

**THE APPLICABILITY OF JANE AUSTEN'S NOVEL
PRIDE & PREJUDICE
OVER THE PRESENT ERA**



GOWHAR BASHIR
M.A. ENGLISH LITERATURE
MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD

Abstract

The *Pride and Prejudice* were written before two hundred years ago and as we know that the writers write about that by what they are affected or influenced. In a sense the writer presents the essence of their age and era through their piece of writing. But the world believes that, the passage of time leads to evolution; which is accompanied by advancement in technology; which in turn led to the advancement of the world and people. Therefore what was applicable yesterday may not be applicable in present or what was truth yesterday may not be true at present, because each age and its constituents are different from one another. However, this all is contrary to Jane Austen's novel, i.e. *pride and prejudice*. Although whatever Jane showed 200 years ago is quite applicable to the present age and its individuals. This totally goes against the Theory of Evolution.

Key words: Writer, Age, *Pride & Prejudice*, Evolution, Jane Austen

INTRODUCTION

The Jane Austen's *pride and prejudice* is actually a woman-centered novel and it also explores the behaviour of men towards women. However the irony is that what Jane revealed through her novel prior to 200 years is still applicable to the present generation, which is incredible. We all thought that writers' writings are based on their age and applicable to their era only. But Jane Austen's *pride and prejudice* alters this thought and reveals us its dynamic nature and could be the setback to the theory of evolution.

Jane has begun her novel by showing that how a mother was careful and worried about her daughter's marriage in the 19th century and also Jane herself called her foolish as she only want to see her daughters married and not worried about with whom they should marry. This shows that Jane was young, so did not like these customs, as she was of the thought that women should be honored by some freedom to achieve something and then lead them to decide their destiny. They should not be forced and shouldn't be trapped by customs. If we compare these thoughts either of the Mrs. Bennet or of the Jane Austen with 21st century then they still prevailed. Still, mothers care about their daughter's marriage. Still, they feel unmarried daughters are a burden. Same is the case with daughters, they want freedom. Their priority is their life and career and marriage as a secondary issue. This clearly shows mothers and daughters of 19th century suffered from the same belief from what 21st century women suffer.

The 2nd thing that Jane Austen's novel revealed is the keen interest of neighbours among one another's affairs. She showed how the Lucas family behaved towards the Bennets, as the man "Collins" who proposed Bennet's daughter i.e. Elizabeth, got finally married to Lucas's daughter, which saddened the Bennet family. This kind of mentality is still prevalent in us. We are much more concerned with the affairs of neighbours rather than ours. We are very much interested in the neighbour's desires and ambitions. What our neighbours desire, we too desire that, whether it is about the marriage or business. If our neighbours got a marriage proposal for their son from a certain family, we wish that our son should get the same proposal from the same family, despite knowing that they have only one daughter. This clearly shows that Jane Austen's novel is still applicable as still the emotions of the people are the same.

The 3rd thing that Jane showed about the man of the 19th century who was a little rich and had undergone arrogance, despite of the fact that he was not the actual earner of the wealth and instead of being thankful to their forefathers, he behaved in a manner just as he earned that property or wealth. So express pride in each of his moves. This could be understood from the words of Mr. Darcy, when he was asked to dance with Elizabeth in the novel. Darcy refused to dance by saying "she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me". This shows the peak of arrogance of the property heir of the 19th century. However, when we look at our present age, we all have the same qualities. Whoever comes from a rich family behaves in the same manner and try to suppress others who are not as rich as the one who got richness from their family. Rather than accepting the reality that we ourselves are nothing. All that we have is our grandparent's mercy on us. We just show off and feel that we won the world and criticize those who are doing hard labour to earn livelihood as we feel that they are born poor and depends on us, because we provide them labour. But the fact is that they are the earner and we are the heirs. This in turn shows that the novel is still applicable, because we are similar to that what we were 200 years ago.

The 4th thing that Jane touched about 19th century were the love and frankness among two sisters of the same age group. Although Mr. Benet had five daughters in the novel, but among these five, the first two i.e. Jane and Elizabeth were so frank to each other and share each other's secret. Same is the case with last three, who were of same age and were equally frank to each other as first two were. This can be understood from the novel by the behaviour of Jane and Elizabeth. When Mr. Darcy proposed Elizabeth, she could not hold her back from telling Jane everything what had passed between herself and Mr. Darcy, but does not reveal anything to her parents or their three younger sisters. This quality or mentality still persists in 21st century. If two brothers or two sisters are of the same age, they act like friends rather than elder or younger brother. Due to this they don't require any stranger for friendship, with whom they can share their sorrows and enjoys their happiness and from whom they could receive opinions and suggestions. This quality of individuals of the 19th century is still persists among the individuals of the 21st century and which is better quality. Despite of modernization and advancement in technology a human heart needs a companion to face the hardships of life. So when he got that at home, his quest for the companion ends.

The 5th thing that Jane's novel described is the character of males as well as of females of 19th century. She showed this through Mr. Collins, who proposed Elizabeth with following words "believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that almost as soon I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my life blah, blah. His propose to Elizabeth clearly showed that he wants to make Elizabeth believe that she is the luckiest as Mr. Collins proposed her and when Elizabeth refused her propose then he foolishly said "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of man whom they secretly mean to accept, but when Elizabeth said to him frankly ".....I am not one of those young ladiesThen Collin said that "I know it, to be established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application. He believed that Elizabeth's rejection was mere eye wash. Now if we compare this all with present generation, we can easily figure out that the way through which boys and girls behave to each other when they propose to one another for love affairs, quite resemble to that of 19th century love birds. Today when a boy proposes girl, he mostly said foolish things, but tries to express the girl that she is lucky as he proposes her. Same is the case with girls, they first smile and looks strangely towards guys and make boys to believe that they too love them, only the need is to propose her. Therefore boys proposes, but girls reject and boys suffer from the same fate from what Collins suffered that it is usual with girls to reject on the first application but inside they too love us. So they try again and again and girls on the other side rejects again and again by using certain lame excuses. This is another fact which links the characteristics of 21st century's individuals to that of the 19th century. Someone has rightly said "love is blind". Therefore, whether in the 19th century or in 21st century, darkness exists and does not let the people to be open minded.

The 6th thing that Jane's novel touches was about the shyness of 19th century girls, particularly when listens something about their elopement or marriage or when hear about that what belongs to the one whom they were going to elope. When Elizabeth went on tour with her aunt and when she learnt what the prospect of the tour is, she got blushed and imagined her future life and thought that "I might have been mistress! With these rooms I now have been familiar acquainted!" This thing is still common with the girls of the 21st century. Still, whenever a girl listens something, i.e. related to her marriage or related to her future life husband, she get blush and try to ignore that and goes on imagination about her future marriage life and smiles inside herself.

The 7th thing that Jane expressed was a habit which was prevailing in the 19th century. This was the act of Liddy and Wickham. They loved to each other and wished to get eloped, but instead of confessing to their parents and try to motivate them for their marriage, they ran away. This brings huge embarrassment to their parents and their family and the irony was that, they were not ashamed of their act. This shame full act of runaway of a girl and boy without any legal relationship was criticized during the 19th century and now-a-days talking about the 21st century, nothing changes. If parents of boy or girl are not willing to marry their kids where they wish, their kids then take the bold step and becomes the rebel. They don't care about the wishes of their parents or about their respect. Mere a relationship of two days with a stranger led them to forget the labour pains of the mother, who has borne them, the hard labour of a father who never wishes consolidation for himself, but just wishes all comforts to their kids.

The last but not least thing that showed Jane in her novel is the abstract language used by lovebirds of Jane's era. They negotiated with one another through their movements and by their eyes and understand this abstract language of one another better than the words of others. This is expressed in novel as; when there was a large part at long bourn, Bingley placed herself besides Jane and Elizabeth looked towards Darcy and said herself, "if he does not come to me, then, shall give him up forever. In a sense, she said to Darcy through her eyes that come and sit by my side, otherwise I will give up you. When Darcy had walked up to another part of room Elizabeth followed him. During the whole party Darcy's eyes were constantly fixed on Elizabeth and Elizabeth in turn concentrates only on Darcy. Now look at the present. You will get the same picture, regarding the medium of expression of love birds. Nothing changes even after 200 years; they still use this abstract language which was created by their forefathers. Still the love affair begins with the interaction of eyes between love birds and goes on and on for a long period through the interaction of eyes only.

If you study the Harappa civilization you will be astonished. The ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodara have proved that 5000 years before, there flourished a highly developed civilization with well planned and most populous cities in the valley of Indus. The people of both the cities of Mohenjodara and Harappa were primarily urban. They had progressed, to such an extent that it confuses even the modern minds. The remarkable structures of Harappa civilization were Great Bath, Great Granary and Great Hall. Most preferred amusements of Indus valley people was dancing and singing.

If, for instance, the present technology were given to the people of Harappa then definitely they would live the life quite similar to ours, despite of the fact that they belonged to 5000 year old civilization.

In nutshell humans are humans.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the research regarding to this novel what I discover is that whether humans of 19th century or of 21st all are equally affected by emotions despite of evolution or advancement in technology. Nothing changes in us. Our emotions and the way to express them remain same as they were 200 years ago or 1000 years. Either 200 years ago or in the present, when we are angry, we use to frown and when we are happy we use to laugh. In present or in the past, we desire to earn much more, not because of our need, but for appreciation and for admiration from the world. We the humans always believe that we are the best among the rest. Lust for power, lust for fame is always our primary aim. We cannot exist alone as we need, to let our emotions fly.

Therefore the Jane Austen's novel, i.e. Pride and Prejudice is equally applicable to the present era as it was in the 19th century. Hence the theory of evolution is in question.....!

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- 1) Spend most of the time with boys and girls of age 14 to 25 years. Noticed their each and every action. Checked out their interests and desires. Noticed their thinking, behaviour towards opposite sex.
- 2) Interacted with elders regarding to social obligations like marriage, neighbourhood, and present age's life style and got their opinion about the present generation and its way of thinking.
- 3) Use Facebook to interact with girls and boys to know their feelings about love, trust, desire, anger, hate, cheat and marriage.
- 4) The best thing of methodology is that I put myself into every condition about what I want to know. Sometimes I create situations with my contemporaries so that to feel realty of the already mentioned situation in pride and prejudice
- 5) Detailed study of Harappa civilization.

REFERENCES

- 1) PRIDE AND PREJUDICE BY JANE AUSTEN.