliest of the party the next morning, agreed to stroll down to the sea before breakfast. They went to the sands, to watch the flowing of the tide, which a fine southerly breeze was bringing in with all the grandeur which so flat a

shore admitted. They praised the morning, gloried in the sea, sympathized in the delight of the fresh-feeling breeze—and were silent; till Henrietta suddenly began again with— ‘Oh! Yes,—I am quite convinced that, with very few exceptions, the sea-air always does well. (123)

When Catherine goes to Lyme Regis with the family of Crofts, she happens to develop liberal and extroverted mentality. She gets appreciation for being kindly benevolent to Louisa who suffers from the chronic fit of nervousness. Her sojourn to Lyme Regis brings her closer to Wentworth. In addition, the cool climate of Lyme Regis produces wholesome effect in her. As a result, she maintains the integrity and equanimity of her mind. She picks up a habit to explore what lies behind the glittering façade of event and happening.

Catherine too is not mentally sound. She loses the wholesome mental health. The guilt of breaking her engagement had overruled her mind. She had to bear the brunt of remaining a spinster at the age of twenty seven. In addition, she lived a secluded and silent life in Kellynch Hall for almost a decade till Henry comes back. At last she has lost the moral courage to face Henry whom she badly humiliated. That is why it was necessary for her to grow dynamically. The emerging social trend of allowing women to go out for the enlargement of their minds is hinted in this novel via Catherine’s excursions and sojourn. The following extract presents:

No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, which could bear a comparison with Henry, as he stood in her memory. No second attachment, the only thoroughly natural happy and sufficient cure at her time of life, had been possible to the nice tone of her mind. She had been solicited when about two-and-twenty to change her name by the

young man, who not long afterwards found a more willing mind in her younger sister and Lady Russell had lamented her refusal, for Charles Musgrove was the eldest son of a man. (33)

After Catherine breaks the engagement, it is very difficult for her to get a suitable groom. She has to wait for many years to get a groom. But she does not get a man as qualified and intelligent as Henry. Thus the image of Henry continues to haunt her. She tries to forget it but she cannot because inwardly she had loved him. Exposure to social mobility and the emerging trends is pivotal in bringing Catherine back to the same track. At last she tries and becomes successful in regaining her lost love.

Henry Tilney is a captain who is confident, bold, and gallant. It is customary for girls to get attracted to him. In navy, he gets good accolade and appreciation as a navy officer. But he has low economic profile. He comes from weak financial background. That is why; it is very difficult for him to marry a girl from the higher class family with rank and honor. Once, a girl named Catherine comes in the romantic relationship with him. He is also drawn to her passionately. Both admire each other's qualities. Their relationship deepens incredibly. Due to the growing love, trust and mutual sense of affection, both of them decide to marry. Engagement between Henry Tilney and Catherine is enacted.

Feudal vanity is the bane of General Tilney. Feudal elitism is already on the decline. Sir Walter is finical, secluded and solipsistic. He is capable of committing any kind of moral crime for the sake of maintaining his family status. To some extent he is prodigal. Due to feudalistic sense of vanity, he is detached from social mobility and social dynamics of transformation. "Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation. He had been remarkably

handsome in his youth; and, at fifty-four, was still a very fine man” (4). He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy.

Sir General Tilney, captain Tilney is an example of those patriarchs who do not allow their daughters to choose their life partners. Although women got freedom in many matters related to their lives after the rise of the middle class, the deep-rooted patriarchy continues to become a serious stumbling block. Social realities and glimpses of the then history of the eighteenth century England are projected through various textual complications and interconnected incidents.

Catherine’s father is conscious of rank and economic background. He is a former baronet. He does not like to see his daughter getting wedded to a man who comes from low economic background. The following extract discusses:

The business, however, though not perfectly elucidated by this speech, soon ceased to be a puzzle. Catherine found that John Thorpe had given the message; and Miss Tilney had no scruple in owning herself greatly surprised by it. But whether her brother had still exceeded her in resentment, Catherine, though she instinctively addressed herself as much to one as to the other in her vindication, had no means of knowing. Whatever might have been felt before her arrival, her eager declarations immediately made every look and sentence as friendly as she could desire. (85)

In this extract, Henry narrates in the first person point of view. He says that his gallant act during the Napoleonic war yields dramatic transformation in his life. His position in society gets enhanced following his promotion to captainship. Economic strength appears to be the key to sound social standing. It is also a key to getting a good girl from elitist family. The then society lays crucial importance on

economic security, financial stability and sound social standing. Those males who achieve all these criteria can be the eligible figure in the then society.

From a common navy officer, he is promoted to the post of captain. This valorous deed and the subsequent economic strength as well as promotion make Henry the most dazzling and eligible bachelor. His position is enviable. He publicly declares that he marries any girl who impresses him, catches his fancy and then strikes the romantic chord of his heart. Seven years after the dissolution of his engagement with Catherine, he comes back to the Kellynch Hall with dignified posture and position. At that time, Catherine remains as a spinster with a faded charm.

Most of the characters that rose to captainship are not only the recipient of awards and gifts from the government of Britain but also the victims of Napoleonic war. England had not easily defeated France in the Napoleonic war. England had to pay a huge casualty to defeat France. James is the brother of Henry. James suffers from injury which is not cured. He is on leave in his home so that he could recover from this injury. The injury suffered by James hints at the loss and wounds suffered by English soldiers. Beneath the veneer of Britain's glorious victory over France lie the harsh realities like the wounds, injuries and casualty suffered by British soldiers. The lines disclose:

Once or twice indeed, since James's engagement had taught her what could be done, she had got so far as to indulge in a secret "perhaps," but in general the felicity of being with him for the present bounded her views: the present was now comprised in another three weeks, and her happiness being certain for that period, the rest of her life was at such a distance as to excite but little interest. In the course of the

morning which saw this business arranged, she visited Miss Tilney, and poured forth her joyful feelings. (113)

The wound sustained by James refers to the historical realities regarding the human casualty during Napoleonic war. The glorification of Great Britain's victory over France hides realities about the loss of lives and the sufferings of British soldiers. Only a few soldiers received deserving credit. But the majority of soldiers suffered a lot from wounds and injury. Implicitly, *Northanger Abbey* hints at this side of historical realities.

The fall of gentry is another historical as well as social problem that is hinted in *Northanger Abbey*. General Tilney is shallow and supercilious. He is obsessed with rank and status. He is show to the extent of degradation. Due to his prodigal and demonstrative nature, his resources deplete. When resources begin to decline, he often talks about renting out Kellynch Hall so that with house rent he can live in Bath, the urban site in the vicinity of London. When his resources decrease, he often talks about retrenching family estate and properties. General Tilney's exposure to the vulgar culture of Bath leads to his decline. At last even Catherine comes to conclude that her father is incredibly shallow and vain. The lines point out:

Catherine, however, kept close at her side, and linked her arm too firmly within her friend's to be torn asunder by any common effort of a struggling assembly. But to her utter amazement she found that to proceed along the room was by no means the way to disengage themselves from the crowd; it seemed rather to increase as they went on, whereas she had imagined that when once fairly within the door, they should easily find seats and be able to watch the dances with perfect convenience. (11)

General Tilney, who used to boast of his aristocratic ancestry, is now bound by the pressures of time to think about retrenching expenditure. He comes to know about the pragmatic value of being economical. Surrounded by the pressures to manage cost and increasing expenditure, he comes to terms with the ground reality of life. He goes to the extent of shifting to Bath because he loves superficiality and vulgar life in Bath. To him, Bath symbolizes the sophisticated aristocratic culture. But it is a center of decadence, and degeneration. He is not immune to this vulgarity of life in Bath. Through the fall of Walter from the economic abode, the then reality of the gradual decline of gentry is projected.

Before Catherine knows the motive behind Mr. Elliot's intimacy with her family, she is profoundly impressed by his pleasing and persuasive personality. But upon hearing about his real nature and treacherous scheme, she detests him callously. Her anger at him knows no bound. The extract suggests as:

Mr. Elliot was rational, discreet, polished, but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others. This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection. Her early impressions were incurable. She prized the frank, the open-hearted, and the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still. She felt that she could so much more depend upon the sincerity of those who sometimes looked or said a careless or a hasty thing, than of those whose presence of mind never varied, whose tongue never slipped. (192)

The glittering mask of Mr. Elliot tempts Catherine. Catherine's inherent vulnerability is that she is tempted by the superficial things. Nearly she is cheated by him. At first she is cheated by her own father, her sister and Lady Russell acting in the place of her

mother. From the first deceptive entrapment she did not save herself. But she wants to save herself from every hazard and gimmick. She nearly falls prey to the machinations of Mr. Elliot. But she is alerted by Mrs. Smith. That is why she gets alert and aware of a man like Elliot.

The gentry used to keep governess in their home. Miss Hamilton is a former governess of Catherine. When Catherine suffers from inner pain and misery she invites her former governess, Miss Hamilton. She had called on her “former governess, and had heard from her of there being an old school-fellow in Bath, who had the two strong claims on her attention of past kindness and present suffering” (180). Miss Hamilton had shown her kindness in one of those periods of her life when it had been most valuable. Anne had gone unhappy to school, grieving for the loss of a mother whom she had dearly loved. She used to suffer from the feeling her separation from home, and suffering as a girl of fourteen.

Hamilton gives her advices in the time of agony. Of strong sensibility and not high spirits, must suffer at such a time; and Miss Hamilton had been useful and good to her in a way which had considerably lessened her misery. Finally, Catherine is advised to reexamine and renew her feelings for Wentworth by Lady Russell. Catherine is satisfied at a very early period of Lady Russell’s meaning to love Henry. There she felt her own inferiority very keenly. The disproportion in their fortune was nothing. It did not give her a moment’s regret. But she is painful to have no family to receive and estimate him properly, nothing of respectability, of harmony, of good will to offer in return. She had but two friends in the world to add to his list, Lady Russell and Mrs Smith. To those, however, he was very well disposed to attach himself. Lady Russell, in spite of all her former transgressions, he could now value from his heart. While he was not obliged to say that he believed her to have been right in originally

dividing them, he was ready to say almost everything else in her favor. She had claims of various kinds to recommend her quickly and permanently.

Thus, it is obviously clear that some of the problems faced by characters including Anne, Wentworth and Musgrove are rooted in the historical period and socio-cultural context. The despair resulting from the harmful effects created by the Napoleonic warfare, emerging feminist thought and oppressive pattern of patriarchy and declining gentry as well as the disintegration of tradition are the important historical and cultural factors that shape the attitudes and outlook of important characters.

Chapter: IV

Austen's Concern with the Humanity

The core finding of this research is that Austen's *Northanger Abbey* contains plenty of glimpse and gazes of the historical realities of the eighteenth century England. Both the positive and negative sides of Napoleonic war are hinted implicitly. The fact that navy brings lots of opportunities for youths to climb social ladder is boldly presented in the novel. Henry Tilney is rejected in a humiliating way by Catherine on the ground that he does not have property and status. This bitter sense of humiliation gives much pain to him. During the Napoleonic war, he acts gallantly. He alone leads the strategic movement to besiege the port of France when the war is decisive.

For capturing the decisive port of French navy singlehandedly, Tilney is given with a sum of twenty five thousand pounds. He is also promoted to the rank of captain. This England's victory in the Napoleonic war changes both the financial and social position of poor youths like Henry Tilney. This sort of historical reality is projected implicitly. Not only the positive sides of war, but also its negative sides are also hinted. Captain Tilney loses his wife because he did not get a time to take her to clinic. She dies because her husband is busy in the war. Moreover, Captain Tilney suffers from injury in the war. He lives on allowance and indemnity.

The rise of the middle class and girls, increasing gradual demand for freedom in the sphere of their private choices can be seen indirectly in activities of characters like Catherine and Isabella. The decline of gentry is also traceable to the economic impoverishment of Walter. More than half of dozen of female characters in this novel are reported dead. George Tilney's wife died many years ago. Captain Tilney's beloved died and he is mourning over her the series of the death of women refers to

the situation that the government or society did not pay attention to the social problem. The government of Britain is enmeshed in the bigger problems like war, patriotism and colonialism.

The society witnesses some of the callous practices. Several micro glimpses of historical realities and gazes of socio-cultural events are projected in *Northanger Abbey* via many textual complications and ambiguity. A change of attitude can be seen in the three main characters George Tilney, Isabella and captain Tilney. These changes can also be seen to have their roots in personal changes as well as external circumstances.

Captain Tilney thinks of class as superior to money. He resents the Navy for bringing men who do not deserve it into respectful places in society. He cannot see how a man without property can be a gentleman. He disregards the feelings of people who he considers to be beneath him. Catherine values social status infinitely more than wealth. She cannot imagine Marrying below her own status in society. She truly believes that love cannot overcome class. She realizes that money can give a person a higher place in society. Isabella marries a man who was below him on the social ladder in order to obtain wealth. He disregards the title he was to inherit. He wished he could have a different name. It appears that the attitudes to class and money change both as the situation of the character changes. Henry Tilney is, in the end, considered a good match for Catherine for two reasons. One is that he has himself obtained a fortune since he and Catherine last met, and the fortune of the Tinley family has been significantly reduced.

Most of the members of Tilney family seem to disregard everything that has to do with money and social background. They do not mind socializing with their less well-off relatives. In short, even the characters who do not want to value class and

money are forced to acknowledge the fact. Income is a subject that is discussed openly in Austen's novels. Either the income of the character is provided in plain numbers, or a hint is given by the descriptions of said character's house, carriage and servants, for example.

Austen goes to considerable lengths to provide the reader with information about her characters financial situations. When the Allens, family friends of the Morlands, offer to take Catherine with them to Bath, a resort for the wealthier members of British society. Catherine eagerly accepts the Allens' invitation. Her life has been relatively sheltered, so Bath is a new world for her. In Bath, Catherine is introduced to Henry Tilney. Catherine quickly falls for Henry, but after their first meeting she does not see him again for some time. Mrs. Allen runs into an old acquaintance, Mrs. Thorpe, and her three young daughters, including Isabella, who is slightly older than Catherine. Catherine and Isabella are soon best friends. Isabella, superficial and fond of gossip, inducts Catherine into the social world of Bath, with all its balls, dances, shows, fashion, and its gossip. Isabella says that she had expected something better. She assumed them to be pleasant people. Though they are nothing, Isabella still thinks they are an acquaintance worth having simply because they are nobility and will raise the status of Tilney in Bath. Catherine is also influenced by the power of money. It is interesting to note that Catherine says that she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement.

Works Cited

- Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. London: Seagull, 1990. Print.
- Deidre, Le Faye. *Glimpse of War in Austen's Works*. London: Macmillan, 2004. Print.
- Fisher, Lucy. *Fallout of Persuasion*. London: Harper Collins, 2003. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. London: Vintage, 1979. Print.
- Guillory, Elizabeth Brown. "Death as Trope in Persuasion". *Jane Austen and novel*.
New York: Rutledge, 1994. p. 21-22.
- Leefolt, Mobley. *Austen and Anomie*. London: Harpers Collins, 2002. Print.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Emanuel Levinas Reader*. London: Basil Blackwell, 2007. Print.
- Mulk Raj Anand, 'Why I Write?' *Indian Writing in English*, ed. K.N. Sinha (New
Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1979), p. 5-6.
- Smith, Peter. *Implied Politics in Austen's Fiction*. New York: Penguin, 2005. Print.
- Tomalin, Claire. *Social Realism in Austen's Oeuvre*. London: Macmillan, 2001. Print.
- Williams, Raymond. *Realism and the Contemporary Novel*. London: Fontana, 1990.
Print.