

A comparison of Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen with Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

In this analysis I want to compare two very famous pieces of writing - Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1815) and Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1887). I think it would be possible to find out a lot of differences between these books, because they are from different time, place and they are completely of different genres, but my aim is to focus on social life and social problems that are outlined in both of them.

Pride and Prejudice is a typical romantic novel. Authors were interested in nature, love, traditions and looked back in the past. In Pride and Prejudice there is kind, intelligent and sensible Elizabeth Bennet who is fond of her family, especially sisters. The plot revolves around family life, their problems, social events, men and love. Elizabeth's intelligent is shown as something not very common, women were supposed to marry well and then play a role of good housewives and mothers in those days. Parents were responsible for bringing up obedient women and finding good husbands for them. Men were considered to secure their families financially. It was hard time for girls like Elizabeth who had their own mind and did not agree with this old-fashioned kind of wooing. I think Jane Austen wanted to show the beginning of the 19th century as a time, where a family still played a major role in lives, the time where people still lived in countryside, believed in God and followed old traditions and customs. There was a strict social system and families had to build their name and position in it. High society was very pompous and expressed their scorn for poor people. We can consider this kind of society as old and not modern.

All these things that I have already mentioned in connection with Pride and Prejudice can be compared with Sherlock Holmes, because there is visible a big change of society. In this Victorian age at the end of 19th century the society turned into modernity. It was time of great scientific discoveries and industrial growth. Medicine, psychology and new technologies

were shown. But because of this, people started to lose their faith in religious and place science and technologies instead, they believed that only in science there are all the answers. People moved to bigger cities and the life in countryside was considered old and outdated. So as the stories about Sherlock Holmes which take place in London, the place where the streets were not safe. The very serious problem was growing number of people; streets were overcrowded and full of strangers, thieves and murders. The next problem shown is poverty. People had to work in very bad conditions; children and women had to work for long hours. People could not live normal life, they needed some heroes who can solve these social problems and thanks to this, new genres started to be produced. One of them can be detective stories and novels like Sherlock Holmes.

There is no family life in Sherlock Holmes like in *Pride and Prejudice*. The main character Sherlock Holmes is more interested in work than family. The society was based on individuals, not in the family life. Sherlock lives only with another man – Watson, so we can name it as a cooperation of two men. They are sharing the same room and also the same interests. There are no women in their lives and they are even not interested in them. He is very intelligent but not like Elizabeth, he is a scientist and he uses his mind, his brain and he always know what he is doing. He is not a normal person, he is a kind of hero because he can predict and deduct things from small details and he is always true. Although he is different from other people he was accepted by the society, they needed this kind of fantastic stories and him because he could solve their problems.

Finally I would like to say that there is a big contrast between these two books. Typical romantic novel by Jane Austen where the family play a major role and on the other hand stories about Sherlock Holmes, an individual who does not care about family. It is visible that society changed very well in this very short period of time.