



RETELLING THE STORY OF JANE AUSTEN'S *EMMA* THROUGH *POLITE SOCIETY* OF MAHESH RAO

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ABSTRACT

Reimagining Jane Austen's 'Emma' in contemporary Delhi, 'Polite Society' is filled with shimmer and sparkle. But the "Emma" comparison is perhaps more faithful to the author's intentions and the structure of the novel. Mahesh Rao's modern-day Emma is Ania Khurana in Polite Society, the beautiful daughter of a wealthy widow. Ania believes herself to be a novelist but soon becomes more preoccupied with her alleged matchmaking ability. Through skillful weaving, "Polite Society" traverses a richly imagined world of Delhi's elite, evoking an ever-expanding network of social sites and rumors through overheard conversations at parties, fancy lunches, and cafes. Here, Rao made insightful comments about the class, he has observed.

Keywords - *Reimagining, Emma, unexpected match, self-awareness etc.*

INTRODUCTION

Polite Society is a novel which exceeds our expectations. Throughout the novel, lives change for better and for worse, but the world revolves around them like a silent clock. The main character, Ania, is a beautiful, intelligent and slightly bored lady. Ania Khurana, who Delhi has wrapped around her finger. When Ania finds love with her unmarried aunt, she realizes

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her potential as a force for good. In another competition, Ania sets her sights on Dimple, her new, cuter and significantly poorer friend. But her good intentions can be misguided, and when her aunt's handsome nephew arrives from America, the social tide in Delhi begins to turn.

Surrounded by old and new money, rumors, conspiracies, and an unforgettable cast of journalists, socialites, masters, and heirs, Ania discovers that when you seek to please the human heart, everything rarely go according to plan. Using Jane Austen's *Emma* as a springboard, *Polite Society* takes us into the lives of a group of characters we never want to part with. Combining keen observation and social comedy with moments of genuine tenderness, this exciting adventure through the mansions of India's elite celebrates that there is no single path to happiness.

The canvas of the novel *Polite Society* is wide with various figures like Jane Austen's *Emma's* flat and round characters. There is Dimple (Harriet), unwittingly drawn into a world of partying after an exhausting party, Dev (the charming Mr Knightley), interested in archeology, literature, and as far away from parties as possible. Another is Fahim (Mr Elton), a charming socialite and of course, Ania (*Emma*), who is well-meaning but superficial, and is just beginning to feel insecure about the value, she places around.

A full synopsis of this complex novel would take too long to write, let alone reveal too many secrets. Some characters are missing (Miss Bates) and some plots are omitted (Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill), but the plot follows the same general line as the original. Sometimes "Polite Society" can be too polite although there is a lot of thrilling action in this book, i.e. affairs, lies, secrets buried in death, most of it happens behind the scenes. Instead, what readers get are rumors of action, overheard in many glossy salons. Rao's gift is the ability to portray the high value of small gestures and rituals, but that comes at a heavy cost. We lose our sense of bigger problems. Little things seem salvageable, ignorance can be forgiven. Even with financial ruin looming, we are confident that everyone will probably be fine. Ironically, Rao's work shines most when his characters leave the glittering world behind.

The main character, Ania, attends a writing retreat in Italy, she finds herself in a new hierarchy in which she is no longer at the top. She believes there is a protection emanating from her status, as if a special symbol exists next to her name. But at the mansion, the ramparts had collapsed. This downfall comes as a real shock, but Rao is too easy for his heroine to ignore the friction. She returns to her rampart world shortly after, and the conflict mainly results in her confidence in matchmaking skills being shaken.

Polite Society certainly fulfills this vision Ania Khurana, *Emma Woodhouse's* 21st-century version, and Delhi's elite are terrible. One could draw all kinds of beautifully polished parallels between the glitter of diamonds and Ania's society, but deep down their world was

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superficial and rotten. Rao has the eyes and heart of an anthropologist. He writes of the elite with all their malice, all their efforts to climb higher and higher on their social ladder, with a pen of fairness. Between the well-written villain, there are surprising moments of kindness, genuine concern for others, and self-expression.

Austen's "Emma" gives us a unified structure and steady pacing, the key events being loaded enough to take on the entire novel that has become subordinate to a larger plot, predefined. Rao writes with insight into the hearts of those who aspire to get rich. Her portraits of Dimple, Ania's up-and-coming friend, and her relatively modest life are tender and gentle rather than mocking. When a person who wants to be another society, pursuing the wrong kind of brilliance, finds himself trapped in a fraudulent marriage of his own making, the touching writing is genuine, a readable narration of the novel.

It turns out that it is not wealth but fraud that is the central theme of the novel. Financial scams, mental scams, romantic scams, and psychological scams are common by social and economic elites, acting in bad faith according to class norms. All that was thought to be gold; "Polite society" means. Rao's ultimate concern is not with the glitz of high society, but with how people deceive each other and, ultimately, how we deceive ourselves.

Rao's *Polite Society* is Lutyens' Emma located in contemporary Delhi and an ironic parody of those living on the most coveted estates in the country. Emma is Ania Khurana from "Prithviraj Road, in Delhi". Miss Taylor is transformed into Renu, Ania's unmarried aunt. However, if she was a tutor in this version, it wouldn't be out of place in Lutyens at all. Other characters also get their Indian counterparts: Mr. Knightley becomes Dev, Khuranas's best friend; Harriet Smith becomes Dimple, a Delhi immigrant.

Ania is a young woman in her twenties who tinkers with the idea of becoming a novelist although her true passion seems to be matchmaking. Like in Austen's Emma, Rao's Ania has a lucky combination of looks and money that makes her noticeable by men. But her main concern is finding a good boy for Renu and Dimple. As the novel progresses; she successfully finds Colonel Rathore to marry Renu and completely fails to find the right match for Dimple. Those who have read the original story will shake their heads in disgust with the details so that Rao doesn't go astray. Austen's plot is sacrosanct. For example, Emma's original plot faithfully follows the plot of a five-act play with an introduction, pacing, climax, drop, and resolution.

But while Rao is stuck in Austen's plot, he doesn't allow himself to be dominated by other narrative elements that say a lot about his confidence as a novelist. And it happens to be not an adaptation of Emma but a novel that uses Austen's classics to tell a different story. This is made increasingly clear by the third act of *Polite Society*, which takes a much darker turn than Austen could have imagined.

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Polite Society moves away from the Austen style of writing. She usually wrote as an omniscient third person narrator but narrated in detail only her protagonists' thoughts. In the original Emma, this worked well because the reader only had the information that the 21-year-old did. It contributed to the suspense as will she be able to match make as she wants to or will she be unpleasantly surprised by the outcome?

Rao's narration takes a more open approach. In *Polite Society*, moving away from Austen's tight omniscient, Rao opens up all his characters to the reader. Each of them is portrayed as having psychological depth and consideration. The author changes perspectives frequently. A lesser writer would have made a mess of the narrative but Rao keeps the book pleasing and neat. He also focuses on the external details, sights, sounds, smells, touch that are characters in their own right in *Polite Society*.

The choice of voice is propelled by the plot. It would never do to present Ania in the same way that Austen showed Emma. Times have changed, and perhaps many elements of Austen's coming of age novel would not sit well with contemporary readers. Certainly, not many of her male protagonists would work well in a modern novel. Mr Darcy was a straight up sociopath, and Emma's own Mr Knightly was an annoying and condescending man. Austen balanced these characteristics out with appropriate indicators of sympathy and compassion. Meanwhile, Emma's rejection of Robert Martin for Harriet comes off as naiveté, while Ania's rejection of Dimple's beau screams high snobbery.

By keeping a distance from his main protagonist and exploring each of his characters' inner thoughts, Rao allows the reader to empathize with Ania. Unlike Austen, Rao is not interested in writing a book about Ania's coming of age. His is a book about the secrets, lies, and unsaid hierarchies of a social world insulated by power and money. Lutyens' is therefore a perfect place in which to set his novel. Within the setting, Rao again utilizes wide omniscience and distance. The Lutyens' Delhi he writes about is exaggerated, comically too. The characters in *Polite Society* are perhaps a reflection of the increasing Anglicization of the Indian millennial, many of whom speak better English than Hindi. The novel *Polite Society* is comedy with a dark edge; and a genuinely well-adapted Jane Austen novel through it all.

Rao uses his keen eye for the absurd to depict the petty intrigues and scandals that occupy the top echelons of Indian society. Ania Khurana feels superior to everyone in Delhi, and has the social connections, money, and free time to prove it. After engineering her aunt's marriage, she sets her sights on a brilliant society match for her friend Dimple. Unlike Jane Austen's Emma, Ania doesn't quite transform from a meddling, bored socialite to a girl with good intentions, so there is no sympathy when her schemes fall apart. This India is a glamorous playground for the uber-rich.

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The characters are all caricatures, including Ania's weak and foolish father, Dileep; American never-do-well Nikhil, whom Ania is attracted to; secretive Mr. Nayak, who manipulates other people's fears for his own ends; and serene Kamyra Singh-Kaul, with whom Ania has a fierce rivalry. This romp through Delhi leaves behind broken dreams and exposed secrets, but the characters are surprisingly resilient, or maybe just extremely foolish. Brief mentions of heat and traffic jams do little to evoke the setting, as the wealthy characters are mostly insulated from the city's grit; the story feels like it could take place anywhere. Only Rao's biting funny commentary saves this from being a clunker.

Surrounded by way of Edward Ruscha display screen prints in her bedroom in Dad's palatial mansion, Ania Khurana lacks for nothing. Until the writing muse strikes and Ania can finish her novel, the 25-year-old is perfectly content material playing the role of matchmaker. Convinced that it used to be her preparations that had her aunt correctly meet the man of her dreams, Ania next trains her attractions on her pal Dimple. Trying to scrub her working-class roots clean, Dimple is Eliza Doolittle in Ania's capable hands, as the younger public family members expert is sculpted to match seamlessly into Delhi excessive society. But no longer has all gone swimmingly in this comedy of mistakes as couples meet, and consciously uncouple, for all the incorrect reasons. Meanwhile, the patriarch, Dileep Khurana, wrestles with his personal demons, and Ania's first-rate matchmaking choices frustratingly backfire.

CONCLUSION -

Mahesh Rao's *Polite Society* remains proper to the plot of Emma. It makes use of the Jane Austen traditional to inform a unique story. It is dangerous enterprise to adapt a Jane Austen novel. Not solely due to the fact the woman still has stands but because, as instances have changed, so must Austen's characters. In his third e book of fiction, Mahesh Rao remains proper to the plot of Emma, however does not pressure to stick to her persona models at the value of realism. This novel will help readers to stick for many one-of-a-kind reasons, such as the creator and Delhi setting. The essential one is Long-time followers of Jane Austen's books, specifically Emma.

This novel has substances that will be fun for readers. One will locate beautiful descriptions and wit, a threat to witness Emma's progression closer to self-awareness in our era, and the constantly perceptive Mr. Knightley to stability her foibles. The book holds to the manners or virtue that Austen for my part believed in and included in her books. Explicit sexual dialogue, speak of self-harm, and a pessimistic view of the heroine and the "upper class" makes for an often darkish read that lacks the liveliness and optimism of Emma.

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