CHAPTER – IV

A Critical Analysis of Major Novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala with Special Reference to Man-Woman Relationship.
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This present chapter deals with Man-Woman relationship in major novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The chapter deals with novels such as ‘To Whom She Will’, ‘The Nature of Passion’, ‘The Householder’, and ‘Get Ready for Battle’.

The Concept of Marriage is age old and has been popular and prevalent in human society since time immemorial. Thus marriage is a social tie. Marriages in India are regarded as a sacred bond to the truly two souls together. It remains an infinite bond of two souls from life to birth.

Jhabvala’s first novel opens with the following lines “for if she bids a maiden still she gives herself to whom she will, then marry her in tender age so warns the heaven begotten sage” \(_{1}\)

‘To Whom She Will’ or ‘Amrita’ is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s first novel. She is a young Indian graduate of intelligence and sensitivity. This novel bears an epigraph of four lines from Arthur W. Ryder’s translations of the Panchatantra indicating that the central concern of the novel is an exploration of the concept of arranged marriage convinced that early and
arranged marriages constitute the role safeguard against a mixing of class and community the concept of what constitutes ‘tender age’ for a woman however has changed from nine in Vedic India to nineteen in the India of ‘To Whom She Will’.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala left England in 1951 to encounter India engaged in the mightily experiment of bringing its four hundred million people into the mainstream of modern life. She had reflected in it a true image of the society she had entered for the first time in 1951. Its settings and its plot hinges on the making of matches, of love and by arrangement and she displays considerable skill in blending her English cultural inheritance she found around her in India.

She presented in this novel a dynamic picture of Delhi in a state of transaction. She projects a drama of cross generation conflict and resolution in two extended families of post Independence India of the two, one belongs to the weakly aristocracy living for generations in Delhi and the other to the new expatriate community from North Punjab now ceded to Pakistan. She shows the coming together of two common cities who share a common religion and entice heritage who are separated from each other by destinations of wealth, education and breeding. She reveals a world order in which a stubborn identification with one’s inherited culture is both realistic and desirable.
‘Amrita’, is a story about maturing. Amrita, whose feeling for Hari is based on an idealized concept of the Indianans. She is gradually aware that of far greater importance to her happiness is the respect and companionship of she eventually marries. Hari loves her but, abandons his sentimental attachment to Amrita as his senses become pleasurable overwhelmed by an attractive Punjabi girl of his family’s selection. Worn down at last by family pressure, Amrita and Hari settle for marriage with partners from different suitable background.

Amrita’s mother Radha who had in her tempestuous youth flouted her father and insisted on marrying a man from another community is the strongest advocate for the Hari – Amrita relationship. In her heart of heart she thinks her inter community marriage as mistake and is determined to prevent Amrita from repeating it but her aristocracies pride will not allow her to voice her disappointments. But internally she feels that in Amrita’s case at least history should not be allowed to repeat itself. Amrita’s grandfather in the approved English fashion of half a century earlier plans to send her away not on a pleasure trip to Europe but to England in an attempt to make her forget her calf love for Hari. Ignorant and unhearing of the path Amrita’s feeling have taken her grandfather and mother with their complacent view of her choice of a husband as vindication of their own wisdom and experience.
The novel's lovers find happiness in their several ways in the teeth of family insensitivity to their deepest feelings. The readers know that Amrita's decision to marry Krishna will cause no rethinking any restatement of established values in the Saxena's household.

Although Ruth Jhabvala extracts much comedy from the romantic excess of her sentimental lover and ends the novel by resolving the conflict between youth and age in a manner satisfactory to all concerned, the picture she draws of the Indian family as 'a loving protective cocoon' Amrita resolve to marry whom she will has struck her father Pandit Saxena Hari Sahni is booked for Sushila Anand in the business like way that a prize built would be purchased for a stock boxers hurl, money plays between the elders of the two families in the young people's presence and it is only the youth and mutual physical attraction of Hari and Sushila that lend the transaction some slight gloss of beauty and charm.

Amrita is a debate on the subject of marriage. Its end leaves unreserved the question of whether 'arranged' or 'love' marriages are most conducive to happiness and presents an alternative, a marriage of which the partners come as intelligent and understanding adults. The strongest advocates in the novel of the arranged marriage in the novel of the arranged marriage are Radha, Amrita's widowed mother whose
experience of a love marriage has not been wholly satisfactory and Prema, whose melancholy at the facture of her own arranged marriage does not inhibit her from promoting a similar match for her younger brother Hari. The delayed or voluntary marriage finds advocates, at least in theory, in Pandit Saxena who had himself married by arrangement and theoretically accepts the emancipation of women, his eldest daughter Tarla theoretician like her father whose own unsuccessful marriage had been arranged by her aunts and Tarla’s husband, Vazir Dayal Mathur is a victim of an arranged marriage who likes doing what is unconventional and unexpected. The views put forward by these characters stem so clearly from self deceptions of various kinds and from personal concerns quite unconnected with Amrita’s happiness that they cannot be taken seriously by the reader. It is not Amrita’s attractive honesty of nature that is in her mother’s eyes, her chief qualification for marriage but her beauty and her University degree.

The supreme irony on the question of marriage in Amrita is probably the moment when after many hours of negotiation into which no thought of love or affection has entered. Hari’s mother states that her son is so proximately in love with his future bride that he cannot wait a year and will hardly wait for the marriage day. The Anands and the Sahanis
marriage propositions are like as if they would assess fine stock animals for strength, stamina, appearance and age.

The novel's three principal characters Hari, Amrita and Krishna present a series of interesting contrasts all of them on the threshold of materiality they simultaneously reveal and reconcile individual traits and influences of their traditional upbringing. Hari is a romantic youth, to whom Amrita is 'a Goddess' to whom he likes to think himself quite worthy. He is at the same time a good son the pride and joy of a mother who has brought him up to feel a proper regard for his sister and brother, and to enjoy very heartily the food she cooks for him with such loving care.

For Hari, the present is everything and the buttoning reality of Sushila becomes gradually for more influential with him than the vague ideal of Amrita. At the height of the betrothal celebrations, Hari thinks of the vows of fidelity to Amrita he has made through Krishna and feels very uncomfortable his sensuous is active, but it can do little against family pressure to conform his own growing bodily desire for Sushila and a long cultivated habit of slurring over unpleasant or uncomfortable things.

Krishna, Amrita's husband is the only child of intellectual idealistic parents who had suffered long spells of imprisonment on first returning
from England Krishna had sneered at the melancholy of a good deal of Bengali Verse, Krishna’s hate for India gradually settles into acceptance.

Amrita’s quietness is deceptive it hides a resolution and strength of will that emerge in her firm resistance to her mother’s duplicity and the tyranny of her grandfather. She saw no point in any answer she could make. She knew her family members would listen to no words except words of submission. Amrita in love with Hari but still more with the idea of love has become accustomed to Krishna’s company. She becomes aware of Krishna’s importance in her life only when she learns that he is planning to leave Delhi. When Krishna leaves for Calcutta, Amrita misses him constantly and feels her need of him. She indulges fancies of Krishna’s return to Delhi: She would look up and there he would be she even hurries away from her last meeting with Hari so that she can meet the postman at half past two. She wanted to know quickly if there was a letter from Calcutta during the whole of the last interview neither Amrita nor Hari can keep their thoughts focused on each other Amrita dismisses the thought of Hari with a casual shrug, and almost ran to the bus stop and was in such a hurry to get home.

The three interconnected plots of the novel Amrita’s discovery that her love for Krishna is returned, Hari’s joyful wedding with Sushila Anand and the Saxena’s benevolent plans for Amrita’s future reach their happy
conclusions on the evening of the very same day. Thus the end of Amrita is in the tradition of arranged marriage reconciled with romantic love.

‘The Nature of Passion’ (1956), Jhabvala’s second novel deals with the tussle between the old and the young. It is both a novel of manners as well as morals. The novelist’s art of characterization has minor psychological overtones. In fact its familial, social, cultural and moral aspects are more dominant and pervasive than its psychological trend.

Lala Narayan Dass Verma, a prosperous Punjabi contractor in Delhi, feels that he is responsible for the happiness of his children and therefore, he should decide what is best for them. But his children do not think so. They want to lead independent lives. The tension builds up and a clash seems inevitable fortunately chance and some practical thinking on both sides avert the head on collision tradition and modernism comes to term.

‘The Nature of Passion’ is a sympathetic investigation of family life and Indian women. It is another novel of cross-generation assimilation. The novel shows the depiction of life as it is lived by the commercial class newly emerging in Delhi. The primary objective is to depict the bridging of the generation gap in a changing world. The novel is also a study of exploration of the sociological ideas that create and preserve the money
culture that is an outcome of the transfer of industry from foreign to native hands, following the Independence of India.

‘The Nature of Passion’ opens with several scenes of tensions and domestic discord for which Lalaji’s wife, his sister and elder son hold him responsible. Their complaint is that instead of confining his younger children within traditional moulds he has not only educated them beyond all reasonable limits but allowed them to forget the real business of life. In a society in which young men must be absorbed in business before they can develop any specific choices and women be married off at a tender age, too much freedom to the young has jeopardized his family’s unity making him a failure as a paterfamilias.

His decision to send his second son Chandra Prakash for education abroad has resulted in the boy’s marriage with a girl from a different community. Lalaji allows his youngest son Viddi to drift around in cafes and restaurants and consort with the riff – raff of the intellectual community. And rest of all he has sent two of his daughters to college and has neglected to betroth eighteen year old Nimmi whose value in his eyes is quite disproportionate to the degree by convention.

The family is divided into two camps one determined to preserve the traditional way of life with the resilience characteristic of the community
and other engaged in a battle against a tradition that stifles individuality.

Lalaji’s wife, his sister and his two older children always remind him that in his carelessness to provide for the two youngest he is endangering the family’s security.

Lalaji’s three sons are in state of rebellion against their father Om Prakash, the eldest is sullen and resentful of the privileges showered by his father on his younger brothers and sisters, for they have made him lose the prestige due to him as the eldest of the family. He was a male chauvinist and domestic tyrant in the making. He was intolerant with Usha, Viddi and Nimmi.

The second son Chandra Prakash displays an ambivalent attitude to his father’s wealth. He is ashamed of his father’s money and rapacity for manipulation. His father tolerates and tries to love him but is incapable of understanding him Chandra Prakash as his wife Kanta live is and style for exceeding their income on strength of their connection with Lalaji but have no hesitation in looking down upon him and bringing up their children. Lalaji is sometimes grieved because Chandra’s children treat him like a stranger.

His youngest son Viddi is more against Lalaji and dreams of becoming an art critic. Lalaji is but fortunate with regard to his eldest daughter Rani,
who is closely involved in her father's family. She is an ardent supporter of tradition but is flexible as she protests her sister Nimmi from Phuphaji. Usha, the second daughter of Lalaji and Shanta are the typical women who are passive against male oriented society for them marriage is the ultimate reality in the life of woman and childbearing the supreme fulfillment.

Life for woman in Lalaji’s community is a Static affair and marriage a nucleus of unchanging values in which family conformity is integral. But Nimmi is totally against these prejudices. She is educated and has love with a Praise boy Pheroze. She is appalled at the ignorance of other women in her house. She alone feels that she has experienced life as it should be but her relationship with Pheroze is based on deception. But ultimately her desire to break her ties with her clan is not fulfilled. She is made to submit to the majority point of view that only arranged marriages provide the roots and sustain a community. She will take her allotted place in the hierarchy in which parents and children, brother and sisters, husbands and wives live together, simultaneously liked and separate. She will be aware of natural ties and though sometimes resentful of them, will submit her individuality to the common interest of the clan. But her marriage is different as there is a mention of house that will be exclusively hers, of a trip to Europe with her husband and of a
membership of the club in her own right proving that the community moves with a set of conventions. The traditional is invaded by the modern but does not sustain defeat.

‘The Nature of Passion’, presents a fictional world that is, though rich in humour, colour and interest, a symbol of rapacity on a universal scale. ‘The Nature of Passion’, is a satiric exposure of worldliness on the one hand, and as a celebration of India’s indestructible vitality of spirit on the other. Here too, characters are listed as in the dramatis personae of a play, and introduced in a fictional equivalent of the opening scene in a three-act comedy. The birth of a daughter to Lalaji’s eldest son Om brings the family and its clan connections together in a spirited display of community loyalty and jubilation, and introduces the principal characters.

As the resolution of the plot indicates, there is little idealism in ‘The Nature of Passion’. On the contrary, its picture of a world in which the good things of life are seized and enjoyed with rapacious greed is filled with an abundance of intensely physical detail. There are minor characters. Among these are the numerous servants who minister to the needs of the principal characters and the affluent, uncaring society of which they are a part: the bearers who sway under the weight of the food ordered by intently chewing customers in restaurants; the servants of Lalaji’s household who are only thought of by their master and his family.
as wasting coal or making havoc with the sugar and the ghee’ (p.21); (2) the servant who crouches near Lalaji and Dev raj, waiting only to appear when called (p. 140); (3) the gardener in a Loincloth who unexpectedly crosses Nimmi's line of vision as she parades her finery in a college corridor. The phrasing of Lalaji’s rebuke to his son, like his definition of ‘Bribery’ and ‘Corruption’ as foreign words unknown in India, is an instance of the irony with which Ruth Jhabvala presents the world of ‘The Nature of Passion’ as a society which seems to have lost its standards. Although it is seen and described as if from within, the Indian world of ‘The Nature of Passion’ is not one with any part of which its author can identify herself, but one from which she remains detached. It is from this detachment, from the actual experience of living as a permanent expatriate in the Indian world without being absorbed into it, that Ruth Jhabvala’s characteristic irony has become the precise, double-edged authorial instrument that is now familiar to readers of her novels and short stories, and to viewers of the films for which she has written the screen-plays. In ‘The Nature of Passion’, her clear-eyed observation on Indian life at many levels adds astringency to her delight in its comic variety: thus we perceive that there is no genuine concern for India’s political health evinced by any of the ambitious civil servants who attend Kanta’s dinner-party, and no real elegance or distinction of mind.
manifest in the limited conversational ability and superficial social graces of Pheroze Batliwala that so impress Nimmi. A. R. Humphreys remarks on the novels of Fielding and Smollett that, they are very applicable to the ‘true comedy’ of ‘The Nature of Passion’: Satire is to abound but it is not the novel’s major purpose, which is to bring its readers to a healthy and resilient frame of mind through good humour, and that is best found in the recognition of the true comedy that lies around them.

‘The Householder’ (1960) is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s fourth novel. The dominant Hindu view of life, which took shape during the ten centuries that is generally believed to have elapsed between the cosmopolitan of the Upanishads and the formulation of the codes of Manu and Kautilya which classifies the life of the householder as second of four Ashramas or stages in Aryan life: proceeded by the period of studentship it is followed by one of retirement and calm reflection and at last by the renunciation of all worldly interest.

Prem is an underpaid teacher at a private college in Delhi. A new arrival in the capital, he is newly married and lives with his wife Indu and their single domestic servant in a small flat for which he is paying more rent than can afford. Prem seems to be achieving nothing. His employer and his landlord are obviously exploiting him, his students do not respect him, his friend Raj appears to have outgrown the interests they shared in
earlier days and Indu seems not only bored and unhappy but in dined to deliberately thwart his wishes. The plot of the novel humorously traces the process by which Prem, who was until very recently a carefree student, gradually takes on the responsibilities of the householder’s life, shedding his adolescent dependence on parental props and developing relationship with his wife’s self respect and an increased confidence in some at least of his abilities.

For Prem Life often seems too much to cope with alone, for Indu still almost a stranger to him is no source of strength and so he seeks guidance from those who have traveled further, than he has in the round of life. The successful persons of his acquaintance are Mr. Khanna, Mr. Seigal, his married friend Raj and Mr Chaddha a senior colleague at the college. The only wrong person is Sohan Lal wrong as a guide to worldly success because his lack of means proclaims him in competent and a failure in life, doomed to be forever subservient to such worldly successful persons as Mr. Khanna and Mr. Chaddha. He has a deep reaching criticism on the Indian system of early arranged marriage which has deprived him of freedom to live the patriarchal life to which his temperament calls him.

Mr. Khanna and his wife are chief among a number of characters in the novel whose behavior alternately encourages or thwarts Prem’s progress to maturity. Their tea party for the college staff during which the
pregnant Indu stuffs herself compulsively with sweetmeats, permits them to observe many of these characters in action Mr. Khanna’s stream of platitudes is closely followed by Mr. Chaddha’s sycophantic speech of thanks, sentences from which strike with ironic effect upon Prem’s consciousness as horrified but helpless, he watches the irate Mrs Khanna advance on Indu. The speeches are empty and insincere Mr. Khanna’s hospitality is mere matter of form Indu has been the only reality in the garish room, her straightforwardness is vivid and endearing contrast to the pretentiousness of the whole occasion. Regarding the Sehgars, Prem would like to be comfortable, but does not admire the Sehgars way of living. He did not think that such case was conducive to a really noble life.

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Prem strives to establish himself in the linked roles of husband, breadwinner and householder, Indu, finds some difficulty in accommodating her individual, lively outlook to the requirements of her role as married woman and housewife. She comes from a fun-loving family and though she wishes to be a credit to her parents and to Prem, she cannot help being amused by the very idea of herself as the dignified lady of the household Indian tradition lays down time honored rules for a wife’s conduct and Indu finds that there exist certain ideals according to which her husband and her mother-in-law expect her to behave.

Indu and Prem are little more than children, innocents doing their best to conduct themselves according to the traditional rules governing the adult world to which marriage has brought them. Unfortunately, their good intentions often place them in comical opposition to each other: as when Prem’s plan to assert himself in the role of Indu’s intention to prove herself a model housewife she was very careful in serving him the food and giving him properly. She might serve his food to him with a defiant little slam but she would prepare it with care and serve it to him herself. Prem, a teacher of Hindi well versed in the classics, whose ideas about marriage have been shaped primarily by his mother’s exemplary
deference to her late husband applies ancient rule and childhood memory to present experience with amusing results. Returning home rather late to find the house dark and silent and Indu asleep he feels that a wife should not do this but he never tells her. Such are the incidents of misunderstanding in the early months of their married life. Both have stubbornly individual personalities which resist the merging that marriage requires them to fit themselves into the traditional roles of housewife and householders. Though married few months’ earlier Indu talks about marriage problems with Mrs. Sehgal and even Prem criticizes the Indian system of arranged marriage with Sohan Ral.

Part of their education contest in learning to value each other’s individual foibles and personal reference Indu’s earthly practicality confounds modest Prem, whose idealistic concepts regarding the nature of girls have not prepared him for feminine directness.

The character of Prem’s mother adds to the development of the main theme of the novel. A middle aged widow, she directs towards her only son a smothering maternal affection in which the natural expression of her personal feeling is heightened and sanctified by tradition and convention. Her nature creates frustration and irritation in Prem’s household. Her pathos is found due to the death of her husband and marriage of her children. She has always alleged lack of looks and
education and supposed inadequacies, as a housewife creates rather strained atmosphere in the small flat during her visit to Prem’s house. Prem had learnt from Raj that it is difficult when mother and wife meet. His mother’s presence and her solicitude for him make private conversation between husband and wife impossible in the tiny flat. Now he was in a necessary stage in his development. He realized that he wanted to be look after not by his mother but by Indu and he wanted to look after her. He thus tactfully arranges her removal from his home to his sister’s house; He did not even wait till the train was out of sight but turned straightway and made his way to home where Indu was waiting for him.

Both Prem and Indu have been brought up in a tradition that taboos open displays of love between husband and wife, resetting in their mutual reluctance to admit even in private, their affection for the need of each other. The conflicts thus created are both calm and touching Prem feels it very annoying to write Indu in letter when she is at her home, that he misses her, so writes about the weather and the current price of mangoes.

When Indu returns from her visit to her parent’s house she appears remote and cold finding that in her absence her mother-in-law has upswEEP her position as the lady of the household, she is trying hard, by not showing her feelings, to act the part that tradition demands, quietly
submissive to Prem's mother, making no demands on her husband, she is
determinedly not angry. But her feelings are too strong for the rules and
emotion forces her at least into an oblique confession of love.

She has told Prem in words, for the first time that she loves him their
growing sympathy and affection for each other help to disperse the quilt
they feel about what they did at night in the dark. When she accepts his
first gift of sweets and he kisses her, she did not push him away, nor did
she feel at all ashamed though it was daytime. The Mansoon rains and a
starlight night brought Prem and Indu out on the roof, laughing the
freedom of the children; they are but also as lovers. As their
sexual relationship studies, Prem and Indu begin to present to the outside
world a united front those accords with accepted tradition on a long bus –
ride to Meruli to attend a wedding; they behave with meticulous propriety
though they have been making passionate love in private all week long.
They did not talk all the way, for they have felt it to be indelicate to have
conversation together in public. Arriving at the wedding house, they
separate. Indu joins the women guests, Prem the men. These are
established customs, and conforming to them no longer creates conflict
with the young couple's private desires. On the contrary it is done by
mutual consent and helps to establish their right to respect and dignity not
only as wedding guest but as adults.

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One important moment is found when Prem brings a satin pink colour blouse for Indu but his mother thinks that it is brought for her. This incident shows that Prem has come out of his age.

In his quarrels with Indu, Prem strives to adopt an adult, responsible manner but is often amusingly thrown off balance by her potent physical attraction for him ashamed of his unworthy thoughts about her body. The conflict between Prem’s idealism and his healthy maleness is presented humorously, yet with sympathetic understanding. Their disputes which often end in deadlock, and in which Prem and Indu overtly assert their claims to respect as ‘Householder’ and housewife respectively, express in reality their need of each other as friend and as lover.

Once Prem felt sad because Indu was there, now he felt sad because she was not there. After their mutual a, vow of love for each other, Indu becomes Prem’s main source of consolation, a failure apparently on every other front; he feels he has achieved something as a husband and a lover. Her extreme youth and her dependence upon him for support call forth all the tender protectiveness in Prem’s sensitive nature. His status in the college ceases to matter so very much. He has tried to raise it, but fate is clearly against him. Prem is adult enough to find happiness in what he has, his wife and his confidence in his role of householder.
Thus the ‘Householder’ is a social comedy of a lower middle class Hindi teacher reflecting not merely his monetary and familial problems, but also his complexes, his sense of failures and frustration and his minor fulfillments. The novel presents a typical example of Indian domestic comedy in the conflicts between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, the one with accusations; the other with silent hostility another peculiarly Indian situation is the attraction that the symbols of spiritual life and ideal exercise on the individual caught in the struggles of existence. His concern for them is at once escapist and genuine.

At the heart of this novel is the quickening love of Prem for Indu. His immaturity, his ties to his mother and his clinging to the old bachelor life of coffee bars gradually disappear with the growth of passionate connubial love are described throughout what success he achieves as lover, husband and householder is, however, paradoxical. His aims to raise his salary and lower his rent are as unsuccessful at the end of the novel as they were at the beginning and the alternative practical life has also been rejected.

Significantly it is not with the spiritual minded Sohan lal, but with an evening on which Prem and Indu entertains Raj and his family at the dinner that the novel ends. Sense, experience seems to teach him that in the world of men the experience seems to teach him that in the world of
the areas of sense and sensibility are mutually exclusive, Prem has learned by the novel’s end to keep these aspects of his life apart. By the end of the book discord has been resolved in harmony. Having learned first to love and be loved by each other, Prem and Indu take their places as members of adult society.

‘Get Ready for Battle’ (1962) is Ruth Jhabvala’s sixth novel. Her last work set in Intra-Indian context, this novel records her impressions of Indian life in the second decade of independence. She depicts India in which the rich are getting richer and poor, poorer. The world that is revealed is of existing patterns of living changing so fast and so drastically that India in the sixties emerge as a melting point of values.

‘Get Ready for Battle’ is perceived to be in a state of resistance not against a norm but an ideal. Sarla Devi who embodies this ideal, believes that spiritual reality can only come to her after a whole-hearted immersion in the cause of suffering humanity. A recluse by nature, Sarla Devi continually goods herself to act on behalf of others, guided by an instinctive belief that she had to engage and then perhaps in the end, one day, when she had engaged enough she could be free.

In steadfast opposition to Sarla Devi’s ideal are her wealthy husband Gulzari Lal, his mistress Kusum, Sarla Devi’s son Vishnu and daughter-in-law Mala for whom engagement is worthwhile only when followed by
material gain. Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, then get ready for battle. Krishna exhorts Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita. Sarla Devi likewise pleads with her son Vishnu to abandon his father’s path and follow her own. The terms are significant for they help by indicating consequences, to define the parameters of engagement in the novel. Sarla Devi knows that the example of selfless she is stating before her son can only bring him pain, loss and defeat. His father’s path of self centered engagement will inevitably lead him to pleasure gain and victory. The engagers are thus carefully separated. The self centered engagers emerge not as seekers but as predators, for pursuance of a material goal invariably involves exploitation of the poor and helpless in the world of ‘Get Ready for Battle’, the novel is exclusively concerned with the condition of India, where spiraling prices, lack of adequate housing, official corruption, governmental indifference shortage of public health facilities and denial of educational opportunities to those within the poverty line were indeed characteristics of India in the sixties.

‘Get Ready for Battle’, is a grim tale of the exploitation of the faceless squatter by the wealthy, the corrupt and the hypocritical. At the opening of the novel, three parties are shown as interested in the evacuation of Bundi Busti. Sarla Devi’s estranged husband Gulzari Lal is interested in buying the land adjacent to it and will do so only on the guarantee that the
slum is cleared. In this he is aided by a corrupt government servant and a group of women from the small minority of the capital's wealth, who in the name of social service are only betting big business, the people of Bundi Basti are fearful at the prospect of being uprooted from an area that, though squalid and unhygienic is located at a convenient distance from where they work. Prolonged hunger and privation have rendered them incapable of resistance. Their self-styled leader goes through the motion of resistance. He talks to them in an impassioned voice about lighting for their rights but is not convinced. Gulzari Lal knows how things were to be accomplished, quietly approached the right persons, set the correct wheels in motion, and his work is done.

Gulzari Lal is a follower of the new economic religion of the west that is liberated from any concept of morality. The opening of the novel the scene of the dinner party brilliantly expose not only of the modern industrialists method of doing business but also of the moral, intellectual and arithmetic bleakness of the tribe. Business for him is not a means to live but a way of life.

Vishnu's wife Mala had nothing against people being happy and poor, on the contrary she understood that it was necessary for most people to be so and she felt sorry for them but she did not want them to come to the house. Mala's reservations about the poor, however, do not deter her
from using Seemi to alleviate her boredom heavy and slow-willed, Vishnu who prefers his mother’s company above everyone else. Despite her lack of education and her old-fashioned ways, she is a modern aggressive female and her goal in life is to possess her husband wholly. But Mala launches a battle in which her weapons are her voluptuous body and her raging temper. But Mala lacks the cunning and worldly wisdom. Her attempts at luring Vishnu take the form of attacks that are so crude and clumsy that they succeed in driving him further away from bed. Since she is not smart to make friends with upper class of Delhi she strikes up a friendship with Seemi. She feels that Seemi is not a girl to appeal to Vishu but she hears about Vishu’s affair with her is the bazaars of Delhi. So we find that the novelist has made judgment, but not with Sarla Devi, who is not capable of throwing Kusum out of her life.

Kusum is engaged in a single – minded pursuit to bring Gulzari Lal to the point of divorcing his wife and marrying her. For eight years, she has been his mistress and with remarkable astuteness has won the status of wife even she is still deprived of the title. Mistress of his house she is respected by his servants accepted by Mala and Vishnu and indulged by Gulzari Lal. She is even accepted in the highest social circles of Delhi. She is continually aware of her surrogate status. With the title of wife she feels, she can take up her legitimate position in society. She will also be
secure for life. To this end she starts a campaign against Gulzari Lal’s inhibitions concerning divorce. A conventional man, Gulzari Lal’s objections, had always been social not moral, he considered that legal divorce was still too new fangled an idea to be introduced into a family such as his. Kusum, however had now become modern and decided that mistress were no longer socially feasible and that remarried widows were. In consequence, a long and arduous struggle on behalf of matrimony is before her of all her weapons, the most remarkable one is her ability to change face with the changing scene. Kusum is a chameleon of the deadly variety which changes color not to protect itself but to prey on its victims unobserved.

When Kusum’s pleas and pleasure tactics, on Gulzari Lal draw a blank, she turns to Sarla Devi and to Sarla Devi’s brother Brij Mohan. The interesting thing is that Kusum’s sycophantic overcome to Sarla Devi is quite agreeable to the divorce. As for as she is concerned, she is finished with marriage and will not stand in the way of her husband, should he wish to remarry Kusum, though she is aware of her rival’s vulnerable areas and is exploiting them has not a due to the extent of her genocides and sense of fairness. Kusum pretends to involve herself in the cause of Bundi Basti is order to gain her own ends. So at Bhatnagar’s tea party she showers sentiments on the sufferings of poor. She also explains to
Gulzari Lal that he must not do anything to Bundi Basti then Sarla Devi might not give him divorce and then they both would have to suffer.

Kusum’s handling of Brij Mohan requires more skill and boldness. Since Brij Mohan is one who is really opposed to the divorce, it is he, primarily who has to be bright around. Thus Kusum does by playing upon his two basic weakens – money and women. From the beginning of their relationship, Kusum displays very subtly a willingness to take the prostitute Tara. Tara is driven out and loses her livelihood; it takes Kusum only three battles to conquer Brij Mohan. The first victory is scored on the day of their first meeting when Brij Mohan who had come to defend his family honour and protest against his sister’s humiliation is seen driving away with her husband’s mistress, Kusum’s second battle is won when on her discovery of Tara in Brij Mohan’s house, he follows her cringing and protesting “What am I to do? I am a lonely man”. But on their third meeting Kusum makes her final conquest for She awakens in Brij Mohan a desire for the sort of cozy domesticity that she alone can give him. He veiled promises lead to the expulsion of Tara and Brij Mohan’s ultimate surrender.

Kusum’s success with Brij Mohan stems from the fact that they are of a type and recognize each other as kin. Brij Mohan’s dehumanization of Tara and his equivocal stand on the question of his sister’s divorce are
pointers to a basic predatory instinct which seeks to make material out of every circumstance. His initial condemnation of Gulzari Lal springs not so much from outraged brotherly feelings as from an instinct to blackmail Kusum's deft handling brings him around, however, to exactly the opposite position to a conviction that more will be gained from a toeing of Kusum's line. Brij Mohan is doomed. He cannot hope for animalization in the material order represented by the Gulzari Lal and Kusum of this world for though he possesses the ruthlessness of the predatory animal he lacks its cunning and adaptability.

Gulzari Lal's son Vishnu is filled alternately between the two worlds. He suffers a loss of identity as mere son of his father and strains to break out of the secure slot into which he has been lovingly fitted. In this frame of mind he lays himself open to his mother and Gautum's extortions to reject the material in life and work for the uplift of the soul. But the world of ideals seems singularly uninteresting to him. He does not care to involve himself with the cause of Bundi Basti or of Gautams school and is indifferent to Tara's fate Vishnu is one character in the novel whose self-centered preoccupation are not as open to view as those of others hidden as they are, be his personal charm.

His mother's goading and his own inner promptings lead Vishnu to detach himself from his father's business only to launch a business of his
own. The alienation that Lalaji had experienced in the depiction of his sons is repeated in Gulzari Lal when he compares himself to other industrialists whose sons have been absorbed in the family business.

Sarla Devi’s efforts on behalf of the poor are doomed to end in defeat but her identification with them is total on her way to Bundi Basti. Humiliation and invective are her position. Her brother calls her a mad woman; her daughter in-law accuses her of extreme self-centered new and even the prostitute Tara hurts insult and abuse to her. The moment a woman averts her individuality in India, she has to confront a soul conditioned by the Shastras a code of laws in which a woman’s role of is defined only in terms of her relationship with males. All the sections of society look askance at a woman who believes in choosing the kind of life she wants to live. Sarla Devi wears her crown of thorns gladly, for it is only thus that she can alleviate the guilt that she carries on behalf of her fellow men. She at last had achieved for Bundi Basti. Gautam is the only character in ‘Get Ready for Battle’ that cherishes a genuine respect and admiration for Sarla Devi. She in her turn thinks Gautam a very good influence of Vishnu. Gautam believes in natural affinity and scorns annihilation with a material order.

In the final scene of the novel, Sarla Devi is seen as having lost all her battles yet she walks on oblivious of crowds pumps and drunken revelers
a frail human figure irradiated by the sunset sky her heart more buoyant, her foot more light with every step that brings her closer to her visionary world.

In the climate of ‘Get Ready for Battle’ marital dominance is not resolved. Gulzari Lal and Sarla Devi are permanently estranged. Vishu and Mala though married for five years have nothing in common except their daughter and their sexual need of each other. The future does not hold much promise of harmony either, for Vishnu or Mala, Mala looks forward to life where there would be nowhere for to go, they would have to be together and they would live like this every day and all night. But Vishnu too has his dreams and they do not accommodate Mala. In the final scene of the novel, Vishnu is seen as redeeming his promise to Mala but is hardly likely that he will fulfill her dream as well.

Thus in ‘Get Ready for Battle’ all the battles are fought and most of them won, but no one may be said to have emerged completely victorious. Gulzari Lal has secured Bundi Basti but has failed to gear his drive as a successful family man. Vishnu has launched out on his own but will soon discover that his glorious bid for independence has only been a device following of his father’s footsteps and his lost identity, only that a title of merchants son. Mala will soon be bored is Chandipat with an increasingly busy husband, Victory in the ultimate analysis is promised to
the one character who has lost all her battles in life. Sarla Devi will continue to engage in contest whose issues are preordained. She is one who will find and keep forever the universal affinity that she has always sought.

This present chapter deals with man-woman relationship in the major novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The chapter deals with novels such as 'To Whom She will', 'The Nature of Passion', 'The householder', and 'Get Ready for Battle'.

The chapter is an analysis of the theme of marriage in these novels. The main aspect is to find out how do the characters behave with reference to love theme and how marriages have taken place between them. The characters are analyzed in the way how a male character behaves with female character and how they are behaving with each other when they are in love and after marriage.

The chapter deals with characters in intra-Indian context. Here the characters both male and female are Indian.

The novels depict the social structure of society and social conventions which govern the aspect of marriage in these novels. The novels show the psychological depth in characters. Their thinking is all depicted in these novels.
Thus it is found that the man–woman relationship in these novels, though affected by psychological feelings are mostly affected by social conventions of society.

We find in 'To Whom She Will', that elderly decisions take prominence than the feelings of Amrita and Hari. It is also seen that they both get adjusted to these adjustments very easily. Amrita is ready for marriage with Krishna and Hari with Sushela. It is also amazing that Amrita feels love feelings for Krishna Sen before their marriage and Hari gets attracted to Sushila. Thus man-woman relationship in this novel is based on adjustments with elderly decisions.

In the novel 'The Nature of Passion', the man woman, relationship is totally based on society convention some character tend to be modern and some traditional. Nimmi who loves a Parsi boy out of their caste finally marries according to her father's wish who is a businessman with great dignity for whom social conventions his status are more important than the feeling of his daughter. Thus in this novel man-woman relationship is based on social convention.

In the novel 'The Householder', there is already marriage between Prem and Indu. Here the man-woman relationships are difficult to understand as theirs is arranged marriage. They are both unknown to each other. In
them love starts first on physical plain and then develops into emotional bias. They both have misunderstandings for each other. The reason is also the economic condition of Prem for whom it is very difficult to run a house in small salary. His sudden stepping into the role of householder has brought him in confusion with life with Indu while Indu is a totally conventional guided housewife. For her Prem is first only a husband and their relationships are nothing more than friends and lovers and then as husband – wife.

In the novel ‘Get Ready for Battle’, the couple is in their middle age and the society is of upper clan where illicit relationships are fashion. Gulzari Lal has illicit relationship with Kusum, but his wife Sarla Devi has no concern for this matter. She is a social worker for whom concern for poor is much important than her personal life. She is ready to divorce him as he demands because she thinks that there is no life worth in living a relationship which is not on emotional bases. His son Vishnu too has illicit relationship with Sumi but this gets out off as her again reconnects in his wife Mala. In this novel the relationship have been for off from mending for Gulzari Lal’s money and Kusum are important while for Sarla Devi concern for poor plays major roles. Their personal relationships are for beyond the relationship of husband – wife.
While looking at the technique of her novels it is seen that much of the dialogue in ‘The Householder’ is worded in an artistic adaptation of Indian English idiom that shows how far and fast Ruth Jhabvala has progressed in this regard since the writing of ‘Amrita’. Indian English provides writers who need to convey in English the thoughts and words of people who do not normally think or speak in English or behave according to Western convention with a good many expressions that have been ‘Indianized through the repetition, addition, omission or substitution of certain words and through alterations in conventional word-order. Of all of these Ruth Jhabvala made judicious use in ‘The Nature of Passion’, and in ‘The Householder’ she refines her technique. ‘The Householder’ is a study of human life and aspirations that are delicately poised on the fine line between comedy and tragedy. The novel demonstrates Ruth Jhabvala’s increasing skill in the handling of dialogue for purposes additional to the comic. ‘The Householder’, abounds with conversations that reveal the speakers in seeming accord, but in reality at cross-purposes or in opposition. When Prem is one of them, such dialogues contribute materially to his unhappy sense of getting nowhere and achieving nothing. Each such exchange, however seemingly futile and inconclusive, increases the reader’s respect and affection for Prem who seem to care about others in the midst of his own desperately pressing
problems, whose idealism emerges in contrast to the Sehgars' crass elf-
indulgence, and whose delicacy and restraint are demonstrated by means
of contrast with the Khannas' practiced bullying on the one hand, and
Hans Loewe's unexpectedly crude talk of female beauty on the other.
Ruth Jhabvala's handling of seemingly trivial dialogue and seemingly
commonplace incident to expose the inner landscape of her characters' minds and souls is one of the features of her characteristic technique that is well advanced in 'Get Ready for Battle'. She has come a very long way from the arguments that took place among the daughters of Pandit Ram Bahadur Saxena in Amrita, which were lively, entertaining, and illustrative of aspects of conflict in Indian upper-class society in the 1950s, but of limited significance in relation to the psychology of the characters involved. Similarly, the somewhat intrusive narrative voice of Amrita, which commented freely on both character and motive in that novel, is replaced by a far subtler and more effective technique: the interiors of houses and offices become instinct with the narrator. Both aspects of her developing style are well illustrated in her presentation of sophisticated conversation among a group of 'Bright Young People' in Delhi. Ruth Jhabvala exposes self-interest and self-preoccupation through her handling of conversation in 'Get Ready for Battle' by using a cutting and splicing technique that her work in the cinema after 1960 has
extended and developed. Ruth Jhabvala uses the idiom of spoken Indian English in these conversations to an extent and with a lack of inhibition unprecedented in her fiction. ‘The Nature of Passion’ and ‘The Householder’ are of course, each in its own way, special cases, since the principal characters in these novels are represented as being for the most part habitual speakers of Indian languages. In ‘Amrita’, while certain characters in these novels are represented as being for the most part habitual speakers of Indian languages. In Amrita, while certain characters such as Radha and Mira were permitted to express themselves comically in the spoken idiom, Ruth Jhabvala was careful to see that her hero and heroine, Krishna and Amrita, generally express themselves in a mode as pure and unblemished as their natures. ‘Get Ready For Battle’, perhaps because it followed the successful linguistic experiments of The Householders, is more daring and more honest in this regard, including the well-educated Vishnu among the users of the spoken idiom: You are not listening to Gautam,’ (Vishnu) reproved her, ‘and her is using such fine long words. How will you ever become clever and educated if you don’t even listen when people talk clever things with you?’ ‘What to listen,’ said Sumi. ‘All day I hear him’. (p. 98-99). (5) With a suppleness and flexibility carried on from her earlier novels, Ruth Jhabvala’s narrative voice takes on from time to time the distinctive
speech-rhythms and even the phraseology of her characters. ‘Get Ready for Battle’, is not a novel remarkable for the complexity of its characterization, an exception being made in this regard of the characters of Sarla Devi and her son Vishnu. The reader is assisted by the author to see clearly into the shallow souls of Gulzari Lal, Kusum, Mala and Brij Mohan. None of these make, or are capable of making, moral progress. Their advances are made exclusively in the material worlds of economics, social respectability, personal aggrandizement or sexual satisfaction. The novel as a whole reflects a view of India that has altered profoundly from the comic vision that inspired Ruth Jhabvala’s earlier works. What had previously seemed always a little bit ludicrous even in its excesses, has ceased to amuse. To Lalaji in ‘The Nature of Passion’, bribery had seemed an indispensable courtesy and a respectable, civilized way of carrying on business. Ruth Jhabvala’s writing about India could well have stopped here, arrested by the disillusionment that warps creative vision. Alternatively her writing could have limited itself to bitter satire in which people appear merely as types and exempla thrown up by an irreparably damaged society. The latter possibility is evident in ‘Get Ready For Battle’, with its lack of ironic shading, a loss especially noticeable after the richly humane acceptance of life’s realities in ‘The Householder’ and it’s numerous two-dimensional characters.
Fortunately, neither of these eventualities occurred. The grimness that her satire takes on in ‘Get Ready For Battle’ is never, now ever, quite lost in Ruth Jhabvala’s later fiction, although as ‘A Backward Place’ demonstrates, irony does an occasion modify without diluting it.

Thus the final conclusion of this chapter would be that man – woman relationships, either they are in the form of lovers or husband and wife. They are governed by social conventions and later by their psychological feelings. The society, the economic condition, the physical need gains much importance than the true real inner feelings of love and truth.

Thus this chapter has been the major analysis of man – woman relationship in the major novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.

References:


3] Ibid. , p.140 .
