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In society, gender roles are often defined by male patriarchal standards. These roles are often challenged, and a common topic shown by movies. In the movie '*Bride and Prejudice*,' the main protagonist, Lalita is a representation of the modern Indian woman, whose identity is built upon the duality of Indian and Western culture. She addresses these gender roles formulated by male patriarchy through her interactions with two male characters in the movie: Darcy and Kholi, who each define masculinity in their own distinct ways.

Darcy is the male protagonist in the film, and the main conflict between Lalita and him is based on how dismissive and ignorant he is towards Indian culture. Darcy is a wealthy man, and he has no qualms in sharing that he has 'standards' for his 'ideal woman.' He is easily dismissive of Indian culture which is seen throughout the movie, such as when he calls the city of Amritsar as 'Hicksville, India' or when he tells his friend Balraj to find an Indian girl abroad to marry as opposed to marrying one who lives in India, as they might not be modern and matching to their 'level.' Lalita responds to the masculinity set by Darcy's standards by questioning if he is an 'ideal' man himself, who is deserving of an 'ideal' woman. As Geraghty states, Lalita dresses in both Indian and Western clothing, showing that she can be modern while maintaining her roots by allowing her beauty to be represented in different modes of culture (Geraghty, Pg 165). Lalita is many ways the modern woman which Darcy considers 'ideal,' but even when he proposes to her, Darcy says that his mother will be against the proposal and that he tried to forget her, showing that she still did not meet his standards and he is having to compromise by marrying her. Lalita rejects his proposal and reiterates her initial understanding of his character as prideful, arrogant, and ignorant. After apologizing and making amends, Darcy tries to win over Lalita by playing the dhol at the end but he looks really uncomfortable or as Geraghty describes his actions as 'uneasy, unemphatic gestures when the couple come together at the end indicate that this is a clash of cultures which romance has difficulty in reconciling' (Geraghty, Pg 166), showing that he still is not sure of Indian culture and he still seemingly compromising. Darcy's masculinity is defined by his pride and ignorance. It is shown that he is looking for an equal partner as he states in his interaction with Lalita in the flight to London, showing that he considers himself as 'ideal.' Kholi, on the other hand, is willing to marry any girl he finds in India.

Kholi is one of the suitors who comes for Lalita from California. He is also prideful like Darcy which he shows by bragging about his job in America and his big house with two pools, but he is willing to marry anyone

who is willing to submit to him. His idea of standards is based on that he is looking for a simple traditional Indian wife, contrary to Darcy's standards of the modern woman. Kholi is simply looking for a traditional Indian wife because Indian girls abroad are too outspoken, career-oriented, and have seemingly lost their roots. First, Kholi tries to vie for Jaya, but after finding out that is not possible, he shifts to Lalita and almost immediately proposes, and then upon rejection, he proposes to Lalita's friend, Chandra. During the proposal to Lalita, he states that he has spoken to Lalita's mother who has agreed to the proposal. Lalita retaliates by saying that he should have spoken to her first as it is a lifetime decision, which she needs to make for herself and not her mother. She also says that they will not be able to make each other happy, and when he says that she will never have to work, she simply says that she wants to and likes to work. Lalita attacks this toxic masculinity shown by Kholi, by simply stating that she is not willing to settle and she wants to be in a relationship where she is an equal contributor to the relationship and not just a submissive pawn to Kholi. Like Darcy, Kholi's masculinity is also rooted in his pride, but he is looking for any partner who is willing to show him any sort of attention. Lalita in her own way states that she has her own wishes and standards that she is not willing to give up, and in many ways, she shows that she is the appropriate amalgamation of the modern and traditional Indian woman.

The masculinity of both men is rooted in their pride but differs in their 'standards' of what their ideal partner should be like based on how modern or traditional a woman is. Lalita is portrayed as the modern Indian woman whose feminity is defined by her own set of standards which she sets, based on both traditional and modern influences. She is not in a hurry to be married, and she is looking for a partner who is ideal for her, and she is not going to settle for anything less. I believe the reason why Darcy and her end up getting married at the end is that through the experiences shown in the movie, both her and Darcy have been humbled to an extent and learned to keep aside their differences and appreciate each other for the people they are showing that there is not really an 'ideal' man or woman, but just two people right for each other. The movie is a good representation of the hybrid Indian culture which most Indians, both in India and abroad currently live in, with both influences having an impact on their lifestyles and ideologies.

Works Cited