

Review

A Brief Literature Review of the Genre in *Pride and Prejudice*

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Abstract: As the world-famous novel, *Pride and Prejudice* has gained plenty of research at home and abroad. Many critics pay attention to various aspects of the novel, such as the characterization of the centre characters, the theme of it, and also the author-Jane Austen's life which may be some effect to her writing. In this essay, the literature review of the genre in this novel will be talked, through showing some critics' opinions toward it, including the structure, language, mood, tone will be clearly turned up. The essay aims at helping readers get a whole knowledge of the genre of this great work.

Keywords: *Pride and Prejudice*; genre; structure; language

This literature review aims at providing the theoretical background essential to the future study of the genre in *Pride and Prejudice*, including its language, mood, tone, and structure. Jane Austen, a very brilliant writer in Britain, enjoys the perpetuated fame around the world. She occupies a valuable position in British literature history. Her masterpiece *Pride and Prejudice* has obtained a number of literature criticism, mainly about themes, social values, love and relationships between the characters. The literature review mainly consists of three parts. The first part is an international literature review and the second is the domestic one, and the last part is about the limitations in literature study and the tendency in the future study. In the following perspectives, the researchers have revealed the genre from different angles. The followings are critical reviews of the genre in *Pride and Prejudice*.

1. A Brief Introduction to Genre

The genre is always called as the style, as it is saying: "Style is the revelation of individuality, whether of an artist, a period, a place, or a genre. A writer reveals his uniqueness through the peculiar manner of his expression. [1]" It is very necessary to pay much attention to the author's individual traits in diction, in figures of speech, in sentence variety and rhythm, in rhetorical devices and the tone, the mood, the structure, the language of the work. There will be some definitions of the atmosphere—"atmosphere begins with setting and is part of setting" [1]; the tone "suggests the author's attitude—angry, ironic, humorous, and is materialized through the management of language." [1].

So, in the following pages, the above talked will be discussed from the author's own preference to the apparent traits.

2. International Studies

Pride and Prejudice was at first written as letters from one character to another, namely the 'epistolary style' [2]. Style can only emerge at the expense of substance. Austen's style is perhaps most extraordinary for issuing in a narrative without digressions. Miller proposes that Austen's style is the product of the sacrifice of her own personhood. No scholar can escape the modern sensibilities that she brings to her work. Her eyes are open and her

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wits are quick, and to think that she failed to notice the physicality of her own era is to blind oneself to the reality of the world in which she lived [3].

Austen was a radical innovator, sceptical about contemporary notions of the proper content and purpose of fiction, who therefore in her own works deliberately challenged the popular novelists of her time. Her positively portrayed characters, after some comic trial and error, surrender some individual views to become integrated parts of society through marriage. Austen's terrain is new rhetoric's, consisting of informal, increasingly personal sites of communication, conversation, letters, notes, and journals, and even intra-personal thoughts and feelings [4-6].

Austen's novels combine the languages of different literary and extra-literary genres, as well as a diversity of approaches to the major ideological problems of her age. They also combine the languages of different social groups, focusing on the differences between gender and generation, and delving deeply and dialogically into class conflicts among the middling classes, rather than presenting the whole spectrum of social classes. By mimicking the characteristic speech and ideological positions of characters, combining them with their own, Austen's narrators engage them in dialog interaction. The dialog-ism signals the ground for her disagreements with previous critics, including Mary Poovey, Nancy Armstrong, and Marilyn Butler, who have fostered the view of Jane Austen as "a quietly conservative writer". Austen's dialogism never permits the singularity of subjective behavior to detach from its connections to what Bordieu calls the habitus [3, 7, 8]. "In the narration of Austen's characters, all of her creation comes into being, and many of her characters become alive, especially from dialogues, and it is the narrative voice in her work. The personality was revealed from the way the hero or heroine speak.

The believable characters, in *Pride and Prejudice*, among whom good flat characters are more than cardboard cutouts jostled on stage and summarily removed, are more clutter than complicated, that when they are done well they have a resonance and a roundness that make them memorable [3, 9].

Austen's novels, especially *Pride and Prejudice*, work on the principle of class compromise, featuring in most cases a bourgeois female subject who is accepted into a paternal aristocratic culture that is then renovated in the process [10-11].

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen has her protagonists and her narrating voice adopt a contestant attitude of gay relativity vis-a-vis the serious, dogmatic arrogance of patriarchy. Women's limitations are symbolically overcome by the creation of partial utopias at the conclusion of each novel, in contrast to the adverse conditions of the initial realistic fictional world [5, 7, 11].

3. Domestic Studies

Jane Austen was fascinated by humorous characters. Her intelligence of humor especially enabled her to see the foolish and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies of the people she portrayed. Some critics pay attention to her created conversations in the novel and analyze them from the aspect of pragmatics. The first thing that attracts the reader is the vivid presentation of character—especially through the bright and witty conversation. Many misunderstanding and partial misunderstandings, the cross purposes, the arrangements, the deception and self-deceptions are presented in dialogue and in carefully staged scenes [12, 13].

In this novel, Jane Austen's unique artistic characteristics attract generations of readers. And analyzing its dramatic features about the structure, the dialogue and the ironic skill of the novel can appreciate how she displayed so many vivid stages on her "two-inch irony". In the most striking place, the use of comic irony makes us feel the comedy and satire of the whole novel and also the most shining person Elizabeth Bennet who gains the most admiration in print. And the author's mastery of language is showed off. Irony plays a decisive part in characterization as well as in plot development. The verbal irony in the dialogues and the situational or dramatic irony here are especially note-worthy.

One ironical event is that verbal quarrels turned into confessions, intended riddance turned into unexpected but nonetheless welcoming meetings, the proud turned into the humbled and the prejudice turned into the repentant. The irony helps to bring the conscious criticism of the author to the reader and makes it fun to read the novel [14-16].

A literary work without prolonged glamour will lose its value in the face of literature, only the excellent glamorous one will undergo the test of the time and will not be eliminated. In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen adopts a strategy of duplicity, which allows Jane Austen to expose women's miserable condition in a particular society. And like her writing style, the structure of Jane Austen's novel is deceptively simple. She appears to be telling a straightforward story, character by character and happening by happening, exactly as it occurred in chronological sequence. It is an interviewing of plot and subplots, an intricate pattern with various threads [16-18].

Jane Austen was a writer in the age of rationality, which surely leaves its imprint upon her work, heroes and heroines in the novel manifest the fact that they are rationally controlled. Such rationality, however, highlights the unusual power of emotion. This kind of first-restrained and then-emitted emotion in the novel displays Austen's profound knowledge of life and her progressive thought surpassing her times. Elizabeth ends up rejecting Darcy in what we come to see as the first dramatic climax of the story. The Wickham subplot brings on the second dramatic climax: his elopement with Lydia and the scandal and probable ruin of the entire Bennet family. Austen maintains an air of suspense to the very end. She also keeps her three subplots alive with a novelist's juggling skill. In the end, all three subplots contribute to the resolution of the principal plot, and the hero and heroine come together in happiness at last [16, 19].

Plots are the very essential factor to make a whole novel. The main plot follows the far from smooth course of the romance between Elizabeth and Darcy and the conflict of his pride and her prejudice. Their feelings, born of first impressions, are not the only obstacles between them. Three subplots complicate their relationship [16, 20-22]. Some plots reveal Austen's vision about equality and harmonious relationship between adults. Darcy and Elizabeth enjoys a perfect match between two animated and intelligent adults who truly love, support, and respect each other. It is Jane Austen's ideal depiction of marriage.

Education and social code should be referred also. In Jane Austen's time, there was no real way for young women of the "genteel" classes to strike out on their own or be independent. Professions, the universities, politics, etc. were not open to women. Jane Austen made her ask whether what went in the clothes of fashionable gentility really was gentle. There was no centrally-organized system of state-supported education. "While she thought wealth desirable, she did not believe that wealthy people were necessarily always the most cultured; and while she would have defended the Church, she was not blind to the worldliness of a clergyman like Collins. [23]"

4. Conclusion

It is showed that in these academical essays there are some weak points that the critics have forgotten to take. The topic of the mood and the tone is seldom discussed. Some comparison and contrast between Chinese novels and British novels about a certain work in which plots, language, tone, mood, structure will be deeply discussed. To absorb and summarize the useful experiences, as the English majors, we should reduce the limitations in study and enlarge the points that are ignored. In the future study, the necessary materials will be collected more and more, in order to give a more overall study. And we should understand deeper to dig out what Austen believed and insisted in harmony and equality and also in sense and sensibility. "Austen has been wandering up and down between sense and sensibility all the time, but finally emotion has overcome reason, the love has replaced money. She regarded the cordial adoration and love as the foundation of marriage between a man and a woman. Anyway, she broke through the orthodox idea at her time after all, and initiated enlightenment to the people as well. [24]"

Based on the main discussions that are always been talked, the future essay will be more specialized in moral standards. Moreover, it is necessary and meaningful to interpret the novel again because it is a timeless classic that has exerted a profound influence on literature, society, and even individual perspectives. The novel, through its intricate portrayal of character dynamics and societal norms in 18th-century England, has left an indelible mark on various facets. And it has inspired countless writers and scholars to engage in critical analysis and literary interpretation. Its wit, humor, and intricate social commentary have been celebrated and studied extensively, contributing to the development of literary theory and criticism. Its literary prowess has inspired generations of writers and scholars, while its societal commentary has challenged norms and prompted reflections on contemporary values. So as for me, the novel encourages self-reflection and growth, fostering empathy and understanding.

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