

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Male Hegemony in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*.

A thesis submitted to Central Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in English.

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2007

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This thesis titled Male Hegemony in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Asmita Neupane (Ghimire) has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgement

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all my teachers at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, who have inculcated in me the thirst for knowledge. I am first of all indebted to Mr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of Department, and the members of research committee, for providing me the opportunity of research on the topic Male Hegemony. I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Amma Raj Joshi, without whose constant supervision and scholarly guidance the research would never have taken the present shape. I owe a great debt for him who has provided scholarly guidance by going through the script and correcting my mistakes.

Similarly, I am indebted to my respected teachers Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, Dr Sangeeta Rayamajhi, Dr. Arun Gupto, Dr. Bireendra Pandeya, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Sadan Adhikari, Pushpa Acharya, Hem Sharma as the source of initial inspiration and constructive guidelines.

I am grateful to my father Mr Saroj Neupane and my husband Er. Rameshwor Ghimire who encouraged and supported me in one or other way in my study.

I must acknowledge to those great writers, editors and publishers whose writings, books and publications I consulted for the completion of this project.

I would like to thank my friends Sarita Laudary, Anisha Kafle and Raksha Dahal for their unflagging support in the course of preparing this thesis.

I would like to thank University Computer.

Asmita Neupane

2007

Abstract

Persuasion examines how Jane Austen is guided by the ideology of male hegemony. Her female characters, in one or the other way, manage to live under the umbrella of patriarchy without the resisting power. They never realize their confinement and humiliation in a male oriented society. They are attached to the traditional patriarchal stereotypes and internalize their submissiveness as patriarchal society demands them. Their absence in public affairs and property right, and their confinement within the narrow boundary of domesticity reflects Austen's internalization of male oriented ideology.

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I. INTRODUCTION

JANE AUSTEN'S WORKS AND WORLD

Jane Austen was born in the country of Hampshire, where her father reverend George Austen was a rector for forty years and her mother, Cassandra Austen was a keen gardener. Austen was the smallest child of her parents. She lived an uneventful life in the atmosphere of her family affection. Though her circle was narrow and limited, her family was very cooperative, well conducted, free, full of affections, proud of each other and happy. She remained unmarried through out her life.

Jane Austen got her education mainly at home. She had neither the formal education nor did she move in a literary circle. She did not travel more outside. However, she read many books and novels. As she was a daughter of a clergyman, Jane studied well the habits, living style and standard of middle class family, the reflection of which can be found in all her novels. If her letters to different people are used as tools to look into, we may find many similarities between her life and that of the most female characters of her novels –all cooking, needle working, painting, playing, various musical instrument, dancing, horse riding etc.

In 1816, Jane began falling sick and her health deteriorated day by day. She needed regular treatment for her illness. But all treatment proved ineffective and useless. Consequently, she died on July 16, 1817 in the arms of her sister Cassandra in Winchester.

Austen's works are alive with the elements of feminism. Her world was the world of men and women facing the complex moral, social, personal and fragmented aspects of life as they lived it, not only day after day but in a whole world as well. This was her unique ability to portray the simplest emotions and conditions of

women, their place in whole structure that makes Austen the true master of fiction.

The interesting issue in her writing is her thinking about women. People who read her novel will find the direct and indirect means of inferiorizing women in male governed society. Andrew H Wright writes:

Jane Austen, though without any vehement renunciations, looks at man in the world and is deeply troubled by what she sees ; a coarse and inadequate world with coarse and inadequate standards - but she can neither abandon the world nor wholly reject the standards; she sees men and women as silly but kind, attractive yet wicked, vain and vexing; laughable, pretentious, deluded, stupid; often intelligent, and - above all-capable of love. She is no narrow expositor of an outworn morality, no mere angry satirist. (27)

She is mainly recognized for her six novels, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* (1814) together with *Northanger Abbey* were published in the same year after her death at the end of December 1817 by Miss Austen's brother, Henry Austen, who had long been a champion of his sister's word. It was he who chose the title for the novel *Persuasion* and unfortunately, we can never know what Jane Austen herself might have named it.

The novel covers the pre victorian era thought. M.H Abraham writes:

The beginning of the Victorian period is frequently dated 1830, or all alternatively 1832, it extends to the death of queen Victoria in 1901.

Much writing of the period whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose dealt with or reflected the pressing social, economic, religious and intellectual issues and problems of that era. (153)

Besides novel, she has written essays, letters and stories. With the exception of an occasional visit to the watering place of Bath, Austen's whole life was spent in small country Parishes, and simple country people became the characters of her novels. Her brothers were in navy and so naval officers furnish the only exciting elements in her stories. What interested and influenced her most was day to day social life and behavior of the people. Therefore, as Wordsworth says, "Her novels are an admirable copy of life (17)." In her novels, she dealt with domestic life. Therefore, her themes are very common. She deals with the themes of love, romance, marriage, wealth, family life and social environment.

The world that her books present to us is essentially late 18th and early 19th century world in its habits, tastes and appearance. We do find crystal precision of style, the beautifully poised sentences and paragraph and the calmly dexterous marshaling of dialogue and incident.

Austen is concerned with two kinds of world—the social world and the moral world. She can give the reader the sense of solidly based social world, a world in which the adjustment of personal relationship is the most interesting and significant of problems, a world in which individuals, however, sensitive or introspective, belong to community pattern. She has an authentic knowledge of certain aspects of domestic life and deals with those aspects in her novels. Her novels also talk about the impact of the existing system of education on women's life and show the evil aspects of improper education. She was preoccupied with the patriarchal social norms, values and vision of eighteenth century. Her novels neither depict any urban cities nor the complicated life style of the people. Instead, she focuses on rural society and the relationship of male and female in the conventional patriarchal society, writing with a limited scope. This is the world she knew and her love of this setting is very clear in

Emma. Her novels show us the inner lives of the individuals in the male governed society.

Austen has a social experience of male governed society. She not only presents sex discrimination of male governed society but also reveals herself in her work. Her novels talk about income and properties, inherited or acquired social rank, manners of all kinds, gender oriented professions, courtship and marriage, dress and fashion and so on.

Austen's novels are valuable social documents. Malcolm Bradbury writes, "Austen doesn't simply mirror a society but subtly compose it into existence (93)." She explores human emotion and behaviour, most closely associated with the social framework that looms so large in most people's life. She works with material extremely limited in them. Her subject matter is limited to the manners of a small section of English gentry and novels have explored human experience a great deal widely and deeply. She is the novelist of family life. Her novels paint the picture of the age in which women accepted their inferiority by consent.

The scenario of politics and society was changing tremendously in Austen's time but Austen was quite aloof from the political changes and the state of warfare. She did not give any space of violence and war in her works. Her fictions were quite different from the events of her time. While the contemporary society was rapidly influenced with industrial revolution and economic values along with social liberalization, she was influenced by it but in a balanced way for the sake of social harmony and existence.

Persuasion was Austen's final novel and was written between 1815 and 1816 and published incompletely was revised immediately after her death. *Persuasion* concerns the social and domestic issues of her time. Both male and female characters

lack individualism in the novel. They belong to the suppressing male governed society and controlled by it. Being a member of such society, Austen has presented male characters superior to female in each aspects and female characters complaining, emotional, sentimental, confined to domestic duties and subordinate to male. Female characters have been presented having inferior status and have accepted male exploitation as natural. Through such presentation, she gives continuity to certain stereotypes that the society has created for both male and female.

Persuasion is also the tale of romance between Anne, who meets the novel's hero, Captain Wentworth and due to the social barriers and family pressure, she has to break up her engagement with Captain Wentworth without her will in the beginning though they reunite at the end of the novel. Here we can find lack of decision power of female character.

In the novel, Austen has presented her male characters having social, economic power and female characters socially and economically powerless. Her male characters have the sense of superiority whereas female characters are portrayed as inferior to male. The society, she has presented, has male oriented social structure. She has presented female characters like Anne, Mary confined to domestic duties. The female characters lack economic independence and right in property. Being women Elizabeth, Anne and Mary can not inherit their father's property. Their cousin, William Eliot, is supposed to inherit his uncle's property being male. Since women are unable to have a career, Austen shows how women sought comfortable home and economic security through marrying properly. This shows how male hegemony works in Austen's female characters. Through presenting female characters powerless and male characters powerful, she shows how existing patriarchal norms and values affect her. Andrew H. Wright writes:

Jane Austen's characters are instrument of a profound vision. She laughs at man but only because she takes him seriously and examines humanity closely but the more she perceives, the less she understands or perhaps one has better said, the more she understands, the more is she perplexed by the traditions which she finds. (172)

In Austen's time society had been shaped and governed according to patriarchal norms and values. The age was very critical for women socially and politically. In patriarchy all aspects of society and human behaviour were controlled and guided by men only. All social, cultural, economic, religious, legal and many other aspects were dominated by men to suit their purpose. In such society authority was passed through the male line from father to son. So women were alienated and their plight was pitiable. The existence of female was miserable. The atmosphere of society for women was unfavorable. So as a result, women could not develop the sense of unity and couldn't participate in the activities of the world. The female writers had to struggle more than male writers to establish themselves. The male governed society laughed at women and ridiculed their arts. In Austen's time, women were entirely dependent either on their fathers or husbands. They had no distinctive identity in the society. The society was entirely guided by traditional thought.

Austen through her novels has depicted the eighteenth century beliefs of a male governed society that ignored the female existence. Jane Austen has rigid and conventional sense of values. As for social and physical discrimination, the characters in her novels face the social problems of marriage, the cultural problem, low and high classes, birth background and also gender problem. She falls under the trap of suffocating atmosphere of the society of her time. The contemporary society was highly influenced by male ideology from which she could not escape. Austen's books

express general view of life. It is the view of that eighteenth century civilization of which she was the last exquisite blossom. One might call it the moral realistic view.

Virginia Woolf writes:

Because they are literally or figuratively motherless, the daughters in Austen's fictions are early persuaded that they must look to man for security. Although their mother's example proves how debilitating marriage can be, they seek husbands in order to escape from home.

What feminists have recently called matrophobia – fear of becoming one's mother supplies one more motive to free the parental home, as does the financial necessity of competing for male protection. (125-26)

Austen has presented her female characters facing internal and external conflict due to the prevailing social restrictive pressure of tight social morality. Due to prevailing social hierarchy, she can not ignore the social norms. She can not figure for their individual identity, dignity and liberty due to the adverse social condition of her time.

In patriarchal society men defined women as other. Because of gender difference men controlled public and private world. Men with the superior concept of masculine gender oppressed women through institution such as academy, the church and the family. Each justified and reinforced women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalized a sense of inferiority to men. Women in the society consciously or unconsciously consent to their subordinate before male. They are encouraged freely to choose their inferior status and accept male exploitation as natural. Austen's characters are such kind of women. They are presented emotional and sentimental. In contrast, male characters are presented rational and intellectual. This shows Austen's acceptance of the existing patriarchal social structure. Marilyn Butler, in her book *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, concluded that Austen was a

conservative propagandist because all of her heroines got married; and thus she was implicitly endorsing the established social order.

Mary Poovey, in her book *The Proper Lady and the Women Writer*, acknowledges that Austen is aware of the limitations society imposes on women, but Poovey ultimately casts Austen as a defender of the status quo – a novelist who sees marriage “as the ideal paradigm for the most perfect fusion between the individual and society” (203). Marriage for Jane Austen is a means to study human and personal relationship.

Austen has depicted the eighteenth century beliefs of a male governed society in her novels. She has ignored distinct female identity and has presented both male and female characters in terms of the stereotypes created by patriarchy. Her depiction of both male and female characters in terms of patriarchal stereotypes reflects her internalization of the patriarchal norms and values. She has presented the male characters powerful as they have the control over all the aspects of life and female characters are submissive, weak without any resistance to powerful position of male. A kind of male hegemony works in her writings. Her writings show her acceptance of the patriarchal ethos of her time.

The purpose of this thesis will be to study how male hegemony works in Austen's novel *Persuasion* and how her female characters fall under the trap of social structure of her time, though she tries to escape from it. The study will be primarily text based.

II. FEMINISM

A MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LIBERATION

The word 'feminism' refers to the principle of asserting women's rights, independence and authority. Feminism is a part of women's movement. It is a conscious movement of the women who begin to reject their own passivity. In other word, it claims rights to women in proportion to men. The main aim of feminist movement is to develop women's personalities, to make them aware about the precarious women's existence in a patriarchal society and to advocate for the equal legal, economic, social and political rights which men have been enjoying for a long time. Arvonne S Fraser defines, "The object of Feminism was to elevate the equal rights and human rights, status of women of race, language or religion, in order to achieve equality with men in all fields of human enterprise and to eliminate all discrimination against women" (144). Feminism, therefore studies women as people who are either oppressed or suppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy are generally considered feminists. Men may also be feminists but they can not be pure feminist because of lack of femininity.

The words "Feminists" and "Feminism" are political. The feminist movement is a specific kind of political discourse that started in the late 1960s, to raise a voice against the emotional, intellectual, physical, economic, political and psychological victimization of female from the male side. Defining feminist criticism Toril Moi writes, "It is a specific kind of political discourse; a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature" (204). In the same spirit Catherine Betsey said that for the reader there is no innocent or neutral approach to literature; all interpretation is political. In

this context she further said that the feminist reader might ask how the texts represent women, what is said about gender relations and how it defines sexual differences.

Feminist movement reacted against the traditional definitions of women handed down by great philosophers, scientists, leaders and prophets. Simone de Beauvoir stated in her *Reawakening* that female sex had been subordinated through out time and contend what Aristotle and St Thomas made their definition about women. Aristotle said, "The female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities" (134). And St. Thomas added, " women is an imperfect men". She opposes it saying:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. (301)

While we talk the history of women we come to know that they have been excluded to marginality from the existing social structure. Monologist interpretation of society by men is still audible since the origin of human being. Males have been receiving the central position where as the female are thrown at the outskirts periphery. So the awakened women of a patriarchal society raised a movement named feminism in order to awake women about every institution of the male governed society that constrict their identity within a narrow boundary. The feminists did so to make women realize that they are not the secondary or complementary part of male but they are equal to men. The goal of the feminist movement is to win the equal rights. It questions such long-standing dominant male phallogocentric ideologies, patriarchal attitude and male interpretation in literature. It is the movement for the women's

freedom and struggle against patriarchy and sexism. The term “Feminism” is defined in Cheris Kramaras and Paula A Treicheer’s *Feminist Dictionary* as:

A movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex equality in all human relation; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (50)

Feminism is concerned both with representation of women in literature and with changing women’s position in society by freeing them from oppressive restraints. Unjustified is the condition under which most women live. So feminists are ultimately in pursuit of a more radical change for enlightening women of a patriarchal society that exploited women from a long history in the names of sex difference. They are in search of ‘Humanism’ rather than ‘Womanism’. Feminist literary criticism is revisionist criticism. Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar have quoted Edrine Rich in *Infection in the Sentence* and explained the process of revising as follows:

Revision, the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction, an act of survival only by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible. (1244)

Feminism, basically, is concerned with the marginalization of all women. Every institution from culture through ideology to literature is all male-made standards. These institutions are biased on the side of male. Even language is man made thing which has to be followed by women. So feminist writers attack this notion of

patriarchy to awaken women about the discrimination imposed upon women to inferiorize them from law to religion. Feminism disagrees with inferior role inflicted upon them by patriarchal culture. They talk about how to unmask the culture and challenge it through literary texts.

Feminist criticism includes a great variety of practices. English feminist criticism is oriented to textual interpretation. It focuses on women's writing. French feminist criticism is psychoanalytic. It stresses on repression. American feminist criticism is essentially textual and its focus is on expression. Nevertheless all feminists start from one fundamental perception, that is, recognition of the patriarchal structure of society, that the world is organized by men for the advantage of men. Feminists examine the experience of diversities life of women from all races, classes and cultures.

Feminism studies women as people who are either oppressed or suppressed or deprived of the freedom of personal experience. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy in favour of womanhood are generally considered feminists. Today feminists have stepped forward against male dominance in order to enhance women's right and to secure women's emancipation. In this relation, Feminism is also a political theory and practice to break the social bondage of patriarchy. Focusing on this aspect, Toril Moi states, "The word feminist or feminism are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement" (35).

Because of the diversities, the feminist criticism is no more unified. But they agree upon common ground of exposing patriarchy, examining sociocultural and psychosexual context of literature and reevaluating literature by women. So they study the contexts once believed to be 'outside'.

Mary Wollstonecraft first raised her voice in support of women's emancipation as well as women's education. She was the first feminist writer to raise her voice in favour of women through her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She argued for women to be included in the masculine project. Her aim for women was to be given access to education to the liberal model of knowledge and rationality and to enter public life. According to her, the educational system is man made. It is suited and fitted to men for their benefit that internalizes women to become emotional and sentimental women rather than play the role of rational and enlightened women. She was in favour to promote a girl's education. She was aware about the women's limitations in public and private life. She was against women's coquetry and submissiveness to men and their general irresponsibility towards themselves and their society.

Elaine Showalter was another feminist, who divided women's literary development into three distinct phases; the 'Feminine' phase (1840-1880), where they imitated the masculine role and internalized the dominant male aesthetic standard; the 'Feminist' (1880-1920), where they advocated the rights of women and protested against male norms and values; and the 'Female' phase (1920-present) was the phase of self discovery where women's experiences were their main purpose. She inspired women to take strength in their act of independence in the world and to construct a reliable map of the achievements of English women writers. She believed that women write differently not because they are different psychologically from men but because of their social experience. She entitled *Women's Writing and Women's Culture* in which she said that women have their own types of culture, body, the speaking style, the language, the capacity of thinking and behaving, all are their own sorts and male have their own. So they are naturally different.

In the historical development of Feminist theories, Virginia Woolfs' *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* and Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985) and *Feminist Literary Criticism* (1986) have heralded a new era in women's literature raising their voices for women.

These feminist critics' views on women are different, but the aim of each critics is to awake women and support them by attacking men. Literary critical theories propounded by men focus only on men, without giving any space to women. Even Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* undermines women as 'secondary' or 'other sex' while men to her is the first sex or self or autonomous being. Elaine Showalter in her *A Literature of Their Own* strongly objects to Beauvoir's treatment of women as second sex and satirizes her that if the women on earth are second sex, the women readers are also second readers,

Kate Millett developed the idea of *Sexual Politics* (1969), out of the ideas of unequal relation of domination and subordination of women by patriarchal culture. She wrote against of women's suppression and said, 'literary values and conventions have themselves been shaped by men, and women have often struggled to express their own concern [...] and male writer addresses his readers as if they are always men' (138-9). She nick-named male centered theories as patriarchal theologies for providing extreme power to men and attacked such theologies for their dominating attitude towards women and demanding more purity and femininity from them.

Betty Freidan, through her publications, stressed to abandon gender bias and enforcement of equal rights. She argued that despite most gaining female rights, women remained confined to the domestic and were still subject to many legal and customary constrains which significantly hindered their ability to access public life

and its opportunities as men did. The public worlds of politics, business and the professions still remained gendered.

Most of the societies since the remote past have been built upon the patriarchal foundation that therefore men defined the world and society. They defined every aspect of society and culture from their perspective and depicted that in the works of art and literature. The ancient mythologies have attributed some peculiar characteristics to women in the form of goddess. Apollo represents wisdom, knowledge and supremacy while Venus and Eros represent beauty, sensuality and jealousy respectively. The *Bible* is also discriminated book as it portrays women as credulous and deceiving. Women are described as to have been created from a rib of a man. The myth that women are marginal in the creation of history and civilization had profoundly affected the psychology of women and men. These mythical descriptions have pushed women into a degenerate and subordinate position. But being awakened about the miserable existence of women, feminists question all male based definitions against women and male oriented religion that marginalize women in order to create a new definition and religion where female and male will be equal.

From the origin of human beings the existence of women is miserable due to the imposed law and customs by men upon women. Women become the means to fulfill the sexual desire of men. They become the object of sex. Their roles are limited within the frame of house-works and they become the source of entertainment for men. In patriarchal society sexual differences cause sexual discrimination and repression. Because of the biological differences women have been compelled to lead a poor life. The sexual difference cause women to remain within the four walls of a house.

In patriarchal society men defined women as other and men as universal because of sex difference. The radical feminists insisted that the root of women's oppression were buried deep in patriarchy. Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* (1970) argued that sex is political primarily because male-female relationship is determined by it. Because of gender difference men controlled the public and private world. The patriarchal ideology exaggerated biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always had the 'dominate' or 'masculine' roles and that women always had the subordinate ones. This ideology became the tool for men to oppress women.

From the beginning, the world is under the control of male. Every institutions, rules and laws are men made. Everything is oriented to male because they are the product of men. By imposing these norms, rules and laws upon women, they dominate women and ignore the existence of women.

But with the development of time the movement named Feminism came into existence to deny the male culture, norms and values that undervalued women as complement part of men. The feminism as a movement aimed awakening women in all sides. Its overall goal was to develop all round personalities of women. This movement endeavored to make conscious to the women that by biological difference they are not inferior to men. They can be equal to men if they get the same education, opportunities and chances. They can do the work what men can do.

Feminist critics like Mary Wollstonecraft, Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf, and Susan Gilbert were the renowned critics to enlighten the women about the precarious existence of women in a male governed society. These feminists talked about religion, festival, education, culture, myth and literature, and so on to manifest it that these above mentioned things were the tools for

male to dominate and exploit women. They further said that with these means the patriarchal society exploit women. They proved the superiority of male and compelled women to internalize their inferiority.

By this contribution of these female writers, women in a male governed society began to understand the ways of exploitation upon them by their fathers, brothers and husbands. Being conscious, women began to realize their inferior status of women not because of their sex difference but because of male culture and values. Being awakened women, they attempted to deconstruct all male values, norms and culture in order to reshape the norms and values that will make no difference between male and female. By reconstructing and reshaping the culture they brought the marginalized women into center.

Feminists opposed the anti feminists' views which they claimed were of narrow and conservative disposition. In Austen's time the system of education was different from man to woman. The male governed society of that time desired to keep women emotional and sentimental. So the society encouraged women to read sentimental and emotional type of novel. By providing emotional and sentimental education, the male oriented society made women emotional and sentimental and then claimed that women cannot be rational and intellectual. Austen was also trapped in such educational system and produced emotional and sentimental novels blocking rational and intellectual side of women. Criticizing the patriarchal education system Mary Wollstonecraft writes:

To do everything in an orderly manner is a most important precept which women, who generally speaking, receive only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from their infancy are broken into method observe. This negligent

kind of guess work for what epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of a sort of instinctive common sense never brought to the test of reason!- prevents their generalizing matters of fact, so they do today what they did yesterday merely because they did it yesterday. (94)

Because of the male oriented social structure from the very beginning of social history, the society conceptualized that women were born hostess. Women were expected to stay at home and confine themselves to domestic duties and social graces playing music and decorating themselves for men. In a sense they were satisfied with their given status in the society. They had no idea about their secondary object like female position in the family. Stating this situation Rosemarie quotes Freidan:

According to Freidan, the feminist mystique –that is, the idea that women can find satisfaction exclusively in the traditional role of wife and mother. Deprived of meaningful goals, these women dust and polish their furniture as if they were Sisiphus rolling an enormous boulder as a steep hill only to have it roll down again. (256)

They were totally unaware about their state of being. Most of them believed that was what their natural role and duties and followed them without any complain. Not only ordinary people, even the scholars thought in the same way and helped to strengthen this concept. Austen is one of them who internalizes the patriarchal ideologies and produces her works in patriarchal pattern.

The patriarchal society thought that women were naturally inferior to men. Women internalized their subordinate position and accepted their role to be weak and passive. Their duties were to please men. They had to be useful to men and they had

to win their love. These were women's duties in ages and that were taught to women from childhood.

In the patriarchal family, responsibilities and obligations are not equally distributed. The subordination of female children and of wives is life long. Women have for millennia participated in the process of their own subordination because they have been psychologically shaped so as to internalize the roles of their own inferiority. The unawareness of their own history or struggle and achievement has been one of the major means of keeping women subordinate. There has never been any women or group of women who have lived without male protection, as far as most women know. Women have no history- so they are told; so they believe. Thus ultimately, it is male hegemony which most decisively disadvantages women.

Male hegemony has been most damaging to women and has ensured their subordinate status for millennia. Women have been managing to survive under male cultural hegemony. The denial to women of their history has reinforced their acceptance of the ideology of patriarchy and has undermined the individual women's sense of self-worth.

Hegemony is generally understood to mean domination by consent. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, but by a more subtle and inclusive power by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted.

The concept of male hegemony is not new in a patriarchal society. Women in the society consciously or unconsciously consent to their subordination before male. History is only male centered and women are completely absent. The concept of history for women is inappropriate.

Males have thought themselves as the ruler of the world. From the historical time they have made women inferior. The patriarchal society think that man's existence is possible without woman, because man is the subject, absolute whereas women is an incidental and inessential being. Rosemarie Tong quotes Millett's "*Sexual Politics*" in *Feminist Thought* about the male's superiority in patriarchal society. She writes:

Patriarchal ideology, according to Millett, exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or "masculine" roles and that women always have the subordinate, or "feminine" ones. This ideology is particularly powerful because through conditioning, men usually secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress. They do this through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalize the sense of inferiority to men. (96)

Austen also survives under male cultural hegemony, which can be clearly seen in her works. Her depiction of male and female in the traditional stereotypes pattern in her novel *Persuasion* proves her victimization of patriarchal society.

From the very beginning society has been structured according to patriarchal domination. In fact, patriarchy is the system, which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institution. Throughout the history, men have had greater power in both the public and private sphere. To maintain this power, men have created boundaries and obstacles for women, thus making harder for women to hold power. According to this concept, women are defined as lacking male authority and

male power. Men have learned how to assert and exercise power over people slightly different from themselves in the primary exchange of women. In doing so men acquire the knowledge necessary to elevate 'difference' of whatever kind into a criterion for dominance.

Power is owned by the dominant group as an attribute or property. In short men have power. With this power they create limited truth about women, who are minor group and they accept it as natural. As feminists discover the truth about power, their aim is to throw off macro structures of power that oppress women and other subordinate group. They argue that difference does not adhere in the self. It is not an inherent essence but is created by relations of power. They insist that the emphasis on gender or sexual difference is unhelpful and that women are not marginalized because they are different but made different by marginalization.

Women followed their duties made by patriarchal society without any questions and they never tried to challenge it. The modern feminist critic Virginia Woolf questioned, "whether part of the housework was her task"(34). The male structured society compelled women to think that was their destiny and women did not think necessary to revolt against this thinking. Thus , it became easy for men to convince women that their role in life was to be wives and mothers and to serve the family.

Generally women were taught piano playing and dancing in the place of real education like boys got. They were taught domestic skills such as sewing and laundry work aimed at making them good wives and mothers in the place of independent human being. Rosemarie quotes Betty Freidan in *Feminist thought* that , " Patriarchal society thinks women are ideally suited only for certain occupation teaching ,nursing, and clerking and are largely incapable of other tasks" (28). Women had to look after

their younger brothers and sisters. Women were forced to accept the secondary position assigned by patriarchy. Rosemarie quotes Adrienne Rich's in *'Women Born,* "Men, suggested Rich, have convinced women that unless a woman is a mother, she is not really a woman. Indeed , patriarchy has kept women convinced that mothering is their one and only job" (87).

In patriarchal society, females have been exploited and marginalized in every domain and women needs and interests are ignored and neglected. The law, constitutions and the executive body are biased against women. These institutions are male oriented and through these institutions females are oppressed and suppressed.

Rosemarie Tong senses the hierarchy between male and female because of biological difference. She sees domination and restriction upon women by male cultures and male oriented society. She finds women as an object for pleasing male. In such a miserable women's existence, she feels necessity to deconstruct male made culture and male oriented society in order to be free from any type of bondage. She writes:

Feminists have explicitly articulated the ways in which men have constructed female sexuality to serve not women's but man's needs, wants and interests- what women must do [.....] is to reconceive female sexuality this time in the image and likeness of women.

Although this reconception is different, it is potentially empowering.

Liberated from the procrustean bed of male defined and male controlled female sexuality, women are discovering the richness and diversity of the female body sensing within it, the power of what some formal "

Women spirit rising". (72)

Because of the patriarchal structure of society women have been involved in an age long pathos of identity crisis. Women's identity crisis has been the issue of several women writers all over the world. The bias society oppresses and suppresses women bitterly and obliges women to internalize their inferiority. But feminism awakens them to dismantle all the disciplines of patriarchal society to address the absence of women in various academic areas by uncovering women's achievement.

Feminism as a political movement, made women conscious and started questioning the long standing, dominant, male phallogentric ideologies. Feminists by awakening women tried to establish common ground. They hit hard the male centered biased attitude. The feminist movement made aware to the women that they themselves were not the reason to be unfit, but it was male's desire, not to give women any respect. The feminist movement enlightened women about their confinement within the four walls of a house. This movement made female conscious about the domestic oppression by male upon women and then, it encouraged women to challenge male oriented social structure that prevented women in public life. Making women conscious, feminist movement gave inspiration to question the assigned role of female in the society. Feminists aimed at deconstructing male made position of women in a house to make them acknowledge the reality of female power.

Feminists are alert of their existence. They desire that women should also be a part of history, and emphasize upon equality or legal reform for women's rights. In this concern, Tomasevski says, "The present day feminism is a struggle for achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control our lives and bodies within and outside the home" (34). Thus Feminism awakens women with the new idea to struggle against the male dominated society to free women from the

male trap. By enlightening the female, feminists advocate for emancipation and equality.

Feminism, as a political movement, awakened women to bring a change in the society for women's right of liberty, equality, property, education and so on. This female awareness movement helped to change the condition of women. In a patriarchy, women were constrained by society and culture. But female awareness movement encouraged women to challenge what it means to be female in a male governed society. It tried to dismantle the conventional pattern to establish nonsexist ones. The issues like identity, self individuality and freedom became the common features for feminists to awaken women.

In the time of Austen, women became trapped in a patriarchal world, a world in which male dominated female in the family and in society. Women were psychologically restrained in a very special way. There were gender defined social roles for women, which became established and institutionalized for women. These roles gave women considerable power and privileges but it depended on their attachment to men and was based, minimally, on their satisfactory performance in rendering these men sexual and reproductive services. If a woman failed to meet these demands, she was quickly replaced and thereby lost all her privileges and standing. Women had to shape their lives and act under the umbrella of patriarchy. Women were often forced to flee from one "protector" to the other, their "freedom" frequently defined only by their ability to manipulate between these protectors. Men constructed theologies based on the counterfactual metaphor of male procreativity and redefined female existence in a narrow and sexually dependent way.

In Austen's time, both men and women had internalized patriarchal stereotypes which was difficult to wash out from their mind. In *The Creation of*

Patriarchy, Gerda Lerner writes, “ As long as both men and women regard the subordination of half the human race to the other as ‘natural’, it is impossible to envision a society in which difference do not connote either dominance or subordination”(252). Living in the world in which they were devalued, women had learned to mistrust and devalue it. In such situation rather than critiquing traditional patriarchal system, they accepted it as natural and produced their writing in the same traditional patriarchal pattern. Sincerity, sacrifice and devotion were considered natural. Austen could not be an exception to resist the existing system. So her characters in the novel *Persuasion* follow the traditional roles and ignore the female dignity and identity. In the novel female characters have been considered as marginal and subordinate and complementary to masculine desire and enterprises.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

AUSTEN'S WOMEN: SUBMISSIVE FOLLOWERS OF MALE FRAMED STEREOTYPES

In Austen's novel *Persuasion*, the female existence is confined, unconscious and submissive. The female characters are traditional women. They are the submissive followers of male framed stereotypes. The novel opens with a brief history of the respected Eliot family, where Sir Walter Eliot holds power. Mrs. Eliot, a devoted wife and dutiful mother, has passed away fourteen years ago leaving Sir Walter with three daughters: Elizabeth, Anne and Mary. She was excellent in her domestic duties. As Eliot family has no son, the family fortune will pass to William Eliot upon the death of Sir Walter. Miss Eliots are disinherited from their father's property because only the male have property right in the patriarchal society. The family has hoped that their heir will marry Elizabeth but he disappoints them. Mary, the youngest daughter of the family, is married to a wealthy man Charles Musgrove. She thinks herself very important since her marriage. But she has very limited space in her family. "She had given all the honour to the family and received none" (6).

Due to the financial crisis, the family is suggested to leave Kellynch Hall for a short time and relocate in Bath. As Sir Walter holds the family power, he decides to do as he has been suggested, dismissing Anne's dislike of the city. Because she is female, she is overheard and undervalued by her father. She also can not resist male decision. Elizabeth, Sir Walter's eldest daughter, is silent follower of her father.

Eight years ago, Anne was engaged to Captain Fredrick Wentworth but due to the social and family pressure, she broke up her engagement. The patriarchal ideology manipulated her psychology in such a way that she herself thought it a degrading alliance. "She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing, indiscreet, improper" (30). She sacrificed her love for her father's reputation. She suffers

inwardly but can not go against family's decision which shows female's powerlessness in the male oriented society.

Sir Walter, Elizabeth and Mrs. Clay, widowed daughter of Mr. Shepherd, leave for Bath and Anne goes to stay with her sister, Mary, at Uppercross. There she confines herself to domestic duties assigned by the patriarchal society. She engages herself in nursing, doing house works and playing piano in the party of Uppercross. Mary, her sister, is nervous, complaining and hysteric women. She is confined in the traditional patriarchal roles. She is limited within the domestic affairs.

At Uppercross, Anne finds the Musgrove family absolutely delightful. She often entertains them through playing piano. Miss Musgroves: Henrietta and Louisa are pleased to engage themselves in the traditional female roles. They are fond of dress and fashion. They are fond of dancing and singing. "There was a family of cousins within a walk of uppercross, in less affluent circumstances, who depended on Musgroves for all their pleasure; they would come at any time, and help play at anything, or dance any where" (50).

Captain Wentworth has returned from the sea and is staying with his sister at Kellynch. He makes friend with Mr. Musgrove and becomes a daily visitor at Uppercross. Anne is anxious to see him again after such a longtime. His thought brings all her emotions forefront, but his actions towards her are merely detached and polite.

Captain Wentworth proposes that they all take a trip to Lyme to go visit his friends, the Harvilles. When they go for a morning walk on the beach, Louisa Musgrove has a bad fall and is knocked unconscious. At that time, Mary and Louisa lose their sense and become hysteric. Captain Wentworth, Charles, Harville, the male characters, control and support the female. Nursing is woman's duty in patriarchal

society. So Captain Wentworth wants Anne to stay in Lyme and nurse Louisa. He says, "You will stay, I am sure, you will stay and nurse her" (121). Anne also accepts to nurse Louisa happily. "She expressed herself most willing, ready, happy to remain" (121). This makes clear how male assigns certain roles to female and how they follow such roles willingly.

After Christmas, Lady Russell and Anne decide to rejoin the rest of the Eliot family in Bath, there Anne is formally introduced to her cousin, Mr. Eliot, her father's heir. He has made peace with his once estranged uncle, Sir Walter. Though Anne questions Mr. Eliot's motive for his sudden apology, she accepts him as a pleasing gentleman. Mr. Eliot is extraordinarily appreciative of Anne and it is soon apparent that he seeks to make her his wife. Lady Russell tries to persuade her to marry him. She thinks that he will be a perfect match for Anne and if she marries him, she will be a happy woman and will get a strong male protection. On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. Musgroves are happy for their daughters because they get a perfect match. Henrietta is engaged to her cousin Charles Hayter and Louisa will marry Captain Benwick. Anne is also happy for these two young ladies. This shows how women become happy when they get male protection. The society encourages them to seek male security and they do so. They never try to establish self identity.

Because they ignore their identity and depend on male, their lives become miserable when they lose male protection. Mrs. Smith, Anne's old school friend, has recently been widowed and fallen on the hard time. Because she loses her husband's protection, her life becomes miserable. She has not independent identity. She has the difficulties of every sort. Even she is excluded from the society. The patriarchal society made women seek male protection and made them believe that it is necessary

for them. Women also, instead of developing independent self, seek fine life partner and become happy to identify themselves with male.

From Mrs. Smith Anne learns about Mr. Eliot's hidden past. She finds out that he has mistreated Mrs. Smith and that he plans to marry her to ensure that he becomes the sole heir of Kellynch Baronetcy. Mr. Eliot fears that Sir Walter will marry Mrs. Clay, have a son and thereby deprive him of his title. He plots to ensure that he will remain Sir Walter's heir. Anne and Captain Wentworth reunite at the end. Sir Walter gives his approval to the marriage. Anne becomes happy to be a sailor's wife.

All the female characters in the novel are the followers of male framed stereotypes, who are dependent, weak, confined, suppressed, silent and obedient to patriarchal rules as the society expect them.

As Austen's society is male dominated society she does not believe that patriarchal norms and values should be discarded. Gene W Ruoff says, "she is an reflectively conservative defender of the status quo, ignorant of or choosing to ignore the ills which grow from the social systems into which she cheerfully integrates her heroine" (50). She is here invented by the patriarchal society to promote an ideal image of male stereotypes. These stereotypes are constructed entirely by the traditional patriarchal society. During the period of Austen, the English society was conservative and it was controlled and moved by male. So she is rather conservative than revolutionary. Her characters fit to the patriarchal society as they internalize the social structure of male governed society. The female and male characters of this novel adopt the roles that are given to them by patriarchal society. The female characters never feel the need to establish the identity of woman like male. C.S Lewis writes, "in *Persuasion* the heroine falls into no such self deception and passes through

no such awakening" (72). Austen's depiction of both male and female characters in terms of patriarchal stereotypes shows her male hegemonic conscience.

In the novel *Persuasion*, Austen's female characters are deprived of the property right. Females have been marginalized on the issue of property by patriarchal culture. Being members of such culture, Austen's female characters are outside from having any right in property of their father. Male characters are depicted having right to be the ownership of parental property.

Sir Walter has three daughters: Elizabeth Anne and Mary and no sons. As the patriarchal rules allow only male to inherit parental property, William Eliot will be his next heir rather than his daughters. Though they are deprived of the property right, they are unconscious about it. Rather than resisting, they are pleased and excited to see William Eliot at Lyme, their father's heir and are eager to have introduction with him. Mary clearly shows her excitement:

Bless me!' cried Mary, it must be our cousin Charles, Anne must not it? In mourning, you see just as our Mr Eliot must be How very extraordinary! In the very same inn with us! Anne must not it be our Mr. Eliot; my father's next heir?

'There! you see! cried Mary, in an ecstasy,' Just as I said! (122)

Still William Eliot has the fear of unborn son of Sir Walter rather than his three cousins. He fears that Sir Walter will marry Miss Clay, have a son and thereby deprive him of his title. Austen shows that the property of father is handed down to his son and daughters are deprived of it. Charles Musgrove is only the successor of his father though he has two sisters: Henrietta and Louisa. While talking to Mary, Charles Musgrove remarks that Charles Hayter is the successor of his father. He says:

Charles Hayter has vary fair chance through the spilers, of getting something's from the Bishop in the course of a year or two, and you will please to remember that he is the eldest son. Whenever my uncle dies, he steps into very pretty property. (80)

In the novel *Persuasion*, female characters are depicted having no power in property. They also never intend to be in power. John Wiltshire quotes Alistair Duckworth who explains: "Austen's female characters even when deprived of its social inheritance, still respond affirmatively and in traditionally sanctioned ways that deprivation need not lead to despair or to disaffection" (177). As a result they are prevented from the right of property. Their mind is shaped by the patriarchal values, so does Austen's.

The age of Austen was the age of male. So male have created and defined every institutions making beneficial to them. They have created certain stereotypes regarding male and female. Both male and female internalize those stereotypes and act as the conventional society expect them to. The society is biased against female. So gender discrimination has been seated deeply in both sex's psyche. Austen's psyche is also constructed by the patriarchal values. So many of the themes of her novels revolve around the socially assigned roles of men and women. Claude Rawson writes, "Austen's heroes are usually substantially older and wiser than the heroines and sometimes display a quasi- paternal authority over them" (251). In the novel *Persuasion*, her characters both male and female, fit the role of the stereotypical male and female. Austen clearly states, "One morning , about this time, Charles Mangrove and Captain Wentworth being gone a shooting together, as the sisters in the cottage were sitting quietly at work" (18). This shows women's confinement and men's freedom. Austen plays with the roles of men and women. She imposes patriarchal

limitations upon her female characters which shows her internalization of patriarchal stereotypes.

In the novel *Persuasion* both male and female characters have patriarchal attitude. Both internalize the patriarchal stereotypes and act accordingly. Rather than resisting male structured society, female characters accepts the existing patriarchal values and create limited space for themselves. They participate in many socially approved domestic activities. They never realize their subordinate and submissive role. On the other hand, the male characters are free to dominate and exercise power over them. Both of them are ruled by the expectation of the society rather than, by themselves. John Wiltshire writes:

That future of confinement to an unvarying limited neighborhood, supported with the spirits only of ruined happiness, sighted for a moment by Emma woodhouse from the Harlfield windows on a miserable evening in July, becomes the actual condition of the gradually disclosed heroines of *Persuasion*. (167)

Elizabeth, Anne, Mary, Mrs Smith, Henrietta, Louisa, Mrs Musgrove, Lady Russell, are the female characters of the novel *Persuasion*, through them she uncovers her male hegemonic conscience and her internalization of the patriarchal stereotypes. Austen describes, "The Mr Musgroves had their own game to guard, and to destroy; their own horses, dogs and newspaper to engage them; and the females were fully occupied in all the other common subjects of housekeeping, neighbors, dress, dancing and music" (45).

These female characters are shown in subordinate and submissive role through out the novel without resisting power. They have been marginalized and made to internalize their inferior status in this novel. Anne, the protagonist of the novel, is very much

confined to the domestic duties. Julia Prewitt Brown writes; " Anne's main failing is that she is too 'tender' and too excessively 'feminine'!" (69). She accepts male culture and values without questioning them. She believes that nursing is duty of female. She says to Mary, " I perfectly understand Mr Robinson's direction, and have no fears, and indeed, Mary I can't wonder at your husband. Nursing doesn't belong to man, it is not his province. A sick child is always the mother's property; her own feelings generally make it so" (59).

Austen here apparently points out that women in her age internalize the role of submissiveness by accepting the role of male created culture through Anne's desire to nurse the child.

Mrs Harville is another female characters, who has stayed at home with her children while Captain Harville has been sailing in quest of prizes. Lady Eliot is another female characters who was very sincere in her confined domestic duties. Austen explains, "Lady Eliot has humored, or softened , or concealed her husband failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not very happiest being in the world herself, has found enough in her duties, her friends and her children to attach her to life" (4).

The male characters in this novel have also patriarchal attitudes. They have put women into the limited space. Charles Musgrove often goes for shooting. He is indifferent towards his sick child. He thinks that it is female's duty to look after the domesticity and child. Males are not necessary in the house. They should be attached to the public spheres. Austen writes:

Charles Musgrove began consequently to feel no necessity for longer confinement. The child was to be kept in bed, and amused as quietly as possible; but what was there for a father to do ? This was quite a

female case and it would be highly absurd in him who could be of no use at home to shut himself up. His father very much wished him to meet captain Wentworth, and there being no sufficient reason against it he ought to go ; and it ended in his making a bold public declaration.

(58)

Captain Wentworth, a gallant, brave and independent naval officer thinks that, it is an evil thing to admit any lady on board or a ship. He thinks women have no right to be comfortable on board. He says, “ I hate to hear of women on board, or to see them on board; and no ship under my command, shall ever convey a family of ladies anywhere, if I can help it” (72). Through Captain Wentworth, Austen shows how male creates confinement for women.

In Austen's society, women have no independent identity. They have to depend on male for every aspects of life. Rather than let them to be independent, they are encouraged to seek male protection. So female characters, in the novel lack their independent identity. They are recognized as some body's wife and daughter like Mrs Musgrove, Mrs Charles, Lady Eliot, and Anne Eliot. Their identity is determined by male. Instead of resisting male protection, male identity to establish their own, they also manage to live under male protection and happy to attach themselves with male. Austen writes, “ Anne gloried in being a sailor's wife” (265).

Mrs Clay, Mr Shepherd's daughter is a widow. As her husband dies, she returns to her father's house. She is not independent herself. She is financially as well as socially powerless. She has to live under male protection. So she returns to her father.

Love and marriage become the means for them to seek male protection. So they are interested in the issue of marriage and love making. The female characters

search for suitable lover or marriage partner for themselves and for their daughters and friends. Henrietta and Louisa are fond of love making. Austen writes:

The Miss Hayters, the female of the family of cousins already mentioned: were apparently admitted to the honour of being in love with Captain Wentworth; and so for Henrietta and Louisa; they both seemed so entirely occupied by him that nothing but the continued appearance of the most perfect good will between themselves could have made it credible that they were not decided rivals. (75)

Henrietta and Louisa's marriage is fixed to Charles Hayters and Captain Benwick. Mr and Mrs Musgroves are very happy for this. Anne is also very happy for this. She thinks that Henrietta and Louisa are very lucky that they get such a perfect match and she says they should be very happy for this. Austen clarifies, "Such excellent parents as Mr and Mrs Musgrove exclaimed Anne, 'Should be very happy in their children's marriage. They do every thing to confer happiness; I am sure. What a blessing to young people to be in such hands'" (229).

Lady Russell is another female character who tries to encourage Anne to marry Mr Eliot. She thinks that if Anne marries him, she would be a very happy woman and their match will be a perfect match. She says to Anne, "If Mr Eliot should sometime hence pay his address to you and if you should be disposed to accept him, I think there would be every possibility of your being happy together. A most suitable connection everybody must consider it – but I think it might be very happy one. (167)

Clandia L. Johnson explains, "Lady Russell's this argument is a manifestly sentimental one whose object is to establish the priority of that most basic unit of the social structure, the patriarchal family" (148).

Austen's female characters seek male protection for themselves. As they lack individual identity, financial power and social status, they are encouraged to live under male protection. Before marriage, they live under father's security as Elizabeth, Anne, Henrietta and Louisa do. And after marriage, they live under husband's security as Mary, Mrs Mansgrove and Mrs Croft do. But if they lose male protection, their life will be miserable because of lack money and social status. Mrs Smith is a widow whose life becomes miserable and pathetic after her husband's death. She was married to rich Mr Smith. But due to the betrayal of Mr Eliot, he lost every thing and died in sorrow. Mrs smith, who is fully dependent on her husband, is now a miserable woman. Her accommodations are limited to a noisy parlour and a dark bedroom.

Austen reveals:

She was a widow, and poor. Her husband had been extravagant; and at his death; about two years before, had left his affairs dreadfully involves. She had had difficulties of every sort to contend with, and in addition to these distresses, had been afflicted with a severe rheumatic fever, which finally settling in her legs, had made her for the present a cripple. She had come to bath on that account and was now in lodgings near the hot baths living in a very humble way, unable even to afford herself the comfort of a servant and of course almost excluded from society. (59-60)

All these female characters internalize male values that male protection is necessary for female to live happily in the society. Male values never let them to have independent life rather these values make them dependent to male. They never realize male's violence upon them. They never realize that these male values prevent them from being independent and encourage them to depend on male.

Sex difference has determined the role of women as complementary being of male. Women characters of the novel internalize the male constructed ideology of sex difference. They are happy to remain being feminine. Therefore they are interested in dancing and singing as well as they are fond of in dress and beauty making. They become an object to please men through these acts. They become an object of physical attraction. Male characters also want them to live as conventional women. Rather than in women's intelligence and ability, they are interested in women's beauty and admire them in regard to their outlook. Sir Walter, one male character in the novel, gives importance to women's beauty than to mind. He has three daughters. Among them, his eldest daughter Elizabeth is dear to him because she is very handsome. His two other children are of very inferior value for him. He has little to admire Anne Eliot as her bloom has vanished early. Austen writes, " Anne haggard' Mary cause every face in the neighborhood worsting and the rapid increase of the crow's foot about lady Russell's temples had long been a distress to him" (6).

The female Characters, Elizabeth, Henrietta and Louisa are fond of dress, fashion and beauty making. They are very conscious on their outlook. Though nine and twenty Elizabeth is fully satisfied of being still quite as handsome as ever. Henrietta and Louisa have been brought from school and now they are living happy life as the fashionable girls. As Austen says:

Henrietta and Louisa, young ladies of nineteen and twenty, had brought from a school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishment, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy and merry. Their dress had every advantage their faces were rather pretty. (43)

In the novel, female characters are employed in their social duties. Anne plays piano to serve other's pleasure and support their entertainment. She feels pleasant to be in service of others through her piano. Austen explains' "The evening ended with dancing. On its being proposed, Anne offered her service as usual, and through her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she sat at the instrument. She was extremely glad to be employed and describe nothing in return but to be unobserved" (75).

The patriarchal society creates certain stereotypes which become the means for male to exercise their power over female and to dominate them. They put themselves in the superior position and define themselves as rational, powerful, practical, independent, bold and so on. On the other hand, they put female in the inferior position and define them as nervous, weak, hysterical, complaining, shy easily persuadable and so on. As Austen's society was also male oriented, she has internalized these male made stereotypes and depicts her female characters accordingly.

Anne, one of the female characters in the novel, is easily persuaded by the disapproval of her father and of lady Russell to end her engagement with captain Wentworth. Such advice is against her initial decision but she believes it right. Seven years later she regrets her decision to break the engagement. After seven years, she often meet Captain Wentworth at Uppercross but feels uneasy, nervous and shy when she meet him. She even can not eat properly when she meets him. Neither can she raise her eyes and head before Captain Wentworth. Austen describes, "Her eyes half met Captain Wentworth; a bow; a curtsy passed" (63). This line shows Anne's shyness. She feels nervous before Captain Wentworth and feels a kinds of relief when he is out of her sight. Austen writes; "It is over it is over / she repeated to herself again and again, in nervous gratitude. The worst is over!" (63).

Mary and Henrietta are depicted hysterical, weak, nervous and insensitive characters where as Benwick and Charles Musgrove are depicted bold and supportive characters. Louisa has a bad fall at Lyme and she almost lost her consciousness. At that time, instead of holding sense, Mary and Henrietta lose their own sense and become horrified. They themselves become hysterical Austen explains:

Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arm, looking on her with a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. ‘ She is dead ! she is dead !’ screamed Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him immovable' and in another moment, Henrietta , sinking under the convictions, lost her sense too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who caught and supported her. (116)

This shows how Henrietta and Mary grow calmer but male characters become supportive to female characters. Austen, through the depiction of male and female characters in the framework of patriarchal ideology of her time, reveals her internalization of the patriarchal ideology of her time.

These all incidents of the novel make us clear that woman’s self in Austen’s novel is constructed by the will of male in the society. Their identity and marriage are fixed by the patriarchal society. They remain as the society wished for them. They have been largely deprived and been kept isolated in homes for domestic works because of biological difference. The male constructed norms, cultures and education benefitted men to discriminate woman.

In the novel, the characters thought has been imprisoned in a confining and erroneous patriarchal framework. The patriarchal rules and regulation have profoundly affected the psychology of male and female characters. Female characters

have confined domestic space. They are depicted as dutiful daughters and submissive wives. Throughout the novel the female characters adopt the roles and internalize the stereotypes that were given to them by the patriarchal society. Neither they feel the need to establish the identity of women nor they dare to protest against patriarchy.

Julia Prewitt Brown writes: “there are no apocalyptic ending in Jane Austen’s novel; there is never a revolution; the heroine is never completely enlightened” (79).

Austen’s presentation of the characters in terms of patriarchal stereotypes shows her internalization of patriarchal ideology.

IV. CONCLUSION

Jane Austen took a stratified society absolutely for granted and presented the female powerlessness, the injustice of eighteenth and nineteenth century patriarchal society and the suppressed individualism of female. In her novel, Austen depicts the weakness of women, who are easily influenced by the patriarchal ideology.

The issue of male hegemony is the important theme in *Persuasion*. Jane Austen's society was dominated by patriarchal social conventions. Austen, in *Persuasion*, brings back the old values. She is not revolutionary. She has respect for the patriarchal ideology and stereotypes. She is conservative in her respect for patriarchal norms and values. There are certain rules and limitations for women in the male governed society. There are certain stereotypes attach to male and female. Being a member of such society, she can not undermine the gender based patriarchal ideology. Rather, she accepts the existing social norm that has mastered men to dominate women. Her advocacy for patriarchal values and stereotypes reflects her internalization of the male hegemonic conscience.

Jane Austen presents her ideas through the medium of her characters. Each male and female character in the novel longs to live under the patriarchal ideology. Their ways of working and behaving is like ancient ones. Female characters are happy to indulge themselves in the woman roles, the patriarchal society gave them. Both male and female characters value the existing male oriented culture, norms and stereotypes greatly.

Anne, the protagonist of the novel, is easily persuaded to break off her engagement with Captain Wentworth eight years before. Due to the social and family pressure, she believes that it is right for her to allow herself to be persuaded. She concludes that a strong sense of duty is no bad part of woman's portion. Having been

persuaded to break off her engagement with a man whom she still loves, she wears her sadness and deprivation in her prematurely aging body and face. She suffers inwardly but lacks energy to persist. She assigns herself to the patriarchal female roles such as playing piano, nursing, engaging herself to the domestic duties at Uppercross and Lyme. She values herself and is valued by other in these conventional feminine roles.

Other female characters are also depicted engaging themselves in the conventional feminine roles. They have passion for dress, fashion, dancing and music rather than labouring for rationality and intelligence. Miss Musgroves are complaining, nervous and hysteric women. They are fond of dress, dancing and love making. Elizabeth is conscious of her beauty and youth. Anne often entertains others through playing piano. Rather than developing personality as equal to male, Austen's female characters engage themselves in the existing male oriented culture, value and roles.

Austen's female characters are deprived of the property right. Their involvement in the public affairs and professions is not allowed. They can not resist against this. Rather they accept their confinement and follow the traditional women's role as patriarchal society demands them. Charles Musgrove's announcement that 'his son's dislocated collarbone is the female case which will not prevent him dining out to meet Captain Wentworth' and Captain Wentworth's unwillingness to admit ladies on board ship, show how the male characters create confinement to the female, and Anne's mild declaration that 'nursing does not belong to a man', and 'a sick child is always the mother's property', make clear how Austen's female characters accept the male created confinement.

Feminism, as a female awakening movement, developed only after 1960s. Before this, female were unaware about the male domination upon them. And even if they were aware, they had no power to revolt against the patriarchy. They managed to live under the umbrella of patriarchy. Patriarchy created a limited domestic boundary for them and they were made to believe that it was their duty. Austen is a female of such period. During her time, women were neglected mentally, economically and physically by the society. Their involvement in the public affairs were not acceptable to the patriarchal authority. Being female, Austen herself falls under the trap of social structure of her time. She can not break the social hierarchy. She can not promote her female characters from their general status. Rather they are dominated by the social conventions and conservative rules. Her female characters are the ordinary women of farm, of kitchen and of arts rather than other professions. They are submissive characters rather than rebellious. They lack freedom, equality, liberty and dignity. Therefore, Austen can not deviate herself from the conventional pattern of showing that female are weak, submissive and subordinate to patriarchy.

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