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Vashisth, Kusum

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Self and Society in Gurinder Chadha's Bride and Prejudice

Kusum Vashisth kusumv29@gmail.com

Jaipur National University, Indonesia

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1447-4835>

Abstract: The research paper attempts to probe into the concept/idea of 'self' by analyzing the 'self' of the characters in Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* its Indian cinematic adaptation *Bride and Prejudice*. It will explore the hybrid or diasporic identities as against the British national identities of Austen's characters. One of the texts explored is an adaptation of the other thereby resulting in the similarity as far as the plot and characters are concerned. However, society and culture have changed during the process of adaptation. The adapted version has a global approach. It is not only a different culture and society but also a larger world weaved in one thread. The native setting of the original novel is but a part of the larger setting of the adapted movie. The globe has taken place of Britain. Not only that but the source text belongs to the imperial nation whereas the adaptation belongs to the third world. The central setting of the adaptation is a country which was once a colony to the imperial nation of the source text. In spite of this major difference of settings, not only the plot but even the characters remain unchanged. Their position in the plot, their role and the experiences they go through remain the same. Hence, they should be the same too. What is worth exploring here is the impact of the changed society, culture and setting upon these characters. The given paper attempts to explore this aspect.

Keywords: Global Hybridity, Diaspora, Self, Society, Identity, Postcolonial, Globalization, Adaptation, Marriage, Cultural Amalgamation, Existential Crisis, Cultural Diversity, Nationality, Filmization, Creative Synergy.

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Self and society are two significant aspects that influence individual personalities a great deal. Though 'self' may be defined or understood as 'who a person is' but 'that person/self' would be a different person if born and brought up in England, a different person if born and brought up in India, and would certainly be very different if brought up in wilderness. Hence it would be more appropriate to call certain aspects of personality which are peculiar to an individual irrespective of his/her culture, nation, and surrounding environment as 'self'. Apart from this 'self' there is that aspect of personality which gets influenced by the society (or absence of society) to which a person belongs i.e. the surroundings influence the 'self' to make the individual who he/she is. Hence it may be concluded that an individual is a result of his/her self and society. The society of an individual usually shares the same set of rules and beliefs as a particular society belongs to a particular culture and a particular nation. But when an individual belongs to one society and lives in another, the impact upon a personality is bound to become complicated and perhaps a little conflicting too. This happens in case of those who live in diaspora.

The narrative of the diaspora is above all a narrative of the "self," for the very act of migration implies a "bodily" lifting out of the familiar and the relocation in the new and unfamiliar. Diasporic presence is a dispersal, a scattering, a flight and has to take roots elsewhere, specifically if it seeks sustenance and growth. But it continues to depend on the bits and pieces of the origin to hold itself together.... (Jain 79)

When exploring a diasporic experience, the concepts of 'self' and 'identity' of individuals experiencing diaspora are bound to undergo crisis.

Diaspora is a term that was earlier used for the displaced Jews but gradually it became an umbrella term for all the people who leave their homelands and go out for various reasons. Initially those reasons were mostly forced ones, as people moved only out of economic or some other kind of necessity. It might also have been a forced exile. But with changing times, the reasons changed. People now leave their homelands of their own will, sometimes for economic or professional success. This is particularly the case in India. Even when people do not leave their homeland, there is an interaction among them on global level as a result of technological development. This interaction has caused a global relationship between people of different nations and cultures. They are more aware of what is happening around the world and how it affects them. This growing tendency might as well be called diasporic phenomena. Hence, irrespective of whether someone lives in one's homeland or in a foreign land, different cultures affect a person's life and personality. A sense of homelessness and nostalgia are peculiar to those who live outside their homeland but a conflict between native culture and foreign culture is something that now influences not only those who experience diasporic existence in a foreign land but also those who are in the boundaries of their own nation. This is also known as the effect of 'global hybridity'. Gurinder Chadha's movie *Bride and Prejudice*, an Indianised version of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* celebrates this diasporic phenomena or diasporic cult. Except for three characters, the Bingley siblings and Mr. Kohli, there are no other diasporic characters in *Bride and Prejudice*. Yet the effect of diasporic existence is apparent on the whole movie and its characters. The characters are globally connected and the influence of Gurinder Chadha (a filmmaker of Indian Diaspora) is inevitably visible on them and on the movie. The colorful and musical movie is a celebration of the diasporic influence on lives of people yet the conflicts which are a result of this influence are also visible. The movie appears to be celebrating these conflicts too.

To begin with, this conflict may be searched or looked for in the Indian notions and views about marriage. The novel by Austen has a localized setting moving between countryside and town. The female protagonist is portrayed as an intelligent and free-spirited woman. Considering the England of Austen's age women had only one option for social and economic progress as well as happiness and that was a good marriage (Austen belongs to the romantic age but her works display more of the eighteenth-century elements in them).

In spite of the fact that Austen's contemporaries are romantic writers as Coleridge or Wordsworth, she is not traditionally regarded as a romantic novelist. The literary tradition of Pope and Johnson influenced her more. (Dobošiová 5)

Elizabeth, the protagonist of *Pride and Prejudice* is attributed only that much boldness which her society in that age allows as she may choose to say no to a good marriage prospect if she feels that the chosen bridegroom is foolish or not good for her without considering what her future might be if she doesn't get a suitable husband (she is likely to remain a spinster and to lose all that she has as a consequence of her father's death). In those circumstances her decision will certainly be considered bold in refusing Mr. Collins while her friend Charlotte's decision is certainly a sensible one in marrying Mr. Collins. In the film adaptation this idea has been given a verbal expression through Jonny Wickham's dialogue to Lalitha, the Indian character in the movie in place of Elizabeth. "Better single than unhappy, thik hai na" (*Bride and Prejudice*). The only risk that Lalitha's decision of not marrying poses is that she may remain single forever while for Elizabeth given the circumstances of her times, it is a risk of losing everything she has. In Austen's age the issues related with marriage were economic and the future of a woman depended in an acute manner upon the person she married and his economic status both, whereas in contemporary India it is related to such problems as caste system, arranged/love marriage. The global influence upon traditional customs has changed many things. In the Bakshi family of *Bride and Prejudice* Mrs. Bakshi many a times speaks of finding an Indian bridegroom for her daughters. The traditional approach of finding a groom from same community has become flexible and it is sufficient for Mrs. Bakshi if the lad she chooses for her girls is from India and is a rich man (However she even accepts an American Darcy for a son in law unconditionally). Filmmaker Chadha herself belongs to Indian diaspora and her influence upon the film is visible. In some places this might still be improbable in India to ignore caste and community while arranging a marriage but the global influence has changed this approach in many urban areas to a more flexible one. Every society exhibits some criteria for marriages although these criteria may differ from society to society. Similarly certain aspects that become responsible for various types of marriages may also be found common in different societies universally owing to basic human nature. For instance two people from the opposite sex may be physically attracted or may have selfish reasons to get married, they may have deep emotional attachment or might also think practically about the qualities they should look for in their life partners and may make their decisions accordingly. These aspects differ from individual to individual and may be found in any society, age or culture. But what controls them is the society. It is the society which determines as to how much is allowed to an individual while making these decisions. Ultimately it is happiness which two individuals or their parents/guardians seek for in their choice of life partners. As explored by Dobošiová the age of Austen was undergoing a phase of change in English society regarding who would choose a life partner, family or children themselves.

Late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was time of many changes when a marriage and human relationships are considered. By the end of seventeenth century the shift in distribution of power over decision-making had taken place in all classes except for the highest ranks of aristocracy. (Dobošiová 8)

But only the power of decision-making regarding marriage was undergoing change, women's prospects and position in the society were still very limited. Women could not propose a man of their choice to marry if they liked him, they were only free to accept or refuse a man's proposal.

Young women could be controlled more easily because of their rather passive role in a courtship and their marriages ensured their economic security. Daughters were in a weak position because their only future lay in a marriage. Sometimes the manoeuvres to marry off a daughter, especially in upper class circles in late eighteenth century, turned into a desperate man-hunt. (24)

As explored by Dobošiová seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were also marked by a growing number of spinsters (8-11). If those spinsters were from aristocratic families, and inherited enough to support them for a lifetime it was convenient for them to remain single. But for women from other classes of society, life was very difficult if they remained single.

The three obstacles to any solution to the spinster problem were social snobbery, which caused that girls of genteel upbringing could not work in most occupations; inadequate education for women; and the lack of professions for women. Only at the very end of the eighteenth century, another occupation opened for well-educated unmarried women from decent homes. They could become governesses in wealthy households to young children under seven. Governesses suffered from both economic hardship and social stigma. (11)

Hence, it is apparent that marriage is the only prospect for women in Austen's age. This also is a reason why Austen in the first line of *Pride and Prejudice* states, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1). Landed gentry in that society had enough fortune to support them their whole life even if they did nothing else and for women it was necessary to marry someone who could support them economically. Hence rich men were expected to be looking for a woman who needed them.

"All mothers think that any single guy with big bucks must be shopping for a wife" (*Bride and Prejudice*). This notion is taken directly from the opening lines of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* and though it aptly applies to Austen's age (given the circumstances and distribution of role between men and women in that society) it isn't a misfit in the global and postcolonial setting of the film in India either. Though it is not an only option (unlike Austen's age) for Indian women to marry, yet traditional Indian notions associate women's happiness solely in marriage and spinsters in India are not looked at with respect. If they are unmarried, the general notion remains that they couldn't marry because of certain faults in them and it is usually difficult for people to accept that not marrying could have been their own choice too. Hence mothers seek for their daughters' happiness and are always worried seeing unmarried young daughters in their home. Although women in postcolonial India

do have the freedom to get educated or to work, but traditional notions (of what they ought to do) remain the same. Particularly men from Indian diaspora desire a 'traditional girl' for a wife. It is the desire which helps them feel connected with their roots, their homeland. The theme of 'simple traditional women' keeps recurring in the film. In the sarcasm of Lalitha (who is intelligent, aware and rooted i.e. lives in her own homeland), it is an outcome of her understanding of her homeland which is no "imaginary" realm for her but it is also the result of the global influence as she feels that probably every westerner comes to India seeking for 'simple traditional' women. The engagement and wedding ceremony shown at the beginning of the movie result from an arranged marriage and the bridegroom from Indian diaspora actually asked his parents to find a 'traditional' girl for a wife. This bride happens to be Lalitha's friend who lives in India. Another diasporic personality, Mr. Kohli, comes from America to India looking for a 'traditional' bride and when Lalitha refuses, he marries Chandra. The expectation vs. reality is also apparent in Lalitha- Kohli dialogue when Mr. Kohli says, "...Lalitha, I am offering to take you to America, you and your family will have no more worries". On her further refusal he says, "...you wouldn't even have to work" (*Bride and Prejudice*). Lalitha's reply to this is simple and assertive, "but I like working" (*Bride and Prejudice*). Hence, the problems in the film are of contemporary global society with a mixture as well as conflict of / between traditional and new approach towards life. Women may work but traditional Indian women don't, women have liberty but traditional Indian women must not be outspoken, women may earn their living respectably (which was difficult in Austen's age) but still they are expected to get married and willfully look after their husband and family. In this the movie may still be considered loyal to the source of adaptation, while dealing with the theme.

An important feature of the diasporic existence is the conflict between the individual and the society. As the person in diaspora has roots/ origin in one country but is brought up in another, there is twofold impact of this upon the individual. They benefit (be it intellectually or economically) because of globalization. More than one culture and geography has more to give in this respect but the cultural values and emotional ties become more complicated. This also may create a rift within the personality leading to a fragmented self. This process of 'breaking up of personality' may be studied through various characters from the texts. The very first scene of Mrs. Bakshi and the four daughters throws light upon this conflict and upon their personal 'self' and the 'self' influenced by their social (Indian, global/ national, international) values. The scene depicts the views as well as traditional and global aspects of the 'selves' of Jaya and Lalitha. It shows the less talented and segregated Maya criticizing the revealing dress of the youngest, Lakhi. She labels it as "very vulgar". The mother from the older generation, not very brilliant intellectually, only concerned about her four daughter's future, with her own traditional notions about everything is also segregated from the global influence. Her world is her family as she belongs to a generation

which during her prime was not exposed to the outside world. She, in the scene, refuses to let Lakhi wear something that could make her draw everyone's attention. Lakhi's desire to wear the dress also reflects her desire to exhibit as well as become part of the world beyond the borders of Amritsar. In Lakhi's words, "It's what everyone is wearing in Mumbai" (*Bride and Prejudice*). It is the international exposure (this diasporic cult or globalization) which is influencing big cities with greater intensity. It is this influence and the resultant changing manner of life with which Lakhi desires to identify herself. This desire to identify with global culture may be witnessed in different people in different ways. For instance, most 'stay at home' people have a desire to go out to countries like America where there are better prospects of life whereas some like Mr. Bakshi don't approve of it. Lalitha's two friends choose to marry NRIs for the same reason but Lalitha refuses to do the same. She however seems torn apart by the 'diasporic phenomena' or the global influence. In her second encounter with Darcy she is annoyed by his comment upon arranged marriage as 'backward' her own approach in dealing with her marriage seems mixed and complicated. She, as an Indian, keeps asserting that arranged marriages are good and "it is like a global date" (*Bride and Prejudice*). But she herself goes for a 'love marriage' (her character certainly balanced in that she never opposes love marriages either. She only wishes to marry the right person irrespective of where he belongs to or who chooses him (she herself or her parents). In this her approach towards marriage is very similar to that of Elizabeth in the novel. But Lalitha, even before she has met Mr. Kohli, is annoyed that her mother wants him to come to see Lalitha for his bride. If she is not against arranged marriages, she should have been open to seeing Mr. Kohli before judging him, however her refusal to him is not because her mother chose him but because she finds that her mental level doesn't match. It seems deep inside her was the desire to not marry anyone chosen by her parents as if being an Indian she realized that arranged marriages are to be looked at with an open mind and respected but they were not her cup of tea. Her 'self' seems to be torn apart between her identity as an Indian and the world encompassing her giving her the option to see that her cultural ways were not the only right ones if they did not suit her.

Jane Austen is essentially a 'national writer' who not only writes about England but also remains confined to upper and upper middle classes. This is the society that Austen was familiar with and she never went beyond this in her writings either. The various locations in her settings are the rural and urban England hence, her characters are deeply rooted in their society and thereby a product of that society. The five Bennet sisters are a product of that society yet they are very different from each other. The reader sees them through the narrative of Austen. Elizabeth Bennet is intelligent. Her beauty lies in her intelligence and initially Darcy does not find her beautiful, it is only after noticing elegance in her carefree manners (they being the result of her casual approach towards social mannerisms rather than a lack of knowledge) and her intelligence does he see beauty in her. Her Indian counterpart Lalitha is played by beautiful Aishwarya

Rai. Darcy notices her beauty instantly when in the movie he sees her for the first time. He is downstairs and is able to notice her even from a group of young ladies standing in the gallery upstairs. Austen's Darcy is made to notice Elizabeth by his friend Bingley and when Bingley asks him to dance with her he not only refuses but also refers to her as "tolerable" and incapable of tempting him (*Bride and Prejudice*). Chadha's Darcy is instantly taken by Lalitha, now and then his glance shifts to her and this is noticed directly by the audience watching the movie with the camera held at medium close up on Darcy then on Bakshi sisters (Lalitha and Jaya) then again on Darcy (being questioned by Kiran about the Indian girls) and then close up on Lalitha and Darcy respectively. In this Darcy is shown looking up when the focus shifts on Bakshi sisters laughing, and next Lalitha noticing him (in close up) making Darcy shift his gaze. Even Balraj asks Darcy to dance with Lalitha (as Bingley does in the novel) but Balraj actually makes him dance with her. Chadha shows loyalty to the novel in making Lalitha intelligent too but it is her exceptional beauty which draws Darcy's attention. The problem here is not of pride (as in the novel) but of misunderstanding caused by two different cultural backgrounds. In the novel it is Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice which the title reflects but Chadha changes the 'pride' of the title to 'bride' as there is no issue of pride in the theme of the movie. As has been discussed earlier the theme of marriage is there in both the novel and the adaptation but the treatment is different according to the age and setting hence, the issue of 'Indian bride' becomes significant. The prejudice of Lalitha is rooted in her Indian origin and the current global scenario. The beauty of the female protagonist essentially draws the attention of audience as they are directly made to see rather than read her in the cinematic mode. But it is also worth noticing that Aishwarya Rai with her blue eyes and fair complexion is an Indian with global looks. To cast her in the role of Lalitha considering the global audience may be called a sensible choice. While Elizabeth is seen through the narrative as intelligent and sensible; Lalitha is seen through Rai's performance, her expressions, dressing sense and her dialogues. Out of Austen's five sisters in the novel Catherine (Kitty) is invisible in the sense that she is highly influenced by Lydia and has not been given a strong personality by the author, she constantly changes through external influence. She however seems to be aptly filling the requirement of giving company to Lydia and thus throwing light upon Lydia's personality. Gurinder Chadha completely does away with the character and makes no Indian replacement for Catherine (or Kitty). For Mary, Austen mentions clearly in the narrative that she, "... in consequence of being the only plain one in the family, worked hard for knowledge and accomplishments, was always impatient for display" (Austen 27). Her Indian counterpart in the movie is called Maya who is beautiful with sharp Indian features but in comparison to the other three sisters (as played by exceptionally beautiful actors) appears plain. Nowhere is it mentioned in the movie nor is it necessary to, that Maya is the plainest. It is apparent in the choice of actor for the role and also in the way Maya is presented. She is the

only one among the sisters who is never seen in a western outfit; even in her nightdress (during the performance on 'no life without wife') she is the only sister wearing an Indian suit in white. She has not been given much space in significant conversations, the only remarks she makes upon any subject is based on what she considers to be decent or indecent. But her desperation for display takes a different turn. It depends upon the audience to interpret her snake dance and her desire to play sitar next. Thus, she is plain in looks, in dressing, in thoughts; is also eager to display her accomplishments and is the only one (like Mary) who has nothing to do with young men. In this Maya is very similar to the Mary of the novel but the narrative of the eighteenth-century novel depicts her plainness and unintelligence as the reason for the rest of her personality, i.e. the society of the age makes it necessary for a simple looking girl (without extraordinary beauty, without any special talent or intelligence and any economic support to back her) to do something in order to make her future secure. Hence it was the society that made her make an effort for gaining 'accomplishments' and if one makes an extra effort to learn something it is natural for a person to have a desire to display it. Maya on the contrary has simply been shown at only one place displaying her snake dance and that is certainly performed well. In case of Maya, it is not the unpolished performance with high affectation (which is a weakness with Mary) but a performance inappropriate for the occasion. This also gives it a comic effect which is a specialty of Chadha. But the postcolonial Indian society does not make her future insecure. Besides her plainness in remaining simple and wearing simple Indian dresses also is responsible for her 'plainness' if attempted at she could certainly look glamorous and more attractive. Not mingling with men is also part of her nature. Her mental faculties are not depicted through what she speaks but through her expressions which go opposite to others in almost all situations. For instance, when Mr. Kohli abruptly calls them "beautiful butterflies", she and her mother have a broad smile which clearly depicts that they take it as a complement (which it was meant to be) and are genuinely glad about it. On the other hand, the expressions of Mr. Bakshi and other three sisters (though different from each other) make it apparent that the compliment was very awkward and inappropriate. Or on Mrs. Bakshi's complaining about the dowry, they will have to give during the daughter's marriages, when Mr. Bakshi sarcastically says that "they could have drowned one or two of them", Maya looks offended whereas the other sisters smile at the sarcasm. In this way Maya's unintelligence is part of her 'self' and so is her eagerness to display what she can do or what she has learnt. This 'self' of Maya is centered within her small world and keeps her segregated from global influence as she is not shown as being much interested in what is happening around the world than she is about decency being observed by her family (i.e. whatever she understands by decency) and about what she and her sisters do (their social conduct). The 'self' of the five sisters is integrated with their society. The eldest Jane is sensible but if that were a contribution of the society then all sisters should have been the same. This is Jane's own quality and so is her goodness which tends

to mar her sensibility. She sees goodness everywhere even in the most apparent vilest of actions she finds the means to see goodness. Marriage as the ultimate prospect for a girl in eighteenth century, however, does influence her. For though good hearted but sensible as she is, she sees people through her good heart as well as her lack of practical experience which social gatherings like balls, dinners etc. are insufficient to provide. If she is really blind to the flaws in some people and thinks of the whole world as consisting of saints she can't be a sensible person which Austen allows her to be (she would either be a foolish person or a hypocrite pretending goodness). The society of the age doesn't allow women to work outside or interact with society in a more constructive way (unless they are forced by circumstances) so that they could not only be useful to the society but also self-independent and more practical. Such an interaction could have made women more aware of what the world is like. But the gatherings meant for entertainment only allow them to interact so that they may find suitable husbands for themselves. A woman or a girl with a good heart may be sensible and still may refuse to accept any dark side of humanity if she is very simple hearted and not much exposed to the world and its ways. Thus, one cannot ignore the effect of social influence upon Jane either. Also being a simple girl (i.e. not very ambitious) Jane has an inclination towards getting married and no other ambition (which her society doesn't even allow for her). So as soon as she met with a suitable young man who was also interested in her she fell in love with him and was glad about it. Once in love she couldn't help feeling hurt when Bingley never returned after his departure from Netherfield and being a good-hearted person her only solace was thinking that she was mistaken about his emotion. Jane might have been a different person in a different society, i.e. if there were more opportunities and more options for women she might not have been thinking of marriage but of some other possible future prospects. Thus, probably she might never have fallen in love with anyone. She might also have been more practical as a result of social exposure which the society does not provide her. Her Indian replacement, Jaya is also represented as sensible but she does appear as a mature and responsible eldest sister unlike a childlike Jane. The only difference visible on the screen between the characters of Jaya and Lalitha is that Lalitha is easily offended or irritated whereas Jaya is more patient. Mr. Bennet, in the novel, keeps talking about how foolish his daughters are and that Elizabeth is the only one who has some sense and is intelligent. The youngest three are portrayed as extremely foolish so that Kitty has no views, taste and personality of her own, Mary never realizes what her weaknesses are and if her conduct is bringing her praise or making her an object of fun in the society, Lydia only wants to get married before other sisters and wants a husband for herself without considering what that husband would be like as if a husband were a post which she would like to grab before everyone else does. In Chadha's movie, Lakhi (for Lydia in the novel) is also shown intelligent though very childish which is also appropriate as she is the youngest one. When Mr. Kohli boasts about his money and property in America Mrs. Bakshi and

Maya are impressed which shows in their expressions, Jaya's response is a gentle sarcastic smile which is not meant to reach or offend Mr. Kohli, Lalitha's sarcasm has taken an attacking mode with annoyance in her expression instead of any type of smile whereas Lakhi's expression has a mild careless sarcastic smile which quickly wears out and she begins to make faces showing that she is bored and she leaves. Maya's display (or desire to display) her talents at inappropriate occasions or her inability to understand sarcasm at certain places does depict that she is not very intelligent, nor very quick at understanding indirectly communicated meanings. While others are smiling, she wears an expression of shock on her face; and while others are shown embarrassed, she may be seen genuinely appreciative with an approving smile. However, her expression does not always go against others; for instance, when at an engagement ceremony her mother begins to dance on stairs singing louder than others thereby drawing everyone's attention giving them an opportunity to laugh at her, she along with her sisters Jaya and Lalitha looks embarrassed and it is Lakhi who reacts differently and laughs at her mother. Lakhi's reception of the situation is however not mistaken it is only her carefree way of dealing with the situation. She takes it lightly like everything else and therefore is able to laugh at her own mother. If Lakhi's responses are seen going astray from other family members it is more about how she responds to a situation than how she perceives it whereas Maya's odd responses are a result of her perception of a situation. Hence, Maya in a lot many ways is a character like Mary (her British counterpart), but Lakhi and Lydia's carefree approach towards everything is the only common feature between the two. Lakhi is intelligent, which is not narrated in the movie but is visible in her reactions and expressions in various scenes, but Lydia is called unintelligent in the novel by her father as well as by the author herself. Jaya in the movie appears much more mature and balanced as compared to Austen's Jane. Apparently, the setting, society, and even mode of presentation of a story seem to have changed the characters accordingly. Chadha has shifted Jane Austen's story into a different culture and a different age. But *Bride and Prejudice* may be called a loyal adaptation of the novel. To determine the loyalty of an adaptation to the source is, however, a complicated process. Both literature and films use two different modes of presentation; both are different forms of art. Literature is narrated whereas films give an audio-visual presentation to the audience. Sometimes a perfect imitation of the written word on screen fails to convince the audience of its loyalty to the source whereas some adaptations make deliberate changes and still make the audience feel their loyalty. Joy Gould Boyum has discussed some examples of this in his *Double Exposure*. Peter Brook's adaptation of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, for example, is appropriately reproduced as a film with an effort to keep the adaptation loyal to its source and yet it has failed to make the same impact upon audience as the novel does. According to Boyum, "... to bring ... connotations to a metaphoric level requires something else ... that Brook has failed to provide" (Boyum 173). The very metaphors which are the strength of the novel fail to be effective in the visual mode of

the film. What seems significant, thus, is not the exact replication of the page on the screen but the effect of the work upon reader/audience. It is the emotion felt by the reader, the overall reading experience which when adapted to the screen must be shifted in order to make the audience experience similar emotions. According to Boyum,

...an adaptation is by its very nature both work of art and palimpsest. Comprehensible without reference to the literary work on which it's based, it nevertheless stands in indissoluble relation to it, much in the manner of any reworking of preexistent materials.... (Boyum 64)

The Indianised adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* may be called loyal in the sense that it has taken the basic story as it is. The Bennet sisters have become Bakshi sisters, but in the basic concern of their marriage, the movement over places (local in the novel, global in the adapted movie), misunderstandings caused by a character called Wickham, Darcy's aunt substituted by Darcy's mother, her attempts to get Darcy married with the girl of her choice (her daughter in the novel), Chadha has been faithful to all the incidences. The change of cultural setting may have caused her to substitute certain characters or names or even cultural events like ball parties have been changed to dance in marriage ceremony or garbha but the events of the novel have been faithfully followed by the adaptation. The relationship between the novel and its adaptation as well as the self-sufficiency of both cannot be ignored. Hence within the same story of sisters having similar problems, misunderstandings and similar solutions with the substitutes of almost all the characters from the novel; the different cultural setting in different age gives a different society to the same characters. This changes their 'selves' thus making them very different from the characters of the novel.

Maria Cardell while exploring love and marriage in Austen's novels finds that marriage between two mature individuals leads to happiness (Cardell 25). According to Cardell, Jane of *Pride and Prejudice* and Elinor of *Sense and Sensibility* are mature characters as compared with Elizabeth and Marianne (their younger sisters respectively), who according to Cardell are in the process of maturing. The inefficiency in the judgment of characters of Darcy and Wickham by Elizabeth, and of Colonel Brandon and Willoughby by Marianne may aptly be considered their immaturity; whereas the efficient way of dealing with their broken relationships that were never verbally established by Jane and Elinor may be considered a trait of maturity in them. But this maturity in Jane is also a necessity for a character like hers who cannot manipulate or seduce men due to her simple and uncomplicated character. It has already been discussed how the age in which Jane Austen lived gave only one future prospect to women which was marriage. This turned most women into manipulative characters when it came to drawing attention of men and getting men to marry them which was also very necessary as the society did not even allow them to directly propose marriage to a man they liked. Thus, not only was marriage an only prospect for them but even this only prospect was very restricted and they were at the mercy of the men who asked them to marry. Charlotte is also depicted by the author as very

intelligent and sensible. Although Austen herself does not approve of Charlotte's decision, she mildly condemns it through Elizabeth's censure and depiction of underlying unhappiness in Charlotte's marriage. But Austen also justifies the decision in that the social circumstances left no choice for Charlotte.

Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservation she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it. (Austen 144)

Thus, here is one character whose maturity cannot be denied yet she ends up in an unhappy marriage but she always knew what she was doing. Elizabeth meeting Mr. Darcy also has an element of fairy tale in it and Dobošiová calls her "Cinderella with her own will" (Dobošiová 16). Not every Cinderella meets her savior prince in real life and leaving what is practically available for a dream may be considered immaturity. As for the character of Chandra Lamba (Indian version of Charlotte Lucas) the situation is slightly different. In the postcolonial India she may have worked and earned her own living. The social conditioning does apply to a spinster in this age and culture only to the extent of what people think and speak about her. She may be censured in their judgments but may still have her own life with economic security. But Chandra's decision does not make her immature either for it depends upon an individual under a given circumstance to choose his/her preferences. She is presented as a sensible and intelligent character in the movie who later on tells Lalitha that she "...did not want to take chance in case..." her "prince charming never came" (*Bride and Prejudice*). Cardell considers Jane as a mature woman though she too has a weakness. She cannot find faults with anyone and doesn't blame anyone for anything. Her inability to see hypocrisy and selfishness of people around her is as immature a conduct as Elizabeth's misjudgment of the characters of Darcy and Wickham. These arguments do not claim to negate what Cardell has explored in her research rather they see Cardell's findings in a different light. These findings are also being applied here to the diasporic existence of postcolonial India. And in contrast to the characters of movie in this setting, Austen's characters may be seen with a difference. This gives a fluidity to the 'selves' of the characters and it is evident that the same characters who seemed mature are now seen exhibiting traits of immaturity as Jane does. Also Jaya (Jane's Indian version) has been modified and she completely does away with Jane's weakness. For Jane's society allowed and demanded that type of weakness in a character like her but Jaya's society doesn't. Maturity, which is thoroughly analyzed by Cardell in Austen's two novels, is a trait of personality. It is evident that this trait is influenced by different society, culture and age differently. Considering the significance of marriage and chastity in the age of Austen, Jane's character in keeping her feelings to herself and letting her feelings towards Bingley to be expressed in a very mild manner even in front of him is maturity as per

the requirement of the age, but without Darcy's interference (as a result of Darcy- Elizabeth relation) she may or may not have ended up in a happy marriage. Whereas Jaya-Bingley's onscreen chemistry depicts that they were clearly courting each other and Bingley's character in the film is weaker and more vulnerable as compared to Austen's Bingley. Chadha has neither probed deeply into the character of Bingley nor given a detailed explanation of how Darcy succeeded in talking him out of marrying Jaya. Jaya's mother plays a role similar to Jane's mother in convincing Darcy (indirectly) that Jaya/Jane doesn't love Bingley, but how Chadha's Bingley is convinced by Darcy is not clear as it is Jane's reserved character and uncommitted attachment between Jane and Bingley which convinces him of Darcy's opinion that probably he was mistaken in his recognition of Jane's love for him. It may also be noticed that though genuinely in love with Bingley, Austen's Jane was initially inclined towards him because of her mother and the society. She accepted her position as a woman in the society and realized (like Charlotte) that marriage was her only goal to be achieved in life. She could think of nothing else but marriage. She like any ordinary girl of her age accepted the first proposal she got, only the proposal was yet to be made and Bingley's partiality towards her along with her mother and everyone else guaranteeing its approach, it was treated as if it had already been made. Jaya on the other hand belongs to a global and comparatively liberated society. She and Bingley exchange glances during an Indian engagement ceremony and audience may witness love in their expressions (Bingley gazing at her captivated and she in turn coyly looking away). They then dance together in the ceremony; Bingley initiates further interaction by introducing himself and his company (Darcy and Kiran) to the Bakshi family and finally seeking permission of the family during their second interaction (in the wedding ceremony) to take Jaya out with them to Goa. In Indian cultural context the permission given means the proposal accepted. Bingley also comes to say goodbye before leaving India, kissing her on her forehead and promising that he shall email her as soon as he reaches home. There is no doubt of Jaya's feelings towards him to the audience and she doesn't hide them in front of Bingley either. In Goa they are seen swimming, romancing and enjoying together. This doesn't happen in India casually if traditional families are to be taken into consideration. Hence Jaya-Balraj chemistry is apparent as against Jane-Bingley chemistry. Chadha has taken the characters as they are so that Jaya falls in love as Jane does, and so do both the Bingleys who are then convinced by their friend Darcy that Jaya/Jane doesn't love but is being forced by the mother which is what both the Darcys genuinely believe to be true. In spite of the similarities (or rather Chadha's loyalty to the original text, the different age and the different culture play their role in changing them altogether. Jaya may be noticed to be a more mature, more sensible, and more confident character than Jane, Bingley of Austen has been given an appropriate reason to believe in his mistake about Jane's emotion but Balraj Bingley's reasons are not clear and he appears to be a weaker character as compared to Austen's Bingley, Lydia's character has been portrayed as a silly and unintelligent girl inviting danger through her

foolishness whereas Lakhi's only weakness seems to be her carelessness (for in various scenes her intelligence is evident), Maya and Mrs. Bakshi's mental faculties/intelligence may appear weak in the movie but Mr. Bakshi is never shown as speaking in a degrading manner about any of his daughter's unlike Mr. Bennet. Mr. Bakshi may be similar to Mr. Bennet in his sarcastic nature but his sarcasms are directed against views or values and approaches which he disagrees with rather than against persons. In all this it is apparent that characters have been changed by age and culture although Chadha has tried to keep the elements of the original work as best as she could. Maria Cardell's arguments about marriage between people with same level of understanding, and her concept of maturity as the base for a happy marriage may seem weak in the light of the above made study upon various characters in *Bride and Prejudice*. Jaya becomes a stronger, more mature and more sensible character than Jane while Balraj Bingley's character becomes weaker than that of Austen's Bingley thus disrupting the balance between Jane-Bingley chemistry yet the couple has been depicted as promising a happy marriage which is in keeping with the original work by Austen. Another couple in the novel, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have been depicted as a mismatch and therefore an unhappy one. But this probably doesn't apply to their Indian counterparts, Mr. and Mrs. Bakshi. Mrs. Bakshi drags Mr. Bakshi on dance floor during the engagement ceremony of Chandra and Lalitha's friend. During this ceremony Jaya and Balraj Bingley get to know each other and they also dance together. After this dance both go to Jaya and are happy for Jaya. Mr. Bakshi makes a gesture of fatherly love for the daughter. And then communicates something to Mrs. Bakshi. Though the conversation is not made audible to the audience but the music continues in the background; Jaya, Lalitha, Mr. And Mrs. Bakshi and Chandra Lamba come together in this scene with all smiling faces towards Jaya. And during the communication between Bakshi couple, mutual happiness for their daughter and emotional attachment between the two is expressed through their body language, and expressions. In fact, it is Mr. Bakshi who lovingly holds Jaya's chin and then turns to his wife and says something with a smiling face and bodily expressions telling that he is sharing his happiness with his wife. Music in the background adds to the celebrative mood. This scene reflects that the relationship between the Bakshi couple is a warm one. Whereas the chemistry between Bennet couple in the novel seems to be suggestive of an unhappy marriage, this probably does not apply to their Indian version. Mr. Bakshi cares to share his emotions with his wife. When during their first acquaintance Balraj Bingley invites Jaya to a hotel in Goa, Mr. Bakshi refuses as he disapproves of letting his daughter go with strangers (men particularly) which is how things are in Indian culture (the parents being protective to the daughters); he however only says that "...it wouldn't be appropriate for her to go on her own" (*Bride and Prejudice*), a sentence which encapsulates all the meanings of why she can't be allowed in a polite manner. To this when Mrs. Bingley adds that "...perhaps her sister can accompany her", Mr. Bakshi disapproves which is apparent in his expressions (disapproving

gaze and his head slightly shaking in a negative) but he does not insult his wife by refusing instead he decides that Lalitha would be the sister to accompany Jaya (perhaps he trusts Lalitha's intelligence and capability to protect the sister and herself in the same manner as is expected of a male in the Indian society). Mr. Bakshi's sarcasms are never lost upon his wife (unlike Mr. Bennet's). Mr. Bakshi may be sarcastic at times but it's apparent that his sarcasms are aimed at Mrs. Bakshi's views that he disapproves of and not her mental faculties or herself which is what Mr. Bennet constantly does in the novel. For instance, he tells the joke of three swimming pools which attacks her materialistic approach and her reasons to choose Bingley for Jaya. But Mr. Bakshi himself is happy about the marriage and the happiness of his daughter. Mrs. Bakshi is also shown as naturally about to laugh at his joke but then checks herself as she knows it is against her and she is not supposed to laugh. When Mr. Bakshi makes a comment that, "...she only selectively practices what she preaches" (*Bride and Prejudice*), she tells him to go and welcome their expected guest which he instantly does. Mr. Bennet on the other hand always intended to visit Mr. Bingley but never said so to his wife. He kept teasing her that he had no such intention. He doesn't care what his wife or daughter's do. His sarcasms are directed towards their intelligence (or lack of it); since Elizabeth is more like Mr. Bennet himself she is his only favorite. Apparently, Mr. Bakshi always keeps his wife's words while Mr. Bennet does not. Mr. Bakshi who is hesitant to dance during engagement ceremony of Lalitha's friends and openly dances with his wife during his own daughters' wedding and the body language of Bakshi couple and their chemistry during this last scene is clearly indicative of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Bakshi may be different but they are a happy couple and they do love each other. As is evident from Mrs. Bakshi's statement, "She wants love to be there from the beginning. Where was the love shuv when we first got married haan? Tell her, tell her that you marry first then love grows" (*Bride and Prejudice*), the Bakshi couple probably had had an arranged marriage. From their point of views to intelligence there is no match between the two and their level of maturity certainly does not match. They are still a happy couple. Hence it may be said that there seems to be no exact criteria to decide if a marriage would turn out to be a happy one or not. This type of uncertainty is a feature of post structuralism which may be discerned in postcolonial age everywhere. Particularly for the diasporic experience the whole concept of identity has been invaded by uncertainty. This uncertainty or fluidity of 'identity', 'values' and 'selves' as well as the cinematic mode itself more prominently belong to the postcolonial age, the age of global hybridity. The problem of 'identity' includes multiple aspects; those who belong to the first generation migrated from homeland who long for their homeland and feel lonely, those who belong to next generations and grow up in a foreign land thereby identifying themselves with this culture which looks at them as outsiders, those whose native country is different from their home which is further different from their country of adoption, and those who live in their homeland and get to interact with or look at the

immigrants from here; all of them have different problems with their identity. Those in their own homeland have not experienced the life of immigrants, looking at them from a distance they develop their own notions (positive or negative); some long for this life in other countries with better prospects while others criticize it negatively. Political, social and economic aspects all interlinked due to globalization affect even those who live in their homeland. It may be said that the experiences of people, their understanding of other's 'identities' and perceptions of their own 'selves' have become complicated, hence the fluidity of 'identities' and 'selves' under the influence of this globalization.

Home and homelessness, nation and nationalism, borders and crossing of borders have become uncertain categories. The word "home" no longer signifies a "given," it does not necessarily connote a sense of belonging, instead it increasingly foregrounds a personal choice which the individual has exercised, and "home" and "homeland" are for all practical purposes separable units.... Two systems of knowledge and two sets of cultural influences construct identity and the socio-economic reality of both the societies confronts the self. (Jain 80)

Postcolonial 'selves' have a global and diasporic experience; therefore, they have an example of different cultures, different societies and different value systems in front of them. They may to some extent be free to choose the value systems of the society and culture that suits them without fearing or having any doubts about the permission or acceptance of them by their society. The rigid mental frame, which holds that societal values and cultural customs cannot be broken and if broken may lead to trouble, has changed as a result of this globalization. But it has uprooted or weakened the roots of national identity and results in an identity like that of a plant floating over different environmental conditions. This also applies to those who live in their own homeland. Though they are not floating beyond the boundaries of their homeland but the boundaries beyond the homeland do influence their 'selves', the breeze coming from across the borders brings the pollens of that culture with it. The custom of "elders getting married first" (*Bride and Prejudice*) has been an old one in Indian culture and though things have to some extent changed over the time, it only means that these notions are not as rigid as they once used to be. In other words, now if younger daughter in an Indian family gets married first, there still may be chances that elder one gets a good husband even after the younger but earlier the pattern used to be so rigid that under such circumstances the elder must end up remaining a spinster (not willfully but forced by her society and circumstances). Here Jaya already wishes and is hopeful that Balraj Bingley turns out to be rich as well as looking for a bride. Hence it is apparent that the concept of self is very much determined by the society and it changes as the society changes. The 'self' of the characters of Austen's English culture and society change when taking on the globally hybrid Indian, American or British identity even when the adaptation remains loyal to its source text, i.e., the original plot of *Pride and Prejudice* remains intact in the adaptation called *Bride and Prejudice*.

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