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Marriage Culture in Pakistan in Relation to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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Abstract

This research paper attempts to study and interpret the concept of marriage in Pakistan with respect to Jane Austen's narrative work, *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel under study has a major influence on our conception of marriage prevailing in our contemporary set up. There are five various sorts of marriage depicted in this novel, each of which has its own unique characteristics and preferences. In Pakistan, it is possible to find these kinds of weddings which make this study relevant in the intended context. This study aims to connect Austen's ideas on different types of marriage on the then society with the traditional views on marriage in the current scenario of our own contemporary context. In this way this paper presents a useful comparative analysis to highlight the idea and set conventions related to wed lock along with the potential of Jane Austen work to highlight the marriage culture of Pakistan in contrast to the original setting of the novel.

Introduction

1. About Jane Austen

Jane Austen is a well-known English author. Her works have been adapted for television, film, stage, and radio. This feat is all the more impressive keeping in view that she only wrote six complete books (Schneider, 1993). They were *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*. Austen is known as pure novelist. She accurately critiques rural culture within the constraints of art. Her life's events and people inspired her. She expresses her own views on the world through her fictional narratives. (Weinsheimer, 1972).

Jane Austen's works contain excellent domestic comedies. So her friends are mostly from the middle and upper classes. Her satire focuses on human relationships. Jane Austen's work is centered on love and marriage. In her books, a young lady falls in love with a wealthy and attractive man (Solomon, 2000). Getting married will be difficult for her but it all works out. Austen opposes illicit love. Only marriage can end a romance. She believes that a couple's ability to get along is essential to a happy marriage. According to her views a husband and wife are meant to be spiritually complementary to each other. A lovely friendship is the bedrock of a lovely marriage. Without it, marriage is a sham as depicted in 'Pride and Prejudice' (Ashton et al., 2012).

2. About Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen's novel is set in rural England in the 19th century and focuses heavily on the Bennet family. It had five sisters, all of whom had distinct personalities. Mrs. Bennet's primary goal in life is to see her five daughters married off. First-born Jane plays down Charles Bingley's interest in her during the party, but it's clear that he's drawn to her (Peter, 1978).

Darcy, Bingley's best friend, would not let him marry below him. When they meet at a local event, Darcy expresses his displeasure with the whole arrangement. Collins arrives soon after, hoping to marry one of the Bennet sisters. (Rubinstein, 2014). As a result, Collins marries Elizabeth's friend Charlotte Lucas instead of proposing. Elizabeth meets George Wickham, a

handsome military man. They are attracted to each other when Wickham tells her Darcy denied her inheritance (Ganjoo, 2013).

When Bingley suddenly leaves for London, Elizabeth concludes that Darcy is endangering Bingley and Jane's relationship (Wiesenfarth, 1984). Darcy, on the other hand, grows fonder of Elizabeth. Darcy eventually proposes to Elizabeth, but she declines. If Darcy asks for an explanation, Elizabeth tells him he's trying to hurt Jane and Bingley's relationship.

Darcy tells Elizabeth in a letter that Jane is not in love with Bingley. Wickham reportedly sought to marry his 15-year-old sister after wasting his wealth. Lydia, the youngest Bennet, soon marries Wickham. Elizabeth is afraid that even this will tarnish the Bennet family's reputation. Wickham then secretly persuades Darcy to marry Lydia. He also invites Bingley back. Bingley marries Jane, and Darcy proposes to Elizabeth. This time she agrees (Moe, 2016).

3. Research Objectives

In the context of Pakistani marital culture, the following study objectives have been created by a detailed textual examination of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This paper aims:

1. To conduct the study of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in contrast with Pakistani culture.
2. To sum up, its universality and application in the cultural setting of Pakistan.
3. To draw conclusions on whether or not Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* can be applied to Pakistani culture.

4. Research Questions

As a researcher I have attempted through this research to provide answer to the following question pertinent to this study in terms of marriage and Pakistani society:

1. What is the potential of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to highlight the marriage culture of Pakistani society?

5. Significance of the Study

Due to its emphasis on Pakistan's current marital challenges, this study is important for a variety of reasons. As described in the chosen book, finding a partner for the daughter who is financially secure is a major concern for this family. The major goal of this study is to raise public awareness about the social determinants that lead to a rise in the prevalence of materialism in personal relationships and in society at large. This study makes a significant contribution to the study of Jane Austen's work and to the critique of it in our own cultural setting.

6. Delimitation of the Study

This study does not make an exemption for delimitations. The following are a few of the in-hand research's limitations: The majority of humanities and arts research is qualitative, focusing on the characteristics of the resources via an interpretive lens. Using a qualitative technique, the current study exemplifies the thesis statement's main points. There are two ways in which this study's findings might be generalised: quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative studies are restricted in scope, while qualitative studies are more open-ended. In addition, just a few concerns particular to Pakistani settings are addressed and held responsible in the research's restricted application and breadth. In spite of the concentration on *Pride and Prejudice* in this study, other works by Jane Austen also deal with contemporary social themes.

7. Framework of the study

Using the descriptive approach, the text of *Pride and Prejudice*, which is considered the key resource for this study, is examined in the preliminary research process. An in-depth textual study of the whole document is conducted in order to pinpoint relevant sections that reflect general cultural themes. As part of analysis, we compare the then conventions of the time depicted in the book to the current scenario to see how well it fits the setting and how it handles marital concerns of the two different cultures. I attempted to look for parallels, contrasts, and similarities along the way to establish worth and utility of the work with respect to our own cultural norms related to marriage.

2: Review of Literature

Morrison, (2009) says that Jane Austen is a great "authoress of marriage and inheritance." According to Welsh (2007), "she was a spinster all her life and died a spinster." She "seems to have had a lot of experience with the perils of all attachments."

Cartmell, (2010) thinks that "Jane Austen wrote [all her] novels about marriage, and most of the commentary and moral discussion is focused on how to make a good marriage and how to make the one good marriage that stands out from the rest of the novel and dominates it. It's true that marriage is a social agreement, so it has to be thought about in the public eye (Morris, 2014). Most people think that people will have the marriages they deserve after reading this book "and that Elizabeth will get married when she solves all of her problems (Austen, 2017).

According to Kliger (2017), It is one of the few big mistakes we can lay at James's door. "Jane Austen," he said in one of the few big mistakes we can lay at his door. "She was instinctive and charming." Further, he talks about Austen's writing that she did not just show how a society looks, but also makes it come to life in a subtle way.

According to Ellingsen (2008), she is, in fact, the kind of writer who needs the support of society, as well as its ability to create standards of living that are good enough to measure lives by, to bring her fictional world into being. At the same time, her fictional world also makes that society possible."

1. Research Methodology:

This study's methodology is essentially qualitative, using a descriptive technique and drawing heavily on the text of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as its main source. Textual analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* will be used to find portions that are similar to Pakistan's marriage system and will be contrasted accordingly through comparative scrutiny.

Many research papers and articles on Jane Austen's critique and other relevant resources are used as secondary sources for this research paper.

3: Analysis and Discussion

1. Historical perspective

The eighteenth century is often referred to as the Romantic Age or the Age of Romanticism because of its literary style. The eighteenth-century upheavals like the American Revolution and the French Revolution influenced this literary trend. It was common for poets and authors to express themselves via emotion, a love of nature, and a fascination with the sublime. Revolting against the established norms of classical society in the seventeenth century, the Enlightenment represented a social revolution (Vorachek, 2005).

Jane Austen was one of the few novelists whose work was entirely novelistic. Throughout her writings, she improved and simplified her ideas to match the current state of English society. She remained focused on the novel's structural and technical merits (Hakim, 2004). For her work, she chose to concentrate on the most fundamental human emotions and sentiments rather than accentuate the Romantic era's existing themes. It's hard to find a more honest example of someone who wrote art for the purpose of creating art than in her (Fischer, 2009).

2. Element of Marriage

Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen, was published in 1813. First impression was the title given to the piece in 1796-1797. Marriage is a major theme in the book. Austen emphasizes the many social bases for personal adjustments through marriage of the protagonist of the novel's (Lascelles, 2000). She illustrates the benefits and drawbacks of marriage using one prior relationship and four subsequent ones.

Austen mocks English society by mocking this customary mentality. Marriage is viewed as a social contract where both parties are bound. Their obligations to one another required them to be each other's faithful significant other. As a result, even a comfortable lifestyle seems inadequate. You are safe if you have money (Ali et al., 2012).

The Bennets, Elizabeth Bennett's family, is the focus of this novel. Mrs. Bennett is always thinking of husbands for her daughters. Mrs. Bennett hopes that a wealthy bachelor will

fall in love with one of her daughters when he arrives in town. The mother's five daughters are Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (Kitty), and Lydia. Mrs. Bennett's concern about marriage was shared by all English mothers at the time. Their daughters were born with a natural fear of the unknown. So they had a preconceived notion of marriage (Knox et al., 2004). This relates to the English social structure. He is a well-off bachelor from a wealthy social circle. When he arrives in town, Mrs. Bennett immediately begins her personal sleuthing to find him a spouse.

The decision to marry should be left solely to the two partners. This couple's union shows one spouse losing status, while the other gains one. They represent love's tenacity in the face of adversity.

3. Marital concept in the society of Pakistan

Marriage is a vital concept in Pakistan. Pakistani weddings are mostly based on what can be witnessed in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Marriage and romance were valued social customs in Jane Austen's time. In this case, a bachelor's financial stability is clearly relevant to his married life. It was vital to safeguard the couple's social and financial well-being, as well as the inherited property for future generations. For well-off girls, arranged marriages were the norm (Donnan, 2018).

Mrs. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice* is obsessed with finding suitable husbands for her adult daughters. Marriage is obligatory in Pakistan once a person reaches puberty. Regardless of how long it takes, the idea of marriage is clearly communicated. As social outcasts, spinsters face pressure to marry (Korson, 2017).

Women value financial security. Parents want their daughters to marry wealthy men. Some parents educate their daughters to get them married into wealthy and secure homes. In Pakistan, there are social climbers in every class. Like Mrs. Bennett, many Pakistani mothers want their daughters to marry wealthy men. Dowry is when a bride brings a large amount of household goods to her husband's home. Many people equate the bride's value and that of her family with what she brings or does not bring (Kumar, 2020).

4: Conclusion

Pakistani culture can be traced back to 17th century English marriage. Marriage problems persist despite advances in civilization and can be traced back in time. Victorian England's

society was dogmatic in many ways as we do have the same preoccupation still persisting in our own time. Domestic partnerships, for example, have been changed to suit people. Public opinion no longer matters in society. A person's autonomy should be based on their own thoughts and actions without consulting others.

In Pakistan, marriage in most cases is still based on Victorian ideals. Society and family, especially parents, have an impact. Everyone is curious about a person's marital status after puberty. This idea has waned in popularity. Urbanites and educated families are well aware of the many restrictions on marriage, including the legal marriage age. Teaching one's children is vital in today's society. The children's marriage is only considered when they are old enough to make their own choices. Otherwise, it was a matter of urgency to marry off children young. However, many backward communities still struggle with dowry, feudalism, child marriage, and financial stability. Pakistani society appears to be lagging behind in terms of marriage customs and traditions.

So there is a dire need to instill a spirit of awareness and understanding in this regard to do away with all such dogmas that lead to problems related to marriage in Pakistan. Art and literature can play its role in this regard if studied and applied on utility grounds with respect to our contemporary problems. Austen's fictional works are relevant, helpful and potentially effective to highlight and resist the set dogmas still prevalent in our culture related to marriages. To cope with our contemporary issues there is a need to explore these literary works on their utility grounds to our own culture setting. This is how the study of literature may lead to fruitful potential outcomes for us to seek solutions for many of our problems in the long run.

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