

## Identification of Marxist Aspects in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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### Abstract

The continuous struggle of different social classes for solidifying a secured social status is an increasing concern for socialists and philosophers. Marxism, as a socioeconomic viewpoint of history, clarifies that social relations among the people are structured following their material possessions. It advocates for some political actions for bringing about a society free from exploitation. To understand Marxist views of literature, it is necessary to take into account the relationship between life and literature. The aim of this study is to examine Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* from Marxist point of view. Following a qualitative analysis, the present study portrays that literature didn't remain unresponsive to Marxist ideas of class controversy and unreasonable dominance of the ruling class upon the proletariat and restless anxiety for betterment of people from working class. The study definitely answers the queries regarding the impact of materialism on human life. It also justifies Marxist ideals regarding ideology, class struggle, materialism and domination in a capitalistic society. This paper will help us understand the reflection of Marxist philosophy in literature.

**Keywords:** Marxism, Capitalism, Class Struggle, Base, Superstructure, Ideology, Communism, Subjugation, Materialistic Marriage.

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### I. Introduction:

Victorian novels are the best printed sources to understand the development of British society in the light of Marxism. There is a notable and abrupt shift from early romanticism to realism in the Victorian Period (1832-1901). "The 'novel' itself had little of the formal definition it has today. It was seen simply as a narrative form opposed to 'romance', a work of fiction dealing with the affairs of everyday life" (James, 2006, p. 2). As the realistic presentation of life, Victorian novels tried to depict the real society of the 19th century. Novelists like Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte attempted to epitomize Victorian class consciousnesses, their incessant attempts to uplift class position, their materialistic values, moral degradation and materialistic society. According to Steinbach, "Victorian Britain was a deeply classed society; everyone was aware of class, admitted that it was a meaningful social reality, and identified themselves as a member of a class. As a result, understanding class is fundamental to understanding Victorian Britain" (2017, p.124). Jane Austen in her respective novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) focuses on the class consciousness of the people. There was extreme hierarchy in Victorian society. People were considered, acknowledged and respected on the basis of their income.

According to Marxist ideology, different classes are determined by the relations of the people to the means of production though in today's world one's identity is not specifically dictated by one's relation to wages, profit or property. It is stated in *Communist Manifesto* that this class struggle must bring a revolution on the part of the lower middle class and the lower middle classes would seize power from the ruling class (Marx, 2008). In the light of Marxist philosophy, the aforementioned novel depicts the effect of capitalism on the lower-class people, on their thinking and life standard, and their hunger for economic development and

advocates for a lower class revolution to turn down capitalism in favor of communism. Austen shows that classes are not only the product of material possessions rather they originate from cultures and customs as well. These classes are continuously changeable with the passage of time. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels also believed that the constant battle between the classes would definitely and continuously change their classes. Pertaining this opinion, Steinbach, in his book, *Understanding the Victorians*, consents that, "Classes were dynamic, not static, and could be inclusive as well as exclusive and went well beyond the economic" (2017, p.126). This present study tries to explore *Pride and Prejudice* to examine and justify Marxist ideologies, it's prophecy of a turnover from capitalism to communism, the bad impact of capitalism leading to moral deterioration in search of fortune.

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) originally titled as *First Impressions* (1797) can be taken as a document of eighteenth and early nineteenth century English society. As a daughter of a clergyman Jane Austen experienced aristocratic British society to a great extent. In this book, she tries to share her adulthood experience of Victorian society and its values, customs and culture. S. H. Butcher, in his book, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, comments that "as there are persons who, by conscious art or mere habit, imitate and represent various objects through the medium of colours and form, or again by the voice; so in the arts above mentioned, taken as a whole, the imitation is produced by rhythm, language or harmony, either single or combined (2000, pp.4-5)."

So as the mirror of life, art reflects on the age to which it belongs. *Pride and Prejudice* represents a society full of class-conflicting issues to which Karl Marx was concerned. Throughout the text, by developing eloping themes of marriage, love, reputation, pride, prejudice, materialism, class-struggle, conflict between society and individualism, Austen shows how human life is entirely shaped by material issues and money in the society. The text shows the perpetual struggle of the characters to uplift class.

Marxism, the political and socioeconomic theory and the practice of the revolutionary lower and working class movement against the oppression of the upper class was founded by German Philosopher and socialist Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Their joint venture *Communist Manifesto* announced the start of Communism with its publication in 1848 (Barry,2013,p. 156).

In *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels opine that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes" (2008, p.33). Marxism shows that the ruling class is in the driver's seat in the state but the state represents being in favor of the common interest of all ironically. It asserts that like earlier socioeconomic systems, capitalism also produced internal anxiety and tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system called socialism.

Both Marx and Engels put their belief in the state ownership of the economy, production, industry, transport, etc. abnegating their private ownership. 'Communism' is the term they used to define their economic doctrine and this doctrine was later developed into 'Marxism' by other classical Communist thinkers like V. I. Lenin . Aiming at bringing about a classless society, Marxism denounces capitalism and promises of an inexorable and pervasive socialist future that with the advent of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the subsequent spread of communism throughout Eastern Europe inspired a revolution from the part of lower working class people. As a materialistic philosophy and with its concern for concrete, tangible and observable fact it focuses on the general ownership of the medium of production, assignment, and exchange. As a result, it tries to interpret our lives, society and everything around us barring the existence of a world. Marxism shows that social conflicts are developed on the basis of different social classes which are constructed by the possession of the medium of production or lack of possession of the medium of production. How lower labour classes are submerged and exploited by their capitalist counterparts is dexterously demonstrated by the Marxist philosophers. "The oppressed classes, however, believe this inequality as 'natural' or 'preordained', and do not even recognize that they are oppressed" (Nayar,2011,p. 60).

Other philosophy, say idealist philosophy believes in the existence of the spiritual world and tries to explain a theological explanation of the things, human life and prescribes for a view of morality and generosity. Marxism, as a realist school of thought, opposes this sort of philosophy. The most striking contrast between

Marxism and other philosophies is that whereas other philosophies simply try to understand the world, Marxism advocates a change into it. As a social, political and economic philosophy Marxism experiments the effect of capitalism on labor, their productivity, economic development and social standard and subsequently urges the workers for a revolution to reverse capitalism in favor of communism. Marxism believes that this revolution is inevitable because of the continuous battle of the proletariat or the workers in order to achieve their rights. The struggle between these two social classes- the bourgeoisie, or the capitalists, and the proletariat, or the workers defines the economic relations in a capitalist economy and will inevitably lead to revolutionary communism.. This constant battle to achieve their rights results in the instability of prevailing social structure. Again ,Marxist theory confesses that sometimes the submerged, exploited lower classes do not even realize that they are exploited and manipulated. This is something Edward Said indicates in his *Orientalism*. Said shows that the orient submit themselves to the Occident in the process of being civilized. "I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely there, just as the Occident itself is not just there either. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other" (Said, 1978, pp. 4-5). Likewise, the proletariat submit themselves to the ideologies of the ruling class in their ceaseless endeavour for uplifting their class and social status. Marx's other writings like *Communist Manifesto*, shows the way how the working class captures the power from the ruling class. In simple expression, Marx argues that an economic system based on private profit is inherently unstable. Marxist philosophy attempts to give these ideas a ground with adequate fact and scientific analysis.

## **II. MARXIST LITERARY CRITICISM:**

Marxism considers literature in terms of the cultural expression and historical conditions which produce it. According to the Marxist theory "Culture is the expression of class conflict and social relations that are structured by and through power relations" (Nayar,2011, p. 62). The main challenge of any cultural theory is that it cannot ignore society. Culture and society, according to Marxism, is determined by the conditions and the formations of the economy.

As a theory concerning society, "Marxism sees culture as the masking of real social and economic conditions where cultural artifacts conceal exploitative labour and ideology convinces people that everything is alright" (Nayar,2011, p.62).

Since the aim of Marxism is to establish a society where there are no classes and where everybody is acquainted by a common ownership, it believes that "good art always has a degree of freedom from prevailing economic circumstances, even if these economic facts are its ultimate determinant" (Barry ,2013,p.152). Both Marx and Engels believed that "The more the opinions of the author remain hidden the better the work of art" (Barry,2013,p. 152). They believe that a writer's social status, his ideology, outlook and experiences play a major role in his writings. For example, when we read Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*, we see her Pakistani identity lurking in between the lines which makes her child narrator unreliable. Thus, the focal point of any literature should not be deteriorated by the author's personal thinking (Sidhwa,1989).

Marxist criticism, as Terry Eagleton remarks in his book *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, "is not merely a 'sociology of literature', concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings" (Eagleton,2002, p. 3). Marxist philosophers believe that literature must bear the imprint of its history and the best part of literature imprints the historical epoch in the deepest manner. Marxist criticism of literature is mainly concerned with the interaction of base and superstructure. "For Marx, art and literature are a superstructure of society. Marx notes that there is an unequal relationship between art and society. Meaning that a more developed, productive society does not have a high level of artistic achievement. He references the Greeks as a society where the epic was created, yet economic development was lacking" (Lewers,2015). Both Marx and Eagleton see literature as the production of base. The art, culture and literature preach the ideologies determined and developed by base. As a result, they consider literature as one of the superstructures of the society. As mentioned frequently, money is the term they both use to judge the value, norms and doctrine. David Harvey, in his book *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*, questions Marxist's estimation of value, arts and culture in economic terms. Harvey puts forward a question towards his readers, "Most of Marx's

theoretical arguments throughout Capital are expressed in value terms. The economic data of the world and most of Marx's actual examples are expressed in money terms. Are we to assume that money is an accurate and unproblematic representation of value?" (2018,p.51). The most probable answer to this inquiry is that arts and literature should not only be determined by the economy, rather they should be judged by their realistic presentation of life and society. If arts represent the true picture of society then it should be appraised. As art is the part of society's ideologies, it should represent the true relation between base and superstructures that is between the capitalist class who owns the means of production and the working class helps the capitalist earn profit. If arts and literature truly represent men and their material life then it will be appropriate to agree with Terry Eagleton that "to understand literature, then, means understanding the total social process of which it is part" (2002,p.5).

### III. DISCUSSION

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) originally titled as *First Impressions* (1797) can be taken as a document of eighteenth and early nineteenth century English society. As a daughter of a clergyman Jane Austen experienced aristocratic British society to a great extent. In this book, she tries to share her adulthood experience of Victorian society and its values, customs and culture. S. H. Butcher, in his book, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, comments that "as there are persons who, by conscious art or mere habit, imitate and represent various objects through the medium of colors and form, or again by the voice; so in the arts above mentioned, taken as a whole, the imitation is produced by rhythm, language or harmony, either single or combined (2000,pp.45)." So as the mirror of life art reflects on the age to which it belongs. *Pride and Prejudice* represents a society full of class-conflicting issues to which Karl Marx was concerned. Throughout the text, by developing eloping themes of marriage, love, reputation, pride, prejudice, materialism, class-struggle, conflict between society and individualism, Austen shows how human life is entirely shaped by material issues and money in the society. The text shows the perpetual struggle of the characters to uplift class status.

According to Marxist belief, the base or substructure or money and material possessions shape and maintain the superstructure where base is dominant. Art, family, culture, religion, philosophy, law, education, science, media belong to superstructure whereas private property, commodities, and capital form the base of a society. Elements of superstructure are run by existing ideologies which are actually false consciousness. Marxist theorists like Gramsci, Engels and Althusser show how working class is subjugated by the ruling class through several ideologies. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen represents a society which is entirely influenced by ruling class' ideologies where each and every character is somehow obsessed with the concept of material possessions. Human dignity is evaluated in terms of material possessions. Moreover, we see the very material version of marriage and human relationships. That Bingley "wore a blue coat, and rode a black horse" matters a lot to Bennet family girls (Austen,2018, p. 15). He along with his sisters are termed as bourgeoisie as they belong to a respectable family in the north of England and earned their fortune by trade. Mrs. Bennet is fascinated by Netherfield's "sweet room" and states: "I do not know a place in the country that is equal to Netherfield" (Austen 62). Mrs. Bennet is dissatisfied with the possibility of the ending of "Jane's week" in the Netherfield as she invests Jane to attain the favour of upper- class bourgeoisie (Austen ,2018, p.87). The fascination of the ladies towards the officers also symbolizes their hunger for upper class identity. This is reflected in the following statement of Jane Austen about Mr. Wickham: "The officers of the —shire were in general a very creditable, gentlemanlike set, and the best of them were of the present party; but Mr. Wickham was as far beyond them all in person, countenance, air, and walk, as THEY were superior to the broad-faced, stuffy uncle Phillips, breathing port wine, who followed them into the room" (2018, 114). The very first sentence of the text: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" indicates the positional superiority of bourgeois in society who possess a good fortune. Bingley is thus considered as the "rightful property" of families having unmarried daughters. Mrs. Bennet's ecstasy that "Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England" having four or five thousand a year shows how a man is merely judged by his material possessions (Austen,2018, p. 7). She is obsessed and tireless to secure a reputed place among neighbours by marrying her daughters with a man of higher social status and it seems that "the business of her life was to get her daughters married" (Austen,2018, p. 9). The spirituality of the concept of marriage is polluted here as almost all of the characters prefer wealth and social status to the personality of the betrothed. Marriages of Charlotte-Collins, Lydia -Wickham, Jane-Bingley

are grounded on material possessions. For women of this society, being married to a moneyed man means financial security and uplifting of class. Mrs. Bennet's urge as she states that: "If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for" shows the concept that marrying off daughters to a wealthy man increases the reputation of the family in society (Austen,2018, p. 15). It's a matter of pride and glory. Charlotte, who marries Collins for economic and social security, thinks that happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. By opposing Lizzy's view of marriage she asserts that- "I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home" (Austen,2018,p. 177). Mrs. Hurst thinks about Elizabeth's possibility of marriage that with such a father and mother, and such low connections there is no chance of marriage. About Lizzy's marriage, the most fierce attack about her lower descent comes from Lady Catherine who glorifies her daughter and Darcy's upper class descent as "They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and on the father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient—though untitled—families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid". Thus society fixes marriage between two upper class descents and though Lizzy asserts herself as a daughter of a gentleman she appears as "obstinate, headstrong girl" to Lady Catherine (Austen ,2018,p.474). We see "Lady Catherine's unjustifiable endeavours to separate" Lizzy and Darcy (Austen,2018,p. 508). Though Elizabeth only values marriage on the basis of love and mutual understanding, she herself is finally overwhelmed by the landlordship of Darcy in a sense.

The marriage of Bingley and Jane is delayed only for class-consciousness. Miss Bingley's inattention towards Jane also originated from the gap of class between them. As Jane is indicated by Bingley's "never returning to Netherfield again" she herself feels which she writes to Lizzy that: "If I were not afraid of judging harshly, I should be almost tempted to say that there is a strong appearance of duplicity in all this" (Austen ,2018,p.208). This duplicity, according to Marxist philosophy, is nothing but the class gap between Jane and Bingley. But in today's modern world, Marxist ideologies are seen as a weak presentation of the classes of the society. According to Steinbach, "Today, most aspects of the Marxist scheme of history have fallen out of interpretive fashion. In particular, class is no longer seen as part of an inevitable historical trajectory towards revolution and a classless society. Furthermore, class conflict is no longer seen as inherent to a class system" (2017, p.126).

It seems incredible to Elizabeth that "she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy! That he should have been in love with her for so many months! So much in love as to wish to marry her in spite of all the objections which had made him prevent his friend's marrying her sister, and which must appear at least with equal force in his own case—was almost incredible!" (Austen ,2018, p.267). The character of Wickham can be taken as a materialist who "will never marry a woman without some money" (Austen 378). That Wickham's "lies about the whole Pemberley family are endless" can be seen as an implicit revolution by the proletariat towards bourgeoisie after many years of subjugation. Unable to do any real revenge to his masters of Pemberley house, he finds a different way of revolution and spreads scandal about them (Austen,2018, p. 379).

Mrs. Bennet's joy knows no bounds when she thinks of getting three of their daughters married to the higher classes and earning ten thousand a year. For this reason the Bennets are speedily pronounced by the neighbours to be the luckiest family in the world signifying how money and wealth are adored. So people like Mrs. Bennet become servants of the demigod money. It seems that the entire society celebrates the Bennet family's coronation of enlisting in upper class society through marrying daughters to rich men. The family becomes the subject of discussion and jealousy of the neighbourhood. Moreover, we see how individuals are evaluated by the legacy of their pounds. That Bingley had inherited "a hundred thousand pounds from his father" is highlighted by the Bennet family (Austen,2018, p. 24). Again, unlike the girls of the Bennet family, Miss Darcy has a total inheritance of thirty thousand pounds which justifies her social superiority in comparison with girls of the Bennet family. So, it is seen that the main concern of this society is money and fortune which subsequently determine a man's value, position. Mrs. Bennet becomes "delighted" when Jane is invited to the Netherfield (Austen,2018, p. 48). Eliza is humiliated by Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley as she appears in Netherfield to see the sick Jane: "She has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker. I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild" (Austen,2018, p. 54). We see how people of the privileged class look down upon the lower middle class. Whereas Bennet family feels blessed to be introduced with the people of Netherfield and Pemberley, Darcy desires that "a woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and

besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved" (Austen,2018, p. 58). In Eighteenth and early nineteenth century England, we see ball dance as a media to choose life partners. Very often these kinds of relationships are formed on the basis of appearance or outward grandeur. Middle class families like the Bennet family long for the upper class one as they attempt to uplift their class through marrying their daughters with the rich like Darcy and Bingley. We see Miss Bingley's extreme class-superiority becomes evident in the arrangement of Netherfield balls as she thinks for her a ball is rather a punishment than a pleasure because she feels uneasy in mixing with lower and middle class people. On the other hand, the Netherfield ball is long awaited by the Bennet family. To them a ball is a life changing event as young girls are supposed to be admired and chosen by gentlemen in the ball. The massive distinction between Lucas's ball and Netherfield ball also symbolizes class concern in the society and sir Lucas attempts to be extolled and enlisted in the upper- class society through arranging the ball. Though ball acts as a platform of social gathering, people become victims of class contradiction here rather as there exists an invisible hollow among people from lower, middle and upper class.

Darcy appears as a "proud" man with "disagreeable countenance" to the participants of Bingley's Dance party (Austen,2018, p. 17). His sense of class-superiority becomes evident from his utterance to Mr. Bingley when he refuses to dance with anybody of the party: "I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. In comparison with Bingley, Darcy is "haughty, reserved, and fastidious and his manners, though well-bred.... not inviting" (Austen ,2018,p.25). Moreover, it is said that "with the rich he is liberal-minded, just, sincere, rational, honourable, and perhaps agreeable" (Austen,2018, p. 121). Darcy's pride can be taken as the byproduct of his upper class descent as Wickham justifies that for almost all of his actions may be traced to pride, and pride has often been his best friend. To Wickham, Darcy possesses several types of prides including 'family pride', 'filial pride', and 'brotherly pride' (Austen,2018, p. 120). Darcy's sense of superiority also becomes evident as he comments about Elizabeth that "she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me" (Austen ,2018, p.18). Moreover, we see an obstinate hero towards the heroine as he believes once his good opinion is lost, it's lost forever which he thinks is justified by his upper- class descent.

Even the non-conformist heroine of the novel, Elizabeth herself feels that being the mistress of Pemberley is something precious. The following contemplation signifies her joy of uplifting class: "And of this place, I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been familiarly acquainted! Instead of viewing them as a stranger, I might have rejoiced in them as my own, and welcomed them as visitors to my uncle and aunt. But no—recollecting herself— 'that could never be; my uncle and aunt would have been lost to me; I should not have been allowed to invite them" (Austen, 2018, p. 332).

However, she is again humiliated by Miss Bingley for her lower class descent that "she has grown so brown and coarse" (Austen 363). Lydia, "the humiliation" acts as "a proof of family weakness" which makes Lizzy feel "the deepest disgrace" of the Bennet family (Austen,2018,p. 372). Mr. Bennet seems rational about class prejudices which becomes evident when he ironically criticizes his wife for her much hastiness to meet with Mr. Bingley: "But if we do not venture somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her daughters must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself" (Austen ,2018, p.12).

Mr. Bennet's ironic expression symbolizes the aggression to catch the tie of higher class by lower middle class families. But at the end of the story, Mr. Bennet also seems very happy as he is informed about the marriage of Eliza and Darcy. Austen proves that in a materialistic society, one cannot remain good all the time, rather one can only be less evil here. Mr. Bennet's transition from his indifference for wealth to his eagerness for it can be seen as the consequence of capitalism. His admiration for wealth and fortune becomes evident from the following statement about Mr. Darcy: "This young gentleman is blessed, in a peculiar way, with everything the heart of mortals can most desire, — splendid property, noble kindred, and extensive patronage" (482). Furthermore, the ecstasy of Mrs. Bennet about the marriage of Eliza and Darcy heightens the blind class prejudices of the society: "Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! Who would have thought it! And is it really true? Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it—nothing at all. I am so pleased—so happy. Such a charming man!—so handsome! so tall!— Oh, my dear Lizzy! I apologize for having disliked him so

much before. I hope he will overlook it. Dear, dear Lizzy. A house in town! Everything that is charming! Three daughters married! Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord! What will become of me. I shall go distracted" (Austen, 2018, pp.503). Jane ignores the betrayal of Bingley and feels "the happiest, wisest, most reasonable end" of their relationship in spite of "all his sister's falsehood and contrivance". Jane would have acted as Lizzy wanted her to refuse Bingley. Instead she is ecstatic and states:

"How shall I bear so much happiness" (Austen, 2018, p. 462) and "I am certainly the most fortunate creature that ever existed" (Austen 465). From Marxist perspective, these are the rejoices of the proletariat about uplifting class status. The Bennet family finally uplifts its position through marrying their daughters to upper class bourgeoisie which we see as: "Kitty, to her very material advantage, spent the chief of her time with her two elder sisters. In society so superior to what she had generally known, her improvement was great" (Austen 515).

Actually, these issues are still all pervasive in society in terms of marriage. Elizabeth and Darcy try to escape the social structure, but rarely they can. Platonic concept of love is thwarted by socially occupied positions. It can be said that they are influenced by the existing ideologies of society regarding marriage, materialism and class-conflict. Their psychological and behavioral aspects can be justified from the perspective of naturalism which states that the personality of individuals are shaped by the socioeconomic and natural environment to which they belong. Actually, *Pride and Prejudice* represents the ways how through spreading several bourgeois ideologies, upper class people are highly esteemed by lower class people.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION:**

Above discussion proves it very well that Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is essentially the criticism of 19th century Victorian society where Marxist idea of cultural materialism which refers to a society based on money, wealth and material possessions prevailed to a great extent. In Austen's novel, the author tries to focus on the moral deterioration of the people of Victorian society. How the human psyche is occupied by the thought of gaining wealth and fortune is very vividly portrayed by Austen. The Bennet family is the prime example in this regard. How much oppressed is Mrs. Bennet with the thought of marrying her daughters off to the rich men of the higher class certainly catches the attraction of readers. Austen denounces the very thought of the lower class people of uplifting their social status by acquiring material gain that subsequently degrades their moral values. Besides, she also criticizes upper classes' intention of not sharing their financial fortune with others. As a daughter of a clergyman Austen was very much acquainted with the Victorian cultures of ball, dance party and different types of programs of the upper class. Her adulthood experiences get a vivid description in the novel through her female characters. Elizabeth is one of the most adorable heroines of all time. She should be appraised for her initial thought of not marrying for financial gaining. This is why she refuses Darcy when he proposes to her. Her thinking of getting married to the one whom she loved is very much praiseworthy. However, this very Elizabeth when she visits Pemberley, being overwhelmed, changes her mind to marry Darcy and laments for her initial rejection of Darcy, though it is said that she now gets to know the truth about Darcy's well-mannered temperance and this is the reason she has changed her mind to marry him. Both lower and upper class are portrayed animatedly by Austen. Both are criticized for their respective values and thinking. The author shows how marriage was considered as a tool of fortune making in that Victorian society. For example, the Bennet family is obsessed with the anxiety of getting their daughters married off to rich men. Similarly, Charlotte Lucas married Mr. Collins only because she is seeking economic certainty. According to her, happiness in marriage is only a matter of chance. By opposing Lizzy's view of platonic marriage her assertion is: "I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home" (Austen, 2018, p. 177). This shows how intensely Marxist ideas of cultural materialism prevailed in that society. The ideas of base and superstructure are also available in this novel. The balls and dance parties are two central bases mentioned in the story and these are certainly the cultures and customs of the upper class. Almost all the lower and middle class characters in the story revolve around these balls and parties. Not only this, their daily lifestyles are shaped by the notion and values of the upper class. Austen also portrays the condition of women in the patriarchal Victorian society. In 19th century England, women were totally dependent on men for their financial support. This is one of the frequent themes for Victorian female writers as can be seen in Virginia Woolf and George Eliott. Austen shows that women were compelled to marry against their will just to secure a certain financial support. We can see Mrs. Bennet continuously provokes her daughters to try to get themselves

married to the upper- class men. Marx locates these aspects of the society in his writings that directly or indirectly one's life is determined by money and wealth.

Thus, Austen criticizes Victorian capitalist society to a great extent criticizes people's moral deterioration in search of fortune. Eventually, Austen ends with an advocacy for a society where resources, mode of production, sources of ideas, norms, beliefs are equally owned by the individuals echoing the motto of Marxism.

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