

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the findings and discussion of the study from the analysis of postmodern feminist narratology in *Lady Susan* by Jane Austen using the theory of postmodern feminist narratology by Ruth E. Page (2006).

Page applies, throughout her research, flexible categories over fixed sets and has refined existing models by adding to the narratological distinctions that already exist, ranging across media, historical period and theoretical terrain. This reworking of narrative includes the work of Robert Longacre's (1983) anatomy of plot enhanced by its alignment with the more fluid and plural framework of Michael Hoey's culturally popular predictable patterns (2001) to analyze the narrative plot, particularly the marking peak or climax.

From the analysis combining both theories, it is resulted that in *Lady Susan* by Jane Austen, there are three passages that might be categorized as Peak. All three climaxes present in Problem-Solution, Desire-Arousal and Goal-Achievement patterns containing a similar amount and range of rhetorical underlining, heightened vividness, the concentration of participants and the change of vantage point. Each of the passages also corresponds to a moment of crisis for a character within the story. The peaks are as follows:

1. Lady Susan has a love affair with Mr. Mainwaring resulting in the decayed relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Maiwaring,

2. Lady Susan tries to seduce Reginald De Courcy but it results to a false alarm as he has not developed his feelings to the extent of marrying her and then fails,
3. Lady Susan tries to seduce Reginald De Courcy resulting nearly to the point of marriage but fails for the second time.

4.1 Anatomy of Plot by Longacre

According to Longacre's outline, plot structure is based on an Aristotelian plot progression where the 'knot' becomes 'untied' and resolution begins to unfold. In the narratives, it is the typical pattern of a single episode of Peak. Peak marking should predictably occur in an episode-like unit that corresponds to the Climax or Denouement in the notional structure of plot (Page, 2006). This marking includes rhetorical underlining especially through repetition, parallelism and exclamation, concentration of participants, heightened vividness, change in pace or a change in orientation.

Based on this theory, the peaks in *Lady Susan* are found in different parts of the plot. The first peak is found in the introduction part of the plot. From the beginning of the story this peak has been discussed as the first problem Lady Susan has in the story which leads her to another series of problems. The second climax is found in the rising part and the last is found in the climax part.

4.1.1 Introduction

In the introduction part of the plot, the peak is marked by several plot structures which are the concentration of participants, rhetorical underlining, the

change of vantage point and/or orientation and heightened vividness. This peak centers in a problem caused by a love affair between Lady Susan and Mr. Mainwaring. The affair happens after Mr. Mainwaring feels seduced by Lady Susan. She says that she was flattered and attracted by the kind manner and attentions given by Mr. Mainwaring although she has avoid any flirtation with him.

The orientation changes every time the subject changes from animate characters to inanimate characters. As an epistolary novel, the story is narrated from the point of view of the letters' writers but there are some changes of subjects in several sentences from actual characters of the story to inanimate subjects, such as feelings and circumstances. It indicates a marking peak.

The long illness of her dear father prevented my paying her that attention (Letter I)
The event of all this is very provoking (Letter II)

The concentration of participants which is used to introduce other characters is also found in this part. Because of its epistolary form, the characters are introduced in the story by other characters in their letters, for example:

(...)if quite convenient to you and Mrs. Vernon to receive me at present,(...) (Letter II)
(...)Maria highly incensed,(...) (Letter II)

Another structure found in the introduction part is the rhetorical underlining structure. Some repetitions are used to give significant effect of emphasis, for example, for the only resolution Lady Susan has to resolve her problem in Langford which is to go to Churchill.

I take London in my way to that insupportable spot, a country village; for I am really going to Churchill... At Churchhill, however, I must remain till I have something better in view. (Letter II)

The parallelism is used to make prominent the content the writer wants to give an emphasis in to indicate a peak marking, for example the parallelism of the modifiers in this nominal phrase.

(...)but their hospitable and cheerful dispositions lead them too much into society for my present situation and state of mind. (Letter II)

An exclamation is also used to give more emphasis, in this part, on the matter of her trying to convince that he problem happens without her intention.

“I like this man, pray Heaven no harm come of it!” (Letter II)

The heightened vividness also presents in this part. This structure is the least present in the plot's part. Perhaps because it is still the introduction part that the characters' feeling have not been maximally explored. It indicates a marking peak through the change from a form of narrative to a pseudo dialogue.

“I like this man, pray Heaven no harm come of it!” (Letter II)

These structures of anatomy of plot show that there is a peak in the introduction part of the plot.

4.1.2 Rising

In the next part of the plot which is the rising part, there is also a marking peak indicated by rhetorical underlining, concentration of participants and change of vantage point and/or orientation. This peak also starts with a romance problem

sparked when Lady Susan moves to Churchhill from Langford to avoid her previous problem.

This part of plot serves the beginning affair between Lady Susan and Reginald de Courcy which is failed not long after. The repetition is used to give emphasis that the notion Lady Susan trying to marry Reginald De Courcy is another start of the same problem to be marked as a peak.

(...)and I advise you by all means to marry him... and though no one can really deserve you, my dearest Susan, Mr. De Courcy may be worth having. (Letter IX)

The most prominent structure of this part is the concentration of participants. There are several additions of characters as their roles are also important in the making of this peak.

*Mainwaring will storm of course, but you easily pacify him; (Letter IX)
I have seen Sir James; he came to town for a few days last week, and called several times in Edward Street. (Letter IX)
I scolded him for making love to Maria Mainwaring; (Letter IX)*

Another Structure used to indicates the peak of the rising part is the change of vantage point and/or orientation, for example to give emphasis about how an artful representation of someone can be beneficial when combined with intellectual and good manner. Lady Susan uses this trick to give a good impression to Reginald De Coucy.

(...)how little the ungenerous representations of anyone to the disadvantage of another will avail when opposed by the immediate influence of intellect and manner. (Letter X)

In this second peak, the problem discussed is also caused by Lady Susan's seductive manners, especially towards the opposite-gendered characters. Lady Susan

and other characters assume that she has been a love interest of Reginald De Courcy as their sudden intimacy has been growing since the first time they meet in Churchhill.

4.1.3 Climax

The third part of the plot is the climax part. Like the name of the part, there is a peak or climax. The structures used to indicate the climax are rhetorical underlining, the concentration of participants, heightened vividness and the change of vantage Point and/or orientation. The peak in this climax is about the same problem discussed in the previous part of plot which is Lady Susan's seducing trials also with the same opposite character, Reginald de Courcy, but is emphasized, still in the use of several exclamations, by the implication that this time their romantic relationship is certain, as follows:

What a pity that you should not have known his intentions! (Letter XXII)
The probability of their marrying is surely heightened! He is more securely hers than ever. (Letter XXV)

Some concentrations of participants also happen as characters are back and forth to the plot of the story, contributing their roles again to the problem discussed.

She is going to London to see her particular friend, Mrs. Johnson. (Letter XXVII)

The most used structure is the heightened vividness marked by changes from the narrative forms to pseudo dialogues and the use of rhetorical questions.

"I must warn you of one thing—do not let Frederica Vernon be made unhappy by that Martin...Heaven only knows! Good bye," (Letter XXIII)
"I do not know when you will see me again; but remember what I tell you of Frederica...She is an amiable girl, and has a very superior mind" (Letter XXIII)

Where the resentment which true love would have dictated against the person defaming me—that person, too, a chit, a child, without talent or education, whom he had been always taught to despise? (Letter XXII)

The pseudo dialogues are used to give clear and actual explanations of situations from the characters writing the letters to other characters. As for the rhetorical questions, they are used to express the characters' feelings more clearly.

The findings of this analysis show that the story not only has one peak but three peaks which occur as moments of crisis. As Longacre's model suggests, these Peaks do serve to mark the high point of the complications in the narrative events. In each case, after these climactic crises, resolutions become possible. Hence, in terms of the linguistic forms used and in terms of the content of these parts of the plot it appears that the plot of *Lady Susan* does not correspond to Longacre's paradigm but instead follows an alternative pattern characterized by multiple climaxes like the theory of the binary opposition of male and female narratives. It is contrasted with the universal theory of narrative proposed by structuralists.

It shows that, as the postmodern theory suggests, the structuralists theories should be more open to possibilities and changes for the narrative texts changes over time to be more varied than just the narratives the structural theories derived from which are usually biased by gender.

4.2 Culturally popular predictable patterns by Hoey

Likewise, the culturally popular patterns in *Lady Susan* do not follow a single pattern of transformation. While the Problem–Solution, Desire–Arousal and Goal–Achievement patterns of separation and reunion occur in a temporal sequence.

Based on the analysis using Hoey's theory, the repeated value is the problem caused by Lady Susan's seductive personality. In the pattern of Problem-Solution, the discussion centers on how Lady Susan tries to get out of her problem caused by a love affair she has with Mr. Mainwaring.

(...);the females of the family are united against me...Sir James is gone, Maria highly incensed, and Mrs. Mainwaring insupportably jealous; so jealous, in short, and so enraged against me, that, in the fury of her temper, I should not be surprized at her appealing to her guardian, if she had the liberty of addressing him:(...)

It shows how Lady Susan feels a problem from the pressure of circumstances that she causes from having a love affair.

The only solution she can think of is to move from Langford where she has been staying after her husband's death for three months. She finds shelter in Churchhill where her husband's brother, her brother-in-law, lives with his family. Although she does not really like Churchhill, she has no other choice but to live there for sometime as she has nowhere else to go.

The Desire-Arousal pattern is then used to give a second peak. In this pattern, Lady Susan and other characters assume that Lady Susan has been the romantic interest of Reginald De Courcy as their intimacy has been growing since their first meeting.

Lady Susan as the main character of the story does not undergo any transformation in herself. Instead, she remains the same from the beginning of the story until the end, being a coquette to get anything she wants. The description of

Lady Susan throughout the narrative emphasizes her constancy, being aggressive. For example, she remains seductive, seducing other characters of the opposite gender.

I have subdued him entirely by sentiment and serious conversation, and made him, I may venture to say, at least half in love with me, without the semblance of the most commonplace flirtation. (Letter X)

This is highlighted in the predictable patterns, which take the form of desire-arousal patterns and like the overarching sequence of separation and reunion are duplicated. The first of these patterns is spelt out in detail here.

What is the situation?

It has been delightful to me to watch his advances towards intimacy, especially to observe his altered manner in consequence of my repressing by the cool dignity of my deportment his insolent approach to direct familiarity.

Who within this situation is particularly attractive?

I have subdued him entirely by sentiment and serious conversation, and made him, I may venture to say, at least half in love with me, without the semblance of the most commonplace flirtation.

What effect did this have on the character?

They are now on terms of the most particular friendship, frequently engaged in long conversations together;... It is impossible to see the intimacy between them so very soon established without some alarm, though I can hardly suppose that Lady Susan's plans extend to marriage.

What did the character do about this?

I do not suppose that you would deliberately form an absolute engagement of that nature without acquainting your mother and myself, or at least, without being convinced that we should approve of your choice;

How successful was this?

I must own it has only convinced ME of my brother's having no PRESENT intention of marrying Lady Susan, not that he is in no danger of doing so three months hence.

The situation is that Lady Susan feels a desire which mark the beginning of the second peak. She starts to feel chemistry between her and a male character. She assumes that she has made herself attractive for Reginald De Courcy to like her by her seductive personality without her really trying. The effect of her seductive personality is her growing intimacy with Reginald De Courcy and it is sensed as a problem by other characters. Other characters, Reginald De Courcy's sister and parents, who sense the flirtation as a problem act upon this by giving an advice to the male character. It is the first time the female character feels that she has been acted upon by someone as it is always her who always decides what she wants to happen. The result of the attempt of giving the advice results in a way which the other characters feel as something positive as it is what they expect to happen.

The third peak, present in a Goal-Achievement pattern, is marked by a goal resulted by an anger felt by the main character as she feels betrayed by her own daughter and her love interest. The goal is to make revenge to her own daughter and her love interest as she feels superior upon them that she can do anything opposite to their likings. She tries to revenge to both of them by trying to make them hurt. As her own daughter is also falling in love with the same person as her love interest, she tries to make her relationship with her love interest more official than ever to make her daughter suffer by trying to make him marry her. She tries to make him sure to marry her by trying to make him believe that everything he hears about her from her daughter is wrong, so that she can marry him to take advantage from him and make her daughter suffer from jealousy. The result of the revenge is the opposite from what

she expects as a sudden obstruction happens when her love interest hears about her previous love affair with a married man that he does not believe her anymore and break their relationship. Then the result is far from a success as it is not what she expects.

Although the patterns of plot found in this story are categorized in different categories, Problem-Solution, Desire-Arousal and Goal-Achievement, the values behind all problems discussed in these peaks remain the same. These values and the plot structures need to be understood in terms of how they reflect and function within particular contexts.

The repeated values in this story show how women in the eighteenth century are eager in achieving a fortunate marriage that many of their problems are about marriage and their goals are to be married especially to gentlemen who have many fortune. In the case of Lady Susan, she tries to accomplish that by using her beauty to seduce men, both single and married, to gain chances of getting a fortune marriage.

In contrast to her, the male characters who are seduced by Lady Susan keep undergoing some changes of heart affecting the circumstances they take, whether to keep pursuing Lady Susan or not. Lady Susan is cast as an aggressive, independent character at the first encounter of her with other characters, especially the characters of the opposite gender, and in the end, when it comes to the time of deciding whether to continue their relationship or not, Lady Susan not like other women in her era will be the one who decides, although at the end of the story she is the one who is left by her love interest for lying to him.

(...)I found, therefore, that something must be done; for I did not choose to leave my character at the mercy of a man whose passions are so violent and so revengeful. (Letter XXV)

It shows how Lady Susan has a strong personality of being independent and aggressive. It is contrasted with usual manner of women in her era as it is exemplified in the story by the comparison of Lady Susan's personality with her own daughter Frederica's. It shows a glimpse of emancipation or women empowerment in the era where the patriarchal social pattern is still strongly applied in the society.

Frederica was no more altered than Lady Susan; the same restrained manners, the same timid look in the presence of her mother as heretofore, (...)
(Conclusion)

Hence the differences in the anatomy of plot and the single pattern of transformation shows that Lady Susan narrative form is different from the universal theory of narrative proposed by structuralists. The plot pattern which centered on transformation of problem, desire and goal and the multi-climactic plot have parallels in the ideological assumptions about masculinity and femininity in the eighteenth century and in the social and economic details of the 'real world' experience of men and women from the time. Further, the way that this content is structured as a plot is not isolated from this ideology but instead can be interpreted as helping to carry the gendered meanings of the story.

However, although Lady Susan's plot corresponds with the alternative pattern of plot as containing multiple climaxes, it does not mean that all female narratives are the same as there are also many female narratives which contain only one climax.

Therefore researchers on the same matter with different corpuses are needed to broaden the horizon.