

20.3.2020

Dear Students,

With the enforcement of the quarantine for corona virus infection, I urge you all to follow all necessary precautions to ensure your personal health and that of the community at large. Make wise use of your time and spend it in improving your reading and writing skills. Since your semester has been deferred substantially I feel that you people have to take the initiative in furthering your studies at home. To help you out I will be posting and uploading some lecture notes which you may use as study aids to prepare yourself.

Lecture 1: (PRIDE AND PREJUDICE)

The following is in continuation of the lecture delivered in College on 14.3.2020---

The character of Elizabeth Bennet-

- The introductory comments have been given in class.
- Develop the answer using the introductory observations -Elizabeth's contrast to Jane, Charlotte and Lydia must be discussed -Austen's focus on her point of view as essential to the narrative of the novel must also be highlighted-Her coming of age and her ability to face her flaws as seen in her judgement of Darcy and Wickham-And her standing up to Lady Catherine-These episodes must be discussed with textual quotes as and where required.
- Conclusion-Austen's heroine is delineated with her trademark use of irony and humour. Yet Austen is perhaps lenient towards her and her final marriage to Darcy is not only a personal happy ending but represents a certain change in the social dynamics of the period. Elizabeth's character matures through the course of the novel and her marriage to Darcy represents a certain social advancement. Like Darcy,who reforms himself, Elizabeth's intelligence and spontaneity matures her sense of judgement and the lessons she learns in the course of the novel equips her for her new empowered position. That she stands up to Lady Catherine-a woman who represents conservative aristocratic values -is a sign of her ability to have an independent voice and agency. Her playfulness might be the most attractive part of her nature but her independent mind and perceptive nature gives her character a certain modernity which contemporary heroines lacked. She rises above her prejudices to understand the complexities of human life and nature and this makes her character psychologically rich and accounts for its lasting appeal.
- Key chapters for reference -Chapter1(mr Bennet's description of Elizabeth),Chapter 3,Chapter 34,chapter 36,chapter 50,chapter 56,Chapter 59(Elizabeth's conversation with her father)

LECTURE 2:

This lecture will be devoted to discussing the character of Darcy-

- Introductory observations-When Fitzwilliam Darcy makes his surprise entry at Meryton Assembly with Charles Bingley, the assembled townsfolk are in awe of someone who so perfectly fits the bill of an eligible 'bachelor'-he is handsome and is worth ten thousand pounds a year. Yet at the end of the chapter he has exhibited the ugly side of his aristocratic pride to Elizabeth Bennet by refusing to dance with her. His 'manners' disgust the assembly and they quickly 'fix' his character as proud and arrogant. Austen therefore epitomizes Darcy as the proud aristocrat and the small town society of Longbourn and Meryton cannot look beyond his pride to come to an objective assessment of his character. Elizabeth is especially critical of his patronizing behaviour and uses every opportunity to criticize him for his arrogance without giving him any scope to defend himself. Darcy's character, therefore has to transcend and reform himself to become Elizabeth's other half. In an interesting departure from her usual ironical manner of character delineation, Darcy's character is not revealed to us through irony. Instead Austen withholds a lot of information about him and the reader along with Elizabeth discovers his true worth through his actions as the novel proceeds. Most importantly, the character revelation of Darcy is at the expense of the community and Elizabeth. As Darcy's worth is manifested, the flaws of Elizabeth's judgment and the superficial standards of social behaviour, as enforced by the community come to the fore. Another method that Austen employs in her characterization (like Elizabeth Bennet's character) is that of using foils. Like Elizabeth, Darcy is seen in contrast to Charles Bingley and Wickham. Bingley's sociability and Wickham's affability contrast with Darcy's arrogance and reserved manner. But as the novel proceeds we see other aspects of Darcy's character-his discretion and dignity gives him a greater depth of character. Elizabeth's growing regard for Darcy is based on her gradual understanding of the latent merits of his character. More importantly, it is accompanied by Wickham's fall from grace.
- Body-key episodes-like Meryton ball, first proposal, his behaviour when Elizabeth visits Pemberley, his role in Wickham Lydia elopement and his second proposal (change in manner). Elizabeth's assessment of his character after seeing him reformed. Also consider how he undertakes to change his nature and criticize his own upbringing. All of this leads to the revelation of his true worth and Elizabeth's defence of his character before her father-'indeed he has no improper pride' is perhaps the reader's response as well. These episodes must be discussed with textual quotes as and where required.

- Conclusion-Through Darcy Austen has tried to portray a nobleman who reforms himself. His birth and privilege define his demeanour and conduct at the beginning of the novel. Elizabeth's rebuke to him when she refuse his marriage proposal that he had not proposed in a more gentleman-like manner becomes a moment of truth for him. The manner in which he changes himself to redeem himself in Elizabeth's esteem endears him to the reader. Through him Austen seems to suggest that that merit was more important than privilege of birth to become a true aristocrat.
- Key chapters: Chapter 3, Chapter 4 (contrast between Darcy and Bingley), Chapter 34, 35,36, Pemberley chapters, Chapter 50, 56, 59.

Use the above guidelines to prepare these two answers.

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