

Postmodern Glorification of Romance in Updike's Marry Me: A Romance in Comparison to Austin's Pride and Prejudice

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Abstract: According to literary histories, there are many texts and poems which are written within the frame of romance before their being recognized as a specific genre in the 12th century. Although the basis of all romances since its unknown date of birth up to now have been love, travel, and adventure, the presentations of them have changed a lot throughout the history especially during the last decades of the twentieth century when postmodern romances appear to be the popular ones. This research is a comparative examination of traditional and postmodern romance features in Updike's Marry Me: A Romance in comparison to the conventional romances namely Austen's Pride and Prejudice. The fundamental idea of this research was triggered by some questions including what is the difference between Marry Me: A Romance and conventional romances namely Pride and Prejudice? And how does John Updike dissociate Marry Me: A Romance from the norms of conventional romance? The answers of these two questions are definitely prerequisite for this research. It explores the points where Updike departs Marry Me from the conventions of romance strategies indicated in Pride and Prejudice which is a traditional romance in terms of form. The researcher scrutinizes the elements of conventional romance in regard to form such as Mythos, Historical Mode, Hero's Superiority in Degree, Love, and Quest to point out where both novels share the same traditional elements and where Updike detaches Marry Me from those conventions. To do so, mostly the arguments of Northrop Frye on form given in his book: *Anatomy of Criticism* would be enforced to these novels. The results of the research demonstrate that apparently Updike has changed the conventions of romance to the extent that Marry Me identified as a realistic novel by a number of critics, is truly a postmodern romance with a number of dissociated facets of the traditional ones while Austen's Pride and Prejudice is doubtlessly a conventional one as it is entirely ardent to the conventions of romance.

Keywords: Marry Me: A Romance, Pride and Prejudice, Traditional Romance, Postmodern Romance, Form, Northrop Frye, Ending

1. Introduction

The fundamental idea of this research was triggered by some questions including what is the difference between Marry Me: A Romance and the conventional romances namely Pride and Prejudice. And how does John Updike dissociate Marry Me: A Romance from the norms of conventional romance. The answers of these two questions are definitely prerequisite for this research.

John Updike published his romance novel: Marry Me: A Romance (from now on shortened as Marry Me) in 1976, the same year he divorced his first wife, Marry Pennington. While the first section, "The Wait", was published before Couples in 1968, he did not finish the book until 1976. The

early and the mid-1970s is known as a time when divorce rate was high in the United States because of the first "no-fault" divorce law in California, passed in 1969. The law made Updike in his novels to choose this subject as one of his thematic issues in his late novels. Martin Amis in Updike's Version declares that "modern fiction tends towards the autobiographical, and American fiction more than most, and John Updike more than any" [1].

Updike depicts the main themes of love, marriage, divorce, remarriage, disability of making decisions and uncertainty of the hero and heroine, family problems, children matters, as well as adultery in Marry Me and elaborates on them as a pathologist in order to give the reader a photographic picture of contemporary America and American society within the

frame of Postmodern Romance. He re-contextualizes the conventional romances and its attributes and situates them in a new social atmosphere in order to criticize the disintegration of family, the smallest unit of social structure at present. And in this aesthetic manner, the postmodern ethic of love is once more revalued. The ethical values of Love and marriage blended with a sense of mock make the novel of *Marry Me* a true representation of social aura of the last three decades in America.

Kimberly A. Freeman in *Love American Style* states that "In *Marry Me*, divorce, at once realistic and romantic, complicates this debate, collapsing polarities, suggesting postmodern antinomies not only in Updike's work but in the critical history of American literature" [5].

Nonetheless, *Pride and Prejudice* is in every respect a traditional romance novel which is faithful to both form and generic plot frameworks. It illustrates the story of love and betrothal of a handful of heroines namely Elizabeth Bennet, Jane Bennet, Lydia Bennet, and of Elizaabeth's close friend Charlotte Lucas. Austen centralizes the heroines and elaborates the story on their desires and problems.

A romance has many different definitions and characteristics although most of them contain the three major elements of the romance illustrated by love, adventure, and quest. Frye in *The Anatomy of Criticism* points out: "the romance is nearest of all forms to the wish-fulfilment dream...the essential element of plot in romance is adventure, which means that romance is naturally a sequential and processional form [8]. He also believes that there are many minor adventures in romance which create the major one as he calls it 'the quest'.

2. Methodology

Romance has always been open to debate over whether it is a genre or a mode, coming across an absolute definition, stating its precise origins and history, and also determining its inclusions. Romance originated in French word 'romanze', meaning any literature written in the vernacular language. Although it became a genre in the 12th century, it does not mean that romance had not been written before that period while it has situated from the advent of human beings as it is a fundamental element of human beings' nature.

Romance expresses idealism and extraordinary matters. It contains fantasy and realism, past and present, history and legend, prose and verse, and both mimetic and non-mimetic literature while it does not accept any specific structure, classification, and an ultimate ending. As a result, it is reasonable to claim that there is no literary work without traces of romance.

Many critics and scholars have discussed romance, the first one being Northrop Frye who develops a grammar of romance. He defines romance in *Anatomy of Criticism* as the "nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream". And for that reason he writes: "it has socially a curiously paradoxical role" [8]. He asserts that "romance is a historical mode and a mythos rather than a genre and the reason of

being a mode comes from Aristotle's theory on characters in *Poetics* which classifies heroes by advancing that a romance hero is 'superior in degree to other men and his environmentwhose actions are marvelous but who is himself identified as a human being' [8]. Therefore, according to him, romance is a 'generic plot'.

Consequently, by debating these steps about the romance genre, he arrives at the following results

Moreover, the reason it is a mythos is its plot which is mostly based on the mythology and the only way to separate romance from myth is "the hero's power of action" [8]. He considers romance in the category of mythopoeic literature. He also considers romance since a historical mode as romance is always premised on social realities in terms of making that reality idealistic. He says: "in every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy" [8].

Romance is the mythos of summer which means that it deviates from order to chaos and darkness which are winter and death to the new state of order, rebirth, and the character's maturity which can be considered self-realization. It deviates from autumn to winter, from winter to spring, and again to summer.

Richard Chase in *The American Novel and Its Tradition* studies romance by insisting that romance is an American genre and Americans tend to write the greatest romances than Europeans by "adaptations of traditional novelistic procedures to new cultural conditions and new aesthetic aspirations" [4]. That very complexity of feelings and contradiction are the elements of American romance as they exist in social realities. In contrast to Frye, he does not establish a grammar for romance, but makes a comparison between romance and novel by declaring that the only way to distinguish them is considering the way they represent reality. Frye points to the slender boarder between reality, fantasy and romance. Chase asserts that romance "feels free to render reality in less volume and detail. It tends to prefer action to character, and action will be freer in a romance than in a novel, encountering, as it were, less resistance from reality" [4]. Chase believes that the hero and the heroine do not belong to similar social classes and in romance characters become ideal and abstract and

human beings will on the whole be shown in ideal relation-that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic... characters may become profoundly involved in some way....but it will be a deep and narrow, an obsessive, involvement' and on the way to their union they are threaten by a large number of obstacles including antagonists and society [4].

Jerry and Sally, the hero and the heroine of the same social class live in a society where adultery is common while Updike insists on attributing adultery to European counties not to America. Sally before getting married to Richard had had plenty of affairs with other men. She has lots of affairs with Jerry while she is married to Richard. Richard has a

large number of affairs with other women even with Ruth although he is married to Sally. Ruth had had affairs with other men before getting married to Jerry and she has a handful of affairs with Richard while she is married to Jerry. On the other hand, Updike through the mouth of Jerry asserts: "mistresses are for European novels. Here, there's no institution except marriage" [15].

Similarly, Dennis Berthold in *Romanticizing History, Historicizing Romance* supports Chase's claim about attributing romance to America and asserting that romance defines America. According to Berthold studying American romance requires considering three issues including nationalism, history, and genre. In terms of history and nationalism writers have to duplicate a past, because America lacks an absolute past except for the existence of Indians and British people. As a result writers have to replace "fact with myth, experience with innocence, and reality with illusion" [3]. In addition, about the genre the determinant factor is mostly aesthetics rather than history and politics.

The romance hero is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world. The conflict however takes place in, or at any rate primarily concerns, our world, which is in the middle, and which is characterized by the cyclical movement of nature. Hence the opposite poles of the cycles of nature are assimilated to the opposition of the hero and his enemy. The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth [4].

The theory of generic plot is perfectly developed in Frye's *The Secular Scripture* where he claims that: "Romance is essentially a verbal imitation of ritual or symbolic human action" [7]. The hero of romance travels in the way of self-realization. He goes through the obstacles and overcomes them by passing through the disorder and chaos and finally wins the struggle and reaches the heroine and self-realization simultaneously. Frye calls this significant and inclusive adventure the 'quest'. Love and adventure are two ingredients of romance. *Marry Me* lacks hero's self-discovery through different quests.

3. Discussion

3.1. Romance Seasonal Feature and Ending

Romance is seasonal and according to Northrop Frye romance is the mythos of summer and contains a quest from the mode of order to chaos including winter, darkness, and death to a new mode of order and rebirth. At the end of this journey not only does the hero win the heroine, but also he comes to self-realization. *Marry Me* opens with a shift back to the midday in March when Sally and Jerry arranged to meet for the first time in the beach of the coast of Connecticut "the first time, an idyllic, unseasonably midday in March- that the couple agreed to meet here" [15].

But the first chapter, *Warm Wine* depicts their meeting in the same place at another time in the winter when the beach

is not crowded as other months.

In another month, this lot would be crammed, the boarded-up snack-bar-and-bathhouse building would be alive with brazen bodies and canned music, and the dunes would be too hot to inhabit. Today the dunes still wore the look, inherited from winter, off clean-swept Nature, never tasted [15].

The ending of the novel occurs in three different ways and times. The first ending which shows the happy ending of the romance, the union of Jerry and Sally, the rebirth, and order is undated while the second ending, illustrating the reunion of Jerry and Ruth, occurs in November and the third one, associating with Jerry's trip to the West Indies, occurs in March. As a result, the cycle of this romance is not as steady as what Frye determines. *Marry Me* opens in spring which is the state of birth and order; on the other hand, there are three different times and results in *Marry Me* namely marriage, separation, and loneliness which make the ending of the romance open. Apparently, the cycle of time in this romance remains mysterious. Therefore, the dissociation of *Marry Me* in terms of form related to the seasonal cycle is obvious.

As a typical romance, *Pride and Prejudice* is of value to be reviewed in terms of its form. In comparison to *Marry Me*, it contains all elements of conventional romance regarding form. Romance is seasonal and as a mythos of summer, it shifts from order to chaos and then to reorder. *Pride and Prejudice* opens near the end of September and ends in the autumn the year after. Before the beginning of the autumn, the couples, Jane and Mr. Bingley; Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, meet each other and fall in love. During the winter they are almost separated. In the spring, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy run into each other and he proposes to her while she refuses. In the summer, Elizabeth goes on a holiday with the Gardiners to the Lake District. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet each other several times. In the autumn, Jane and Mr. Bingley; Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy get married which has made the novel a comedy of manner. In addition, *Pride and Prejudice* end with the marriage of the couples which illustrates the happy ending of a romance novel.

3.2. Romance and Historical Mode

Frye considers romance a historical mode which means that romance concludes the reality of the time it is written. *Marry Me* was published at the time when an Evangelical revival took place and the born-again Christian was practiced by Jimmy Carter's proponents. Also, the law of the first 'no-fault' divorce was enforced in 1969 and the rate of divorce in America peaked. Furthermore, Updike divorced his first wife Marry Pennington the same year he published *Marry Me*. According to authenticating social influences in *Marry Me*, Updike remains faithful to this realm of romance genre.

The time of the novel is of significance during the 'Camelot' of the Kennedy region that illustrates the occurrence of romance in the remote past, it happens the time which is claimed to be the golden time that Updike feels nostalgic about it. Updike describes the time as: "that year, the first of Kennedy's presidency, the rivers and ponds froze early and black-smooth for beautiful skating" [15]. George

W. Hunt in John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion, and Art claims that "The Kennedy era was the age of Camelot in America, in retrospect, it appears as remote as the age of the Round Table. That particular sense of a distant and irretrievable past is characteristic of Romance" [11]. Updike cites that "it's the story that could only have happened in John Kennedy's region. He infused all of us with a romantic sense of ourselves that's gone. Anything that happened before 1965 seems kind of innocence to me" [11].

Moreover, Updike insists on being American by attributing marriage to America and adultery to Europe. When Sally asks him "if you can't take me as a wife, don't spoil me as a mistress", Jerry responds: "But I don't want you as a mistress; our lives just aren't built for it. Mistresses are for European novels. Here, there's no institution except marriage" [15]. As a result, divorce overweighs adultery and for doing so this divorce would be romantic. Freeman's opinion about this comparison is "for the American Adam, for whom divorce is an option, adultery loses much of its romantic power. For the American Adam, adultery most realistically leads to divorce, and most romantically leads to remarriage" [15]. From Jerry's point of view, even when he is not married to Sally, this mistress should be considered as a wife, a temporary wife, who is imagined in a sort of fairy tale

You were a territory where I went on tip-toe to steal a magic mirror. You were a prince married to an ogre. I would go to meet you as a knight, to rescue you and would become instead the dragon, and ravish you.... What a lazy, lovely naked child you were, my mistress and temporary wife [15].

Austin reflects England's class divisions, the prejudices of upper-class people, marriage, social etiquettes, etc. in *Pride and Prejudice* during Victorian period. Similar to Austin, Updike depicts the golden time of the 'Camelot' of the Kennedy region. He shows divorce, marriage, adultery, family crisis, and social etiquettes in America.

3.3. *Romance Hero and Heroine*

According to Frye the hero's actions are marvelous as he has come from an upper world unlike his enemy who has come from a lower world.

Differently, Jerry lacks such brevity and marvelous actions. He is afraid of death and because of such panic he gets asthma attacks and insomnia. At a midnight he wakes up and tells his wife that "someday he would die" [15]. He is religious and the only way to escape from such dread is having affairs with Sally, the woman with whom he is in love. The first night when they were on their second trip to Washington, in hotel, Jerry gets insomnia and says: "you don't give me insomnia. The Lord gives me insomnia....I love insomnia. It's a proof that I'm alive" [15]. Updike describes Jerry's behavior when he has asthmatic attacks in the following lines

When Jerry has his asthmatic attacks, he would wake in the night and find his breathing shallow. He would go to the bathroom for a drink of water or the ease of moving about and come back to the bed, where she had usually awakened,

with his back bent... At last, after an hour or more, he would tire of abusing her, and God beyond her, and relax, and fall asleep, snoring trustingly as beside him she stared into the dark [15].

Jerry makes Ruth have sex with him on Sunday nights: "usually on Sunday nights, stirred up, he would insist on making love" [15]. He does it in order to satisfy his religious beliefs and escape from his dread. Likewise, when Jerry was in doubt about leaving Ruth and marrying Sally, he recognized that his wife might be pregnant; as a result, he would have left Sally and Jerry's decision as "if you're pregnant, I'll come back and be your husband and Sally and I will forget each other...I've been waiting for an act of God and this is it" [15]. Norton in an article, *A Falsified Universe of Love and Desire*, in *The John Updike Review*, claims "by their intermittent abilities to deceive themselves, their affair continues as though it has staying power, while Jerry's wife, Ruth, "retreats" into memory to spare herself pain [15].

Also, Jerry's actions, as a romance hero, are not astonishing and remarkable. He is doubtful about divorcing Ruth and marrying Sally. He is in a permanent dilemma and although he claims to be deeply in love with Sally, he is not such a lover. Even in the story, he confesses to be an unreal lover: "that's what I am an unreal lover"[15]. Moreover, before taking the second trip to Washington, Sally asks him: "you'll miss Ruth too", he replies "not so much", and she replies "No? Hey I love you for saying, 'Not so much'. A real lover would have said, 'Not at all'" [15]. Nonetheless, the heroine is absolutely courageous and tends to sacrifice everything to reach the hero. Just opposite to conventional romance heroes, Jerry's deeds are not as marvelous as what is expected.

From the beginning of the story, Sally's enthusiasm towards Jerry and getting married to him is obvious and undoubted. When Sally wants to go on a trip to Washington with Jerry, he refuses and considers Sally's tension futile. "Sally don't come. You'll just crucify yourself for nothing" [15]. He continues by saying: "You are so gallant. It would never swing. They'd find out and he wouldn't let you have the children", she replies "I don't want the children, I want you" [15], and "I don't think we should take any risks until we know what we're going to do" [15]. Just carefree to all her family members and her marital life which she risks, she goes to Washington alone and when Jerry asks her: "how on earth you get away?" She replies: "I just said good-bye and got in the Saab and drove to the airport" and he answers: "you know, it's marvelous to meet a woman who can really use the twentieth century" [15]. Besides, when Jerry asks her not to return home and stay with him, Jerry says: "Do you want to not go back? Shall we just run off? You'd lose your children" she answers "I'm willing" [15].

Jerry is not a romance hero as what Frye describes a romance hero should be. The hero is "superior in degree to other men and to his environment" [8], however, Jerry is an ordinary upper-middle class dweller with a handful conflicts in his mind and his life. The narrator reports: He "became an unsuccessful cartoonist and then a successful animator of

television commercials” [15]. On the other hand, his rival, Richard is very rich and has inherited the money from his dead father who “had owned a liquor store in Cannonpart, which had fostered branches in in shopping malls as the little city metastasized and merged with exurban New York” [15]. In comparison to Richard who “was native to the region”, Jerry is “an inland boy, squeamish and hydrophobic”, “a skinny slave, preoccupied and cruel” [15]. Also, opposite Richard who is “a big overweight man A deep voice that in every swollen syllable expressed oral conceit”, Jerry is not that strong when Updike describes: “his skinny chest gleaming like metal in the dying light” [15].

In *Imagination and Idealism in John Updike's Fiction*, Farmer claims that many of Updike's characters are “guilty of living in a falsified universe, of mistaking the order that bestow on the world for an order intrinsic to the world itself” [6].

In contrast to the conventional romance, where the woman had a secondary position in the story, Sally is in the center of attention. She is gorgeous and eye-catching “flashy and over animated and highly visible” [15]. Supposedly, Updike's hero's and heroine's roles are changed. Sally is the one trying to capture Jerry and crucifying her family for him. As such we can see how Updike reverses the traditional role of the hero in romance.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley are from aristocrat level of society. They are rich and handsome. Austin opens *Pride and Prejudice* with the famous sentence describing “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife” [2]. The main hero of *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy, is rich, well-known, a successful business man, and he does marvelous actions to reach Elizabeth. He overcomes his pride and misbehaviors. He finds Lydia and pays Wickham's debt. He writes a letter to Elizabeth in order to dispel her misunderstanding about Wickham and the separation between Jane and Mr. Bingley that he made. As a result, Mr. Darcy is superior in degree to other characters.

3.4. *Romance and Myth*

Frye separates myth from romance when he asserts: “the hero's power of action” [8]. The traces of myth in *Marry Me* is in the first chapter, *Warm Wine*, where Updike idyllically and idealistically symbolizes Sally and Jerry Adam and Eve by saying: “Jerry and Sally, the original man and woman” [14] and in the second chapter, *The wait*, Updike describes their affairs as “Jerry and Sally made love lucidly, like Adam and Eve when the human world was of two halves purely” [15] in order to verify their union and marriage.

The role of journeys in *Marry Me* differs from conventional romance pertaining to being together and having affairs just oppose to leading to self-discovery and winning the heroin in conventional romance. Sally tries to convince Jerry to accompany him to the second trip to Washington while Jerry refuses and says: “it would not be as good as the first time” [15]. There is no self-realization after these trips neither for Sally nor for Jerry. Updike does not

signify the role of journey self-realization. He devalues the significant role of journey from hero's self-realization to an insignificant role of journey which is lovemaking.

The only relationship between Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* with mythology is the “presentation of sibling loyalty, sibling rivalry, and the incestuous unions with which some of the novels end reveal her concern with preserving the sacred inviolability of the home in a time of upheaval and social change” [10]. *Pride and Prejudice* ends with the marriage of Jane and Mr. Bingley; Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy.

3.5. *Romance' Subtitle*

Nathaniel Hawthorne in his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* justifies why writers add *A Romance* to their works.

When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former- while, as a work of art, it might rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably, so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart- has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of writer's own choosing or creation [9].

However, Updike in *John Updike: A Study of Short Fiction* expresses the idea of adding the subtitle of romance to *Marry Me* a compensation for the lack of sociology. He says that “my unease about the book's lack of, let's say, ‘sociology’ led me to give it the subtitle as a way of cutting it off from the other novels” [16]. On the other hand, Freeman comes out with the opinion that “calling it a romance allows Updike more room for imagination. He does not feel as constricted by the ‘sociological’ realism that characterizes the novel, even though the book does deal with the ‘sociological’ issue of divorce” [5]. Newman adds that Updike gives the subtitle in order to “underline the less realistic nature of the work. In its structure this romance emphasizes the subjectivity of each character, with individual chapters ostensibly presented from the point of view of one protagonist” [13].

3.6. *Romance Characters*

Concerning characters, Updike's concern in *Marry Me* is not developing characters by going into their thoughts. Chase states that romance “tends to prefer action to character” [4], Updike does not give readers precise and sufficient information about character's mind. Instead, he mostly describes the environment where they live and things they use in order to highlight American atmosphere. Alfred Kazin in *Alfred Kazin on Fiction, a Review of Marry Me*, claims:

Updike is always at his best in handling the social matters: cars, children, parties, the drinks, and the kitchen talk late at night, the bitter sympathy between women rivals for the same man who equally mistrust him. There is all that American role playing, very real indeed when we are all in suburbia and

find our only models in each other [12].

Except some minor information given by characters about each other, especially in the conversations between Ruth and Richard, the rest of the information is about the appearance of characters rather than their personality and way of thinking.

The only character that Updike penetrates into his mind and describes his attitude is Jerry in some imaginative scenes which are supposed to be the closest parts to romance illustrated by:

Oh Sally, my lost only Sally, let me say now, now before forget, while the spark still glitters on the waterfall, that I love you, that the sight of you shamed my eyes. You were a territory where I went on tip-toe to steal a magic mirror. You were a princess married to an ogre. I would go to meet you as a knight, to rescue you, and would become instead the dragon, and ravish you. You weighed me out in jewels, though ashes were what I could afford...I forgot, sank. And we dried each other's beaded back, and went to the bed as if to sleep instantly, two obedient children dreaming in a low tent drumming with the excluded rain [15].

In *Pride and Prejudice* Austin goes through the character's minds. She describes what they think about, their appearance, and characteristics in details.

4. Conclusion

Romance was revived in the late twentieth century and gained new characteristics. Romance and postmodernism exceed both culture and history. Romance also exceeds the form of the genre in terms of form and generic plot as postmodernism breaks all boundaries including genres. As a result, the new kind of romance is a postmodern phenomenon.

Though romance is contaminated with the inundation of history, postmodernism is contaminated with the inundation of romance. It is impossible to locate the exact history where the postmodern romance refers. Besides, it is implausible to divide romance and realism. Realism recalls the past in order to forget it while postmodernism recalls the past to make it impossible to forget throughout the figure of woman. Opposite to traditional romance which considered woman's state poor, postmodernism reevaluates women and revolves around women's desires.

Dissociation of *Marry Me* from conventional romance regarding form have been studied. Although some critics do not consider *Marry Me* to be a romance, according to what was argued in this study over deconstruction of form of the conventional romance, *Marry Me* is a postmodern romance since Updike dissociates it from the norms of the conventional romance genre. Opposite to the conventional seasonal romances, *Marry Me* is dissociated from such a norm by offering three different endings in different times. The time of the first ending is unknown, the time of the second one is in November, and the time of the third one is in March. Updike deconstructs the happy ending of a romance novel, too.

Jerry is afraid of death, he has asthmatic attacks, and he

gets insomnia. Jerry is doubtful about giving up Ruth or Sally and divorcing Ruth and marrying to Sally. A conventional romance hero achieves self-realization after solving the hindrances. Quest as one of the important elements of conventional romance loses its significant role and value. Quest's role used to be hero's self-discovery in conventional romance. On the other hand, in *Marry Me* Jerry goes on a trip to Washington for a business purpose and Sally accompanies him twice. Instead of fighting the obstacles and achieving self-realization they have affairs in Washington.

According to what was discussed throughout this study, obviously *Marry Me* is a postmodern romance.

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