

## Love Across Time: A Comparative Study of Romantic Expression in 19th-Century and Contemporary Fiction

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### **Abstract**

*The paper is a comparative analysis of Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Ali Hazelwood *The Love Hypothesis* (2021) as the discussion of how romantic expression has evolved in literature. This paper discusses the manner in which the two authors depict love, adoration and emotional communication in terms of literary devices, including the tone, imagery, language, and symbolism. Through textual evidence in both pieces, we can see how the language of love has changed over the years to become less restrained and more emotive and open as it is in modern romance. The concept of love presented by Austen focuses on the ethical development, small signs and the appropriate values of the society, whereas the concept of love offered by Hazelwood involves the vulnerability, equality and intellectual bonding. In spite of the contrast in tone and expression, the two novels validate the statement that love is a transforming power that defines personal identity and cognition. The results indicate that the description of love in the literature reflects the overall cultural changes in emotional communication and gender relations, which proves that the language evolves, however, the nature of human affection does not.*

**Keywords:** *Romantic Expression, Comparative Literature, Jane Austen, Contemporary Romance, Cultural Change*

### **Introduction**

Literature has been ever a strong means of communication and reflection of the society, culture and the level of intellect of the times it was produced. As the landscapes of various centuries changed, the literary genres and styles developed, thus, the romanticism and the moral limits of the 19th century were replaced by the realism and the individualism of the

present time, so on, which left an imprint on the image of love, society, and emotions in literature, as well. A case in point, one of the classics, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) (Austen, Kinsley, & Bradbrook, 1980), is representative of the previous era wherein literature portrayed that love was discussed as strongly bound within social rank, reputation and propriety, with a focus on emotional control and moral decency. Conversely, the modern authors such as Ali Hazelwood in her book *The Love Hypothesis* (2021) (Hazelwood, 2021) criticize and adopt the theme of romantic love asserting that the partners are free to choose one another according to science, emotions, and reason that is perfectly in line with the modern liberal and individualistic spirit (Regis, 2013). These changes underscore that literature is not only a medium of entertainment but also a witness to the journey and, in fact, a partner of the evolution of human thinking and social norms through its themes, tone, and characterization which were always aligned with the current ideology by that time (Barry, 2017).

### Research Objectives

- \* To find the main differences in how romantic love is shown in old 19th-century English novels and newer, contemporary fiction.
- \* To analyze how the authors, Jane Austen and Ali Hazelwood, use literary tools like dialogue, tone, and symbolism to express affection.
- \* To track how the language of love changed from being very formal and controlled to focusing on being open and honest.
- \* To show how the way love is written reflects bigger cultural changes in society's views on communication and gender roles.
- \* Research Questions:
  - \* What are the main ways that romantic love changed between Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Hazelwood's *The Love Hypothesis*?
  - \* How did talking about love change, moving from using hints and restraint to using humor and emotional transparency?
  - \* How did symbols of affection change, such as moving from important letters to consistent, everyday support?
  - \* How did the reason for admiring a partner change, moving from focusing on good behavior to valuing intelligence and mutual equality?

### Literature Review

English fiction has been an effective tool to study the artistic values, emotions and shifting notions on love. Romantic fiction is one of the most enduring subgenres that are flexible

in this region. It shows the changes in intimacy and the social prospects that have transpired. According to (Fekete, 2022) love fiction has to balance between specific demands of intimacy and social perceptions of gender and love. In the various ages, this genre demonstrates the way societies theorize regarding the expression of emotions, morality, and identity.

During the nineteenth century the romantic fiction emphasized on restraint and virtue and propriety as a demonstration of love and moral character. Among the most remarkable of the figures during this period was Jane Austen, who skillfully wove in love among ironic and witty dialogues to increase the awareness of the social canons of her time. And pride and prejudice is the example of this restraint of emotion, imagery, tone, and symbolism are used to show admiration without giving up social form. The description the love in the novel is based on minor gestures and implied tensions, and finding the right balance between passion and social values. This is indicative of the moral and artistic geography of Austen-England.

The dialogue in the works of Austen has a crucial role in constructing the romantic meaning. Her interactions are recriminating and social maneuvering. (Grant, 2025) says it is a masterclass where the underlying passions are wit and form. The manner in which they talk, the way they call each other names and what they do not say, all displays emotional fulfillment and social constraints in the way people can express their love. The initial proposal of Darcy to Elizabeth is even more connected to class prejudice rather than true passion, which depicts the pressures between social positions and emotional truth. The gender and ethical relationships within the jotting of Austen are pointed out by the sharp reaction of Elizabeth who surpasses the boundaries of irony and constraints of love.

The artistic turn in discrepancy is a turn towards truthfulness, lightness and sincerity of emotion. Recent research has revealed that the ultramodern compendiums particularly the youngish bones insist on openness and straight forwardness in relationships. Such ultramodern stations are perfectly embodied in The Love hypothesis by Ali Hazelwood (2021). The fashionability of the novel that was enhanced by BookTok (Schwartz & Sullivan, 2022), shows the increased desire to read emotional narratives that are full of humor, literalism, and relatable elements

The jotting style of Hazelwood has no similarity with the slyness of Austen. Her writing is very informal and conversational and is often filled with technical terminology reminiscent of the academic nature of her characters and the artistic nature of the twenty first century. According to (Thomas, 2012) this is an indication of a larger trend in ultra-modern love a

step backward of lyrical restraint to sincerity and openness as indicators of actual intimacy. The humor used in the novel and inner research and the direct dialogue make the compendium dragged into the personal interests of the characters without the muddy social structure, instead of focusing on a sense of vulnerability as a virtue.

Although the broad scope of exploration of both nineteenth-century and ultramodern romantic fabrication is provided, a lot of research has focused directly on the transformation of the language of love, its images, symbolism, discourses, and manifestations of admiration through the ages. This discrepancy highlights the necessity of a comparative study of classical workshops such as *Pride and Prejudice* by Austen and the novels of the modern world that are analogous to Hazelwood *The Love* thesis. This kind of comparison provides sapience to the way the transformation of artistic values and the language practices have changed the image of the love and shifted the irony of the era of Austen to the sincerity of the moments stories.

### **Research Methodology**

The study is qualitative and comparative as it is based on the topic of the changing expressions of romance in two literary eras. Given that the research is conducted on the language, tone, and symbolism in fiction, the qualitative method will be the most suitable. Instead of using the numbers or surveys, the study interprets written evidence to learn how the notion of love and the way of its expression evolved.

The research paper particularly draws a comparison between *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen and *Ali Hazelwood* (2021). The reason why these novels were selected was owing to purposive sampling since these novels are two different periods in the evolution of the romantic fiction. The ideals of restraint, propriety, and emotional subtlety are emphasized in the work of Austen, whereas the novel by Hazelwood demonstrates the openness, humor and candidness. The comparison of the two passages gives a fruitful ground to outline changes in the language of love.

The method used in the research is the textual analysis. The imagery, symbolism, tone, and dialogue patterns that characterize the expression of romanticism in the two novels are analyzed by close reading and comparative thematic analysis. It will take a closer examination of how admiration, intimacy and affection are conveyed in various ways with a close look at direct and indirect communication of the same. This interpretation method assists in the disclosure of the way the language of romance has changed its shape and style during the course of time.

The information is composed of textual evidence that is obtained out of the two novels. Such source offers theoretical background and assistance in locating the findings in the context of the previous studies on romantic fiction and linguistic expression.

### **Data Analysis**

The romantic expression of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen and *The Love Hypothesis* (2021) by Ali Hazelwood brings out the evolution of the language of love where people are no longer respectful and gentle in their relationship language, but rather open and full of emotions. The change is not only a result of the time but also the alteration in the way people feel and communicate love. Through analyzing the two novels in terms of their presentation of symbolism, imagery, dialogue, tone, and adoration, this paper identifies how romantic elements of vocabulary have transitioned as a result of the formal etiquette of the society depicted in Austen to the bluntness and exposure of the present-day relationships.

### **Comparative analysis of symbolism**

The use of underground gestures, letters and social interactions in *Pride and Prejudice* symbolizes love that does not require an individual to confess it aloud. By writing to Elizabeth, and saying, Be not alarmed, madam, on receiving this letter, by the dread of its not including any repetition of those sentiments... Mr. Darcy takes the letter as a moral and not as a romantic action. It represents his emotional maturity, modesty and readiness to be comprehended. The letter has the burden of self-examination and change to it and it is one of the strongest romantic symbols of the nineteenth century books. Austen through this oblique means demonstrates that love during her era demanded dignity, patience, and thought. Hazelwood on the other hand brings in gestures of everyday life, which are used to represent affection and care. The acts that Adam does in the *Love Hypothesis*, like getting Olive a favorite coffee, defending her in a scholarly argument or letting her know that he is present and by her side is actually a sign of a love that is based on presence and propagation as opposed to restraint. When Olive considers how he made her feel seen, not because she was special, but because he decided to see her, Hazelwood finds a contemporary vision of love which is founded on emotional acknowledgment. Symbolism, therefore, shifts out of moral uprightness to emotional certification, in which there is a significant shift in the way love is perceived and manifested.

### **Comparative analysis of Imagery**

The use of imagery in the Austen narrative is meant to enhance the romantic emotion with sophistication and order. Even the beauty of nature of Pemberley is a mirror of the inner world of Darcy, who is characterized as a big and handsome stone structure, standing on a well-rising ground and supported by high woody hills. When Elizabeth sees it, it is an emotional awakening and she realizes that the beauty of the estate reflects the value of Darcy. The landscape symbolism of Austen makes Pemberley a symbol of unity and balance, of reasons and emotions that constitute true love during her time. Love is romanticized and, is associated with the magnificence of the natural environment and the value of temperance. However, Hazelwood transfers the romance to the real world of laboratories, coffee shops, and universities. Her figurative language is modern, bright and clear. The intimacy becomes very intimate, physical, easy to relate to when Olive sees the silent presence of Adam, whose hand touched her hand, and she was saying nothing. The modern interaction of emotions and intellect is also supported by the scientific environment. Love is seen to take place in sterile laboratories and conferences instead of in grand gardens and estates, and thus, modern love is seen to thrive out of realism and not idealism. This change of romantic sceneries to common ones is the beginning of the change of love as moral enlightenment to love as understanding of each other in common places.

### **Comparative analysis of Dialogue**

Another good juxtaposition between the two texts is dialogue. Austen lovers can talk but talk in a highly organized manner in which wit and irony conceal weak points. The way Elizabeth and Darcy talk to each other is characterized by acuity and reserve. The fact that Elizabeth, in her rebuke to him, says:-- From the first moment of our acquaintance, your manners have impressed me with all the confident hopefulness of your arrogance, your conceit, and your egotistic contempt of the feelings of others, makes one realize that passion and pride may live together, covered by the cement of civility. It is after the realization and a moral clarity that the love is eventually revealed. In the work of Hazelwood, dialogue is more direct and emotionally open as a form of communication. The vulnerability and trust are immediately created by the request of Olive, I only need someone to fake it with me. The whole conception of the book, deception dating to true love, is based on open-minded talk and emotional taking of risks. Once Adam has himself finally confess, I have long been in love with you, it becomes devoid of Austen-esque irony, but it is sincere. The simplicity of the statement is an emotionally rich statement in the absence of the social filters, which defined previous periods. Contemporary discourse thus turns into a means of sincerity and bondage as opposed to social bargaining.

### **Comparative analysis of tone**

Another aspect that shows the development of romantic storytelling is the tone. The tone used by Austen is witty, ironic and moral. Suppressions are upheld even during confessions. Elizabeth says, I do, I do like him... I love him. Yes he is not improperly proud, her voice is gentle and steady, and reflects the moderated feelings of her age. Love is one to be prudently recognized, as opposed to being proclaimed unthoughtfully. However, Hazelwood adopts a warm, humorous and self-conscious tone. The dialogue in the head of Olive supplies much comic effect like when she is terrified after an unintended kiss and thinks, Did she just kiss him in front of the whole biology department? She absolutely did.” Her tone is easy and realistic to romance, and the approachability and relatability are brought by the humor and good sense. It can be seen the difference between the irony of Austen, expressed in a calm and deliberate way, and the humor of Hazelwood, presented as a conversation, is a way of modern love stories embracing the idea of imperfection, awkwardness, and emotional candor.

### **Comparative analysis of Admiration**

The emotional focus of both novels, admiration, perhaps shows the most profound change. Pride and Prejudice admiration is associated with moral development and self-enhancement. The next dialogue when Darcy admits that he must explain to you how much he admires and loves you, the words are burdened with the issues of propriety, pride and change. His love to Elizabeth succeeds after a process of humility, forgiveness, and respect. Their respect comes both ways and earned, through consideration and contemplation. Emotional and intellectual respect in The Love Hypothesis is the form of admiration. You are genius, Olive, Adam tells her. You’re kind. You make people better by virtue simply being around them, but not transforming them, focusing on partnership. Love in this case is not about morality teaching but mutual empowerment. Both of the characters have each other as admired, not as an ideal but as a developing person. This equality demonstrates the fact that admiration in the contemporary romance is not so hierarchical and more emotional.

In both novels, the manifestations of love shift toward restraint, involvement, formality, and moral development to emotional truth. The world of Austen needed love to be in conformity with decorum whereas Hazelwood has a party of weakness and self-expression. The development of romantic language reflects a bigger transition in how society approaches relationships not as a responsibility that needs to be addressed but rather in the manner of a nurturing relationship which is based on emotional ties. Symbols, images,

dialogue, tone, and admiration allow both writers to preserve the knowledge of their own time about love and indicate that regardless of language and the terms of romance, the desire of people to get in touch with one another is eternal.

### **Conclusion**

The comparative analysis of the *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen and the *Love Hypothesis* (2021) by Ali Hazelwood helps to observe how the language of love has been transformed throughout the centuries in terms of its refinement and restraint being replaced by openness and emotional sincerity. Through symbolism, imagery, dialogue, tone, and admiration, the analysis of both novels reveals that the expression of love is not only the type of literary style but also the changes in the emotional needs and social requirements.

Love is expressed in the work of Austen in the form of hints, letters and conscience. The emotions of the characters are developed in the framework of the acceptable behavioral norms, in which self-restraint and dignity mould affection into a form of self-discipline. Growth, humility and respect earn admiration. On the contrary, the novel by Hazelwood introduces the subject of love to the contemporary environment where emotional faithfulness, humor, emotional sensitivity create intimacy. Her characters show love in the way they are open, talk, and support each other, and this is a sign of a world where sincerity is more important than decency.

This development shows that the expression of romance has turned to be more direct and emotionally open over the years. However, regardless of the shift in tone and setting, both writers manage to portray love as a transformational power one that stimulates the understanding, self-awareness, and empathy. The perennial relevance of these emotional truths indicates that the language of romance may change with its time but the nature of the language is the same: human want to have a connection with another person and to do so on a deeper, meaningful level.

Finally, this study brings to the fore that the image of love in literature is the reflection of the development of human communication. The history of romantic language can be said to follow the course of showing how generations define the process of loving and being loved, to be eloquently reserved by Austen, and openly expressed by Hazelwood. Not only does this work connect two eras in literature but it also proves that the core of romance lives on and its heart is just as resilient, regardless of the fact that its lyrics might fluctuate.

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