

**Villains in
Jane Austen's Novels
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Interest in Jane Austen's novels and critical scholarship in her works are still active, Book reviews and periodical essays are indicative of the current critical interest in Jane Austen's novels(1). However, no study in the form of a book or a complete essay has tackled the topic of villains in her novels independently. Critical books on Austen's novels or periodical essays tend to deal with this aspect of her novels inclusively, but not separately. Our hoped contribution is to analyse and compare the portraits as well the roles of the villains in the major novels of Jane Austen.

This paper tackles the role played by the villains in three of Jane Austen's novels. We have chosen *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Mansfield Park* as the theme of our study because they were successively published (2), a fact that would reveal the development in Jane Austen's handling of the villains in her novels, These novels, from our point of view, are adequately representative of Jane Austen's novelistic career.

Our suggested study is initiated by the contention that in Jane Austen's novels villains assume greater importance than heroes themselves. As villains, their role is to create vital complication in the action of the novels, contribute actively to misunderstanding and misjudgment, or lead a heroine to a state of romantic

illusion, in order to play their roles effectively, Jane Austen's villains are endowed with certain physical and psychological attributes that make them both attractive and convincing. Villains in the three novels of our study share so many aspects in common.

Physically, the villains in the three novels are very attractive, smart and appealing both to the heroines and the other feminine characters in the novels. In Sense and Sensibility, (3) Willoughby inspires both admiration and attraction in both Elinor and her mother :

Elinor and her mother rose up in amazement at their entrance, and while the eyes of both were fixed on him with an evident wonder and a secret admiration which equally spring from his appearance....." (S.S.P35).

Willoughby's manners are also admired by both the heroine and her mother :

He apologized for his intrusion by relating its cause in a manner so frank and so graceful, that his person , which was uncommonly handsome, received additional charms from his voice and expression, (S.S. P : 35).

The remarkable attractions of this young man are youth, beauty and elegance. Such attributes promise necessary progress in the relationship between Willoughby and Marianne's mother and sister, though they are not emotionally involved. They are, so far, neutral on-lookers.

As for Marianne, the effect of her first incidental meeting with Willoughby is wonderful: "His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favourable story....." (S.S.P. 36) Marianne's response to the situation is basically romantic .Her fancy is the leading faculty in judging the young man. According to her fancy, she thinks of Willoughby as an ideal hero of a story

The two words "fancy and story" indicate Marianne's world which has very little to do with actual life. Her admiration is not confined to his person and air: His name was good, his residence was in their favourite village, and she soon found out that of all many dresses a shooting jacket was most becoming " (S.S.P. 36) .

Marianne's romantic admiration for Willoughby builds up an ideal portrait of him. Every thing related to him adds to his perfect portrait . His name, residence and dress are the complements of his admirable person and air. As a result" Her imagination was busy, her reflections pleasant and the pain of a sprained ankle was disregarded". (S.S.P. 36).

Commenting on Willoughby's character, Michael Hardwick states that he " was a young man of good abilities, quick imagination, lively spirits, and open affectionate manners. " (4) He goes on saying that, " he was exactly formed to engage Marianne's heart, for, with all this, he joined not only a captivating person, but a natural ardour of mind, which was now roused and increased by the example of her own....." (5)

Yasmine Gooneratne points out Willoughby's enchanting effect upon Marianne when she meets him:

At Barton Marianne meets in romantic circumstances, and falls in love with, John Willoughby, an attractive young man who satisfies the yearnings of her sentimental imagination by appearing to share enthusiastically her every thought, opinion, and artistic taste; (6).

Marianne's response to the meeting is that of an enchanted person under the spell of a very witty and clever tempter. Concerning Willoughby's role in the novel, Mary Lascelles remarks that" he plays his part to admiration, his smart wit shows itself as ardent gaiety, he displays his taste and sensibility to advantage" (7).

In addition to Willoughby's attraction in person, speech, dress and manners, his thoughts, taste and interests strongly appeal to Marianne. " They speedily discovered that their enjoyment of dancing and music was mutual, and that it arose from a general conformity of judgment in all that related to either." (S'S'p-39.) Their taste was strikingly alike. The same books, the same passages were idolized by each " (S'S'p 39.) " and long before his visit concluded, they conversed with the familiarity of a long-established acquaintance." (S'S'p-39).

Jane Austen very cleverly sets up an identity of thought, mind and taste between Marianne and Willoughby. They match each other as if each were created to fit the other. In Mrs Dashwood's estimation, he was as faultless as in Marianne's." (S'Spp 40-41).

Elinor, however, is the representative of sense in the family. Her judgment of the young man is not of absolute infatuation. She has so many things in his manners to censure, though Jane Austen uses a very mild tone in her treatment of this point:

" and Elinor saw nothing to censure in him but a propensity..... of saying too much what he thought on every occasion without attention to persons or circumstances. In hastily forming and giving his opinion of other people, in sacrificing general politeness to the enjoyment of undivided attention where his heart was engaged, and in slighting too easily the forms of worldly propriety, he displayed a want of caution which Elinor could not approve, in spite of all that he and Marianne could say in its support, "(s'S'p-41.)

Elinor's judgement is marked for its disenchantment and clarity of vision. Being neutral, she sees Willoughby's social failings and shortcomings. His excessive egoism is, to her, his major weakness. Elinor also notices Willoughby's egoism in his attitude towards Brandon. He talks of Brandon slightly:

"Brandon is just the kind of man, said Willoughby one day when they were talking of him together," whom everybody speaks well of and nobody cares about; whom all are delighted to see, and nobody remembers to talk to." (S'S'p-42).

Willoughby's way of talking about Captain Brandon reveals his tendency to think ill of others so as to add to his own assets. He is superior to Brandon because he is "cared about; and talked to."

Elinor's judgement; however, does not determine Marianne's relation with Willoughby, nor does it affect the progress in its development for the two parties are mutually in love with each other.

With the development of her acquaintance with Willoughby, Marianne's admiration becomes stronger and grows deeper: "When he was present; she had no eyes for anyone else. Every thing he did, was right. Everything he said was clever." (S'S'p. 44).

Indeed, Marianne is extremely happy in Willoughby's company, for he cares much to please her: "this was the season of happiness to Marianne. Her heart was devoted to Willoughby," (S'S'p.45).

More of Willoughby's traits are known to Marianne and her family. He is lavish with promises, eloquent in speech and very refined in manners. He praises the cottage in which Marianne lives considering it "the only form in which happiness is attainable...." (S'S'p.60).

Willoughby's praise, indeed, rings false, but Marianne is under the spell of his charms. Enchantment becomes so strong that Marianne's engagement to Willoughby becomes a matter of course.

Complete reversal of the whole stage of enchantment occurs when Willoughby's real character is known. Leaving so suddenly, without any explanation, and sending no letters, Willoughby arouses so much doubt. Both sisters go to London hoping to meet him there. They are kept in suspense for a long time before a letter from Willoughby arrives. For the first time the young man's frankness is greatly shocking to poor Marianne:

My esteem for your whole family is very sincere, but if I have been so unfortunate as to give rise to a belief of more than I felt, or meant to express, I shall reproach myself for not having been more guarded in my professions of that esteem. "(S'S'pp-153-153).

In this letter, Willoughby expresses his sorrow for deceiving Poor Marianne by his false professions and affectation which he coats with words of regret. Though the letter is written by Willoughby, it reveals his basic characteristic as a villain: pretence and affectation, which destroys the credulous hearts of young women, like Marianne.

The letter starts the process of disenchantment on Marianne's part as it unfolds Willoughby's true character. Elinor feels sorry for her sister. She herself is shocked at the real villainy of such a worthless young man. Willoughby's letter, to Elinor, spotlights his evils. He has departed "so far from the common decorum of a gentleman." It is "a letter of which every line was an insult, and which proclaimed its writer to be deep in hardened villainy" (S'S'p-153). Marianne, so far, is kept in the dark about his letter which her elder sister receives and reads.

Willoughby's mercenary nature is soon affirmed. His marriage to Miss Grey is chiefly motivated by her money. Having an annual income of about fifty thousand pounds, Miss Grey represents an irresistible attraction to Willoughby.

immoral shocking conduct with Marianne and her family. His main defence centres round his poverty and necessity which forced him to seek a girl of fortune to establish himself securely. The economic factor thus determines his moral behaviour. Willoughby, significantly, admits his villainy while seeking forgiveness. Consequently, Elinor's heart is softened while listening to his long confession. It is noteworthy that Marianne never meets Willoughby after he leaves. Her sister, Elinor, tackles the whole situation for her depending on her sense. Marianne's illness is a technical pretext for the impossibility of confrontation between Willoughby and her.

Indeed, Willoughby succeeds to arouse Elinor's pity and partial forgiveness.

This is very finely expressed by the sensible sister:

Yes' you have certainly removed some thing-a little. you have proved yourself, on the whole less faulty than I have believed you-have proved your heart less wicked, much less wicked." (S'S'p-218).

The outcome of such a meeting between Elinor and Willoughby is that Jane Austen rescues the latter from the dark villainy. Thus, "his final, pious repentance" (9) is achieved. This development in Willoughby's character fits the moral comedy pattern of the novel.

As for the role played by Willoughby in the novel, it is vitally important to the development of both action and characters. "He appears first in the romantic role of rescuer and his romance with Marianne proceeds quickly" (10) The "rescuer" in the person of Willoughby starts a process of enchantment for the rescued. He not only wins her heart but he also affects her mind and judgment. Her vision is determined by his likes and dislikes. Marianne's attitude to Colonel Brandon is the outcome of a blurred vision during the phase of enchantment.

though she is 'not handsome.' (S'S'p-162) Money is a great value before which every other achievement could be sacrificed. Emotions, such as love, sincere attachments, gratitude, honour or decorum are all trivial in comparison with money. Willoughby foreshadows the villains of the other two novels of our study in his pecuniary interests.

Andrew Wright compares Willoughby to Lovelace, the hero of Richardson's *Clarissa* from the moral point of view:

John Willoughby, on the other hand, is a regular villain, a less interesting, because less complete, version of Richardson's Lovelace, whom he resembles in his carefree gaiety, insensitive wit, his propensity to seduction, and in his final, pious repentance. (t).

The focal feature of Willoughby's behaviour is irresponsibility and lack of principle. This feature explains all his dealings with the young women who are attached to him.

Willoughby's propensity to seduction" is confirmed by Captain Brandon's story about the former's elopement with young Eliza Brandon, leaving her with a child by him: he had left the girl whose youth and innocence he had seduced, in a situation of the utmost distress, with no creditable home, no help, no friends, ignorant of his address." (S'S'p.175).

In his villainy, Willoughby is much worse than Lovelace. He is a cruel, opportunist hypocrite. No wonder then, he is called "such a scoundrel of a fellow!! such a deceitful dog!" (S'S'p-180).

Jane Austen, however, is quite careful that Willoughby's character should not be detestable. In order to achieve this purpose, she plans for his reappearance to seek forgiveness. His apology to Elinor is marked with contrition and repentance. In a confession that runs for a whole chapter Willoughby tries to justify his

Though Marianne is essentially romantic, hasty in judgment, and hardly calculating, Willoughby's short acquaintance confirms her attitude towards Colonel Brandon, the hero of the novel.

During the whole period of enchantment, Marianne pays no attention to Brandon, her worthy and noble husband later on. To her Colonel Brandon has "neither genius, taste, nor spirit. That his understanding has no brilliancy his feelings no ardour, and his voice no expression." (S'S'p-43.) Brandon's shortcomings are but the sentimental outcome of the period of enchantment during which Willoughby poses as the embodied example of a romantic hero endowed with every admirable trait. No wonder, then, Marianne overlooks the merits of other people as her imagination is possessed by Willoughby, who distorts her vision.

Disenchantment starts when Willoughby is exposed and known for what he really is. Marianne is stripped off from her blurred vision and begins to see people in a new light. The process of sound judgment is gradually completed preparing for the happy ending of the novel. After her recovery, Marianne tells her sister, Elinor of the change in her attitudes towards people. She recapitulates her relationship with Willoughby and comes to this sensible conclusion:

I considered the past: I saw in my behaviour since the beginning our acquaintance of with him last autumn, nothing but a series of imprudence toward, my self, and want of kindness to others. (S'S'p 292).

This revaluation on Marianne's part reflects a positive development in her vision, Her marriage to Colonel Brandon is not unexpected after such a development She sums it up as follows:

"my feelings shall be governed and my temper improved" (S'S'p-293) Both the governed feelings and the improved temper ensure the happy marriage to

Colonel Brandon, whom Marianne respects and loves. " Marianne could never love by halves; and her whole became, in time, as much devoted to her husband as it had once been to Willoughby. " (S'S'p.321).

Elinor's marriage to Edward Ferras completes the Dashwoods' happiness.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, (11) the villain's role is similar to that of his counterpart in *Sense and Sensibility*. Wickham is mainly introduced into the novel to confirm the heroine's prejudice against the hero. Elizabeth Bennett's prejudice is" reinforced by Wickham's false story about Darcy. " (12) The heroine's misjudgment resulting from her prejudice dims her vision for a long time before the truth about the hero's creditable character is known. It is true that Elizabeth has some distaste for Darcy from the very beginning and before Wickham's arrival at the neighbourhood, but Wickham's acquaintance to Elizabeth undoubtedly confirms her bias and prejudice against Darcy.

In order to play his role most effectively and successfully, Wickham is endowed with all the attractive traits in appearance and speech:

This was exactly as it should be; for the young man wanted only regimentals to make him completely charming. His appearance was greatly in his favour; he had all the best part of beauty; a fine countenance, a good figure, and very pleasing address. (PP p. 116).

This piece of information is known about Wickham when he is first introduced to the young Bennett girls : Kitty and Lydia. When Elizabeth meets Wickham, she is charmed by both his appearance and his pleasing address. Listening sympathetically to his affair with Darcy, Elizabeth strongly takes his side, sympathizes with him and antagonizes Darcy.

"Among the officers arriving at the neighbourhood Mr. Wickham seems the best: '....but Mr Wickham was as far beyond them all in person, countenance, air, and walk.... (PP p. 120) "Mr Wickham was the happy man towards whom every female eye was turned, and Elizabeth was the happy woman by whom he finally seated himself. (PP p. 120).

Clever as he is, Wickham listens first to Elizabeth's evaluation of Darcy character before he starts playing his role of confirming her misjudgment. Having won her trust and given ear to her bias against Darcy, Wickham begins to tell Elizabeth his false story about the former's injustice with him. It is worthy of note that Elizabeth is arbitrary in judging Darcy: "He is not at all liked in Hertfordshire, Every body is disgusted with his pride. You will not find him more favourably spoken of by anybody." (PP, p. 121) " Elizabeth's emphatic use of " at all, every body and any body" in stating Darcy's character, or rather reporting it, is a manifestation of her bias against him. Contrasting with her biased report of Darcy's character, is the following most favourable and over. sweeping judgment of Wickham's character:

Whatever he said, was said well, and whatever he did, done gracefully, Elizabeth went away with her head full of Mr Wickham, she could think of nothing but of Mr. Wickham and of what he had told her , all the way home....(PPp.127).

Elizabeth's admiration for Wickham and her sympathy with him are boundless. Thus, she is extremely ready to be enchanted by what he tells her. Enchantment, the first stage, of a villain's role, is thus successfully achieved by Mr Wickham with Elizabeth.

Though many of the characters of the novel try to defend Darcy and to find excuses for his pride, Elizabeth is adamant about censuring him. She is not the

their lives. Therefore, the economic motive in their dealings is out of question. Henry does not aim to secure a better income or to settle his debts through marriage. His reasonable income encourages him to embark on many love adventures.

Another point of difference between Henry Crawford and the two other villains is that he is not as smart and attractive as they are. To the young Bertram girls he "was not handsome, no, when they first saw him he was absolutely plain; but still he was the gentleman, with pleasing address." (MP, pp.32-33).

No superlative adjectives are attached to Henry Crawford as in the cases of both Willoughby and Wickham. His social position is, however, in his favour. Further meetings add gradually to Henry's attractions:

The second meeting proved him not so very plain, he was plain to be sure, but then he had so well made that one soon forgot that he was plain....(MPp.33).

The Bertrams, especially the female admirers, are more inclined to concentrate on Henry Crawford's points of attraction disregarding his plain features.

A third meeting with Henry raises him to the place of "the most agreeable young man the sisters had ever known, and they were equally delighted in him," (MP p-33). A week after Henry's arrival at Mansfield, the two sisters, Maria and Julia are ready to fall in love with him.

From the moral point of view, Henry Crawford fulfills the prerequisites of a villain. He is the most horrible flirt that can be imagined. His sister Mary, his accomplice, is so proud of him as a flirt that "if your Miss Bertrams do not like their hearts broke let them avoid Henry." (MP p.31).

Henry's notions of morality are those of a confirmed villain. He wants to win the heart of the engaged Bertram daughter. for her engagement makes matters easier for him:

finding herself thus selected as the object of such idle and frivolous gallantry (PP,pp.259-260).

Wickham's true character becomes quite known to Elizabeth as well as to the other characters, except for Lydia. "With respect to Wickham; the travellers soon found that he was not held there in much estimation" (PP p-284).

Wickham's frivolous and lax moral conduct is confirmed by his elopement with the thoughtless Lydia Bennett, Elizabeth's youngest sister. But for Darcy's manly stand and readiness to provide for the elopers, Wickham would have not married Lydia. Wickham's elopement provides the final opportunity for self-revelation. Both Darcy and Wickham are now fully known without any sort of affectation. Their deeds speak for them. In keeping with the Pattern of the happy ending, Wickham and Lydia, as Karen Newman remarks, "are not punished with misery and unhappiness, but live tolerably well given their weaknesses and extravagance...."(14).

The final stability secured by Lydia's marriage and Darcy's marriage to Elizabeth is but the fruit of the rapport between them at the end of the stage of disenchantment preparing for complete revelation. " Their story comes to a happy ending earned by two properly humbled people who have learned to bear mortification and to rise under it with love."(15). Elizabeth's union to Darcy is the reward of a troublesome journey of revaluation and judgment.

In *Mansfield Park* (16), Jane Austen adds some other variations the portrait of the villain. In this novel, we have a villainess, Mary Crawford, who collaborates with her elder brother, Henry Crawford, the chief villain. Unlike Willoughby and Wickham, Henry Crawford is not motivated in his villainy by money. Both brother and sister are economically well-off. They do not suffer financial difficulties in

their lives. Therefore, the economic motive in their dealings is out of question. Henry does not aim to secure a better income or to settle his debts through marriage. His reasonable income encourages him to embark on many love adventures.

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An engaged woman is always more agreeable than a disengaged. She is satisfied with herself. Her cares are over, and she feels that she may exert all powers of pleasing without suspicion. All is safe with a lady engaged; no harm can be done. "(MPpp.33-34).

Henry's views reveal his selfishness and careless disregard for either morality or social stability. He is mainly interested in fulfilling his desires regardless of their consequences. In this respect, R.T. Brissenden remarks that "Henry Crawford is not such a calculating villain as Lovelace, but he is an irresponsible and selfish man, and his actions lead directly to the ruin of Julia and Maria. His villainy also threatens, Fanny, but it is deflected before it can harm her." (17).

John Peck also concentrates on Henry's selfishness and its destructive effect upon the Bertram family and Fanny Price: "...his view of the world is totally egocentric, and therefore disturbing. His perversity is reflected in his belief that there must be something wrong with a girl if she does not like him." (18)

Social irresponsibility, moral laxity and egocentricity pose as three main features of Henry's character as a villain.

Henry's proposal to Fanny Price provides an opportunity for pointing out his social merits. He is favoured by almost all the members of the Bertram family. They think chiefly of him for both his personal and social attractions. Old Mr. Thomas Bertram sees him as a very suitable suitor to his niece, Fanny Price. Addressing Fanny, he says:

Here is a young man wishing to pay addresses to you with everything to recommend him, and merely situation in life, fortune and character, but with more common agreeableness, with address and conversation pleasing to everybody. (MPp. 239).

Sir Thomas persists in his defence and support of Henry Crawford's proposal. He strongly recommends Crawford using almost the same words used: "Here is young man of sense, of character, of temper, of manners and of fortune, exceedingly attached to you, and seeking your hand in the most handsome and

disinterested way. "(MPp. 241) Crawford's villainous ways have not yet been known to any of the Bertrams. Therefore, he is still attractive from both personal and social aspects.

Even Edmund Bertram, who sympathizes with Fanny recommends Henry's proposal: "I consider Crawford's proposals as most advantageous and desirable, if you could return his affection" (MPp. 263) Edmund also tries to convince Fanny to think of Henry's different traits as complementary to hers:

"There is a decided difference in your temper, I allow. He is lively, you are serious; but so much the better; his spirits will support yours." (MPp. 265) Edmund comes to the conclusion that difference in temper" is rather a favourable circumstance. (MPp. 25,62).

Social acceptance is thus achieved by Henry Crawford who professes his love for Fanny before the Bertram family. With Fanny, Henry tries to convince her of the change he has undergone. He very eloquently acts out the role of the true lover to win Fanny's heart:

You think me unsteady-easily swayed by the whim of the moment-easily tempted-easily put aside, with such an opinion, no wonder that. But we shall see-It is not by protestations that I shall endeavour to convince you I am wronged, it is not by telling you that my affections are steady. My conduct shall speak for me-absence, distance, time shall speak for me. (MPp-261).

Henry Crawford, we notice, uses a language of emotional intensity. This is expressed by the many stops that interrupt the flow of his speech to Fanny. Henry also uses incomplete sentences to convey his passionate feelings. He seems too agitated to exercise full control over his words. Fanny's response is not immediate. She is a pondering, wise and rational young woman. She is not easily deceived by Henry's sweet words. Neither is she entrapped by his sister's alliance.

Presents, like sweet words, do not change Fanny's attitude towards the Crawfords though his villainy is not yet fully known to the whole family. Mary Crawford shares her brother's villainy. Like Henry, Mary is a city girl with all the values and conduct of urban young women. She has "the habits of a young woman who had been mostly used to London." (MP p-30) Physically, Mary Crawford is pretty. As for the other social and moral features, Mary is a "warmhearted, unreserved woman. Her opinions are unfolded immediately after her arrival at her sister's home in Mansfield, "Matrimony was her object, provided that she could marry well." (MP p. 31).

Being a young woman of a good fortune, Mary wants to be married to a rich husband. She hardly pays any attention to feeling, or emotions. Mary attracts Edmund Bertram's attention, He enjoys her company and even thinks of getting married to her-Planning to be a clergyman, Edmund tries to convince Mary of the importance of his career. Unsympathetically, Mary tells him that a "clergyman is nothing" (MPp. 70).

Edmund's person, temper, character and conduct matter very little to her. However, Mary is ready to accept Edmund as a husband if he inherits his father's wealth. Fanny, if a rational observer, has seen that Mary Crawford "had only learn to think of nothing of consequence but money." (MPp. 334).

Mary Crawford's role as an accomplice to the villain is carried out through introducing him to the young ladies, talking about his gallantries, flirtations in London as well as his charm to young women. She acts like a link between the brother and the other female characters, She thus shortens the time needed for a conquest. Through her meetings with the young women, her letters to them, the

presents given on her brother's behalf, and her commentaries on his interests, she is a great partner in his villainous acts. Mary has an independent role as a villainess especially with Edmund Bertram. She plans to ruin him by raising hopes of love intending to snare the young man.

Yasmine Gooneratne remarks that Mary's "beauty becomes a trap, her gaiety a snare, her free and vivacious conversation an invitation to indulgence and error." (19) Mary enjoys all the attractions of a villainess: beauty, gaiety and lively conversation, but they are destructive to those who deal with her. Yasmine Gooneratne relevantly judges Mary's character. She maintains that "Deception, according to Mary Crawford, is the rule rather than the exception in social dealings and in marriage especially." (20) Her relationship with Edmund is true evidence of her deception.

The Crawfords' impact on the lives of the Bertrams is destructive. They have upset their peace and stability and brought chaos and sorrow to the family. Divorce, elopement and frustration are brought about through the acquaintance with the Crawfords. Revelation of the true realities of both Henry and his sister is shocking to the whole Bertram family. Only Fanny is not shocked because she has been a clear-sighted observer of their dealings. She firmly resists Henry's charms and artificial attractions. To her, "the Crawfords seem to be agents of a depraved and evil world, ready To lure the weak and unsteady to certain destruction." (21) The marriage of Fanny to her cousin, Edmund provides the happy ending of the novel. Fanny is rewarded for her rational discriminating attitude towards the Crawfords which keeps her safe from their ruin.

In keeping with her sustained attitude towards the villains of her novels, Jane Austen does not severely condemn them. Andrew Wright points out that "in conception and in execution, however, Henry Crawford is meant to be a villain, though as Miss Austen quite appropriately shows us, even a villain may have good qualities." (22).

Yasmine Gooneratne holds an opinion similar to Wright's. She maintains that despite his selfishness, Henry "cannot with justice be condemned outright," (23). Indeed, Jane Austen tries to keep a small part of her sympathy for her erring villains. They have the opportunity to regret their misdeeds or to repent. Other times they are helped out of their villainy to live properly among the good people.

In the conclusion of our study it is relevant to point out our major findings. Most of the villains of the novels dealt with are physically attractive. Their charms are superior to those of the heroes, and therefore the heroines are for some time enchanted by the villains' attractions. In speech and conversation, all the villains are eloquent, witty and impressive. They are very clever in winning the ears of heroines and consequently their trust and sympathy. Jane Austen's villains come from urban centres and invade the rural environment of their heroines who yield so easily to their conquests. (24).

A major feature shared by the villains in our study is their mercenary attitude. They are money-minded and extravagant. They desert the heroines and elope with less attractive women due to mercenary motives. In this way, they are calculating and materialistic. Morally, villains are lax, unprincipled, and reckless. They do not care for values and social mores. Hence, they are always a threat to social stability. Emotionally, Jane Austen's villains are all false, egoistic and even

sadistic. True love, to them, is a strange emotion which they profess only at the outset of their relationships with their victims.

Nevertheless, Jane Austen's villains, in our study, are not portrayed as confirmed criminals; They are not wholly corrupt. Despite the tragic results of their roles, they still have the virtue of repentance and regret.

Notes:

- (1) The most recent review of critical books on Jane Austen is made by Stuart Tave, University of Chicago in *Novel*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Winter, 1989 in which he reviews five books on Austen.
- (2) Dates of publication: *Pride and prejudice* 1813, *Sense and Sensibility* 1811, and *Mansfield Park* 1814 according to Michael Hardwick in the *Osprey Guide to Jane Austen*, Osprey, London, 1973.
- (3) *Sense and Sensibility*, Every man's Library Edition, London. New York. 1965 First published 1906. Dent: London. Dutton. New york edition unless otherwise indicated. (S.S) stands for the novel.
- (4) Michael Hardwick, *The Osprey Guid to Jane Austen*, op cit, p-65.
- (5) *Ibid*, P. 65.
- (6) Yasmine Gooneratne, *Jane Austen*, Cambridge University press, London 1970, p-66.
- (7) Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art*, Oxford University press. London. Oxford New York, 1963, R.P. 1974- p.p. 65-66.
- (8) Andrew H. Wright, *Jane Austen; Astudy in structure*, Penguin Books. 1962, R.P. 1964-67 (P-100).
- (9) *Ibid*, (Loc. cit)

In keeping with her sustained attitude towards the villains of her novels, Jane Austen does not severely condemn them. Andrew Wright points out that "in conception and in execution, however, Henry Crawford is meant to be a villain, though as Miss Austen quite appropriately shows us, even a villain may have good qualities." (22).

Yasmine Gooneratne holds an opinion similar to Wright's. She maintains that despite his selfishness, Henry "cannot with justice be condemned outright," (23). Indeed, Jane Austen tries to keep a small part of her sympathy for her erring villains. They have the opportunity to regret their misdeeds or to repent. Other times they are helped out of their villainy to live properly among the good people.

In the conclusion of our study it is relevant to point out our major findings. Most of the villains of the novels dealt with are physically attractive. Their charms are superior to those of the heroes, and therefore the heroines are for some time enchanted by the villains' attractions. In speech and conversation, all the villains are eloquent, witty and impressive. They are very clever in winning the ears of heroines and consequently their trust and sympathy. Jane Austen's villains come from urban centres and invade the rural environment of their heroines who yield so easily to their conquests. (24).

A major feature shared by the villains in our study is their mercenary attitude. They are money-minded and extravagant. They desert the heroines and elope with less attractive women due to mercenary motives. In this way, they are calculating and materialistic. Morally, villains are lax, unprincipled, and reckless. They do not care for values and social mores. Hence, they are always a threat to social stability. Emotionally, Jane Austen's villains are all false, egoistic and even

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