CHAPTER III

IRONY THROUGH JUXTAPOSITION OF CHARACTERS
The term juxtaposition, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English is "to place people or things next to each other or very close together, esp to show a contrast: ...". Herein, characters have been juxtaposed so as to reveal their ironic importance in the novels.

No doubt, the technique of juxtapositioning the characters or situations provides the most favourable opportunity to the ironist for bringing out 'life's little ironies'. Both Jane Austen and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala prove their ironic temper to perfection by exploiting this opportunity to reveal a constant irony found in their novels. This is perhaps the main reason of their popularity.

Either to create humour or to establish some moral norm in the context of the social reality, both situations are executed through the juxtaposition of different characters in the same or variegated situations. However, in Jhabvala's novels the characters are juxtaposed in another context too; that is, the placement of the Eastern and Western characters in the light of the cultural clash.

II

IRONY THROUGH JUXTAPOSITION OF CHARACTERS IN JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS

Jane Austen's irony arising out of juxtaposition of characters is comic in mode, humorous in tone, moral in purpose and above all, most remarkably entertaining throughout the novel. No doubt, it requires a master hand in the art of characterisation.
And Jane Austen's delineation of characters is so natural, alive and vivid that sometimes it is compared to that of Shakespeare. George Henry Lewes, for example, points out:

... instead of description, the common and easy resource of novelists, she has the rare and difficult art of dramatic presentation: instead of telling us what her characters are, and what they feel, she presents the people, and they reveal themselves. In this she has never perhaps been surpassed, not even by Shakespeare himself.²

As it is already known, Jane Austen largely concentrates on female characters, as hers is a woman's world. A woman portrays woman. And there, "The heroines", as suggested by Atma Ram, "are described and studied in contrast with other characters in relation to the same or similar situations".³ This contrast can be categorized into two types: In the first type her heroines are juxtaposed with two male suitors who are further juxtaposed with each other, mostly, in contrastive shades — one good and one bad. While in the other way, every heroine has one person of her own sex to highlight her contrastive qualities through employing the technique of irony. Prof. Andrew H. Wright brings out this fact well:

Marianne's affections are vied for by Willoughby and by Colonel Brandon—though Elinor's attachment is to but one person, Edward Ferrars; Elizabeth must (briefly) decide between Wickham and Darcy; Catherine is beleaguered by John Thorpe, while she loves Henry Tilney; Fanny is importuned by Henry Crawford, though her heart belongs to Edmund; Emma considers Frank Churchill, but she is always, rather unconsciously, in love with Mr. Knightley; while Anne, though her heart remains true to Captain Wentworth, must endure the attentions of William Walter Elliot. In short there is a very definite pattern in each of Jane Austen's novels—....⁴

Further, the two suitors who "play definitely secondary role.... by complement or contrast, serve, thematically, to deepen and broaden the portraits of the heroines."⁵ However, the different shades of her heroes and villains become ironical when she imparts a romantic and attractive personality to the villains while heroes are introduced as prosaic and straightforward.

Further, the ironic colour deepens when, at the beginning, it seems that the heroines will choose these villainous characters as their suitors but the reader gradually realizes the ironist's scheme. The heroines finally choose the reserved or witty heroes having acquired self-realization after going through several ironic situations.
At the same time, the heroine is also contrasted or compared with another female character, which is her favourite technique of characterization by making an implied comparison, through an intimate relationship either as "sisters" or as "friends" or even as "rivals" and thereby to display ironic revelation of different shades of human nature. Dr. Chapman rightly observes:

... each heroine is furnished with a pendant, rival, or foil; Marianne with Eleanor, Elizabeth with Jane, Catherine with Isabella, Fanny with Mary, Emma with Jane; Anne Elliot,... has two foils... [Elizabeth and Mary].

Dr. Chapman's observation can be substantiated by giving the example of Catherine, who is contrasted with Isabella and Miss Tilney. There is no doubt that all these juxtaposed characters commonly placed with the heroine merge into a constant irony which is achieved through self-knowledge. This irony eventually establishes Jane Austen's moral norms which leads to fresh views, reactions; and also, brings to the fore the virtuous and noble nature of good persons by highlighting the dark shades of mean or unfeeling people.

The present chapter is concerned with a study of irony which stems through such juxtaposed characters in comparative and contrastive situations.

III

The highly amusing and most entertaining irony emerges in the novels Northanger Abbey and Emma by employing the common technique of placing the ignorant, self-deceptive and misled heroines, Catherine Morland and Emma in contrast to the open-minded, straight-forward, dominant, brilliant and witty heroes, Henry Tilney and Mr. Knightley.

Mr. Knightley in Emma and Henry Tilney in Northanger Abbey are mentor-lovers who voice Jane Austen's moral philosophy, which is enriched in ironical tones and humour when it is placed against the ignorant minds of the girls who tumble from one mistake to another. On the other hand, the female counterparts like Miss Tilney and Jane Fairfax or Isabella Thorpe and Mrs. Elton deepen the ironic contrast when they are placed with their "good sense" or "moral weakness" respectively — against these deluded heroines. It paves the way to the resulting irony which discloses the fact that it is not only the "good sense" or "candour" but also the "moral weakness" and
"deception" which educate the illusioned heroines and open their eyes to see the reality as it is.

Undoubtedly, the other characters like John Thorpe, Frank Churchill or Mr. Elton contribute to the same with their apparent rosy coloured personality as contrasted to that of the prosaic and straightforward heroes.

_Northanger Abbey_ provides a perennial source of ironic humour when the simple, innocent and credulous Catherine Morland, susceptible to Gothic fantasies, interacts with the witty, intelligent and clear-visioned Henry Tilney. On their visit to Northanger Abbey, Henry mocks in an ironic tone, at Catherine’s fantasy and impatience to see the Abbey. Jane Austen writes:

He Smiled, and said, ‘You have formed a very favourable idea of the abbey’. ‘To be sure I have. Is not it a fine old place, just like what one reads about?’ ‘And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as “what one reads about” may produce?—Have you a stout heart?—Nerves fit for sliding panels and tapestry?’ ‘Oh! yes—I do not think I should be easily frightened, …’

The ironic smile deepens with the Austenian comment that Catherine finds the Abbey “very unlike the one which Henry had endeavoured to alarm her by the description of.—It was by no means unreasonably large, and contained neither tapestry nor velvet” (p. 794).

The ironic contrast of the two not only amuses but also states Jane Austen’s moral views. When Catherine’s illusion-filled mind makes her believe that General Tilney must have killed his wife or imprisoned her somewhere in the Abbey like a Gothic fantasy; Henry comes to chasten her with his stern moral voice:

‘Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you—... Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?’ (p. 821)

Prof. Andrew H. Wright brings out Jane Austen’s real intention behind this contrast when he says that Henry Tilney’s “function throughout the novel is not only to
provide by his cleverness... a sharp contrast to the 'goosish' heroine, but to take over as leading proponent of Jane Austen's viewpoint, whenever circumstances require". In fact when Jane Austen juxtaposes the two protagonists in contrast, Catherine Morland is introduced as 'the most unheroic heroine'—"Catherine is the anti-heroine..."— unlike other Austenian heroines while Henry Tilney emerges, ironically enough, as the most dominating hero of a woman novelist—"the only one who ever threatens the primacy of a heroine."

Thus, the first juxtaposed characters of Henry and Catherine complete her first education in good sense. But she still has to learn the limitation of this newly acquired good sense and that real life is much more complex than that of fiction. This education is done by another juxtaposition of Thorpes with Catherine and Tilneys. Isabella Thorpe and Miss Tilney come as "friend" in Catherine's life. Both stand at two extremes — Isabella, an embodiment of 'treachery' while Miss Tilney, an embodiment of 'good sense'. "Isabella Thorpe", in Norman Sherry's words, "is the conventional friend of the heroine of the popular novel who supports her, confides in her, and helps her... But underneath is the shrewd, calculating, vulgar young woman looking out for a husband with money and not too particular about how she gets him". Such a shrewd girl is contrasted with the innocent, credulous, artless and guileless Catherine which provides Jane Austen with ample opportunity to expose the ironic contradictions of life. Isabella Thorpe's disloyalty to both Catherine and her brother shocks Catherine intensely. She realizes that real life has its own perplexities. But Henry and Miss Tilney's affectionate care puts her out of this agony. The ironical turn takes place when the simple, credulous and immature Catherine is no more deceived by Isabella's second letter, which tells Isabella's intention of returning back to James Morland. She knows that it is not love but selfish interest, which guides Isabella.

Miss Tilney's candid and mature nature, on the other hand, teaches immature and wild Catherine the importance of sensibility and good sense in life. This is what helps her to come out of real life sufferings like her expulsion from the Abbey or Isabella's treachery. And eventually she emerges as a mature, sensible and candid girl.

Thus, these two juxtapositions result in an aesthetic irony in the sense that Isabella starting from being a Gothic confidante ends as an Austenian villain. Norman Sherry terms her "the anti-confidante and the real-life social climber." While Miss Tilney starts from real life character, ends close to a fictional heroine. In Norman Sherry's words:
Yet Miss Tilney is just a little too good to be true, and ironically, in this way, approximates most closely to the fictional heroine.¹³

Jane Austen's double irony is revealed here in the fact that both Miss Tilney's "good sense" and Isabella's wickedness and hypocrisy complete Catherine's education.

The same irony is observed in the juxtaposed characters of Henry Tilney and John Thorpe. However, John Thorpe's character is not much developed, and he is the weakest Austenian villain. Nonetheless "John Thorpe", as Andrew H. Wright observes, "contrasts sharply with Henry Tilney in being gross where the latter is refined, stupid rather than brilliant, boorish rather than elegant,..."¹⁴ The very introduction of the two is done in a sharply contrasting mode. Henry Tilney is introduced by Jane Austen in the following way:

...[He] was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it. His address was good,... (p. 689).

This introduction contrasts with that of Thorpe:

He was a stout young man of middling height, who, with a plain face and ungraceful form, seemed fearful of being too handsome unless he wore the dress of a groom... (p. 704).

Henry Tilney, in spite of ridiculing her fancy, is sympathetic towards Catherine. He is, as Robert Liddell calls him, "a mixture of banter and true kindness,... [who helps] her to know herself,..."¹⁵ While, John Thorpe always bullies Catherine, teases her and even lies to General Tilney about her belonging which leads to a tragedy in Catherine's life. But Jane Austen uses the same irony when, despite their different approach, they both "function principally to sharpen and define the position, the personality, and the development of the heroine"¹⁶, as has been suggested by Prof. Wright.

Like Northanger Abbey, in Emma too, Jane Austen places the ignorant and self-deluded heroine in contrast with her mentor-lover. However, Emma goes beyond simple ironical contrast to a subtle and psychological problem. This complex subject is delineated by placing the central character Emma in contrast or comparison with various characters of different shades. This forms, consequently, a web-like
juxtaposition of different characters, which ultimately results in the most amusing irony. Moreover, all these characters directly or indirectly contribute to the disillusionment of Emma Woodhouse.

Emma Woodhouse and Mr. Knightley repeat the combination of Catherine and Henry. Like Henry, Mr. Knightley voices the author’s moral views, as he pulls Emma up for her folly and fanciful imagination of match-making. Norman Sherry quite aptly brings out the contrast between them:

True, Emma is blind to the truth of her own and others’ situations, Mr. Knightley is not; Emma acts often without principle or on wrong principle, Mr. Knightley often points out to her lack of principle, and himself embodies right principle;...17

Thus, in the fanciful world of Emma, Mr. Knightley turns up with his vision of reality who tries to open Emma’s eyes to see the reality. Emma’s endeavours to uplift the status of Harriet; her attempts to match her with Mr. Elton; her fancy of Jane’s involvement with Mr. Dixon or her own temporary involvement with charming and attractive Mr. Frank Churchill, in all these matters Jane Austen establishes a contrastive set-up by bringing Mr. Knightley in the way of Emma. He always goes against her fanciful imagination so that she can come out of her illusory world and see the reality. And in this struggle between imagination and reality, of Mr. Knightley’s blunt admonishings and Emma’s arguments, the most amusing and ironical result is Emma’s realization of her love for the senior man. And, to some extent, it also leads Mr. Knightley to the realization of his love for Emma or, rather, his mustering enough courage to confess his love for Emma.

Jane Austen not only contrasts her characters but makes a comparative study of them as well. Through this method, “She pin-points”, as suggested by Gilbert Ryle, “the exact quality of character in which she is interested, and the exact degree of that quality, by matching it against the same quality in different degrees,...”18

This symbolic relationship of the contrasting-comparative kind is evident in the Emma-Jane Fairfax relationship. Mark Schorer writes in his article: “... they are alike in many ways—age, station, accomplishments.”19 Thus, apparently the reader thinks that they can become friends while in reality they turn out to be rivals, because of the sharp difference in a few aspects of their character.
Emma with her free and domineering spirit, as well as her ignorance of the nature of passionate love is juxtaposed with Jane Fairfax with her self-complacent, cold, reserve behaviour as well as want of money who has "a genuine commitment to passion, a woman torn by feeling, and feeling directed at an object not entirely worthy." Emma's "natural, unaffected, open relationships with Mr. Knightley and Frank Churchill contrast with the obscure mystery that surrounds Jane;..." This is one trait that differs in them so intensely that it carries them ironically to the two opposite extremes of each other — to be the most unsuited companions for each other. Yasmine Gooneratne brings out this point in the following words:

... each turns for companionship to the other's (and her own) opposite — Emma to Harriet, Jane to Mrs. Elton. Emma rules Harriet, Mrs. Elton patronises Jane. The indifference and dislike that prevail among the members of this quartet are only thinly covered by the requirements of social politeness.

This multifaceted irony colours the relationship of these four characters. Instead of being friends Emma and Jane turn into enemies. Besides this, Jane Austen's planned irony exploits this situation to make another contrastive relationship between Emma and Harriet and Mrs. Elton and Jane Fairfax where the domineering characters (Emma & Mrs. Elton) and their protégées (Harriet & Jane) contrast with each other. It is obvious that weaving of such a complex plot results in an unprecedentedly amusing irony.

Emma Woodhouse and Harriet are juxtaposed mainly on intellectual grounds. Emma's wit, intellectual superiority, her charming personality and free temper is quite in contrast to Harriet's inferiority both at the intellectual level as well as the social. Still they are linked with a true sense of affection and love. But this bond cannot deny Emma's desire to boss her which results in an astonishing irony when Harriet confesses her love for Mr. Knightley. This is the most shocking and humiliating moment of Emma's life.

On the other hand, Mrs. Elton and Jane Fairfax also contrast with each other in their intentions. Jane has no affectionate heart nor can she show superficial love for anyone. While Mrs. Elton is an affectionate and pompous lady who patronises Jane in order to raise her status higher more especially in front of Emma. But ironically Jane too goes beyond her expectation when her secret relationship with Frank Churchill is revealed.
This is how, on the same grounds, Mrs. Elton and Emma are juxtaposed by the author. They both patronise two girls to improve their lives, still, they’re opposite to each other in their intentions. "Mrs. Elton", in Norman Sherry’s words, "is a kind of unpleasant reflection of Emma. She is conceited, self-important, a snob and social climber." She patronises Jane to satisfy her selfish vulgarity and officiousness, while Emma, despite her vanity and governing spirit, seems superior, sympathetic and innocent in managing Harriet’s life. This complicated juxtaposition of the two governesses culminates into the amusing end of their companionship with their protégées with an ironical turn when Jane unites with Frank, instead of joining the job of governess brought forth by Mrs. Elton; while Harriet marries Robert Martin in spite of Emma’s utter dislike of his inferior society. Thus, Jane Austen’s irony weaving its pattern through the four juxtaposed characters becomes a source of amusement where neither Jane Fairfax nor Harriet derive much real assistance from their eager patrons.

Emma’s final education is completed by her placement with three suitors—Mr. Elton, Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley. In other words, Mr. Knightley is placed side by side with Mr. Elton and Frank and is proved to be superior to both of them—both intellectually and morally. He loves Emma neither for her social status nor for any selfish reason. He loves Emma for her affectionate heart and inner beauty. He neither flatters Emma nor flirts with her by encouraging her fantasy. On the contrary, he always rebukes her and warns her against giving free reign to her fancy.

Jane Austen sets up a highly interesting and comic situation in terms of the three suitors of Emma. Mr. Elton, according to Emma’s strategy, should love Harriet but, ironically enough, he is found to be in love with Emma herself. Secondly Frank Churchill captures Emma’s fancy and she thinks him fit to be her life-partner. He encourages her in her fantasy. But a humiliating secret leaves Emma shocked when she realizes that Frank was using her as a shield to hide his relationship with Jane Fairfax. But the most interesting irony takes place when eventually Emma learns that it is Mr. Knightley who is close to her heart despite all his rebukes and arguments.

Thus, Jane Austen ends the novel once again with the comic irony, which brings the two right persons into marital relationship.
After *Northanger Abbey* and *Emma* Jane Austen establishes a double theme in the form of a juxtaposition of the head and the heart or 'reason' and 'passion'. In her next two novels *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen sets out to show two different and entirely contrasted protagonists in juxtaposition in order to reveal an essential irony between 'sense' and 'sensibility' or between 'pride' and 'prejudice'. Robert Liddell finds a close affinity in these two novels in this regard:

The two novels have many similarities of pattern and theme. Each is the story of two mutually devoted sisters who, after various vicissitudes, both make happy marriages...\(^{24}\)

Both the novels are the stories of the two mutually contrasted sisters. Elinor and Jane as the 'Candid' sisters are juxtaposed with one another. Robert Liddell writes:

...the 'candid' sister (Elinor or Jane) is united to the man whom she loved from the beginning of the book.\(^{25}\)

But an interesting irony is pointed out by Liddell when he observes:

The 'uncandid' sister (Marianne or Elizabeth) is punished by being imposed on by an anti-hero (Willoughby or Wickham), but ends by making an advantageous marriage with a worthy man (Brandon or Darcy). ... later Willoughby is finished off by a mercenary marriage and Wickham by an immoral marriage.\(^{26}\)

*Northanger Abbey* was a satire on Gothic fiction while *Sense and Sensibility* is a satire on romantic sensibility. Here Marianne takes up the role of Jane Austen's target. She is blinded by her romantic notions of sentimental novels. But here she is juxtaposed not to any mentor-lover but to her sister who becomes the voice of Jane Austen's moral norms. Thus, these two sisters are juxtaposed with each other to compare and contrast the value of 'sense' and 'sensibility'. Jane Austen introduces this contrast at the very beginning of the novel *Sense and Sensibility*:

Marianne's abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor's. She was sensible and clever; but eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent.\(^{27}\)
Elinor, on the other hand, "possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgement, ... and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: ... (p. 6). This parallel delineation of the two runs throughout the story.

At the death of their father, Marianne comes out with "excess of sensitivity", while Elinor's behaviour is rational in controlling the situation; Marianne expresses impatience and impertinence with Mrs. Jennings' foolishness while Elinor shows polished and good sense in tolerating her vulgarity. The difference becomes all the more evident in the way the two sisters handle their love life. Marianne's falling in love with Willoughby in the tradition of the sentimental novel with exuberant expression of feelings and emotions is juxtaposed sharply with Elinor's restrained, and "heroic self command" in her relationship with Edward Ferrars. Moreover, it is the moment of their disappointment in love, where the difference in temperament of the two sisters reaches its peak and takes an ironical turn thereafter. Yasmine Gooneratne writes:

Each has made that discovery in the presence of a watchful adversary: Marianne meets her former lover, Willoughby, in the company of his future wife at an evening party, Elinor is forced into the role of confidante by her rival for the affections of Edward Ferrars, Lucy Steele.29

In this situation both sisters react differently:

'No, no,' cried Marianne, 'misery such as mine has no pride. I care not who knows that I am wretched. ... I must feel—I must be wretched—and they are welcome to enjoy the consciousness of it that can' (p. 142).

On the contrary;

Elinor saw that it was his hand, ... for a few moments, she was almost overcome—... but exertion was indispensably necessary, and she struggled so resolutely against the oppression of her feelings, that her success was speedy, and for the time complete (p. 105).

Such juxtaposed approach to the failure in love of the two sisters ends with remarkable ironical twist, which carries the book beyond the satirical walls to the open sky of universal symbol of life to prove that both sense and sensibility are equally important in life. Thus, Marianne, the object of Jane Austen's satire moves towards acquiring sense while Elinor is found gaining in sensitivity. Prof. Andrew H. Wright writes:
And the grand irony is that Elinor and Marianne virtually interchange their positions....: Marianne, it is quite clear, does gradually acquire sense, but it is also true that Elinor becomes increasingly sensitive as the book progresses. So the two elder Dashwood sisters function not as mere allegorical figures but as ironic symbols. 29

Thus, Marianne makes a prosaic marriage with Col. Brandon while Elinor marries Edward after having undergone many melodramatic phases in their life.

Like other novels, Jane Austen juxtaposes the two male suitors in this novel too, in order to establish her moral norms through comic irony. Willoughby is introduced as a 'sentimental' hero—dashing, passionate, enthusiastic rescuing Marianne on the first meeting; while Edward Ferrars is introduced as an Austenian hero — sensible, reserved and affectionate. This juxtaposition of the two male suitors is basically intended to mark a parallel plot with the two sisters. Prof. Wright remarks:

The interaction between the future husband of Elinor Dashwood and the man who trifles with Marianne's affections offers a sharp contrast which is, in turn, meant to draw a parallel between the two sisters themselves. 30

And this parallel plot is formed with the two juxtaposed couples:

Elinor's caution and Edwards' reserve are opposed to Marianne's impetuosity and Willoughby's out-spokenness. 31

But Jane Austen's implicit irony exists in these juxtaposed characters' behaviour when the sentimental relationship breaks down into pieces of sorrow while the cold-reserved pair is finally rewarded with marriage. This is how Willoughby, the sentimental hero and Edward, the sensible hero after forming a contrast to teach Marianne and Elinor the importance of 'sense' and 'sensibility' respectively. And this is done by an ironical turn in these two male suitors' approach to their love. As Willoughby who is introduced as sentimental hero of love and romance ends up as an Austenian villain by seducing Colonel Brandon's ward and leaving Marianne to deep sorrow to marry a woman of fortune. While Edward Ferrars, who is introduced as an Austenian hero, deviates towards sentimentalism when he insists on marrying Lucy without love or money to honour his promise. However, with the passage of time, he, acquiring "good sense", marries prudent Elinor.
This is how through contrastive setting up of the characters Jane Austen exposes the implicit irony of life.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's favourite technique of juxtaposing the characters and situations deepens the complexity of her heroine, Elizabeth Bennet. Though, in this novel too, two sisters make a contrastive pair — the 'candid' Jane and the 'uncandid' Elizabeth—unlike Marianne, Elizabeth Bennet is a much more charming and appealing character on account of being witty, intelligent and keeping 'a large proportion of Elinor's good sense'.

Elizabeth’s witty and challenging temper is contrasted with the humble and amiable nature of Jane Bennet in the very beginning of the novel when Elizabeth speaks to Jane:

‘... You never see a fault in anybody. All the world is good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.'

...

‘...But to be candid without ostentation or design—... belongs to you alone. ...'32

The ironist plays her own irony out of these two juxtaposed characters when both Elizabeth and Jane suffer equally in their relationships with Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley respectively, despite their contrastive approach to their relationship with them.

But the most important juxtaposition of the novel, is none other but of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet representing the clash of two dominant character traits of 'pride' and 'prejudice'.

The ironic comedy appears whenever they are face to face. Elizabeth's loveliness, individualism, open temperament; bold and vivid nature falls into sharp contrast to Mr. Darcy's excessive cold, reserve and class-conscious personality. The artistic irony follows the conflict of these two opposite personalities when Elizabeth who has been moving from dislike to hatred in her feelings towards Darcy, he finds his original indifference to her beauty changing to admiration. Elizabeth, who puts her fight against Mr. Darcy's pride, finally convinces her father that his pride is not improper. Thus, the ironical importance of this juxtaposition is the journey, which starts with conflict, confrontation and misunderstanding finally culminates into acceptance of one's pride and the other's inferior background.
As in the other novels, the ironic perplexities are very obvious in this novel too when Elizabeth grapples with two male suitors. George Wickham and Mr. Darcy are juxtaposed to bring out Jane Austen’s moral views. They are the “perfect agents of illusionment [of Elizabeth], and thus of the ironic theme, in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth is put off by Darcy’s rudeness; her vanity is piqued: ...”33 “George Wickham is at once the most plausible and the most villainous of Jane Austen’s anti-heroes: he is handsome, persuasive, personable; disingenuous, calculating, and dishonourable.”34 He, thus, succeeds in persuading Elizabeth against Darcy who is the exact opposite to him—proud, straightforward, reserved and uncalculating.

Elizabeth is first misled by Wickham’s pretended “candour”. But disillusionment follows when she learns of Lydia’s elopement with him and the villainous and shameless condition he lays down for marrying her. This completes the ironic reversal as far as Elizabeth is concerned.

To complete the delineation of Darcy’s character Jane Austen has juxtaposed him with another ‘extreme’, which is found in Mr. Bingley’s character. Prof. Wright highlights the juxtaposition of Darcy and Bingley in the following words:

Bingley and Darcy are sharply contrasted from the very beginning—the former has ‘a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners’, the latter, a ‘fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien... [but] he was discovered to be proud...’ Bingley is remarkable for ‘easiness, openness, ductility of... temper’, while Darcy is ‘haughty, reserved, and fastidious, and his manners, though well bred, were not inviting’.35

This contrast is very similar to that of Elizabeth and Jane. Jane and Mr. Bingley possess what Jane Austen regards as Christian moral traits (candour), while Elizabeth and Darcy have to learn it and get rid of their pride, rudeness and prejudices.

Mordecai Marcus studies the juxtaposition of the various characters with Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in terms of a different ironical significance. According to him, “the relationships between Collins and Charlotte, Wickham and Lydia, and Bingley and Jane function, sometimes ironically, [help] to bring together Darcy and Elizabeth”.36

Mordecai Marcus scrutinises the four couples in contrast, in which Darcy and Elizabeth stand at the centre whose conflict takes place at the level of personal and
social existence. And their agreement too is the "reconciliation of personal and social claim". But Collins and Charlotte and Wickham and Lydia are placed at the two extremes. As the first couple yields to social claim while the latter defines adherence to selfish and personal claim. In this design Jane and Bingley get their position somewhere below Darcy and Elizabeth as they lack both personal and social claim and are the most immobile and fixed character with all their passivity and impertinence. Marcus writes:

Thus Collins-Charlotte and Wickham-Lydia contrast to Darcy and Elizabeth through lack of integrity, whereas Bingley and Jane contrast to them through lack of percipience and strength.37

But the irony is implicit here in the sense that all these couples in spite of standing on the contrastive roles contribute to bring Elizabeth and Darcy together. The Collins-Charlotte marriage opens Elizabeth's eyes to the monetary reality while, the Jane-Bingley relationship prejudiced Elizabeth earlier against Darcy because she felt that he had deliberately intervened in their affair. But Darcy's letter clears away this doubt and she realizes that he was unaware of their relationship. But Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy's pride entirely vanishes when she learns about Wickham's villainy and Darcy's rescuing of Lydia by fulfilling Wickham's demands. At this moment Darcy and Wickham are once again contrasted under Elizabeth's scrutiny but now, ironically, they have interchanged their position. Mr. Darcy's 'goodness' and Wickham's 'treachery' are crystal clear to Elizabeth. This is how all three couples are an integral part of Jane Austen's comic irony.

V

From "light, bright and sparkling" work Jane Austen moves to more serious work; Mansfield Park and her last novel Persuasion. Both novels, as stated in the previous chapter, are the embodiment of her ideas of Christianity and moral wisdom. Norman Sherry writes about Fanny Price of Mansfield Park:

And so we are left with a heroine who is also the representative of right, as was Elinor Dashwood, and as Anne Elliot is to be in Persuasion.38

Thus, because of their self-righteousness neither heroine — Fanny Price or Anne Elliot—needs the mentor-lover. Still, Edmund Bertram and Mrs. Russell act as
their mentors respectively but they too lack perfection. Thus, the irony in these two novels is different from that of the novels discussed earlier. Both heroines are juxtaposed with other characters to bring out their goodness and moral superiority to others. But it does not arouse that ironic laughter, which largely depends on the folly or some deviation form ‘candour’, of the heroines, still, an ironic conflict of worldliness and unworldliness can be observed in these novels.

In *Mansfield Park* there are two phases of Fanny Price’s life, which are juxtaposed with other characters in ironical set up. The first phase begins with Fanny’s childhood days when she is introduced at Mansfield Park. The timid, sickly, shy and silent Fanny is contrasted with the pompous Miss Bertram, the outrageous Mr. Bertram and the hypocritical and completely uncharitable Mrs. Norris, who always bully her, mock her, tease her and show off their superiority in all fields. Fanny is inferior to them in many aspects—social status, education, financial status. But by the end of the novel we realize that morally she is superior to all of them. Sir Thomas Betram, who was proud of his children’s ‘education’ learns painfully that Tom, Miss Bertrams and even Edmund come out as morally degraded and much inferior to Fanny’s virtue in terms of their ‘education’ or ‘accomplishment’ when they all succumb to Crawfords’ apparent charm. Such ironical placement of the character is definitely an important part of Jane Austen’s planned moral strategy.

On the other hand, it is irony which brings homeless and poor Fanny to that state where she will become the mistress of Mansfield Park after marrying Edmund. While Mrs. Norris, who along with all those who always boasted of their financial superiority to Fanny, are finally forced to live a desolate life, away from Mansfield Park.

But the most interesting ironical turn takes place in the novel when Fanny’s second phase starts. This phase concludes Fanny’s childhood life deprived of any appealing quality with a contrastive look when she looks more pleasing, amiable and sternly confident of her moral norms. Like other novels, Jane Austen places Fanny Price in juxtaposition with her cousins as well as Mary Crawford and Henry Crawford.

To bring out the hidden selfishness, lack of true and genuine feeling of love and their mercenary attitude combined with their stark pragmatism of the Bertram girls, Maria and Julia, Jane Austen juxtaposes them in *Mansfield Park* with the self-
righteous Fanny Price. In spite of having "beauty and brilliant acquirements, a manner naturally easy, and carefully formed to general civility and obligingness", the Betram girls unlike Fanny fall an easy prey to Henry Crawford's charm, who is the very embodiment of evil.

Maria and Julia become each other's rival when Henry Crawford flirts with both of them. Fanny, on the other hand, remains steady and determined not to deviate from her path of righteousness despite all attempts by Crawford.

At the same time Fanny is juxtaposed with Mary and Henry Crawford, who come as the temptation for the Bertrams. The charming, attractive, witty, confident and with an open temper Mary Crawford almost dominates the sickly, retiring, prosaic and priggish heroine, Fanny Price. Irony plays its crucial role here when even Edmund despite being the mentor of Fanny, gets bewitched by Mary Crawford ignoring Fanny's true, genuine but silent love for him. Ironically, she becomes the unwilling confidante of Mary Crawford and Edmund during the preparation of the play.

At this moment one would anticipate only one thing that soon Edmund and Mary would marry leaving Fanny alone. But the same ironical turn comes to play here as well when Maria, (Mrs. Rushworth) elopes with Henry and Mary calls her 'guilt' as mere 'folly'. Edmund recognises Mary's complete lack of moral wisdom and her meanness. At the same time his eyes are also opened to Fanny's moral vigour and decides to settle for her. In this way, in contrast to the insensible, mercenary, inconstant and patronising Mary Crawford, "Fanny's long practised self-discipline, her humility and her patience, have guaranteed her eventual happiness". Yasmine Gooneratne penetrates into the real essence of such juxtaposed setting:

The placing of the young Bertrams, with the treacherous attractions of the Crawfords on one hand and the unprized virtues of their Price cousins on the other, suggests the grouping of characters in a morality play, an impression heightened by Jane Austen's presentation of Mary Crawford and Fanny as the Bad and Good Angels that alternately confuse and counsel the wavering, sorely tempted Edmund.

But the story is not only of a double choice before Edmund but also before Fanny. Edmund and Henry figure out in an Austenian tradition as the two male suitors of Fanny. Henry Crawford, Mary's brother, is the male version of Mary—a degraded
character behind all the charm, wit and polish. Henry and Edmund are interestingly juxtaposed with each other. Edmund unlike the other Austenian heroes such as Mr. Knightley, Mr. Darcy, or even the priggish Henry Tilney, is a weak character, easily swayed by Mary’s superficial charms. Henry, on the other hand, wins the reader’s sympathy for a while by helping William Price out as well as supporting Fanny at Portsmouth.

However, Jane Austen’s irony would not allow them to go far from her arena where Edmund’s inner beauty is regained after acquiring self-knowledge and wins Fanny’s love. Henry, on the other hand, is eventually proved to be a morally degraded person when he elopes with Maria Rushworth.

In this way, this novel presents a vast panorama of variegated characters who, having been juxtaposed with the central character, Fanny Price represents the conflict of worldliness and unworldliness. And finally, it reveals the realistic and moral irony by proving Fanny’s Christian values as supreme. However, the irony in this novel assumes a serious tinge as compared to the lighthearted comic irony of the earlier novels.

The last completed novel by Jane Austen is *Persuasion*, which is the most serious novel both in tone and in matter. The widely admired heroine Anne Elliot is an embodiment of all that Jane Austen held dear. She is a marvellous combination of ‘prudence’ and ‘romance’. It is obvious that like Fanny when Anne is juxtaposed with other characters, she is always proved right and the Austenian irony comes into play again to bring out this point.

First, it is the young Anne juxtaposed with her own self but eight years older. The young Anne is ironically more prudent than romantic and yields to her Godmother’s persuasion to break off her relationship with Capt. Wentworth.

In contrast to this stage, the matured Anne, after the passage of eight years, emerges more romantic than prudent. She cherishes her love for Wentworth by denying two handsome proposals of Charles Musgrove and Mr. Elliot.

The juxtaposition of conflicting qualities and the resulting irony can be traced in the other characters too.
Like Elizabeth and Darcy, Anne and Capt. Wentworth are juxtaposed by Jane Austen to highlight the conflict of 'prudence' and 'pride'. Capt. Wentworth's pride is hurt having been rejected by Anne Elliot eight years ago. The ironist weaves a marvellous parallel plot. At the beginning of the novel, Wentworth is a 'remarkably fine young man' whose love is rejected by 'an extremely pretty girl', as he falls short in terms of social and financial status as compared to that of Anne Elliot. But after eight years the situation is one of absolute contrast, which once again juxtaposes the two in an ironically interchanged position. Now Capt. Wentworth has improved his fortune and willing to marry any girl but Anne Elliot. Anne, on the other hand, could not forget her first love and still waiting for him. Interestingly now Anne Elliot's financial condition has weakened gradually.

At this moment, the reader hardly thinks, they can be united ever in future. But, Jane Austen's multifaceted irony juxtaposes the two protagonists against other characters in order to bring them closer to each other.

First it is done through Capt. Wentworth's eye who always compares Musgrove sisters to Anne Elliot. Therefore, in an Austenian tradition the heroine and her rival are placed side by side in which "The right balance is sought between the... impetuous, headstrong Louisa Musgrove, and the Anne Elliot of nineteen who yielded to persuasion." This is done through the eyes of Capt. Wentworth who has not forgiven Anne for her being persuaded by Mrs. Russell.

The visit to Lyme of all important characters is the best opportunity to place them face to face which is mainly intended to bring Wentworth close to the reality. The dialogue between Louisa Musgrove and Capt. Wentworth sets the juxtaposition of Anne first against Henrietta and then against Louisa herself. Louisa is criticising Henrietta's intention to yield to Mary Musgrove's persuasion. Kenneth L. Moler observes it quite aptly:

Then follows Mary Musgrove's attempt to prevent Henrietta Musgrove from visiting Winthrop. On the surface, the incident seems a parallel in miniature to the situation that had existed among Anne, Wentworth, and Lady Russell.43

As Henrietta's visit to Winthrop will be an indication of her continuing affection for Charles, Mary, who does not consider Charles an eligible suitor for her sister-in-law, prevents her from meeting him. Henrietta is almost persuaded by her when Louisa
interferes and she visits Winthrop. Louisa remarks to her sister: "...I have no idea of being so easily persuaded. When I have made up my mind, I have made it;..." She calls Mary’s advice “nonsensical complaisance”, which is in sharp contrast to Anne’s accepting Mrs. Russell’s advice as token of her devotion and sense of duty. Moler remarks rightly:

For Wentworth, Anne’s sacrifices to duty and affection and Henrietta’s weak-mindedness are on a par. He admires the devotion that Mrs. Craft exemplifies, and that Louisa professes to be capable of, and he feels that Anne, like Henrietta, lacks the courage of her inclinations. ... she lacks the all-important “fortitude and strength of mind,...” [which, he thinks, Louisa Musgrove possesses].

He is unable to see the difference between Anne and Henrietta’s persuasion. Moler writes:

Mary’s objections are founded, not on prudence and real concern for Henrietta... but on shallow snobbery. But to Wentworth, Mary’s meddling and Lady Russell’s counsel are alike “idle interference,” to be brushed aside by any lover with sufficient “fortitude.”

Capt. Wentworth couldn’t see Henrietta’s want of any genuine love or gratitude for Mary as contrasted to that of Anne’s for Lady Russell. At the same time he admires Louisa’s views on free will, of frank and independent spirit and her romantic temper as the “power of mind”. He criticises Anne’s yielding to persuasion in angry words indirectly while praising Louisa’s free will:

It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on (pp. 1262-1263).

The first ironic turn takes place when Louisa’s foolish attempt to jump from the Cobb second time to prove her “strength of mind” before Wentworth leads her into a severe accident. Prof. Wright compares the attitude of all the characters at this situation:

Everyone is too upset to think—everyone but Anne. Mary’s reaction is, "She is dead! She is dead!" Henrietta faints, and Captain Wentworth calls for help, while Captain Benwick and Charles Musgrove stand by ineffectually. But Anne takes over: with calmness and decision, she ... suggests that a surgeon be fetched; ...
At this moment Wentworth recognises Anne's "firmness", which lies not in "free will" but in "steadiness of character". Anne tackles the situation bravely and nurses Louisa until she is provided medical aid.

Moler rightly compares Louisa and Anne through Wentworth's eyes who learn an ironical fact quite opposite to his opinion of the two girls:

At Lyme, Wentworth sees the folly of his own ideas about "powers of mind" exemplified in Louisa Musgrove, and at the same time learns to appreciate Anne's true strength of character.\textsuperscript{48}

Now he does not strive to compare Louisa with the nineteen years old Anne of the past but a changed Anne of the present, who is mature, prudent and strong in the real sense, who still loves him.

Anne's constancy in her love is projected by Jane Austen by placing her love in contrast to that of Capt. Benefield in an ironical context. The exuberant exposure of melancholic love of Benefield for his dead fiancée is quite a contrast to the silent love of Anne. As superficially Benefield seems to be more constant in his love than Anne. But his sentimental love in the form of grief is soon over when he marries Louisa. While "Anne, with no show [of her love]... continues to love Captain Wentworth when all hope of his loving her again has been given up".\textsuperscript{49} This ironic contrast of the sentimental love and the real, genuine conventional love of Anne Elliot opens Captain Wentworth's eyes and he turns back to Anne.

In Austenian tradition the male suitors are also contrasted with each other. In this novel, this juxtaposition is basically intended for two purposes — to make Lady Russell see the reality of Captain Wentworth's "goodness" and Mr. Elliot's treachery and to test Anne's constancy in her love.

The selfish proud conceited and apparently charming personality of Mr. Elliot is juxtaposed against simple, unconcealed but strong headed Captain Wentworth. Lady Russell considers Mr. Elliot as the best suitor for Anne owing to his affluence while Wentworth according to her is the most unsuitable match for Anne because of his want of sound financial strength. But both her persuasions prove, ironically, to be wrong when Mr. Elliot's illicit relationship with La and his act of exploiting Mrs. Smith's helplessness is revealed before others. She realizes Captain Wentworth's genuine
and unselfish love for Anne and constancy of his character, which are the part of virtue, instead of having any relevance with money or status. At the same time, Anne’s rejection of Mr. Elliot proves her constancy in love too. Nonetheless, the reader is highly amused to witness an interestingly juxtaposed relationship. Norman Sherry brings out this fact that in the first section, “Anne, always in the background, is forced to witness Wentworth’s courtship of Louisa Musgrove. In the second,” in contrast to this, “the situation is reversed and Wentworth is witness to Mr. Elliot’s courtship of Anne.” 50 Ironically enough, the second situation leads Captain Wentworth closer to Anne and he admires Anne’s beauty through Mr. Elliot’s eyes.

This is how through the juxtaposed characters and situations Jane Austen’s moral purpose is served by implying situational irony.
IRONY THROUGH JUXTAPOSITION OF CHARACTERS IN RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA'S NOVELS

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala displays her ironic wit through juxtaposition of characters in a more wide context. The characters are placed side by side in various types of background to show the conflict of two contrasting cultures.

The present discussion on irony through juxtaposition of characters thus, deals with four types of juxtaposition:

i) There is juxtaposition of Indian characters arising out of problems resulting from love and marriage against the background of tradition and modernism.

ii) Then there is juxtaposition of Indian characters, who are trapped in their marital bonds at the monetary background.

iii) Thirdly there is the juxtaposition of Indian and Western characters dealing with marital dissonance arising out of a clash of cultures.

iv) And lastly the juxtaposition of the spiritual seekers of the West against the so-called Indian sages.

To Whom She Will and The Nature of Passion raise the common problem of the "arranged versus the romantically-based marriage" in the context of urban family life in India. The problem is obviously set forth through the juxtaposition of the two contrasting generations. The young generation of Amrita, Nimmi, Hari, Pheroze and Kuku, which is sharply contrasted with the old, rigid and conservative generation of the old. The juxtaposition of the illusory, supercilious, young generation seeking love and pleasure in their free will, with the cool, magnanimity and orthodox old generation enables the author to expose not only the very pseudo-modernism of the young generation but also an ironical truth of Indian society, i.e. despite their modern education and the impression that Indian youth is liberated from the clutches of the old, they are as traditional or backward as their old generation.

The ironic revelation of this social reality has come out best through the technique of juxtaposition of characters in different social contexts.
In *To Whom She Will* Amrita and Hari are juxtaposed with regard to their social context as well as their approach to their adolescent love. H.M. Williams clearly points out the contrast:

Amrita and Hari, co-workers in Delhi Radio, imagine they are in love. In contrast to Hari who is dreamy, ineffectual though popular, charming and too ready to please Amrita is practical, sensible and energetic, and in revolt against her well-meaning but oppressive and domineering mother Radha,...

Though Amrita seems to be more serious than Hari in her love for him, ironically she too turns out to be an embodiment of foolish love. Like Jane Austen, taking a simple incident at the restaurant, Jhabvala brings out the real nature of their love for each other. Hari's indifferenece and Amrita's emotional surge are contrasted in a comic ironical tone. Amrita persuades herself that she is over-whelmed by her love for Hari and dares not look him in the face for fear of doing something foolish. The irony—and quite comic at that—is that Hari is absolutely unaware of the emotional turbulence that Amrita is going through. He is amusingly more concerned with deciding whether to order 'Sheekh Kabab' or 'Shami Kabab':

'It was all right?' he asked anxiously,

'What, my Hari?'

'What I ordered, I was not sure. I thought would she like Seekh kabab or Shami, but then I decided Seekh because last time we were here we had shami.'

Undoubtedly this comic irony is the result of the juxtaposition of two foolish lovers. However, this vague, unreal and transitory love of these adolescent lovers is an outcome of their contrasting backgrounds. Both of them have romantic illusions about the class to which the other belongs. Ramlal G. Agarwal writes in this connection:

Amrita is a spoilt child because of her... affluent background. Consequently, she is obdurate and full of self-love. Hari is willless and uncertain because of his economic backwardness. Naturally they are ill-suited to each other. They attract each other because Amrita associates poverty with simplicity and Hari because he equates elegance with riches. Both Amrita and Hari, see each other in terms of symbols, and their fascination for each other wears away in course of time.
Their liking of one another's class is mocked by Jhabvala's technique of ironic contrast of Hari's reaction to Amrita's doubts and anxiety which leads to true comedy Amrita pleads:

'...O Hari, often I worry about it, and then I am so grateful to you for not despising me for using knife and fork and speaking a lot in English and having been educated in a convent and at Lady Wilmot College' (p.32).

Jhabvala comments in this concern:

Hari did not understand. The things for which she thanked him for not despising her were perhaps the things for which he loved and admired her most; ... So, not understanding, he took refuge in murmuring, 'My love for you is so great, surely it will break me' (pp. 32-33).

Thus, the juxtaposition of their illusion of love helps the ironist to reveal the contradictions in their thinking, their likes and dislikes and the reality of the contemporary class-distinction. This incompatibility of the two consequently leads to their moving back to their own roots. Prof. Shahane brings out the comic mode of Hari's and Amrita's marrying in their own community. He calls this reconciliation "an element of ambivalence, for in it it borders on the delightfully comic and profoundly sad nature of human experience since the comic mode basically affirms the disparity between the ideal and actual norms". 54

So far as Krishna Sengupta is concerned Jhabvala could have exploited the opportunity to contrast him with Hari in an Austenian tradition; however, she remains satisfied with a superficial juxtaposition of these two characters. Krishna Sengupta is an England-returned, well-educated, attractive, amusing and intellectual person, who sharply contrasts with Hari with his shy, timid, middle class instincts and his knowing little of his surroundings.

Jhabvala juxtaposes Krishna's intellectual superiority with Hari's lack of any such intellectualism in the Bombay Coffee-House which is "the favourite haunt of disillusioned young men." He (Hari) could never "understand what was being said, [as the other would talk bitterly of the social system] for he read only the local news and the advertisements in the newspaper, and had no opinion about the Government" (p. 135).

It is in sharp contrast with Krishna's intellectual dissatisfaction about the social conditions prevailing in free India. In fact this contrast becomes sharper, when Hari's
awe for Pt. Ram Bahadur’s aristocracy is mocked by Krishna who had a great disgust for his heavy and authoritative manners, which he called his, “pretentious manner”.

As the novel starts with Hari’s and Amrita’s love for each other, and Krishna is used by Amrita as mediator and confidante; the reader can never anticipate Amrita’s and Krishna’s marriage. But in Austenian manner, the juxtaposed male suitors decide their destination with an ironic surprise. And Krishna’s silent and unspoken love wins over Hari’s ineffectual, romantic and illusory love. Hari too, on the other hand, feels quite at home with Sushila, a girl of his own community.

Undoubtedly Jhabvala’s juxtaposed characters are set solely in the two juxtaposed traditions—the old and the new one. Quite naturally the pairing-off is decided by cultural influence only: Hari and Sushila find their places under the shelter of their parents while Amrita and Krishna are united happily in their westernised, new environment. And this cultural influence can easily be termed as the old, rigid and ossified world of the old consisting of Hari’s family and Amrita’s mother and grand father—and the new consisting of Hari, Amrita and Krishna who are craving for freedom from their orthodox paternal authorities but finally find shelter in their comforting parental fold.

The old generation is thus juxtaposed with its strong belief in arranged marriages of their children against the new generation striving for its individual authority. Jhabvala’s realistic vision of this contradiction finally proves the dominance of the old when the rebellious new generation ironically moves back willingly to its parental authority.

Like Hari and Amrita, Nimmi and Viddi are another soft-headed young exponents of the newly arrived westernised modern generation, who are once again juxtaposed against old conservative generation. The Nature of Passion has more clearly brought out the sharp contrast between two incompatible generations in the post-independence era. Jhabvala’s comic but realistic vision combined with her own pictricular style of stating facts through minute observation colours the entire novel with a bewildering confusion between these two generations of Indian society.

Phuphyji and Lalaji hold the light of the old Indian tradition who are far removed from the light of so-called modernism represented by Viddi and Nimmi. Nimmi, a more intense version of Amrita, is the victim of pseudo-modernism. According to her,
women's emancipation consists in going to clubs, playing tennis, keeping hair short, dating, dressing attractively and discussing English Romantic Poets. This young spirit is juxtaposed against the indignant and disapproving Phuphyji who reacts to Nimmi's lifestyle aggressively:

'A girl of that age has no right to enjoy herself! She should be managing a household and bearing children and looking after a husband. That was thought good enough in our time.'

Phuphyji and Lalaji's wife seem to have utter contempt for Nimmi's and Viddi's education and are of the view that education misleads the children to go astray:

'If I had had my way,' Lalaji's wife said, looking at her husband, 'there would have been no such College. Both of them would have stayed at home and learnt what is right for a girl to learn' (p. 87).

Viddi is another superficial "loner" who always criticizes his father's passion for money. He is almost cynical of his father's traditional way of life who, according to him, "... does not know anything except eating and sleeping. ... He is quite uneducated: ... speaks very bad English" (p. 36). He dreams of living the bohemian life of an artist. A world of art and journalism in London is his dream goal which he wishes to visit not for any intellectual purpose but to live a gay life there so that when he comes back he can "speak about these things with authority, while he treated his companions to whisky and cigars" (p. 35). Ramlal G. Agarwal observes:

Viddi and Nimmi are superficially modern and Phuphiji is determinedly orthodox, and between them they present two faces of India. The former operates in hotels and clubs and the latter in Indian homes.

This contrast eventually culminates in Jhabvala's realistic ironic turn when both Nimmi and Viddi return to Lalaji's authority. Nimmi is ready to marry Kuku, chosen by Lalaji. Kuku's affluence is the happy compensation and therefore better replacement of Pheroze Batliwala. Viddi too enjoys a feeling of security and contentment to get a job in Lalaji's office on Rs. 500/- per month. Thus, once again tradition triumphs and the modernism is proved vague and phoney. However, one cannot deny the influence of money as the biggest important factor in this victory of tradition over modernism.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's main concern is to depict the Indian society in its reality. Her observation is a purely detached observation from the close quarters of
the society. And this panorama provides her an opportunity to play her comically toned ironic wit in the battle between tradition and modernity. Nimmi is her main target to penetrate into the artificiality of the vain affected showing-off of Mammon-rulled civilization. Nimmi with her refined and anglicised manners is juxtaposed against her sisters and other women of her family with their backwardness and traditional way of life. Nimmi hates their being over-loaded with jewellery to display their financial status; she scorns their way of talking and criticising one another; she is filled with bitterness to see their fat and over-bulging placid body. She scolds her sister Usha for her unromantic vision of life thinking that Usha would be happy in only bearing children and cooking after marriage.

She thinks that she is totally different from them and that she lives in an intellectual world of love and romance. But the ironist's comic but realistic vision carries her to the same quarters of arranged marriage where she is looking forward to live a happy life with her husband. She is no more interested in rebelling against her family than to tie a love-knot with Pheroze Batiwalwa.

In this way, in these two novels Jhabvala juxtaposes the young generation with the old and her rapier thrusts of irony see the defeat of pseudo-modernism at the hands of the domineering authority of the old. However, in To Whom She Will, it is the 'Class' and 'Culture', which function as the deciding factors while in the latter novel, it is the money factor, which plays a crucial role in the decision making.

VIII

In the earlier two novels Ruth Prawer Jhabvala juxtaposed the young with their unfettered consciousness and transient enthusiasm for new westernised life against the old unchanging, traditional Indian life: the conflict between love marriage and arranged marriage against the background of Caste, Culture and Money.

In the next four novels the ironic fabric is woven by juxtaposing the married couples at individual level as well as with their surrounding environment which reveal the social comedy as well as tragic reality of those married couples who find themselves trapped in their marital life. The problems and their aftermaths may differ but the contrasting shades of various characters and situations, all centre round the theme of marital dissonance, which has been the major source of conflict in Indian life.
The Householder and Get Ready for Battle dealing with the problems of Indian couples have been discussed in the present section whereas Esmond in India and A Backward Place, which record the conflict of two juxtaposed cultures of mixed marriages will be explored in the next section.

The Householder is dealt with by Jhabvala in a unique manner in the sense that the world of this novel "is limited", as Prof. Shahane says, "to the exploration of the single consciousness" of the central character, Prem, a Hindi teacher in a private college in Delhi. And this central figure responds to his surrounding through his juxtaposed placement with the others. His surrounding consists of "Indu, his wife; Raj, his friend; Chaddha and Sohan Lal, his colleagues; Khanna, his Principal; the Seigals, his landlords; Hans Loewe and Kitty, his European acquaintances; his old mother and the Swami. This completes the circle of the householder — a limited, middle class, social milieu."  

Here in this novel Jhabvala exposes different Indian problems and sufferings especially the contradiction found in the central character in relation to his newly married life in the context of economic hardship, through amusing ironical situations.

Prem, a sensitive, indecisive and submissive young teacher is bewildered by an early marriage and humble job. In the first part of the novel he is shown to be an utter failure as a teacher, as a husband, as a son, and as a would-be father. This failure is well expressed by a number of ironical, comic juxtapositions of different characters against Prem. In fact, juxtapositions through contrast are shown all through the book. And the author's use of ironic good humour creates amusing situations.

First, Prem's failure as a teacher is depicted by Jhabvala by juxtaposing him with Mr. Chaddha, a pompous teacher of his college. Radha Bijawat points out this contrast:

He [Prem] is unable to maintain discipline in the class. His inefficiency has been effectively highlighted by comparing him to the pompous Mr. Chaddha, another teacher in the same college, who unfortunately shared the same classroom also.

Jhabvala writes:
Mr. Chaddha was a bird like little man, who managed to keep discipline very well, so that his end of the room was always very much quieter than Prem’s. All his students were already seated on their benches… while only two or three of Prem’s students had arrived.60

Prem is an utter failure in classroom because of his submissive nature. However, this contrast not only gives rise to humour, but it also shows in poor light the pitfalls of Indian Education system where one room is shared by two classes at the same time. In another incident, Prem’s shy nature is highlighted by Jhabvala through an ironical situation. Here, the shy Prem is contrasted with the domineering and pompous Mr. Khanna, the principal and his even more odious wife. When Prem goes to Khanna’s house to ask for a raise, he is so overwhelmed by the splendour of the breakfast the Principal is having, that he finds himself arguing for a raise in salary for Sohanlal instead of for himself.

Jhabvala projects a deep contrast here when shy and timid Prem’s pleading for Sohanlal is contrasted against Mr. Khanna’s total indifference toward his problem. Prem argues that Sohanlal needs a raise because he “has a large family to support”. The Principal’s only reaction is, “‘A spoonful of salt taken in a glass of warm water is also very good for replacing liquid strength lost through too much perspiration’” (pp. 14-15).

The reader cannot fail to feel a tinge of humour through this ironical juxtaposition. A similar situation arises when Prem goes to his landlord’s house to plead for a reduction in the rent of the house. This time the anxious, nervous Prem is contrasted with the happy-go-Lucky Seigals. Seigal cunningly takes advantage of Prem’s shy nature and wheedles him into teaching his children which smacks of ludicrous irrelevance.

This technique of juxtaposing characters through small incidents is akin to Jane Austen’s technique. Shyam M. Asnani observes:

With Jane Austen’s skill and piquancy, Mrs. Jhabvala shows her interest in the startling paradoxes of life. But her merit lies in the fact that her treatment of them lacks the bitter sting of satire. Her irony points out the contradictions of life, people, and of events which come upon us pouncing when we are least prepared for them.61
The pathetic plight of Prem gains the reader’s sympathy. Jhabvala’s searching irony juxtaposes Prem against his friend Raj to complete the vicious circle of middle-class life. Raj, a minor civil servant seems to be more successful as a householder and husband than Prem. H.M. Williams suggests that Prem’s “failure as a householder etched out in sharp contrast to Raj’s success completes the miserable picture”. Raj’s confident, domineering, self-complacent and aggressive nature is juxtaposed against Prem’s weak, uncertain, shy and self-complaining nature, which always irritates Raj. This contrast finally teaches Prem an ironical fact that he himself too can live a happy life with his wife Indu, despite all problems and hurdles. He realizes that his differences with Indu are only superficial conflicts; in reality, he loves his wife intensely.

The final irony of the book lies in the juxtaposition of the spiritual with the worldly. Prem turns to a Swami to find peace through the spiritual path. The Swami tries to show him the path of peace through absolute renunciation. Jhabvala seems to be laughing up her sleeves, when Prem realizes that true happiness for him lies not in the tranquillity of the Ashram but in carrying the “burden” of a householder. The irony is that it is only after Prem goes through a dose of spiritualism that he is better able to accept the responsibilities which had irked him earlier.

Get Ready for Battle was written after eight years of Jhabvala’s stay in India. Her observation has become sharper and also more critical. The irony is no longer mingled with humour. On the contrary, it borders on tragic irony. Here too the irony is brought out by juxtaposing two opposite kinds of characters. Gulzari Lal and his son Vishnu are exponents of the materialistic, shrewd, calculating, money-minded society. Against them are juxtaposed Gautam and Sarla Devi who, according to V.S. Shahane, “represents the visionary gleam in a world otherwise darkened and disturbed by Gulzari Lal’s commercialism and Vishnu’s expanding industrial stodginess. Jhabvala has thus, skilfully portrayed the two contrary aspects of modern, post-independence India—the this-worlidliness of the Gulzari Lals and Vishnus and the other-worldliness of the Gautams and Sarla Devis”.

This conflict of the two contrary traits reminds us of the similar juxtaposition of “worldliness” and “unworldliness” as dealt with by Jane Austen in Mansfield Park. However, here this conflict is more bitter and gruesome than that of Mansfield Park. Sarla Devi is engrossed in the upliftment of the people of Bundi-Basti. Radha Bijawat suggests that by taking social reformers as her characters Jhabvala’s inner spirit of a social reformer was getting a voice. She reminds us of
Dickens who had portrayed similar kinds of contradictory characters in the context of Victorian society in the advent of the industrial revolution.

The issue of Bundi-Basti brings out the irony underlying the juxtaposition of the two diametrically opposite characters — Gulzari Lal and his wife Sarla Devi. Sarla Devi fights for the rights of the people of Bundi-Basti and thus gets ready for battle against their enemy Gulzari Lal, the rich business shark. But in a corrupt money-ridden society, the result of the battle of the two contrasting extremists is pre-decided. Ironically enough the poor of the Basti for whom Sarla Devi was fighting with her husband are bought out by Gulzari Lal. He bribes Ram Chandra, the leader of the poor resulting in Sarla Devi’s defeat. It is the irony of post-independent India that honesty and sincerity meet with defeat and corruption backed by money triumphs. The novel foreshadows the tragic tone that Jhabvala’s irony will assume in her novels.

Sarla Devi is a failure in private life too. The juxtaposition of Sarla Devi with Kusum, Gulzari Lal’s mistress, sums up the ironical success of Kusum against Sarla Devi’s failure. Kusum’s “ambitions unlike Sarla’s are entirely personal, emotional and selfish”. 64 She is a fluent talker and “can chameleon like take on the colour of any society, including Mrs. Bhatnagar’s band of “do-gooders,” she even deceives Sarla Devi into believing that she is a “spiritual” person. Her total success is in ironical contrast to Sarla’s failure”. 65

H.M. Williams sums up the irony of Sarla’s life in the following words:

In pursuit of her ideal of service to others she destroys her own marriage, loses her influence over her son Vishnu and over Brij. 66

So Sarla Devi fails as a wife, mother and social worker.

IX

The irony through juxtaposed couples acquires a more greyish shade with the couples of mixed marriages. In fact, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s technique of comparing and contrasting characters by juxtaposing them has come out best while dealing with the problems of mixed marriages. Esmond in India and A Backward Place are the best examples of the predicaments experienced by the couples belonging to contrastive
cultures. As a matter of fact, the East-West encounter itself gives rise to irony. In Jhabvala’s novels when an Indian and European fall in love and decide to get married, apart from personal attraction, it is the attraction of each other’s culture that brings them together. But, ironically enough, the same cultural attraction turning into alienation turns their lives miserable.

*Esmond in India* is replete with social aspects of East-West encounter, the most favourite theme of the contemporary Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian novelists. Like them, Jhabvala too projects this theme by juxtaposing the two cultures, which brings forth all the trouble in Esmond and Esmond’s and Gulab’s marital life.

The main concern of the novel is the response of Esmond Stillwood, a European expatriate, to the cultural contrast of India, embodied in Gulab. Both of them are masterly juxtaposed against each other in their cultural background. Lionel Trilling relates culture to our habit, manners and even superstitions.

It is obvious that both Esmond and Gulab are contrasted in their habits, manners, perceptions as well as at level of the intellect. Ramesh Chaddha brings out this difference:

The easy-going Gulab, with her Oriental taste for carrot halwa, spices and hot red curries, her typically Indian bashfulness and indifference towards modern furniture, is a glaring contrast to her husband, Esmond, with his innate craze for orderliness, smart and sophisticated society, and up-to-date furnishings.67

Jhabvala exploits this cultural clash through a number of small incidents in detail. After juxtaposing the two styles of life she displays her ironic wit to expose the total incompatibility between the two. A small incident can reveal this fact. She writes:

She [Gulab] sat on the floor and ate with her fingers. She always did so whenever Esmond was out, for that was the way she enjoyed her food most.68

On the contrary, Esmond prefers his cheese salad “at his smart little dining table in his smart little dining corner...”. (p. 41) Similarly, with regard to furnishing the room the two differ widely. Jhabvala writes, thus:

...He had utilized every corner, fitted in divans and shelves and coffee-tables, all very low and modern and, so they said, attractive. But Gulab could see no
purpose in so much furniture: it only prevented one from being comfortable. (p. 20)

This is how the beginning of their disillusionment with one another's cultural instincts is portrayed through the juxtaposition of the two ways of life. However, this disenchantment is comically ironical in the beginning. But soon this comic irony paves the way for a more tragic, critical and poignant ironical contrast with the birth of their son Ravi. H.M. Williams writes thus:

The marriage becomes a battlefield when Esmond tries to make Gulab bring Ravi up in the European way, keeping him away from sweet foods and not spoiling him with caresses. But Gulab simply reverts to Indian ways when Esmond is not there, lavishing sweet and sentimental love on the child.69

Small customs as shaving a baby's head irritates Esmond as he regards it a barbaric custom and he soon starts hating his son's dark Indian skin.

Thus, the union between Gulab and Esmond proves a disaster. They fail not only in their day-to-day life but also in their way of thinking. Esmond wants his wife to be his mate, his life partner instead of a slave. On the contrary, Gulab's traditionalism has taught her to bow down before her husband, as he is her God but not a friend. That's why the very basic philosophy of the two is so sharply opposed that there seems to be no meeting ground. He starts maltreating her. His "cruelty ranges from savage sarcasm to pinching and slapping, to all of which Gulab [contrastively] responds with dumb, meek surrender, accepting the traditional role of the Indian wife to whom the husband is a god".70 Ramesh Chaddha writes thus:

The root cause of their dissonance is not only racial and cultural gap but temperamental differences also. Esmond is selfish and mean, and Gulab is sluttish and unsophisticated. The sharp contrast between the two ways of living and thinking causes awkward and unseemly situations in conjugal life. 71

And here lies the irony. Esmond who was so attracted to Indian culture and to Gulab, its embodiment, finds himself filled with disgust and hatred at the barbarity and coarseness of Gulab's way of living her life. The irony is heightened when, on the rebound, he is attracted to Betty, an expatriate who has no sense of morality. Esmond who found Gulab "gross, dull and lazy" is happy with Betty who talks of "pee-house for jackals" and regards the burial sites of "Moghul pimps" as the main tourist attractions.
Thus, the separation of Esmond and Gulab, apparently seems to be tragic but ironically enough, it is the best thing that can happen to them as each gets rid of the other's oppressive alien culture.

Another contrast that gives free play to Jhabvala's irony is the juxtaposition of Har Dayal against Ram Nath.

Har Dayal, Shakuntala's father is a conformist and a successful politician who is living a luxurious and splendid life. It is sharply contrasted with the secluded, humble way of living of an old freedom fighter, Ram Nath, Gulab's idealist uncle. Ram Nath resembles Krishna Sengupta's father, who was also an active Congress worker before independence but lived a secluded, neglected and frustrated life after independence. By juxtaposing these two characters Jhabvala brings forth the irony of the post-independent political scenario. The genuine freedom fighter like Ram Nath is left to fend for himself whereas politicians like Har Dayal enjoy all the material comforts they can ask for "without ever having suffered the hardships and penalties of the years of struggle". 72

After *Esmond in India*, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala continues the portrayal of juxtaposed cultural clash in *A Backward Place*. In fact this novel introduces this clash not only through marital problems but also through the problems of spiritual seekers, which is reinforced prominently in her later novels.

Once again the marital dissonance is dealt with at the backdrop of cultural juxtaposition which follows as a corollary. But here the roles are reversed. Here the wife is a European and the husband an Indian. And the ironist lingers on the irony of cultural clash by juxtaposing them against each other. Judy is a young English girl who is sick of the materialistic life of her English middle class home, marries Bal, a feckless young Indian in hopes of finding fulfilment in life. According to H.M. Williams, Judy's hatred for her own single, "lonely and tragic English middleclass" life is juxtaposed to her enjoying "the friendly, promiscuous and comforting disorders of the joint-family, getting on well..." 73 Here, the reader, at the beginning, is led to anticipate a happy conjugal life of Judy and Bal despite their contrasting cultural background. But soon this juxtaposed life of two cultures surrounds Judy with a number of problems. Jhabvala, once again, portrays this cultural clash through an expatriate's eye. Like *Esmond in India*, here too, she penetrates into the problems of mixed marriages through Judy's
eyes. However, unlike the previous novel in this novel it is the clash more of temperaments than of customs or habits. Bal is imaginative, effiminate, a good-for-nothing protagonist. In contrast to the jobless husband, Judy is practical, pragmatic wife who is the only breadwinner of her family. H.M. Williams rightly points out that they had clash in their marital life due to their contrasting temperaments more than their racial differences.

Despite all attempts by Judy to merge with the Indian family, she receives cultural shocks time and again. She loses her patience to see Bal’s indifference to his child’s illness. But she receives a great cultural blow when Bal insists on leaving for Bombay, which is nothing but a wild goose chase. Rupali S. Chibber finds that Judy’s “refusal to leave for Bombay is the first major domestic friction recorded in the novel”.74

And here lies Jhabvala’s irony, which provides a safer end. In spite of possessing English pragmatism and realistic attitude to life, Judy decides to accompany her husband on a quite uncertain path, which can promise nothing. This decision goes entirely against her English rationality. But ironically enough she chooses the path of fatalism. R.S. Singh points out:

She [Judy] thought to herself, even if he had so much confidence not in himself perhaps so much as in his fate, how could she doubt his success? So she just wanted “to be safe, where she was.” This is fatalism. Since they are not able to meet the demands of reality they tend to be dreamy.75

Jhabvala juxtaposes Judy against the old religious lady, Bhauji, a widow. Judy initially inherits her father’s mistrust of religious piety, whereas Bhauji is a devoted worshipper of God. But this juxtaposition soon meets a comic domestic irony when Judy begins to feel the righteousness in Bhauji’s faith and even learns to say “God provides” or “leave on God”, and so on. That’s why she is able to approve Bal’s decision and leaves everything on God. Moreover, this decision reminds her of Sita who followed Rama into exile, the same she wants to do.

X

The novel deals with another problem of an expatriate also through the technique of juxtaposition of characters. It is the problem of those Westerners who
come to India to find solace and peace but fail to grasp Indian sensibility and meet a tragic end. Jhabvala sets forth the juxtaposition of materialism against spiritualism, which completely baffles the expatriate seekers.

"Clarissa had come to India", as Shanta Krishnaswamy observes, "spurred on by Romain Rolland, the Gita and Ramayana". The spiritual seeker Clarissa is caught between her illusory dreamland of spiritual India juxtaposed against what she finds in material reality—an extremely poor and backward India.

Here Jhabvala is no more employing a comic irony as in Judy’s case, but she displays a tragic and painful irony when at the end the seeker of spiritual contentment plunges into a chaos of poverty and backwardness where she finds it difficult to make both ends meet.

Jhabvala juxtaposes Clarissa against another expatriate lady, Etta. H.M. Williams points out the contrast between the two:

Clarissa and Etta form a fascinating contrast, alternating between friendship and enmity... [Clarissa] has come to India inspired by her reading of Swami Vivekananda and in love with the India of the sages and gurus. She is plain, without sex-appeal, without much common-sense, and lives in mounting squalour...

In contrast to Clarissa, Etta is in India because of her chance-marriage with an Indian. But she is now running through a succession of husbands and lovers and finds herself desperately alone in an India which she hates. She is an ageing sex-seeking woman who has made a lot of money through the long series of husbands and lovers. Clarissa’s urge to merge with Indian mysticism is juxtaposed against Etta’s nostalgia for her homeland and her hatred for India. Both are contrasted in their opinion of Judy’s endeavouring to save her marital life. Clarissa appreciates Judy’s efforts to become an Indian wife—"She’s doing very nicely. She had the good sense to realise that the only way to live here was to turn herself into a real Indian wife." (p. 25) On the contrary, Etta opposes Judy’s attempts and completely disapproves them—"You ought to leave him, really you ought" (p. 5).

This juxtaposition of the two expatriates gives rise to a tragic irony at two levels. Shanta Krishnaswamy observes this irony thus:
She [Etta] is not in such straitened circumstances as poor Clarissa; yet she has to appeal to the generosity of crude, newly rich, hotelier Guppy, who, ironically, regards her with a sort of easy, good natured contempt.  

But the final irony which is deeply pathetic, takes place when inspite of Clarissa's confrontation with Etta, she moves in with Etta to find a financial shelter. Moreover, a gruesome ironic turn is observed in their relationship when they both, as dimly suggested by Jhabvala, are found in a lesbian relationship. H.M. Williams writes thus:

She [Clarissa] is interested in men as potential landlords but not as lovers. She is attracted to women, and her relationship with Etta has the stormy quality of a love-affair.  

This is how their contrasting approaches to India ironically meet the same ambiguous end: "As Clarissa is drawn to an unreal India of her loving imagination, so Etta is drawn to an unreal Europe of her nostalgic memories." But, ironically both fail to reach their desired destinations.

After A Backward Place (1965), Jhabvala wrote her next novel almost seven years later. It was A New Dominion (1972) which was published with a volume of short stories, An Experience of India followed by her last novel in India Heat and Dust (1975), the award winning novel. As stated earlier these two novels reflect her complete disillusionment with India and her total incompatibility with this environment. Like Raymond and Charlotte in A New Dominion, she too decides to leave for her real home in the west. The grim irony which is employed in these two novels is the result of the total incompatibility of the two cultures.

The truth seekers of the West are brought to juxtapose against fake 'swamis' and 'gurus', which leads to a catastrophic result. Shantha Krishnaswamy throws light on the contrasting outlook of the Indian and the European characters who are juxtaposed in these two novels. She writes:

If the Europeans seem naive and gullible and weak, the Indians fare no better: they are invariably small-minded and sensual with a total absence of any genuine love or fellow feeling. All the characters display a lack of stability of emotional balance, of fulfilment of any sort, Indian or Western.

To the Westerners India is a land of spirituality and in a naive fashion they come here to be redeemed but meet with abject failure. This is where the grim irony lies. The
ironic truth—‘East is East and West is West and the two can never meet’—is the outcome of this juxtaposition of characters.

*New Dominion* begins with the three European girls Lee, Margaret and Evie, each seeking the spiritual mystic beauty of India. Though these women have different personalities, their aim is the same: to find redemption through oriental spiritualism. Jhabvala highlights a contrast in all three in their motivation and approach in their search for truth. Lee had come to India ‘to lose her self in order to find herself’ as she puts it. But Evie comes here owing to her blind faith in Indian ‘swamijis’ while Margaret’s coming is clarified by Lee herself when she comments that it was designed to let her come to India as a revolt against her life.

Shantha Krishnaswamy observes this difference in their attitudes to ‘swami’ when she writes:

Evie seems mindless, believing in merging herself completely, implicitly with swami. Margaret’s will is broken mainly because her health fails her. She pins her faith on the holy man’s power of rejuvenation and refuses Raymond, the rational tourists offer of hospitalization and treatment. Lee’s relationship with the Swami is a continuous tussle.

Similarly, in a well-written article, Fritz Blackwell brings out the difference in the attitude of the three girls towards the ‘swami’ through a small incident:

Evie is able, effortlessly and gracefully, to do obeisance by touching Swamiji’s feet, which is something Margaret, with considerable effort, comes to do, but which Lee is unable ever to do.

This juxtaposed vareigated degree in contrasting traits of the three spiritual seekers, however, culminates in the same sordid irony of fate. Margaret meets her end in death while Evie and Lee return to Swami and are continued to be tortured by him both physically and mentally and await a sordid end. As stated earlier, Jhabvala’s bitter irony set in these later novels, shows her growing hatred for Indianess which is expressed in the juxtaposition of the oriental and occidental characters. Through this, Jhabvala highlights the ironic conclusion of such relationships. She exposes the inner gruesome and repulsive reality through the juxtaposition of Margaret, Lee and Evie against “Swamiji”. In contrast to the gullible, naïve spiritual seekers who want to submerge themselves in Indian spirituality, swamiji “is worldly, sensual, matrorialistic and he wishes to claim the bodies and souls of all his disciples.” Undoubtedly the
spiritual journey of these expatriates culminates into a grim ironical situation of physical assaults and finally they turn into almost eccentric characters.

On the other hand, The European characters are also juxtaposed among themselves. Prof. Shahane writes:

Whereas Raymond and Miss Charlotte embody the rational, scientific and moral aspects of the culture of the west, Lee, Margaret and Evie represent a sort of dissatisfaction with it. 83

Perhaps through the character of Charlotte, Jhabvala repeats the age old truth that service to mankind is the best path to spiritual happiness. She stands out in ironical contrast to the other three western women who leave their own society in search of spiritual happiness but end up as exploited disgruntled women. Thus it seems, Jhabvala's main intention is to present a highly disgusting picture of Indian sainthood as well as the entire Indian society. For this she juxtaposes Gopi and Raymond to satirize Gopi's sexual relationship with Lee. Raymond is happy to have Lee as a friend and enjoys merely talking to her, however Gopi isn't satisfied and he wants to have a physical relationship with her. Lee, on the other hand, despite her unwillingness, is ready to give in as she takes it as a part of her quest to merge herself completely in this society. Ramlal G. Agarwal perceives the bitterness in the apparent irony in this scene. He writes, thus:

The whole scene is calculated to bring out the contrast between Gopi's attitude to sex, crude and inexperienced, and Lee's attitude, generous and matter-of-fact. 86

Here too the simple and generous Raymond and Lee have been juxtaposed against the feckless Gopi to bring out the irony that though the western characters come from a materialistic society, they are far better human beings than Gopi who belongs to the land of spiritualism.

Like A New Dominion, Heat and Dust also has a unique structural pattern, though differing from the earlier novel. It is a double narrative plot eminently suited to Jhabvala's strategy to depict the two generations of India in juxtaposition. V.A. Shahane writes: "Jhabvala skilfully weaves an intricate design in which the experiences of two generations of English men and women and their Indian counterparts are brought in a very close association with a view to highlighting the differences between them." 87 A good screen-play writer like Jhabvala finds it quite handy to juxtapose the characters in the same situation and same action and interaction to reveal a contrasting ironic truth faced by her expatriate characters. Meenakshi Mukherjee throws light on Jhabvala's art:
One can see in the technique of this novel how much Jhabvala has learnt from her experience with films. The two-streams of the story are juxtaposed as if in an editing room of a film studio where the available material is cut, trimmed and shuffled to make a contrastive pattern.  

However, one cannot deny that all this new technique of Jhabvala is entirely intended to express her bitter experience in India where she can get only 'heat' and 'dust'.

Jhabvala portrays the life of young English women olivia and her step grand daughter in an interval of fifty years in India. Olivia comes to India in the thirties when India was ruled by the British. She is the wife of a district officer, Douglas at Satipur. Here Jhabvala introduces Nawab of Khatm who is a contrast to Douglas in many ways. Unlike Douglas, Olivia finds Nawab young, attractive, authoritative and above all very much attentive towards her. Their love-relationship is reconstructed after fifty years when the narrator is juxtaposed against Olivia who comes to "India to unravel the mysteries of Olivia’s existence and the juicy or dismal oddities of her life." She attempts to clear the dust off the India of the early thirties. Ironically enough, in doing so, she hereself falls a prey to the same situation. Here Jhabvala brings out the contrast between these women as representatives of their respective generations in India. Prof. Shahane writes:

Olivia’s as well as the young narrator’s (indirectly Jhabvala’s also) imagination slowly but surely gathers heat, gains momentum and becomes evocative in removing the dust settled on the India of the early thirties. The young woman’s responses are clearly different in tone, rhythm and spirit from those of Olivia and the creative interchange of dust and heat thus symbolizes the process of the creative imagination itself.

Jhabvala juxtaposes Olivia and the narrator in their approach to their relationships. The narrator is more rebellious, open minded and frank as compared to Olivia and this is an outcome of the generation gap. It reconstructs the Nawab-Olivia relationship through the narrator and Inderlal relationship into more grotesque and completely repulsive scenario.

These two relationships are juxtaposed at the backdrop of the gap of fifty years. Ironically, Jhabvala intends to state the same fact—Indian climate never changes. In fact it grows more stingy and unbearable. The heat of passion grows more intense
and the narrator is found developing physical relationships with Chid as a part of merging with Indian mystery and with Inderal who she finds as her soul-mate.

The juxtaposition of Olivia and the narrator finally states the same ironic truth i.e. they both are left alone with their lonely life. Meenakshi Mukherjee writes in this connection:

It is only slowly that the reader is made to realize that the surface might look different but deep down, the insidious change that India works on its foreign visitors remains unaltered.⁹¹

On the other hand, the narrator’s and Chid’s wrong approach to understand Indian consciousness also leaves them empty handed. Jhabvala describes the unfavourable climate of unbearable heat and dust in her usual manner:

Dust storms have started blowing all day, all night. Hot winds whistle columns of dust ... Everyone is restless, irritable, on the edge of something. It is impossible to sit, stand, lie, every position is uncomfortable; and one’s mind too is in turmoil.⁹²

This unbearable climate as juxtaposed against that of Europe ultimately seems to change her European characters—“India always changes people, and I have been no exception (p.2).”—Who are fallen in a chaos. Chid catches jaundice and finally re-adopts Christianity to go back to his own country.

This is Jhabvala’s bitter satire played by her in this novel whose European characters are always packing up to go back their home, the real home. This also reveals the reason for Jhabvala’s quitting India. According to her a European cannot live in this country without losing his/her identity and this Jhabvala could never accept. The discussion can be concluded by S. Ambika’s remark:

Jhabvala’s personal struggle as a European in India, her penchant for irony and her satiric distancing from her targets of whatever nationality have led her into trouble. Ironies that might be appreciated coming from one of our own, are perhaps resented when they come from an outsider’s pen.⁹³

In this way, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala juxtaposes the Indian and European characters in order to give a voice to her protest and contempt for everything Indian. A new dominion i.e. new India which is filled with the heat of passion and dust of poverty. Undoubtedly this juxtaposition of characters is coloured by her European sensibility which raised a huge storm in India.
NOTES


5. Ibid., p.91.


   All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


20. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., pp.36-37.


All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.


30. Ibid., p.99.


34. Ibid., p.125.

35. Ibid., p.32.

37. Ibid., p.275.

38. Norman Sherry, Jane Austen, p.76.

   All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.


41. Ibid., p.118.

42. Norman Sherry, Jane Austen, p.85.


   All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.


46. Ibid., 213.

47. Andrew H. Wright, Jane Austen's Novels, p.166.


49. Norman Sherry, Jane Austen, p.86.

50. Ibid., p.83.


   All subsequent references in parentheses will be to this edition.


All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.


58. Ibid.


All subsequent references in parentheses will be to this edition.


64. Hadyn Moore Williams, *op. cit.*, p.43.

65. Ibid., p.44.

66. Ibid., p.43.


All subsequent references in parentheses will be to this edition.

70. Ibid.


73. Ibid., p.48.


80. Ibid., p.53.


82. Ibid.


85. Ibid., 110.


90. Ibid., p.125.

91. Meenakshi Mukherjee, op.cit., p.132.

All further references to this edition will be displayed in the body of the thesis through parentheses.