

Pride and prejudice: critical analysis essay

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Bride and Prejudice is a musical film directed by Gurinder Chadha. The screen play which is co-written by Paul Berges in 2004 is created on Bollywood style adaptations (Eber, 2005). The language used for the screen play is mainly English, with Hindi and Punjabi accent interference.

The screen play is characterized with exotic sounds, Bollywood style dancing and vibrant colors. Though Bride and prejudice screen play transplants from Austen's work in 1813, the background of the screen play is set in modern India. Main actress, Rai (used as Lalita), who is doing her first English language movie, commands the play like a seasoned English language screenplay star.

Though the screen parallels Austen's writing which was done over a hundred years ago, in both cases, the producers portray women being useless in society until she is married (Eber, 2005). The action of the film takes place in three different countries, India, England and the United States.

As the movie is based on Austen's Bride and Prejudice novel, a number of characters retain their names while a few are slightly altered. The movie, which is set in Amritsar, features Lalita Bakshi as the main star. Lalita lives with her doting dad whom she assists in running family business.

Lalita's mother desires to marry her daughters off to wealthy men. During her friend's wedding, Lalita interacts with a handsome wealthy gentleman called Will Darcy. Darcy, an American, had come to Amritsar along with a friend (barrister Balraj) and Balraj's sister for family business (Chadha, 2005).

After their interaction, Darcy struggles with attraction to Lalita, who on her side views Darcy differently. She thinks that Darcy is vain, intolerant and arrogant towards Indian culture. Darcy and his friends are greatly amazed at the exclusive behaviors that are exhibited by Lalita's mother and two of her daughters during subsequent parties which they attend.

The mother chatters; Maya performs her kitchy dances while her sister Lakhi has astonishing flirtatious behavior. These behaviors mortify Lalita and Jaya who opt for reservation. Later, Balraj and Jaya develop a romantic relationship which does not last long due to misunderstandings and interference from other people.

After some time, Lalita interacts with Johnny Wickman, Darcy's former friend whom she also gets attracted to. This does not help much as the interaction only validates Lalita's perception of Darcy. Mr. Kholi, a man whom Lalita considers americanized, proposes to her, but she rejects the proposal. To Lalita's confusion, Mr. Kholi marries Chandra who is Lalita's best friend (Chadha, 2005).

As Will's determination to marry Lalita develops, his mother, Catherine, stands on his way through constantly undermining his efforts. Darcy and Lalita separate Lakhi and Wickman later as they attempt to run away together. The separation of the two is based on the argument that Wickman will ruin Lakhi's life the same way he did it to Darcy's younger sister Georgie.

Ultimately, Darcy wins over Lalita's love once again when he joins in traditional drumming. By joining drumming, he wins over Lalita's belief that

he appreciates Indian culture. As the film ends, there is a double wedding of Lalita and Darcy, and Balraj and Jaya. During the wedding, the couples ride on elephants down vibrant Amritsar streets (Chadha, 2005).

The screenplay is blended with fanatic dances and lively songs which rapidly change from rock 'n' roll, pop to touching ballads. All the actors are also clearly portrayed to bring out the intended cultural theme (Bendersky, 2004). The actors who make up the Bakshi Family are presented to relate quite well that the audience will take them for relatives.

Chadha features cultural and social complexities developing the ideas that were originally written by Austen in his work. In use of writing styles, Chadha inhibits cultural richness that incorporates Indian and western cultures (Bhaskharan, 2004).

Chadha operates the audiences perceptions with which outsiders view India and its social/cultural circles. The English rhyming lyrics that Chadha uses in her writings appeal to everyone, easterners and westerners as well, with no regard to the cultural background. The dialogue in the setting is full of choppy exchanges, the most conspicuous one is between Darcy and Lalita who constantly engage in cultural clichés (Flixster, 2010).

Lalita is furious on Darcy whom she accuses of wanting to change her nation into a tourist theme park. The plot is increasingly outrageous with Will being sidelined, Wickman coming into the picture and Lalita's mum lining up for her daughters prospective husbands (Wright et al, 2005).

When the cultural grandstanding fades out, the film slowly falls into romantic action with Broadway musicals. The 'sisters-in pajamas' mix of pop rock does the magic of rolling the film into a romantic action in the absence of cultural barriers. Lalita and Johnny attraction is instigated by gharbah, a fantasy duet number which accommodates American gospel, London, India and Los Angeles musical orientation (Pais, 2004).

The music is used as a socio-cultural instrument for unity in this case where language casual talks cannot work out (Dwyer, 2004). The act is made superb by ensemble actors who peg English language as expected by the audiences to suit all the cultures in the screen play.

Language and culture are greatly used by Chadha to blend the family as a unit that the audience can consider to be a perfect life reality (Chadha, Rai and Henderson, 2004).

In an easy win over the Indian culture, Chadha uses his two western leads in an involving way that is impossible to resist. Johnny appears to have much influence of the two western leads due to his outgoing character that is basically achieved through intertwined use of language that appeases all the cultures.

She is therefore the most likeable figure in this production despite the cultural barriers that stands in the way of two cultures. According to Chadha, Will is good looking, but lacks the massive influential character that Johnny rides on.

However, he is used as a supportive character with minimal sexual charisma in the film that is founded on the power of the sisterhood and matriarchy of the Indian society (Shrivastava, 2005).

A number of styles are hard to ignore in the second part of the screen play, which focuses solely on the characters and the plot. One such notable style is heavy reliance on the artificial misunderstandings and inability of fluent communication. Thematically, analysts are of the opinion that use of language in *Bride and Prejudice* falls short of message and medium.

The film waters down East-West class conflict tensions to capitalize on Indian Americanization and to some extent American centralism (Bendersky, 2004). Chadha does this by using her Lalita Bakshi to scold Will in his quest to acquire a hotel in Amritsar.

She argues that the hotel will create a hub for rich Americans coming to India, those whom she considers as Indian culture misfits. However, what the film *Bride and Prejudice* does contradicts with what Indian experience offers to cater for Western sensibilities in this part of the film (Wright et al, 2005).

Chadha misuses language when she tries to express the difference between Mrs. Bakshi and Lalita in the screen play (Wright et al, 2005). Lalita repeatedly professes her uncaring attitude towards marriage for money gains. It is quite the opposite to her mother's desires which are to have her daughters married off to wealthy men.

However, Lalita tells that what we see does not really portray the actions that are seen. The romance between Lalita and Darcy is quite extravagance.

According to Indian culture, romance actions such as kisses and sexy actions are prohibited in screen plays (Kolodny, 2001 and Sarkar, 2005).

The language and culture presentation therefore differs during the first wedding party. The hip swiveling dances, sexy attires, loose chatters and a hug at the end of the party that Lalita gives Darcy contravene those traditions (Shrivastava, 2006).

In this screenplay, Chadha gives each woman her own language and distinct voice. Lalita speaks her own language that differs from Mrs. Bakshi and the rest of her daughters. Lalita is used by Chadha in the screen play as the most outspoken prudent wit of all the sisters, but with a prejudiced speech and perception of all.

As it is learned from the screen play, this character is attributed to her relations with her father. Her behavior is greatly influenced by her father who is an acute observer other people's particularities. Audience easily perceives the characters as presented by Chadha due to use of language and their conversation (Ray, 2005).

The soft spoken Jaya believes that everyone she meets has at least opportunity to do well, and if they don't, they have good reasons for not doing so. Jaya dares not to express herself openly to show emotions, and that's way she wins a lot of people's love. She uses politeness and good language to gain confidence from other people in the screen play.

Chadha uses Lakhi as the most spoilt character as it is seen from her language and her sexuality. Lakhi, who is Mrs. Bakshi's favorite daughter, is

full of accusations for other members of the family. Lakhi easily gives in to temptation without objection; a weakness that her mother thinks can be reversed if Lakhi is looked after well. As Chadha sets her screenplay, there are senior voices and the overshadowed voices of subalterns in the screen play (Wright et al, 2005).

Chadha also uses language to demonstrate protests concerning the place of woman in Indian society today. Music and dances are satirically and ironically used by Chadha to scorn Indian traditional and cultural perceptions of marriage and romance.

To show a scorn for traditional Indian culture, four daughters of the Bakshi family envisage how life would be under traditional Indian marriage between Lalita and Kholi. The women voices and language show freedom from traditional slavery to men (Hutcheon, 1989).

In a nutshell, female voices are used by Chadha to show how perceptions and ideas over time have changed (Petras, 200, Ashcroft, 1989). The varying voices of the women, starting from Mrs. Bakshi to her four daughters, have important cultural information to pass.

In conclusion, the screen play has powerful mix of tools which are used for communication. There is a blend of Hollywood and Bollywood music which is meant to pass the information about the changing times. The fact that the screen play is shot in three different worlds, India, England and America, shows a mix of cultures which makes it easy to accommodate all the parties.

It is important to note how Chadha uses language and voices to pass the information that people should change their perceptions of Indian culture and tradition concerning women.

The female domination and open criticism, especially by Lalita, show the maturity of Indian culture on marriage and romance. The culture is therefore made strong by use of voice and language including polite language, remorsefulness, and apology among others.

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