

**PRESENCE OF CULTURE MATERIALISM ELEMENTS IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* BY JANE AUSTEN AND *UNMARRIAGEABLE* BY SONIAH KAMAL**

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**Abstract**

Since the dawn of civilization, female marital problems have been at the center of human life. These elements are present everywhere due to materialistic perspectives and beliefs. The 2019 novel *Unmarriageable* by Soniah Kamal is a reimagining of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen set in the setting of Pakistani culture, where the fundamental problem of weddings is one of society and capitalism. Pakistan is a country dominated by the middle class, where people struggle to make ends meet while also needing a lot of money for activities that are largely cultural in nature. The Culture Materialism (CM) movement seeks to examine the fundamental problems in a culture where materialism is also on the rise. The essential components of the ideology of the public mind are also created by materialistic notions in the new literary technique known as critical textual analysis (CM). The current study is qualitative in character and will examine the fundamental marital concerns of the 19th century and the issues of the 21st century from the viewpoints of Harris and Dolimore's theory of Cultural Materialism. The two novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Unmarriageable* will be compared and contrasted in the research, as well as their texts' representations of culture and materialism. The study's findings indicate that marriage problems exist in both societies, even in modern-day Pakistan, although many of the concerns are distinct and have to do with materialism, such as dowries and jewelry. The survey also finds that whereas fathers are constantly mindful of the financial load and societal difficulties, mothers of girls are particularly interested in arranging their daughters' marriages. The female mothers of the girls enjoy the male members because they are a representation of capitalism, while the girls choose those who understand that life is best lived in harmony.

**Key Terms:** Culture Materialism, Marriage, Material, Society, Paradigm

**Introduction**

Culture Materialism (CM) is a relatively young theoretical paradigm that focuses on two main areas of inquiry, one of which is related to anthropology and the other to cultural studies. The importance of literary study is considerable in this area, which has a significant impact on CM in Britain; it is highly regarded to examine literary literature. The CM theoretical framework aims to investigate the deeply ingrained, marginalized, or powerful social problems that exist today. This framework stands in contrast to conventional human studies and readings that emphasize characteristics whereas CM focuses on the foundations of society. By examining neglected groups in society, expressing sympathy for them using literary devices, and creating a novel form of critique, CM focuses on the kinds of problems that have long been ignored. In this study, patriarchy and cultural differences are discussed.

In Kamal's *Unmarriageable* and Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*, the cultural materialist study under capitalist culture is examined in the current study. It looks at marriage-related difficulties in both Pakistani and British cultures. Even though *Pride & Prejudice* is an old book, Kamal's *Unmarriageable* elaborates on how the concerns are still relevant today. The major goal of this study is to inform readers about the social mores and standards prevalent at a time when marriage was regarded as the sole route to achieving social respect because women were prohibited in many spheres of endeavor.

The current study examines the patterns of marital traditions and ideals and their effects on women's gender in Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* (1813) and Soniah Kamal's *Unmarriageable* (2019). Through the lens of Cultural Materialism, it examines the difficulties of Pakistani and British cultures with reference to marital traditions and ideals. Even if the cultures of the two nations are distinct, concerns pertaining to these customs appear to be similar. *Unmarriageable* is a *Pride and Prejudice* of Pakistan, with a nod to Jane Austen's classic and a setting in contemporary Pakistani society and culture. These novels can be said to highlight women's positions in late 18th century English society in Britain and 21st century Muslim society in Pakistan because they were written by women and feature female protagonists. The study demonstrates how women see social injustice and how men treat women as subordinates. In social settings, women are closely observed and evaluated based on how well they adhere to social norms. Through the lens of commonplace belief, this study investigates the thesis of cultural materialism. It also clarifies how cultural materialism can assist in addressing the interaction between readers and literary texts as well as the relationship between fresh literary works and social belief.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Through the eastern and western cultures are different things but in relationships and marriage, the individuals have to face a number of issues regarding materialistic thoughts. Social indulgence in the materialism let human towards hollowness and abandon of purity.

### **Research Objective**

- To comparatively analyze *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Unmarriageable* under the lens of Culture Materialism.

### **Research Questions**

- Which aspects of culture materialism are presented in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, and *Unmarriageable* by Soniah Kamal?

### **Literature Review**

Cultural materialism is one of the various ideas that are used to examine literary works. It is an approach that emphasizes literary arts and other creative endeavors while viewing culture as a useful Cultural materialism refers to the values that develop and change as a result of how we live and respond to the physical environment.

The BBC (2007) gave details about the actors portraying the main characters, the costume design, and Collin Firth's attractions, which are still regarded as the "ideal Mr. Darcy" despite first doubting his suitability for the part due to his lack of sex appeal. His most well-known performance as Mr. Darcy is the swimming scene in the lake close to Pemberley, which isn't from the original book. The other actors included Crispin Bonham-Carter as the charming and kind Mr. Bingley, Alison

Steadman as the opinionated and noisy Mrs. Bennet, and Susannah Harker as the gentle and kind Jane. Dinah Collin, who created the costumes, believed that choosing the proper textiles and attire was crucial since it let each actor appear more at ease and natural.

According to Sundari (2015), Jane Austen was the most well-known female author of the 19th century and she devoted particular attention to love and marriage problems as the central aspects of the novel. She is the only author after Shakespeare to present a really realistic perspective of love. She asserted that genuine love needs to satisfy social obligations as well.

Rad (2015) conducted research on how marriage and women are portrayed in the *Pride and Prejudice* book. The study used a qualitative methodology with the goals of examining how the women are portrayed in the novel in a way that suggests she will eventually get married and have a family. According to the study, women in the 19th century did not have the same rights as those in the present. In order for their future lives to be prosperous, ladies back then had the right to limit their marriages to those who are well-off. Because women only participated in the norms and values that their parents instilled in them, inheritance rights were not granted to them. Instead, parents wished that their daughters would marry wealthy or financially secure men, as this would guarantee a prosperous future for women in English society.

### **Research Methodology**

Present study is based on textual analysis of the novels under the lens of culture materialism. Culture materialism exposes the societal interventions towards goods, materials and chosen subjects. By carefully examining cultural goods, sociologists attempt to develop critical understandings of the beliefs, norms, values, and global and worldviews of the moment. The primary distinction between NH and CM is that the former limits the scope of its work to a simple exposition of the conflicts that exist between the dominant culture and the marginalized subcultures. The other feature of cultural materialism is its commitment to criticize the cultural structures and ideological tactics of the ruling system. Raymond Williams, a British Neo-Marxist critic, and Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, had a significant impact on both New Historicism and cultural materialism. The latter owes its radical political approach to Williams, while the former is strongly tied to Foucault's early version of power-structures. A conservative form of political criticism is New Historicism, while a radical variant is Cultural Materialism. Only the power structures, ideological frameworks, social structures, and cultural creations of the dominant culture are committed to being represented by New Historicism. CM is dedicated to changing society as a whole, not just interpreting its many power systems, ideological frameworks, social structures, and cultural constructs. The poststructuralist movement is primarily where Stephen Greenblatt's NH enterprise and Alan Sinfield's CM project got their start. They both concentrate on analyzing literary notions. Both offer a window through which fresh opportunities can be seen. Sinfield and Greenblatt pave the path for other people's new and current voices. Examples of the critically important practice that represents the culture of otherness include NH and CM.

The study is limited to the following piece of writings:

- *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen
- *Unmarriageable* (2019) by Kamal
- Culture materialism by Dolimore (1984) and Harris (1968)

### Data Analysis

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." (Pride and Prejudice)*

The lines from Austen's masterpiece that have been chosen as examples show how important "good fortune" is to having a life mate at all costs or that he must use. The things that are settled in culture manipulate the unspoken realities as the "good fortune" is the toolkit and the production that will shape the populace's ideology, so the new historicism perspectives, as described by Dilmore and other historians, can be referred to as cultural materialism perspectives. Marxism serves as an example of the possibility of having sufficient financial resources to enjoy life to the fullest. This happiness does exist in society, but according to cultural materialism, the people of the day had the notion that it was better to marry a man who had "good fortune," which may have been the social structure of the 19th century at the time of Jane Austen. The marginalization and sexism of the feminine gender are also present, as is the reproduction that may be had with "good fortune." Because neither the social institution nor the official correspondences exist to establish the ideology of the moment, the Althusser perspective appears to have been abandoned in this instance.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a girl can go from pauper to princess or princess to pauper in the mere seconds it takes for her to accept a proposal" (Unmarriageable)*

The chosen lines respond to a variation of Austen's line that has been brought up in the context of Pakistani society. The social institutions also play a significant role in this regard, influencing how individuals think about the norms that are being established in society. As a result, society is too excluded. The response demonstrates societal thinking and social segments with regard to parents as well as the female members of the society who responded that a woman may become a princess or a prize in her husband's hands by agreeing to the marriage proposal. According to Althusser, the social institutions, particularly the religious sector of society, are creating this ideology because the country has a majority of Muslims and is handling the public's thoughts through official correspondence as well as official individuals who directly address the public. From a cultural standpoint, "becoming a princess" is extremely symbolic since a woman must come from a family that is progressing in terms of riches or other necessities of life that she would not be able to enjoy at home. The other viewpoint holds that the female must leave her parent's home in such a way that she must join an unidentified group where the requisite items may or may not be present, depending on her parent's acceptance of the proposition.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a young girl in possession of a pretty face, a fair complexion, a slim figure, and good height is not going to happily settle for a very ugly husband if he doesn't have enough money, unless she has the most incredible bad luck (which my cousin does)." (Unmarriageable)*

The vocabulary, interpretation, and style of the story are altered for the Pakistani context because most individuals in this country tend to be overly perceptive and quick to judge situations. In order to ensure that the items presented in the study are exclusively relevant to the current norms in Pakistani society, cultural interpretation is kept necessary in Pakistani literature as it depicts the society.. The hue of the individuals in their civilization is likewise considered as the most alluring and

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charming in every way, making this statement different from the Austen one in that she is not maintained as the cultural representation. According to the culture of materialism, objects along certain lines are given favor in society, and since society is structured around these ideas, women would also exhibit these traits.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters." (Pride and Prejudice)*

A description of 19th-century psychical conditions reads, "The culture and perceptions were not limited to the person whom the friend was concerned about that he might be with good fortune, but the things which were matters that the person would be acknowledged as the true person as he is going to be married is the suitable being for someone 'daughters as well.' According to the current theology in the context of cultural materialism, if a person has decent morals as well, he can be demonstrated to be the property of any female as well. The statement is completely at odds with Marxism, which holds that money is only needed to purchase things; yet, the elements listed in the statement are related to cultural materialism because they indicate that a person would have loyalty issues as well as manners.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that every marriage, no matter how good, will have ups and downs." (Unmarriageable)*

The lines discussed the cultural characteristics of Pakistan in such a way that the matrimonial factor required be defined and assessed from the views of luck as well. The primary point in it is that the female would not only be concerned with whether or not her marriage will bring about a happy environment while the behaviors are always being varied at times as well. The person who is molded in every way, but life has its ups and downs because in Pakistani society, the bride needs to be a part of the family where she has to be involved with many sorts of relationships and have to satisfy them all. The topics author, is discussing in her book are clearly present in her studies. In this case, the presenting or recommending phenomenon is that only the male members of society would welcome and benefit from the female. The novel can be used to understand how necessary it was in the Victorian era for men to be the prominent members of society and to be wealthy enough to maintain wives as their life partners. The author is also willing to describe the social norms of the society, as these norms depend on the choice of the male. Because of the connections between the things being discussed in the book and the phenomena that are currently occurring in this area, the author's style is purely natural.

*"Money is the best recipe for happiness." (Pride and Prejudice)*

The lines highlight a Marxist feature in that wealth was seen as both a means of achieving happiness and a means of acquiring happiness itself. There are also cultural features of marriage aspects that are depicted in the narrative. In this tale, the matrimonial issues are discussed, making the happiness of the individuals getting married apparent when they decide to marry their daughters off to affluent men. The novel's specified elements strongly discourage women from finding happiness with someone who is fortunate, and they also suggest that described elements shouldn't be tense

and of the problematic kind when there are few resources available to improve the quality of life. The cultural materialist viewpoint also demonstrates that there are cultures within cultures.

*"Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance."*  
*(Unmarriageable)*

Due to the Pakistani people's tendency to view events as random events rather than something that is considered as true, the world is unclear from a cultural standpoint in Pakistan. Because men rather than women act as matchmakers in society and because men do like or show interest in other men, the cultural concept exists by accident. Here, it is demonstrated from both a cultural and an ideological perspective that happiness is not dependent on chance but is instead attainable through a variety of means. The thinking and cultural manipulation lack a clear concept regarding how to obtain happiness and live a better life.

*"Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how." (Pride and Prejudice)*

The sentence illustrates the cultural component that women lack the guts to describe the things that are prevalent in English society. Cultural barriers and the undervaluation of female speech can place people in a precarious position on how to communicate their concerns. Even in English society, there is a statement difficulty since the daughter of Bennet is not allowed to declare her love or display her feelings of love. She is not constrained by cultural standards that prevent her from expressing her love, which makes the choice and selection of the worlds for her so difficult.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that if you are the daughter of rich and generous parents, then you have the luxury to not get married just for security." (Unmarriageable)*

As the student discusses how marriage is essential for women's security and safety, capitalism and materialistic attitudes are present in society. The lines also discuss how the culture and things that exist in society call for protection, and how women are seen as the most insecure members of society because they are the most marginalized and subjugated group. In other viewpoints, the way that society thinks is very essential since there is a materialistic mindset that is more important than a mental approach because rich and affluent parents are retained as a source of safety and freedom in society. In Pakistani society as well, the desire for riches is maintained as the idealized representation of security.

*"It's Western conditioning to think independent women are better than homemakers." (Unmarriageable)*

The cross-cultural description states that Pakistani culture does believe that western women are liberated from cultural constraints and have the freedom to pursue their careers rather than staying at home to be wives. Due to culturally materialistic beliefs, women in Pakistani society are expected to serve as housemaids, whereas women in Western societies are allowed the opportunity to find employment and pursue independent careers. Things are controlled in society in such a way that women are marginalized because they are viewed as domestic helpers rather than as members of society. The marital issue is that in Pakistan, women are often seen as the head of the household

after marriage rather than a prominent member of society. Many women feel that their social skills and status in society are being taken from them in many ways.

*"She is not enough to tempt me." (Pride and Prejudice)*

In these words, the marginalization of the standing of the female member of society can be considered as the violation of the female's attractiveness and personality with the society's right for the female to be enticed solely for their beauty and appearance. They are meant to be a part of the family and a life partner, but Marxism violates human rights when it prevents women from exercising their right to freedom of expression in favor of only seeing women as objects to be used to serve the needs of society, preventing women from describing themselves or choosing partners on the basis of their own personalities. When asked to join the society where she will be a partner, women get combative due to the various theologies in this area, but the only perspective is being thought at the early stage of building couples that how the females would be attractive to locate the suit for herself.

*"A lady's imagination is very rapid; it jumps from admiration to love, from love to matrimony in a moment." (Pride and Prejudice)*

As seen by the adage that "females have to fall in love at once or they can fall in love at once too," making love and finding the right suit were regarded as essential aspects of life. The act of falling in love, which would precede marriage, was maintained as a fundamental component of culture during the 19th century as well. The young women were observed by both the sense of beauty and the manner in which love could only be produced. Because of the way society is structured, people only want to fall in love and focus on having sexual relations in order to fulfill their desire for marriage. The social issue that has emerged is that people used to believe that being married was the only way to be happy in life, and that women should have the motif of being both pretty and a loving object so that the criteria for a suitable match could be met.

*"Being financially independent is not a Western idea. The Prophet's wife, Hazrat Khadijah, ran her own successful business back in the day and he was, to begin with, her employee." (Unmarriageable)*

The one component of society that is also being abandoned is the fact that women are unable to find husbands on their own terms. According to the lines, women could be accused of adopting materialistic attitudes if they wanted to get wealthier and satisfy their demands in terms of social elements of life. However, from the perspective of Pakistani society, the ideology of the social institute lies there in the culture materialistic that the women would also gain the power of the wealth so that their permanency could be improved. This is contrary to the Marxist analysis that claimed that females could not be so powerful and so wealthy on the behalf of their business rather than being considered the marginalized segment of the society that could only have to deal with the issues of the domestic concerns. Since the citizens of the nation are not truly conscious of the ideologies they follow, the superstructure behavior appears to be completely different.

*"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a husband!" (Unmarriageable)*

A student has put out the superstructure ideology, which states that women should have access to riches and power in order to find their ideal life partner. The phrase "good fortune" in these lines refers to women and is meant to ensure that they continue to have good fortune and that their futures be described as they would like. The issues are of the Marxist variety, but they may also lie in the cultural materialisms' perspective that the many ideologies can be generated in society in a way that makes women wealthy and powerful. The feminist perspective is evident here, and marriage-related issues do not present themselves to women in such a way that they could cause them problems in their daily lives rather than allowing the disadvantaged group to live their lives according to their own preferences.

*"Which girl wants a mustache and a hairy back? I don't."  
(Unmarriageable)*

The cultural aspects are there described in the line as the females do not like the person having long beards and hairs on their back in a way that the males are kept careless in making and modifying themselves to be looked attractive rather than in Pakistani society, where the symbolic things are there that the males are vigorous and the hairy style be there but the things which are described in the line are of the high importance that the females a.

### **Conclusion**

Kamal and Austen did the finest job of portraying the materialistic world where ideals are being formed in people's minds in the context of their own settings. Marriage is viewed as being more difficult than ever despite the progression of matrimonial concerns, which cannot be seen in this viewpoint in a proper way. The issues of middle families are the same as matchmaking is the big problem in all regards as the social construction of the behaviors is based on the capital rather than ethics or based on the material. The matrimonial issues are much evident in the minds of the people as well as in the thinking of the people that the people would be so much with wealth so that the wealth would fulfill the desired aspects of the society in the name of downers and the jewelers. When concerns from Austen's time are present in Pakistan's modern period as well, it is really excessive and makes matters more important.

The analysis of the texts from the perspective of CM highlighted two distinct types of civilizations that have existed throughout history, each with its own norms and culture but sharing some common cultural difficulties with the modern age of the 20th and 19th centuries. The text was analyzed, and the discussion demonstrates that there have always been matrimonial issues. Middle-class parents must be very attentive to many aspects of marriage without worrying about whether or not the suit is appropriate. On the other hand, female members of society who are married must also be very attentive because they do not support the parents' ideal bridegroom rather than the actual bride.

The social conventions that prioritize the male members of society's voice over the voices of women, including when choosing a life partner, are perceived as being extremely bizarre. Both types of society demand that women be liked solely for their worldview and moral integrity rather than their personality traits like manners or character. In both types of societies—those of the 19th and the 21st centuries—the interactions between male and female members of society are regarded as extremely unusual.

In today's society, as well as in the minds of female parents who believe that their daughters will marry wealthy men with high social statuses, there are materialistic notions present. The parents' brains are being instilled with structural materialism ideas, which call on the masculine members of society to adopt Marxist viewpoints as well. However, the parents are not paying close attention to children who are strong-willed or of poor social standing.

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