

POSTMODERN PERSUASIONS: REIMAGINING JANE AUSTEN IN LOVE, LIES, AND LIZZIE

K. Prathaayini¹, R. Karthick Babu^{2*}

¹ Department of English, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India

Email: pratha.vaish19@gmail.com

² Department of English, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India

Email: Karthickbabu.hrd@dsuniversity.ac.in

Corresponding Author: R. Karthick Babu (Karthickbabu.hrd@dsuniversity.ac.in)

Abstract: - This study explores the postmodern reimagining of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in Rosie Rushton's *Love, Lies, and Lizzie*, a contemporary young adult adaptation. Drawing on postmodern concepts such as intertextuality, fragmentation, and cultural relativism, the research examines how Rushton deconstructs Austen's Regency-era social critiques to align with the priorities of modern youth culture. The novel transforms Austen's themes of class, morality, and gender into a framework that critiques consumerism, social media, and adolescent relationships. By embracing metafictional elements and satirical undertones, Rushton crafts a narrative that both honours and subverts Austen's original text, challenging traditional literary hierarchies. The study highlights how the adaptation employs hyper reality to recast romantic ideals and societal norms in a way that resonates with contemporary audiences. Ultimately, this paper claims that *Love, Lies, and Lizzie* serves as a cultural translation of Austen's legacy, revealing the enduring relevance of her narratives in a postmodern context..

Keywords: intertextuality, fragmentation, and cultural relativism, consumerism, social media, and adolescent relationships)

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary novel *Love, Lies and Lizzie* brings together the masterpiece of Austen and cultural dimensions in 21st century. Rosie Rushton never disappoints Austen's devotees by aligning with the plot structure of original text. Here, Technology plays a pivotal role, the letters are replaced with text and Email messages. Similarly, culture with contemporaries also impacts the novel but the pride of James (Darcy) and prejudice of Lizzie (Elizabeth) retains the same.

Rushton's other works include *The Secrets of Love*, *Summer of Secrets*, *Daring Dreams* and *Echoes of Love*. The novel is the fourth installment and published in the year 2009. It has fifteen chapters and divided into two parts. She gives the entirety of the novel in these two parts. Postmodern literature breaks away the conventional traditions through experimentation with new literary devices, forms, genres, styles etc. It's stated that Rushton breaks the original novel terms and conditions while replacing them with modern technology and cultural modalities. As set in postmodern era, the language used names of characters correlated to pilot the novel to its zenith. Diving deep into novel it delineates love relations between these tender teenagers their way of handling the chaos caused by them. The female protagonist is spirited and outspoken as like in original text. Lizzie is prejudiced against Darcy for his behavior and get more infuriated with her sister Jane's issue. Hence, readers get to know about the cultural relativism of both. The overview of the novel indicates as young romance adult fiction. The Bennet daughters entangling love life begins with Lizzie dumping her boyfriend Toby.

2. HYPOTHESIS

This study hypothesizes that Rosie Rushton's *Love, Lies, and Lizzie* operates as a postmodern adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, deconstructing the original narrative to align with the sensibilities of contemporary youth culture. It is proposed that the novel employs postmodern techniques such as intertextuality, hyperreality, and metafiction to critique societal norms, reframe romantic ideals, and address the dynamics of class and gender within a modern context. By doing so, the adaptation not only preserves the thematic essence of Austen's work but also transforms it into a culturally relevant text that resonates with the values and challenges of 21st-century audiences.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The idea of adapting classic works through postmodern lenses is not new. Literary critics have long examined how reimagined versions of Austen's work reflect cultural shifts and evolving attitudes toward gender, class, and romance. Studies like those by Auerbach (2008) and Leith (2003) suggest that postmodern adaptations of Austen's novels frequently challenge the traditional boundaries of genre, question moral assumptions, and highlight the instability of meaning.

The postmodern approach to classic literature often includes *intertextuality*, where the new work engages in a dialogue with the original text. In the case of *Love, Lies, and Lizzie*, the novel not only references *Pride and Prejudice* but also reflects postmodern concerns such as the collapse of traditional authority and the commodification of culture. Additionally, the concept of the *hyperreal* (as coined by Jean Baudrillard) plays a role in how Austen's characters and plotlines are adapted to a world where reality is mediated through mass media, consumer culture, and virtual identities.

Scholarly discussions by Hutcheon (2000) and Foucault (1997) offer insights into how postmodern art, literature, and culture function in relation to the idea of subverting dominant narratives. In this case, the 2003 novel's modernization of *Pride and Prejudice* allows for a critique of the original's often idealized portrayal of romance and social class, while at the same time playing with the familiar tropes to entertain and engage modern readers.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Postmodern novel features the uncertainty of any beliefs and theories. Postmodernism indeed involves fundamental changes in the understanding of narrative and historicity; one would naturally expect it to transform the shape of fictional texts; but between the 1960s and the early twenty first century. The postmodernist questioned any grounding assumptions and they rejected absolute truth. *Love, Lies and Lizzie* explores the Bennet daughters influenced under light of modern advancements. The adaptation shows the classic furnished with vibrant changes of 21st century. Postmodernist elements are scrutinized below alongside the text.

Pastiche in *Love lies and Lizzie*

The postmodern element pastiche constitutes a literary creation that emulates or appropriates elements from another work, which is generally more esteemed within the literary canon. The pastiche does not serve to deride or satirize the original composition; rather, it operates as a form of tribute and reverence transferring the authenticity of original text. In *Love, Lies and Lizzie*, Rushton pays tribute to Austen by inserting a note of epigraph at the inception of each chapter such as "my good opinion once lost is lost forever" (chap 4). Hence, every chapter is built with the foundation of opening lines from the original text and developed further based on the plotline. The reference of pastiche creeps in when the names of characters remains identical for example, the youngest daughter Mary is called as Meredith in the adapted novel. As such the names have not undergone much of changes yet stays true to the plot. Each and every character originated from *Pride and Prejudice* have similar characteristics. They lean forward to culture differentiations and relativism as even Jane has a ex boyfriend (Simon) who is the most silent and typical character from adapted text. Charlie Bingley is attracted to Jane initially change of attitude comes as James interferes, that he too have been deceived in earlier relationships he had.

"I want more out of a relationship than a guy who agrees to do whatever I do, go wherever I say, constantly tells me he can't live without me" (4) said by Lizzie.

Lizzie never wanted a perfect boyfriend her expectation in a relationship is way more than that of a trustful relationship. Adults in recent times are easily driven by fantasy lead life. Inference can be drawn that relationships fail frequently and accepted later in terms of modern novels. Lydia the third daughter of Bennet is almost under the trap of drugs cheated by George Wickham. The antagonist Wickham exposes to be a drug dealer at last caught in the hands of mobs. The word 'Deceiving' is brought into cultural relativism context.

Intertextuality in Love lies and Lizzie

Intertextuality in postmodernist backdrop represents a decentred concept of the universe in which individual works are not isolated creations, but are interwoven with one or the other texts. There can never exist a work without the reference from other texts, especially adaptations present the intertextuality in relation to canon. Though intertextuality as a term came three decades ago the twenty first century inclined towards culturally is no means of time bound feature. Furthermore, daughter Lydia gets accompanied by male guys like Zak, Denny etc. The flirtatious attitude of girls never changes which incurs lot of problems. Introduction of fragmentation in terms of Bennet daughter's attitude and complication of relationships.

The work reflects correlation of characters, dialogues, themes and symbols. Nevertheless, Bennets families are richer in the adapted novel and gets an equal stand with Bingley's with less class difference is example of hyperreality. The below text in the example of origin of parent's ancestry as they are proud about it for discussion. My father, "happened to be the son of one of the Queen Mother's equerries. And my mother was the youngest daughter of the Earl of Barroth. So you see, our worlds are poles apart" (Rushton 168).

Social Media

The nature of communication is replaced by social media communications like Email, Text messages and phone calls possibly. According to canon novel interaction would be letters and sending birds across was almost decades back. The technology has taken a significant position in modern era without that life becomes unimaginable. The roles of social media in adolescent relationships are irreplaceable such as AI. In the novel, Jane's illness is communicated to their family via phone calls, so the reacting time through the instant messages are faster. Misunderstandings in communication gap are completely avoided. Quickness of communication leads to fast approaching climax, as readers the modern novel encourages vast number of readers as its set for readers of contemporary era.

Music

Lizzie was paralleled by music to her character. Music served as sole purpose for existence of the character her approach to music as therapy. Recently, music has assumed an essential role in the lives of adolescents, serving as a source of solace for them. The aspiration of Lizzie was to gain admission to the institution of music therapy and to engage in the practice of performing music for children impacted by various ailments. She got placement in Lepovre centre where children were affected by autism and brain injuries and her dream was to sing for those kids. Such greater thoughts made a strong impression her character as unique that provokes the likeness of her character irrespective of the era it belongs. Among all other Bennet daughters music acts as linkage for connecting Darcy and Lizzie. From outside both are judged for their pride and prejudice be held by them. They share the similar quality of altruism that merges them as couple for life. "If music be the food of love is a famous quote inspired from one of the plays of Shakespeare.

5. CONCLUSION

Intertextuality between adaptation and the literary canon that Rushton has put forth is tremendous. The way the novel is approachable reminisces the classic back to modern times. The elements of novel are dissected and made to fit in the terms of postmodernism. Thus, the novel love lies and lizzie are investigated in the lime light of Postmodern terms and structures. Rushton's depicted the original entity into adaptation as presented in the canon. The readers are able picture the canon in postmodern era as Love, Lies and Lizzie, that's how she made justice to the adaptation in spite of not many criticisms

References:

1. Rushton, Roshie. Love, Lies and Lizzie. Piccadilly Press Ltd, 2011.
2. Rosie Rushton. <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/r/rosie-rushton/>. Accessed 17 Dec. 2024.
3. Rushton, Rosie. Love, Lies and Lizzie: A Review. June 2009, <https://austenprose.com/2009/06/27/love-lies-and-lizzie-by-rosie-rushton-a-review/>.
4. Andrea Punchmuller. "Postmodern Literature." OER, 11 May 2024, oercommons.org/authoring/4137-posmodern-literature/view. Accessed 22 Dec. 2024.
5. Heise, Ursula. "Postmodern Novels." Research Gate, www.researchgate.net/publication/285172679_Postmodern_novels. Accessed 22 Dec. 2024.
6. María Jesús Martínez Alfaro. "Intertextuality: Origin and Development of the Concept." Atlantis, 14 Nov. 2011, faculty.weber.edu/cbergeson/quixote/martinez.pdf. Accessed 22 Dec. 2024.