

Self-Sacrifice in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*: A Psychoanalytic Reading

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Abstract: Human being and his/her relationship with his/her neighboring in terms of the living together becomes a serious issue researchers have to tackle and find solution for. The concept of love is taking various dimensions of meanings and interpretations. In *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* written by Jane Austen, the way love is conditioned by material possession and wealth forces attention. To readjust things by granting the type of socio-educative values the concept of love this contemporary humanity needs, the Freudian psychoanalytic approach is used to conduct the current research work. It therefore helps to uncover that personal interest is overtaking people in their undertaking. The real love which stands for self-donation, patriotism, group-interest defense by losing his/her own one has to be promoted and be the showcase for new generations.

Key-word: Love, self-donation, Wealth, Social group, Misbehavior

Résumé : L'être humain et sa relation avec son environnement en terme du vivre ensemble devient un problème sérieux au sujet duquel les chercheurs doivent réfléchir et trouver solution. Le concept d'amour fait objet de plusieurs interprétations et de définitions. Dans *Pride and Prejudice* et *Emma* de Jane Austen, l'allure à laquelle le concept d'amour se résume seulement à la possession du bien matériel et sur la richesse devient inquiétant. Dans le but de réajuster les choses en redonnant au concept d'amour la valeur morale dont l'humanité a besoin aujourd'hui, l'approche théorique de la psychanalyse freudienne a été utilisée pour conduire cette étude. Il en ressort donc que les intérêts personnels de l'homme se trouvent au centre de tout ce qu'il entreprend. Le vrai amour qui renvoie au don de soi, le patriotisme et la défense de l'intérêt du groupe au détriment de son propre intérêt pour le bien du grand nombre doit être promu, encouragé et montré comme exemple à suivre aux nouvelles générations.

Mots-clés: Amour – Don de soi – Richesse - Groupe social - Mauvaise conduite.

Introduction

Commonly the concept of love refers to the expression of courtship toward a counterpart or a neighboring. In that regard, Lisa Firestone by paraphrasing Aristotle on human relationship says that: "Man is by nature a social animal and no man can break the shackles of mutual dependance." (L. Firestone, 1). In other words, human being is born in society and he cannot do without social relationships. Thus, human being and his/her

community are closely attached for the safety of the whole social group they are forming. Thus, no one can live alone since s/he is born and has to live in a society. No human being grows in his/her socio-cultural environment. This sociability which refers to the different forms of socio-cultural interactions condemns people to adopt a togetherness attitude within their social groups or communities.

In that vein, any other contrastive attitude centered on personal interest like the ones observed in Jane Austen *Pride and prejudice* and *Emma* by her characters spoils the main objective and the essence of love. Love has to be rooted on self-donation and patriotism. For that reason and thanks to the Freudian psychoanalytic approach, the current research work comes out. The study is divided into two parts. On the one hand, it tackles the symbolization of love in each of the two novels. On the other hand, it is what the term sheds light on with the focus on a fair human relationship as the main key for any community development.

1. Love Symbolization in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*

According to Western culture in general and British tradition in particular, Jane's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* as female literary works tackle the societal issues. They deal with the problematics of love in human relationships that were prevailing in England during the Regency period. In that time, women's concern about marital union and love was carefully planned out. The woman's place in society was predetermined and attached to her marital status. A lady has to be cared for by her husband. She does not need to join the workplace herself before satisfying her female's needs. In that prospect, a girl who gets married to a wealthy person is the one that deserved the respect of the community. Ladies know that their socio-economic status in terms of value relies on men. Any woman who does not get married to a rich man is a social outcast. Referring to English traditional and cultural principles of the writer's time that were prevailing, a young woman female has to get married to a wealthy man in order to be in accordance with the traditional and cultural principles of her community.

In this social vision, the marriageable girl has to be chosen by future husband. To fall in love with a wealthy man becomes a social prerequisite for every aged and matured girl. Socially, a girl's social class, in the regency period, abides by this rule. In many cases, the physical appearance or character of the man to be dated does not count at all. His wealth and property are the yardstick of his love. Thus, the beloved's feelings in the regency period are

not actually relevant. What is compulsory is to be with a husband with at least an appreciable financial status. A union between a man and a woman becomes an opportunity for financial stability. In a desperate attempt to secure a future, a woman would pursue loveless union with a man and empty passion, instead of genuine love and recognition, as covered in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the concept of love in terms of the living together takes many forms in the social groups. Many readings are offered about the concept of love in *Pride and Prejudice*. In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, love refers to courtship. Courtship is conducive to love and marriage. So, courtship takes place "when the couple begins the possibility of marriage and serious dating appears to be continuing with each other." (J. A. B. Sills, 19). In short, courtship focuses on the frequency of the dated people's meeting. In this regard, it is the period where the two people who are willing to live together make many promises to each other: living together till death, no betrayal, fidelity and even self-sacrifice are the cornerstones of a strong relationship. Love is seriously attached to assistance of a counterpart. Elizabeth and Mr Darcy were at the beginning of their marital union. And since they come to discover that their love's feelings surpass their own divergences; their behaviors have changed and they have overcome all the hardships and challenges during the entire story.

Love also means overcoming counterpart's faults. People have to avoid focusing on their counterparts' faults and shortcomings. Love and virtues are at the heart of the lovers' relationship. Jane's character Elizabeth's attitudes direct readers to the fact while she was trying to comprehend the meaning of love until she finally realized that the one she is meant to be with is Mr. Darcy. The two people at first defied each other at the party. Mr. Darcy's words expressed how he undermined Miss Elizabeth. He said to Mr Bingley about Elizabeth: "which do you mean" [...] Elizabeth "is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (J. Austen, 9). Mr. Darcy discriminates against lady Elizabeth Bennet since he cannot pretend to be her companion. For the man, being handsome overpasses her ability of tolerance as a companion.

Compare to Mr. Bingley, Mr. Darcy is unpleasant with his neighbors. "Darcy had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure" (Ibid., 13).

someone can say that Darcy is heartless when it comes to love and human relationship. He feels no interest or pleasure for the other party. Thus, his love for another human being resides in his pride and consideration of beauty. Darcy acknowledged Miss Bennet's prettiest; but he added that "she smiles too much" (Ibid). Darcy's attitudes shows that self-fulfillment is any relationship and marital union. He cannot get married to a girl who smiles too much. Physical appearances overtake Darcy's love to a co-partner. Love is a reciprocal self-donation to correct and compensate the lacking abilities in a partner. That is what makes Elizabeth to "remain with no very cordial feelings towards [Darcy]" (J. Austen, 9). But reciprocal and cordial feelings have to prompt romance in love regarding the living together.

Love means romance. In fact, Mrs. Bennet's says about a piece of mind once her daughter settled in Netherfield exemplifies it. She hopes for nothing more but to marry off the rest of her daughters. Mrs. Bennet expressed openly: "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." (Op. Cit, 6) However and throughout the story, Elizabeth is desperately trying to discover the meaning of romance while learning from the different aspects of love from her father and aunt. The lady uses her parents' experiences to work out a genuine understanding of love. Self-offering was permanent in older people's attitudes. The real value of romance rests in acceptance of an honest love for the significant partner. Despite all the loveless relationships the protagonist encounters, it is remarkable that Jane Austen's characters Darcy and Elizabeth are capable of having a thriving marriage with passion, love, safety, and money.

Love is the reciprocal acceptance and sharing of difficulties with one's partner. The reciprocal love relationship brings far more security than finance in marriage or in any human relationship. Money cannot overpass love in marriage. Love makes the couple secured and free. Thus, the reciprocal love within the couple whereby each partner deserves respect symbolizes peace in marriage. Darcy and Elizabeth, Austen's characters in the novel understudy are the showcases regarding their behaviours. They are protagonists at first but respectful to each other in their couple at the end. This is something which many people are not capable of in this contemporary world.

Contrastively, it is noticeable that with love it is possible to overcome all the obstacles in life. Lisa Firestone says that a couple and people in relationship as well have to ban worrying their partners by feeling frank and sincere. She explained it and said that:

Often, we spend our time worrying about what our partner feels towards us or how the relationship looks from the outside. Even though it feels good to be loved by

someone else, each one of us can only really feel our loving feelings for another person and not that person's feelings for us. In order to connect with and sustain those loving feelings within us, we have to take actions that are loving. Otherwise, we may be living in fantasy. (L. Firestone, 2).

Loving someone for his/her financial stability has to be thrown away in marriage. Marriage cannot be for 'fantasy' but for 'loving feelings'. Love has to focus on someone's personal qualities and feelings which have to be reciprocal in the couple. The worrying about the outside regarding the couple financial status has to be banished for sustainable relationship. Elizabeth was too proud at first to recognize Darcy for the man he could be. Therefore and after getting to know each other, Elizabeth realizes that love regarding marriage cannot base on a socio-financial standing of a partner in a couple; but on the partner's virtues and the possibility for mutual, genuine love.

Love has to be unconditional. Isha Sadhguru says about love that "[...] if your personality is kept strong in the process, it is just a convenient situation, that's all [...] A love affair need not be with any particular person. You could be having a great love affair, not with anyone in particular, but with life." (I. Sadhguru, 3). In other words, love has to be unconditional without any particular interest, in opposition to what was prevailing in England in 19th century where love vastly depended on financial security and a partner's establishment in society. The author of the novels under study is against this materialistic portrayal of love. Love cannot confer a socio-financial value to a person in his/her community. It is something that cannot be caught by wealth or influenced by hierarchy. Instead, it comes from the heart and respect for the partner since it has to be a strong mutual feeling that overcomes every boundary.

Coming to Jane Austen's *Emma*, friendship and love are important in any social group. Dinah Craik, an English novelist and poet, talks of the collaboration between people in a social group prompted love as a friendship. In other words, it is "the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words. [So] a friend is somebody who adores you even though they know the things you're most ashamed of" (D. Craik, 1). Similarly, in any human social group, partners and members as well have to live close and in connection with a neighbour by accepting their differences with the focus on what brings them together like love expressed in friendship; but not to tackle on a co-partner of a social group's lacks.

Emma, the main character of Jane Austen's *Emma*, expresses her friendship to his father's friends namely the fortunate ones with no wives. She matches their behaviours in the community. And she observed:

You like Mr. Elton, papa; I must look about for a wife for him. There is nobody in Highbury who deserves him – and he has been here a whole year, and has fitted up his house so comfortably, that it would be a shame to have him single any longer; and I thought when he was joining their hands to-day, he looked so very much as if he would like to have the same office done for him! I think very well of Mr. Elton, and this is the only way I have of doing him a service. (J. Austen, 9)

In a community or a social group, people have to share and express mutual friendship. Emma is on the way to grant a service to Mr. Elton who is still single although he is fortunate and comfortably wealthy. Love feeling is not having properties or being wealthy. Love is the expression of a friendly feeling towards a counterpart who needs it. Friendship or love is another facet of self-donation. Emma is disturbed by the loving sufferance of a partner; and she decides to assist him. Expressing friendship without any interest and consideration since it has to overpass financial interests, status, and position of partners in the community.

The promotion of collaborative attitudes among people of the same social group by being at the service to a counterpart is what has to direct people in relationship. A true love, as well as a true friendship, is a self-sacrifice. "Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others" (Jane Austen, *Ibid.*, 8) even though she was also single. People have to collaborate and devote the part of their time to their counterparts or social group's members. Love is a sharing of feeling with others. Thus, people have to mind what solitude can mean. Jane's character Emma does not get married to any man while one of her friends, Miss Taylor does. While Emma is trying to match people's pass? with what is going on so as to patch socially where there is an inequity. Love prompts friendship and focuses on self-sacrifice that rejects self-interest; opposed to what did Miss Churchill who gets married to Mr. Weston by interest. The couple "lived beyond their income, but still it was nothing in comparison of Enscombe: she did not cease to love her husband, but she wanted at once to be the wife of Captain Weston, and Miss Churchill of Enscombe" (J. Austen,10). Love has to source any marital union and human relationship in the community as it is well expressed by Emma's attitudes which exemplify it in Jane Austen's novel *Emma*.

Therefore, people have to revisit their ways of perpetuating evil in their communities. Money cannot be a criterion of getting married or not in social groups. Austen, as a realist novelist, is very much concerned with the business of money which involves property and sheds light on the facts in the novels under study. The two novels are opposed in the apprehension of love regarding its expression in social groups. On the one hand, her heroines are crafted as seeking property. Strong emphasis is placed on property or wealth as a prerequisite allied to the concept of love. On the other hand, love instead of being rooted on property is based on self-sacrifice and reciprocal sharing of skills. Such a friendship helps granting to a member of a social group in the community. People cannot root the concept of love on property and physical appearances as it is well mentioned in *Pride and Prejudice* by Elizabeth who states that her husband is “handsome, clever and rich with a comfortable home.” (Ibid). Property makes distinction between the people of her community. Thus, a revisitation of the love expresses the countrymen’s attitudes in human relationship.

2. Self-Sacrifice as an Asset for Family’s Sustainability and Communal Growth

Self-devotion is the energy one develops for a cause. It also means the giving of oneself. Thus, it can be assimilated to the sacrifice one can make to save or help another person. As a companion or not human being has to share love with his/her neighboring, love cannot be subjected to economic interests. By opposition to Austen’s characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, where the economic status of a husband is the most important criterion for women to join marriage, something has to be done to allow partners know what love is. To show the importance of financial status in British culture and tradition which at the origin of many divorces of British couples at the times. Meenakshi concluded that “[...] marriage was desperate economic need, especially in a society that afforded very little opportunity for women to earn a living.” (M. Meenakshi, 143). Finance is well represented in marriage which is supposed to focus mainly on love and reciprocal feelings in a British couple.

Love has to be rooted on reciprocal feelings which imply self-sacrifice so as to focus only on what a co-partner gets as positives for the well-being of the relationship. Granting help to each other and defending one another when it is necessary determines the kind of love people undergo in their relation. Money cannot overpass social actions and collaborations in a relationship or social groups. Mason in that vein said that: “Money is not the most important thing in the world. Love is.” (J. Mason, 1). Human beings have to share their diversities in

terms of habits, feelings and properties as well as safeguarding the economic interest of their social groups. Similarly, promotion of unity in human relationship. People have to get no interest for money while coming to love even though it is an economic means of exchange worldwide known.

Self-sacrifice implies more than generosity or charity. People are generous or charitable while they offer gifts to a neighbour. Their compassions' expression is manifested through gifts. But self-sacrifice is not limited just to the compassion; it goes to permanent devotion to find sustainable solution to the problem (which problem?) a counterpart encountered. In this regard, Mary Wollstonecraft said that the: "True compassion, [is] to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." (M. Wollstonecraft, 2). Thus, true compassion and love stand for sacrificing everything for the well-being of others. And this attitude has to be cultivated in a social group.

In the English culture and tradition, marriage is a source of social respect and marital privileges. In fact, marriage is the legally recognized union of two people as partners for life. More than a physical, spiritual and emotional union, it is a real long-life commitment and agreement as well that has to be based on love which focuses on self-donation of co-partners in the relationship.

According to Burke in the journal *The Linacre Quarterly*, self-giving and self-fulfillment in social group "cannot make ourselves happy by turning in on ourselves. Happiness comes to us from outside" (C. Burke, 8). In fact, in the nineteenth century English family, a daughter is supposed to marry a rich man in order to get a decent life and guarantee a sweet life for their family members. In short, during the period of time, the true love does not exist disappears and it makes place to self-satisfaction opposite to what lovers confess during wedding: "I give myself; I am yours". "I don't lend. I don't hold onto myself. I am yours" [...] I accept; you are mine. And now that you are mine, I will not reject you nor go back on my acceptance". (C. Burke, *Ibid.*, 9). Thus, self-donation is tightly combined with true love that "wants to commit itself and to stick by that commitment" (Op.Cit.).

In marriage, self-sacrifice is foundational. In that vein Austen's characterization of marital union and human relationship by focusing on couples helps to see how love without interest rooted on self-sacrifice has to be the most important event for women. Even though it does not indicate specifically anywhere in the novels that marriage cannot be centered on

materials only. According to the novels, personal interest was surpassing in marriage in the author's time. And one can even assert that true love does not exist in the period. For instance, Charlotte and Mr. Collins' love is apparent. Charlotte does not love her so-called husband Mr. Collins. She has accepted the union just to obtain a comfortable home. The living materials and her comfort are what she looks for with the wealthy Mr. Collins.

Money is nowadays with a great interest in human relationships as it is observed in Austen's *Emma*. Mr. Darcy Lydia Bennet's parent's attitudes exemplify it. He wanted to pay off George Wickham's debts and gave them another thousand pound in addition if George Wickham accepts to marry lady Lydia Bennet. In the novel *Emma*, some characters struggle to get married just because of money. Contrastively, the main character of Jane's novel, Emma's behaviour demonstrates that love cannot focus on material possession but has to be interpreted as an act on self-sacrifice for the safety of the relationship and for the union as well. Lady Emma herself is a confident and independent person who is not interested in any material possession. This is evidenced through her words: "Fortune, I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want" (J. Austen, 68). There is a need of re-visitation the concept of love for any relationship sustainability.

Crosby John F, a critic, explains the concept of self-sacrifice while analyzing Pope John II's talks on the subject and thinks that:

By existing as man and woman, our vocation to self-donation is inscribed in our nature. He thinks that we are lifted out of our isolation and ordered to one another by existing as man and woman. Of course, it is not only by means of the gender difference that we are called to mutual self-giving; persons of the same gender can make a sincere gift of themselves in their relations with each other. But one of the primary ways in which we exist for each other is by existing as man and woman. It is also the way of existing for each other that particularly fascinates (C. John F, 2)

Any human being fulfillment is not resided in his/her isolation but in his/her relation with his/her counterpart as a member and part of the community. The common well-being of people and their community as well is fixed in the nature of any people. By living in the togetherness and being sincere in our behaviors in favour of a co-partner and countrymen determine human being's satisfaction in his/her life. Thus, self-donation in social group has to be promoted. Self-donation goes sometimes to "self-sacrificing love of a mother for her child involves this gesture of self-surrender by the mother to the child" (C. John F, Ibid.). A sincere defense of members of a social group is necessary for the group's welfare and safety.

Crosby, in that prospect, added that:

An animal cannot practice any kind of self-giving for the very reason that it does not belong to itself as person. Since an animal is not gathered into itself with its own interiority, is not handed over to itself, it cannot do something with itself such as give itself in love. It acts and reacts, but does not hold itself in its hands so as to make a gift of itself. It follows, then, that belonging to another in love is not opposed to belonging to oneself as person; just the contrary, we are empowered by our belonging to ourselves to give ourselves to another in love. (C. John F, 3).

The living together has to pass by the self-donation of each member of a social group, community, kingdom and nation becomes compulsory for people's well-being and the community growth sustainability.

Conclusion

Love taking as the simple feeling sharing between people and human social groups has to be extended and redefined as the donation of oneself to a co-partner or to a social group for its safety and well-being. Love cannot limit on the property of someone. More it cannot be exchanged for wealth and economic status or position shifting of someone. A true love is the reciprocal acceptance of sufferance and well-being of people in relationship when they occur during the co-partners' lifetime. Thus, self-donation regarding love is the taking of the front to defend a partner; the offering of oneself to assistance permanently in difficult situations or not a member of a social group so as to lift up financially and socially the latter for the well-being of the whole community.

The searching of the well-being of a member of a social group is targeted in the concept of self-donation while talking of love and human union or relationship. Beloving someone has to be free without any interest since in absence of the targeted interest the supposed feeling expressed earlier can disappear. As any sustainability of a community likewise is the concept of self-donation through a real love for a family well-being lasting. Fair collaboration focusing on reciprocal love sharing in any life's situation circumstances has to be emphasized on and transmitted in any educational sphere. But the question that comes very often out is to which extent one can accept to sacrifice oneself for the well-being of someone else.

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