

Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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The Portrayal of Women in Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice"

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages, In Candidacy for the
Degree of Master LMD in British Civilization.

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Academic year

2014/2015

Acknowledgements

This thesis would have never been accomplished without the considerable help, advice and guidance of my supervisor Dr. Boulenouar Med, who invested his full efforts in guiding me in achieving my goal and encouraged me all the way to the end of this thesis.

I express my deepest appreciation to all teachers of the English department for their crucial role in stimulating suggestions and encouragements.

I would like also to acknowledge with much appreciation the support and encouragement of my friends and classmates.

I'm very thankful to everyone who participated in the realization of this work.

Dedications

I dedicate this work from deep heart

To my parents, especially my mother who gave me the inspiration to fulfill this dream with her support and encouragement.

To my older sister Souad and my little sisters Imane, Maroua and karima as well as to my niece Lilya.

I dedicate this work as well to my cheerful and dearest friends: Nesrine, Asmaa and Sehla

To all whom supported and encouraged me especially Hezil.

To all whom I love and respect.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine Jane Austen's contribution to the feminist question in her selected novel "*Pride and Prejudice*". The study shows how Austen's novel examines the suffering of women and how they could overcome difficulties and achieve success. It is clear that Austen's ideology in her portrayal of her heroine was based on her real world, established herself as a distinguished feminist woman writer in her treatment of women's situation. In this regard, this dissertation involves an overview about the regency period and its characteristics in addition to the literary analysis of the novel. It will study the concept of marriage in the 18th century presenting the different types of marriage in the novel. Furthermore, this dissertation will focus on the status of women in the 18th century, and making an analysis about female characters in the novel through a comparative study between submissive woman and individual woman.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

General Introduction

In the late eighteenth early nineteenth century, Britain witnessed philosophical, economic, religious and literary changes. This contributed in the birth of many writers and novelists such as Walter Scott, Jane Austen and many others. The economic changes also affected the social classes of the society. The status of woman at that time was intriguing; a young woman's job was to make a good marriage for herself. In some cases, a marriage might be viewed more than an alliance and a love marriage was rarely an option during that period.

There have been many great changes during that period and one of these foremost changes is the view on women's rights to work and education. Women lived in an age characterized by gender inequality they enjoyed few of legal, social rights and they were expected to remain subservient to their fathers and husbands. These social economical changes were treated by Jane Austen in "*Pride and Prejudice*".

Jane Austen showed her interests in women development towards self knowledge and social position. Marriage was her main point in "*Pride and Prejudice*"; she has chosen marriage as the main theme because in her world, marriage was woman's main purpose. Marriage was a sign of maturity because when a woman got married she takes her place in the society.

In fact women were treated as slaves under the control of men. Jane Austen wanted to show women as rational creatures that should be loved and respected. She suggested in her novel a new type of women which could be called "*the real woman*", she also presented and introduced the model of woman which can undoubtedly stand as an adequate substitute to the ancient image of woman during Austen's period.

So the following problematic addresses the following questions:

- To what extent Jane Austen's portrayal of women of "*Pride and Prejudice*" representative to the condition of women in the late eighteenth early nineteenth century?

General Introduction

To achieve the objective of study and in an attempt to answer the former questions that constitutes this dissertation which is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter entitled introduction to "*Pride and Prejudice*" will deal with the characteristics of the British society during regency period and the background of Jane Austen including her life and works, in addition to the literary analysis of the novel. The second chapter entitled women and the concept of marriage will deal with the concept of marriage during Austen's era and the five different types of marriage that were tackled in her novel,

The last chapter entitled the representation of women and female identity in "*Pride and Prejudice*" will give an overview of the feminist theory and will also provide a comparative study of the Submissive Woman and the New Woman.

Chapter One

Introduction to "Pride and Prejudice"

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1.1 Introduction

This chapter covered several areas that would be the ground work for the research paper, starting with the background of Jane Austen to observe how her personal life may have affected her works, introducing the regency era and its characteristics. Next, the literary era of her work “*Pride and Prejudice*” which is the romantic era was tackled to understand the themes of the novel in relevance to its literary era, moving to the literary analysis of the novel covering the plot summary, major and minor characters and lastly a brief insight on the novels major themes.

1.2 Jane Austen’s Era and Its Characteristics

Since Austen’s favorite theme was satire on the time period in which she lived it is important to have an understanding of some of the customs, achievements. During this time Austen’s novels were published, it is that preceded the Victorian period, regency era have some unique characteristics that should not be ignored.

1.2.1 Regency Era

Actually the regency period began when The Prince of Wales assumed the role of prince regent after his father, king George the third was declared disqualified to rule in 1811 who is believed to have suffered from madness. The term Regency era often refers to the years between 1795 and 1830, it was a time of glittering world known for its achievements in the arts, sciences and architecture, and also characterized by distinctive tendencies in fashions, politics and culture.

1.2.1.1 in Politics

The Regency was also a time of war, political disorder and economic change. The British Empire has lost the United States, but was not quite ready to accept this loss and that resulted in the war of 1812. Alongside the pressure of napoleon rising to power .the monarchy failed to keep people under control. Austen commented on society rather than the government and politics, her books provided an amusing escape for the people of the era.

1.2.1.2 In Social Life

Thievery, murder, gambling and starvation all existed in regency era .it was remarked by an extreme excess in the upper classes and there was a wide gap between rich and poor. Austen's works focus on the upper-middle classes and ignore the lower classes women were almost totally dependent on men, and they could not work except as tutors or writers Charlotte said to Elizabeth:

"I'm not romantic ,you know I never was, I ask only a comfortable home ,and considering Mr. Collins 's character, connection and situation in life , I'm convinced that my choice of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state"

(Austen, 2008: 22-17).

In fact women cannot inherit property. For financial security, the only option was to marry; women were delighted in fashion, social gatherings and especially balls.

1.2.1.3 in Art and Literature

Literary and artistic movement became popular in the Regency period. Reading was a pastime among the upper-classes, they tended to read novel that involved romance and famous writers included Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, Susan Ferrier, Maria Edgeworth, Horace Walpole and Mary Shelley.

The Regency arts was remarked by strong supports of architecture typified by the elegant designs of architect John Nash, music typified by the works of Beethoven and Schubert , also theater performances such as plays for example London evening offered a rich variety of theatrical and musical productions.

1.3 Romanticism

Romanticism was a literary movement originated in the late eighteenth century in Western Europe. It's a movement in art and literature in revolt against the

neoclassicism of the seventeenth century. *“This was the Romantic Movement, the romantic intellectuals praise imagination over reason, emotions over logic, and intuition over scientific enquiry”* (Koetsier, Burgmans, 2005: 33).

The main points of romanticism were imagination, emotions and freedom, it also stresses on self expression and individual uniqueness, it is also believed that men and women ought to be guided by warm emotions rather than the rules of the bourgeois society. Furthermore the romantic literature includes subjectivity and an emphasis on individualism and freedom from rules, the beliefs that imagination is superior to reason and devotion to beauty, love and worship of nature.

The romantic period saw the first generation of women writers in Great Britain including Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Hannah More, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen. Jane Austen was an author who wrote during the romantic period, she made a significant contribution of the literature of this era. Austen is viewed as one of the most respected authors in the romance genre, her six novels shared common plots involving the marriage of young women and the realities of their lives.

1.4 Jane Austen’s Background

1.4.1 Austen’s Life

Jane Austen lived in the first decades of the nineteenth century, generally known as the regency period in England. She was born on 16 December 1775, in the village of Steventon, Hampshire, in England, she was a writer of the romantic age but her works were mostly published towards the end of the era. Jane Austen was the seventh child of reverend George Austen who was a clergyman; she grew up in an affectionate family. Whose members were all great novel readers. She was educated at home and began to write at an early age, in her early twenties she was beginning to write in full length novels; at first she kept this writing as a secret. Her life was rather quiet, focused on writing and family, she never married and died on July 18, 1817 when she was 41 years old, she is buried in Winchester cathedral.



Source :< takebackhalloween.org >

Austen's life spans an important period in English literary history, she stood between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, between what we might describe as the age of reason and the age of romanticism. It had been a period which appreciated a reasonable attitude to life and that reason should govern all things and emotions was not approved of. The conflict between the two attitudes of mind is explained by Thomas Love Peacock in his novel *Crotchet Castle*. "*The sentimental against the rational, the intuitive against the inductive, the ornamental against the useful, the intense against the tranquil, the romantic against the classic, these are great controversies*" (Thomas, 1831: 32)

For a young woman living a life in regency England, Jane Austen produced an impressive body of works. Her books were notable for their wit, social observation and insights into the lives of early century women, she wrote and performed plays .when she was 14 years old she wrote her first novel, *Love and Friendship* (1789) and then *A History of England* (1789). Some novels were reworked and published later on, such as *Sense and Sensibility* published in 1814, *Pride and Prejudice* published in 1813, *Mansfield Park* published in 1814 and *Emma* which was published in 1816,

Persuasion was written in 1815 and was published in 1818. She started to write a novel called *The Watsons* in 1816 which was never completed because of her illness.

Among her novels, "*Pride and Prejudice*" is the most widely read. It seems to have been her favorite; in a letter to her sister Cassandra she referred to the book as her "*darling child*" because she believed that its heroine, Elizabeth Bennett reflected her best.

1.5 Introduction to "Pride and Prejudice"

Each work of literature has its own theme and fascination; it aims generally at studying society and gives a representation of life, so is Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. "*Jane Austen burdened none of her novels and at least of all burdened *Pride and Prejudice**" (Bowen, 2008: 228).

"*Pride and Prejudice*" is one of Jane Austen's master pieces, the book is widely popular all over the world not only because of its impressive characters but also because of its unique writing skills, it is considered the most brilliant of Austen's novels. She began writing it when she was twenty one years old (1796) and completed it in about ten months (1797). The novel initially written under the title "*First Impressions*" and it was not published until 1813. The story is set primarily in the village of Longbourn one mile from Meryton in Hertfordshire in England, the novel displays an ambiguity about emotion and an appreciation for intelligence and natural beauty especially for family structure. *Pride and Prejudice* was about two main characters Elizabeth and Darcy, one is proud and the other was prejudiced, the two personalities seemed difficult to express the novel contains a variety of themes including marriage, social status and emotions.

1.6 Literary Analysis

1.6.1 Plot Summary of the Novel

Winston Churchill tells us in the Second World War: “*I decided to read a novel; I had long ago read Jane Austen’s “Sense and Sensibility”, and now I thought I would have “Pride and Prejudice.”*” (Sherry, 1966: 09).

“*Pride and Prejudice*” is the story of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett and their five unmarried daughters they live in the estate of Longbourn in Hertfordshire; the family’s property is entailed to pass to the nearest male heir in the family in this case to Mr. Collins. Mrs. Bennett’s dream is to see all her daughters married to men with large fortunes with the arrival of Mr. Bingley, his proud and mysterious friend Mr. Darcy and later in the story, clergyman Mr. Collins and officer Mr. Wickham, Mrs. Bennett finds herself surrounded by possible men for her daughters. She tries her best to get those men’s attention for her daughters and except Mr. Collins; she succeeds in having each of them married to one of her daughters by the end of the story. Mr. Bingley finds himself attached to Jane, while Mr. Darcy marries Elizabeth and Mr. Wickham finally has to settle for Lydia the youngest. Mr. Collins as the only male heir he sees that his duty to propose to one of the Bennett girls. But after being rejected by Elizabeth, he finally marries Charlotte Lucas Elizabeth’s friend. Looking to Jane, Mr. Bingley immediately falls in love with her, and she too, but due to her reservation and her mother silliness, Mr. Darcy gets the impression that his friend is only being liked for his money, and that Jane’s only interest is to be married to a wealthy man, for this reason he advices his friend to leave her. Jane remains heartbroken but due to fortunate circumstances and the intervention of Mr. Darcy himself, they finally get together. Talking about Mr. Darcy, there seems to be nothing that he and Elizabeth have in common at the beginning of the story. she is funny, witty but he is rather snobbish, proud and reserved almost each time they meet, things end up in quarrel and Elizabeth hated and teases him, she was actually attracted to Mr. Wickham who turns out to be a liar and Elizabeth has to admit that she had a wrong impression on Mr. Darcy who she was rejected first but finally accepted to marry him and they lived happily ever after.

1.6.2 Settings

The novel is set in some point during the Napoleonic Wars (1795-1815) in England; it is set principally in Longbourn, the Hertfordshire country town that is a mile from Meryton and twenty four miles from London.

1.6.3 Characters and Characterization

The novel “*Pride and Prejudice*” has a large number of characters and it refers to a large number of places. It becomes difficult for the reader to remember them, hence a list of characters their identities are now provided. (See diagram below)

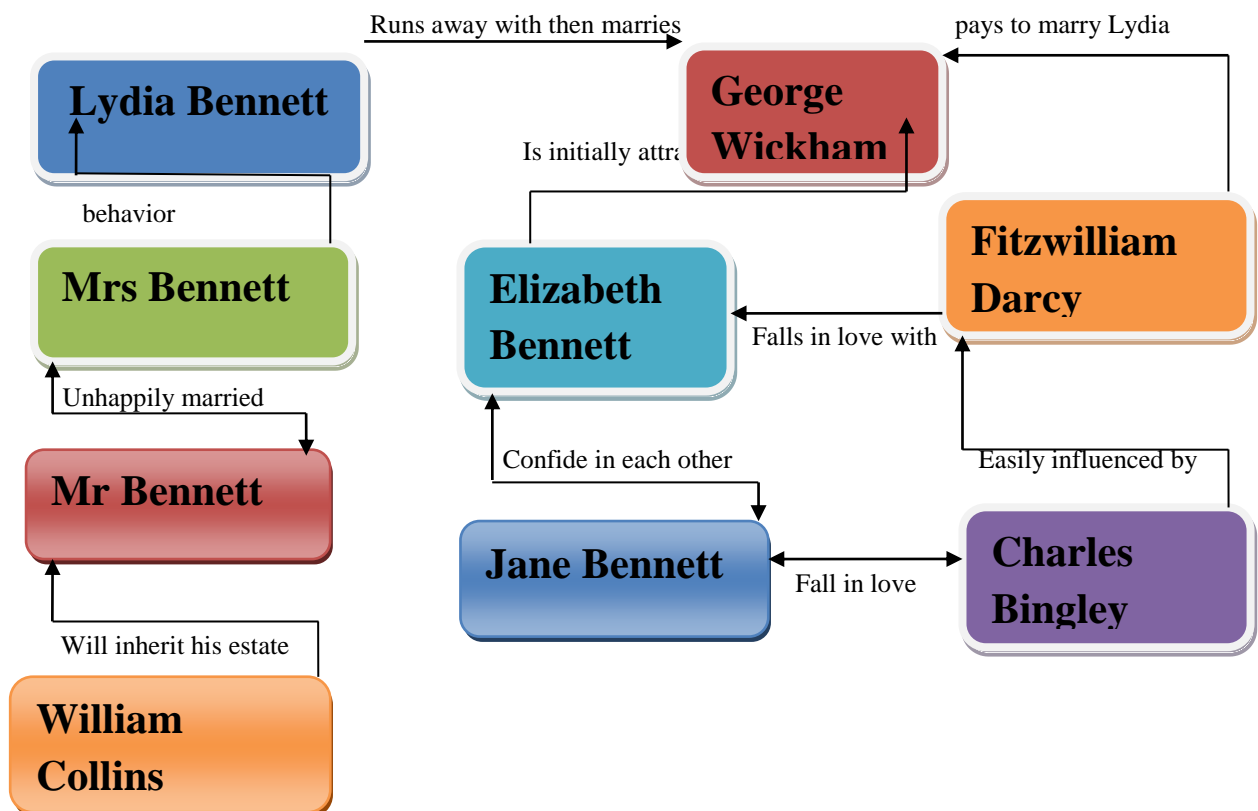


Figure 1.2 the Relationship between the Characters in “*Pride and Prejudice*”

1.6.3.1 Major Characters

I. Darcy Fitzwilliam: He is the nephew of Lady Catherine De Bourgh he is also the hero of the novel. He is 28 years old and the owner of Pemberley estate. He is a more reserved person and makes a poor impression on strangers. He finally marries Elizabeth Bennet

II. Bingley Charles: Is a good gentleman who belongs to a respectable family .He rents the Nether field house, love and finally marries Jane Bennet.

III. Elizabeth Bennet: Is the center of the story, she is the second daughter of the Bennet family aged 20, she finally marries Mr. Darcy.

IV. Jane Bennet: Is the eldest of the Bennet sisters aged 22, she is beautiful, shy and sensible .she loves Bingley and is finally married to him.

1.6.3.2 Minor Characters

I. Mr. Bennet: Is the head of the Bennet family, an intelligent man, he is closest to his older daughters especially Elizabeth.

II. Mrs. Bennet: She is also the mother of the five Bennet sisters; her goal in the story is to find wealthy husbands for her daughters.

III. Catherine Bennet: She is the fifth daughter of the Bennet, aged 17, till the end of the novel she remains unmarried.

IV. Lydia Bennet: She is the youngest sister, aged 15, she escapes with Wickham and is ultimately married to him.

V. Mary Bennet: She is the third daughter, aged 18; she works hard for knowledge and accomplishments.

VI. William Collins: Is a cousin of Mr. Bennet and the entailed heir of Longbourn. He is a clergyman under the patronage of Lady Catherine De Bourgh. He marries Charlotte Lucas.

VII. George Wickham: He is the son of the steward of Darcy's father, he is a liar and in dept his main desire is to marry for wealth and status, he escapes with Lydia to London and finally forced to marry her.

VII. Mr. Gardiner: He is the brother of Mrs. Bennett has a major role in reconciliation of Lydia and Wickham.

VIII. Caroline Bingley: She is the unmarried sister of Charles Bingley she desires to win Darcy as a husband and tries to separate her brother from Jane.

IX. Lady Catharine De Bourgh: She is Darcy's aunt; she is the patron of Collins and the owner of Hastings.

X. Charlotte Lucas: Is the friend of Elizabeth Bennett, she marries Mr. Collins for security.

1.6.4 Writing Style

The novel "*Pride and Prejudice*" was written during the Romantic period .unlike the other romantic novels and poems, Jane Austen's writing tends to be witty and romantic. "*Jane Austen revolutionized the novel form, she moved away from the melodramatic "Gothic" novels, which were popular at the time, and created polished, elegant and witty social comedy.*" (Pesa, 2009:02).

Austen's writing style is a mix of Neoclassicism and Romanticism. Neoclassicism encourages reason and restraint writing. Romanticism encourages passion and imagination in writing. Arranging Neoclassicism and Romanticism together may seem impossible but it was one of Austen's talents, her high intelligence and impressive education allowed her to go deep into her words. Jane Austen generally wrote about her world and the things that she knew best. She portrays life as is truly is. *Pride and Prejudice* is told in a readable prose and it frequently breaks into dialogue so she focuses mainly on the art of conversation. "*Miss Austen's very finely written novel of "Pride and Prejudice". That young lady has a talent for describing the*

involvements and feeling and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with." (Herries Pollock, 1899: 15).

1. 6.5 Major Themes of the Novel

The main themes of the novel are closely interrelate and they are frequently overlap. (See diagram below)

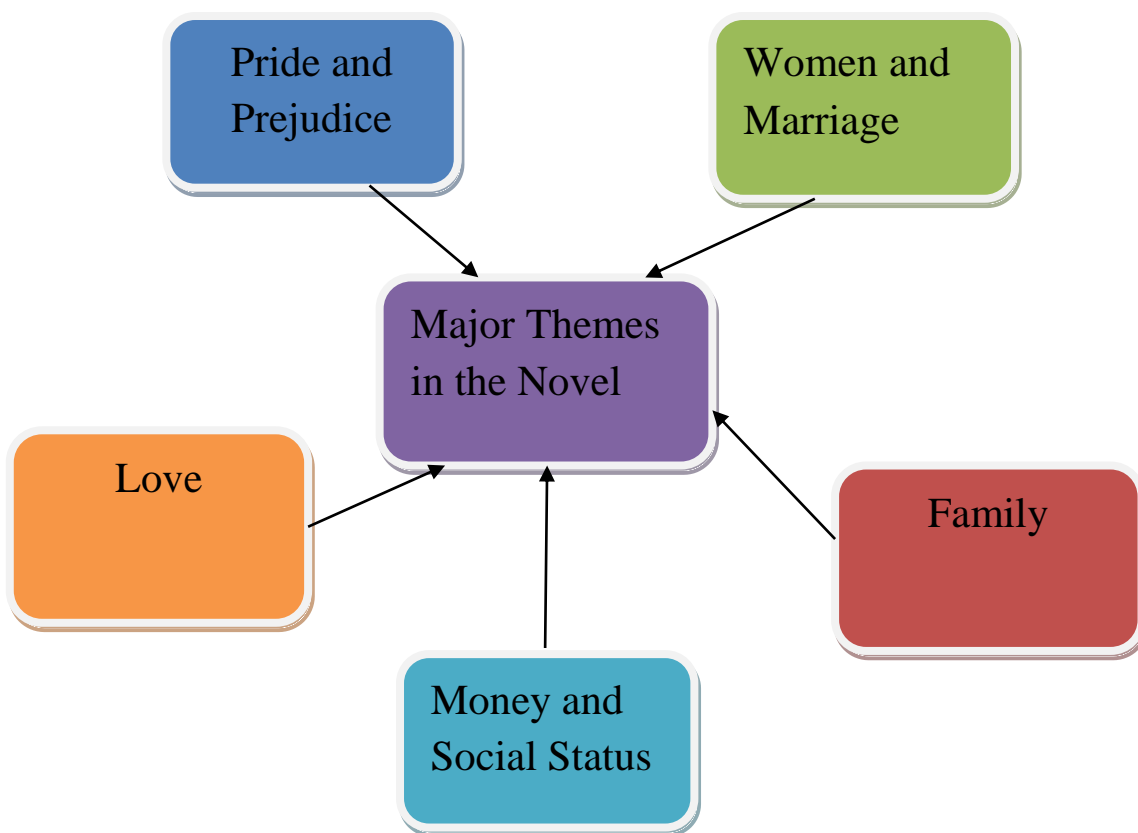


Figure 1.2 Major Themes Presented in the Novel

1.6.5.1 Pride and Prejudice

Many critics take the novel's title as a starting point when analyzing the major themes of the novel "Pride and Prejudice". "*Human nature is particularly prone to pride.*" (Austen, 2008:13).

Pride and prejudice are the main themes in the novel; the best example of pride is Mr. Darcy. He is described in the novel as being superior to everyone else and readers tends to dislike him. Here is an example about him of what he says to Mr. Bingley about Elizabeth: *“He is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me, and I’m in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.”* (Ibid)

From this moment Elizabeth begins to have prejudices about Mr. Darcy. In the novel Elizabeth is full of wrong ideas and she judges people quickly.

1.6.5.2 Love

The story is based around the romantic relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy and no one of them to be attracted to the other in the beginning of the novel. Elizabeth was certain that she will never fall in love with Mr. Darcy and so does he. But by the end of the novel they eventually learn to love each other.

1.6.5.3 Women and Marriage

Jane Austen believe that women are at least intelligent and capable as men , and consider their inferior status in society to be unjust, she herself went against convention by remaining single and earning living through her novels . The opening lines of the novel announces that man is being in want of a wife and the woman is in want of a husband *“who is in possession of good fortune»*¹. Charlotte Lucas, Lydia Bennett, Jane Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett get married to men that are appropriate for each of them. Marriage becomes an economic rather than social activity. In case of Charlotte, the success of marriage lies in the comfortable economy of her household by contrast, Elizabeth refuses to marry for financial purpose and only to marry a man who she truly loves and esteems.

¹ See Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice”(2008) published in Maryland by manor Rockville page 01

1.6.5.4 Money and Social Status

In the novel people are considered according to their fortune and social status. For the young ladies who wish to secure a husband as rich as they can and also men who wish to marry a woman of rich and high status family to ensure a link to a high family such as George Wickham who tries to elope with Miss Darcy. Social class is as important as money in the novel for example Bingley's sisters do not want their brother to marry Jane because the Bennets are of a lower class in society, the same happened with Elizabeth and Darcy. The upper class of society sees those with less money as less cultured and important.

1.6.5.5 Family

Austen's portrays the family unit as primarily responsible for moral and intellectual education of children. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett failed to provide this education for their daughters which led to Lydia's immorality and foolishness, Elizabeth and Jane managed to develop virtue and strong characters in spite of the negligence of their parents. Perhaps through the good influence of Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, Darcy took his father's aristocratic nature; while Lady Catherine's parenting style has turned her daughter to frighten to speak.

1.7 Symbolism and Imagery

Jane Austen had a special genius for dialogue that brings her characters to life; she focuses on the internal changes within the characters, rather than the description of settings. So we can say that the symbols are the characters of this book. There are four important symbols in the novel which are:

1.7.1 Characters as Symbols: Mr. Collins is Mr. Bennett's cousin, he always trying to wobble his way to the good grace of the super wealthy he represents the absurdity of class. Lady Catherine De Bourgh is Mr. Collins' patron, she thinks always knows best makes her represent the worst of wealth.

1.7.2 Journeys: Nearly every scene in the novel takes place indoors; Elizabeth's first journey by which she goes to visit Charlotte brings her into contact with Mr. Darcy. Her second journey takes her to Pemberley. The third journey takes many people in pursuit of Lydia and Wickham. Furthermore we can notice that the Pemberley estate is a symbol of the upper class life.

1.8 Conclusion

"Pride and Prejudice" is full of characters and themes that revolve around the literary concept of "comedy of manners" the novel represents the regency period and its social aspects that influenced the young characters especially women who were their only wish is to find a husband and gain financial security. *Pride and Prejudice* is mainly concerned with the pairing of several couples and the issues surrounding each of those couples. The second chapter will tackle the subject of marriage and women in the late eighteenth century early nineteenth century in relation to the novel *"Pride and Prejudice"*, representing the different types of marriage mentioned in the novel taking into consideration Jane Austen's views.

Chapter Two

Women and the Concept of Marriage

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2.1 Introduction

The eighteenth Century was a very interesting period which was characterized by a gradual change in political, cultural and social fields of life. Jane Austen died at the age of 41 she was never married and had no children, but she left behind a great legacy. In her time she wrote six novels that often describe her life in that of the people around her and mainly portraying the possibility of marriage and romance, two things did not go hand in hand with each other in that time. This chapter concentrates mainly on human relationships and the concept of marriage in the late eighteenth early nineteenth century in the British society, describing that women's main purpose is to find a husband and gain financial security. The features of ideal man will be tackled in this chapter. Jane Austen's pride and prejudice is the ideal illustration of the concept of marriage since its major theme is women and marriage so we can say that this novel is the main inspiration of the concept of marriage in the British society during the eighteenth century, because the novel pride and prejudice presents five different types of marriage which highlight different aspects and preferences in marriage.

2.2 The Concept of Marriage in Late 18th Early 19th Centuries

The eighteenth century, women in England had few legal rights. They were depended greatly upon men for most of their lives, firstly their fathers and brothers, then their husbands. Women were seen as property for men. Furthermore women of the eighteenth century were not allowed to initiate any legal actions or retain money for herself. During that period marriage was considered as the foundation that would rescue them from the hard life, for this reason women were expected to marry and have children even if this marriage was not based on love and emotional interaction from both sides. “*The ideal shifted towards the middle of the century from this point of view to one regarding marriage as a union based on intellectual companionship and respect*”

(Brophy, 1991:126)

Literature often aims mainly to study the society; Jane Austen's "*Pride and Prejudice*" can be seen as a real image which shows the social lives of the eighteenth century people. Austen's writing mostly did not deal with political aspects, but one interesting aspect depicted in the novel is marriage since it is considered as a main theme in "*Pride and Prejudice*". Therefore studying the concept of marriage in accordance to the novel seems to be a valid point.

The concept of marriage is considered as part of the social traditions; it passed from one civilization to another, in other words marriage is a sacred tie between not only two individuals but two families. When looking to the history of man, we can see that man have been unable to live alone, for this reason man and woman live together and try to establish a family which stands for few basic factors including security, responsibility, trust and satisfaction of the needs. With the advancement of civilization marriage can be viewed as an important factor for the survival of the society.

Men and women had different roles in life, men were related to authority, security and responsibility, and it was an understood fact that men were dominant, whereas the women were supposed to stay at home to deal with domestic affairs. Women were completely dependent on men, in time they symbolized emotions and sentimental values. In other words the wife should devote herself to her husband; in return the husband gives her security and economic satisfaction, as Calder stated in his book *The Victorian Home*, "*For a woman marriage meant an acquisition of an 'establishment', her own place, financed by her husband, a place where she had at least some freedom of choice and activity, which she might not have at all in the parental home*"

(Calder, 1977: 9)

During early eighteenth centuries women of the middle class society were not educated, but they were expected to be accomplished on music, dancing and sewing, etc. "*A woman without the ability to handle a little music, a little drawing, and lots of*

needlework was considered lacking, as was a woman who was socially gauche”
(Ibid: 117)

Women could not legally inherit the property of their parents, in case they did not marry, they had no financial security. If the couple enters the circle of this arrangement without understanding the demands wished for this marriage, then they have to face undesirable consequences and definitely it leads to separation or what is called a divorce.

Women were to be married at the age of twenty-one and expected to begin having children immediately. During this period marriage was viewed as the only vocation open to middle class women. They were responsible not only for the moral education of their children, but the wife was supposed to elevate their husband's morality by being his spiritual advisor and even guide him for the benefits of home and family.

2.2.1 Unmarried Women in British Society

To marry and have children was seen by the British society as women's destiny, and for all classes marriage remained the main goal of a woman's life. Difficulties escalated for women because of the vision of the '*ideal woman*' shared by most in the society. In time the rights of married women were similar to those of children. They could not vote or own property. Also they were seen as pure and clean their bodies were viewed as temples that should not be used for pleasurable things. The main role of every woman was of a mother and a home maker, which were roles believed to be congenital³ to women. They were automatically expected to become ideal wives and mothers, in other words woman main target in life was finding a suitable husband.

² The term Originated from the 18th Century Latin word 'congenitus', means having a particular trait or firmly establishes habit

Single women at marriageable age were perceived as growing social problem, unmarried women, failing their mission to bring up a new generation of offspring, were considered prominent and a danger to the stability of the society since its main foundation is the family unit. They were pitied and attracted social disapproval. Moreover as daughters did not usually inherit their fathers' real property, spinsters⁴ were obliged to live with their brothers' families and be dependent on them.

There was an imbalance of male and female in the population during that era .statistics showed that there were over a million unmarried women in Britain, the liberal manufacturer argued W.R. Greg argued that unmarried women remain '*the problem to be solved*' and he presented a plan to "*to remove five hundred thousand women from the mother country (...) to the colonies*" without the guarantee of marriage, single women had to support themselves by going out to work which was considered to break of the ideology of separate spheres for male and female, which provided a significant reason for Greg to advocate female immigration to the colonies, where single men supposedly waited for their wives.

From certain perspective, marriage was viewed as the assumption of society and women's life .no woman could reject this situation, otherwise she suffers the attendant consequences. Unmarried women were nonentities, even worse they were denied by the society. "*They are the focus of all the malice, hatred and scorn that any non-conforming minority can attract to itself.*"

(Hill, 1994: 222)

These women who failed to bring anything to society were described as unnecessary or 'Superfluous'⁵ they were considered worthless to people around them and to the society

⁴This term refers to the unmarried women who are past the usual age for marrying and are considered unlikely to marry.

⁵The term means unnecessary or needless person, serving no useful purpose; having no excuse for being.

2.2.2 Husband-Hunting and Matchmaking in the British Society

The notion of family was in the heart of the British society, in which women were valued and respected almost for their roles and the mission which they had to consider as their only purpose in life: marriage and procreation. During the Victorian era, the parents' best wish for their young girls were to have a good marriage .since birth they were educated in order to become good wives and good mothers. Husband-hunting was a serious business in Victorian England, for middle class girls, marriage was more economic than emotional especially for those who had no fortune or great beauty or had few opportunities to gain a suitable living by themselves.

Besides emotions the aristocratic wealthiest middle-class were aiming to marry their sons and daughters according to their social rank. A new interesting procedure was found to help the Victorian girls to find a fitting husband which is "*Husband Hunting*". It was seen that the man wouldn't make any action without the intervention from the girl's part or even her mother's.

Women or more particularly their mothers were desperately in search for a rich single husband. Undoubtedly one of the most favored places for such match-making during this times, the beginning of May and mid September or what was called '*the Season*' was the perfect time for husband-hunting and match-making, though the city was small but balls and gatherings, concerts and card games were organized, each day people met to see new comers to make introductions and most importantly to exchange gossip or arrange social events. So during this season and through these gatherings girls were represented to society in a hope of finding a husband of suitable and similar social standing. Once presented prospective bride could reasonably attend 50balls, 60parties, 30 dinners and 25 breakfasts all in one season, if she didn't marry within two or three seasons, she was considered a failure.

2.3 Pragmatic Marriage vs. Romantic Marriage in the 18th century

Love and marriage during regency era of England was seen very differently from today, marriage was used only as an economic tool for financial stability. In other words the regency period was not a time for women to seek marriages full of romance, but rather to find a secure, financially stable husband and produce male heirs, the word marriage was on the tip of every women's tongue, if the women of the proper age was single, she either tried to find a husband as soon as possible otherwise she suffered the rest of her life under the title of "*Old Maid*". Marriage was also a strategic way for families to make connections with other families that held more power within their society.

It is evident that marriage is the main theme in Jane Austen's "*Pride and Prejudice*", certain characters of the novel characterized the social values of her time. In Austen's world women had few opportunities to support themselves in society aside from becoming governesses, females had little opportunity for employment. Therefore marriage become a need for survival, it was lifetime commitment for this reason during regency era parents settled their daughters in what was considered "*Good Matches*" they valued security over love. They searched for a man who would keep their daughter fed and cared for. It's imperative that women marry and they often did not matter what a men look like or how he behave however it is essential to be a man of more wealth.

Rather marrying for love woman sought husband who provide her with financial security. Jane Austen in her novel "*Pride and Prejudice*" expressed the idea that marriage should not be based on pressures of the society but rather on sincere love and acceptance of the other person. "*High ideal of love should unite a husband and wife.*" (Halperin, 1985: 732)

She convinced her reader that Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy are in a marriage based on true love and respect for one another. Through her novel Jane Austen revealed a logical understanding of marriage which is both romantic marring

for love such as the marriage of Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy and pragmatic marring for purpose taking the example of Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins marriage.

Therefore Jane Austen expresses different values of marriage through characters to explain her own reasons for believing that way. (See table below)

	Definition	Example from the Novel
Pragmatic Marriage	It is a purposeful marriage in order to maintain and increase wealth.	Charlotte Lucas criteria for marriage are based on the necessity for a comfortable home and happiness not love.
Romantic Marriage	It is marriage for love rather than for wealth of status.	The heroine Elizabeth Bennett wanted to marry on the basis of love, regardless the strict rules of the 18th Century.

Table 2.1 pragmatic marriage and romantic marriage in the 18th century

2.3.1 Pragmatic Marriage

“Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favor of matrimony”⁶

(Austen, Letter of March 13, 1816)

During late eighteenth early nineteenth Centuries was very significant period in which wealth was an important factor to the majority of families in British society, so the quickest way for the family to gather wealth was to have a daughter married to a wealthy man. Women of the eighteenth century had pragmatic view of marriage; they

⁶ See Letters of Jane Austen. Published in US by ReadHowYouWant.

see marriage as business, where they can assure a social status, economic stability and companionship.

Pragmatic marriage in its broadest sense is a purposeful marriage in order to maintain or increase material wealth; it was also called arranged marriage, when women had to try to marry whatever wealthy men were available, not necessarily men whom they loved. Furthermore marriage was not only essential for the daughter's success in life but rather it was a method for providing financial security to her family as well.

Jane Austen was against the idea of marring for wrong reasons because in the Regency Period many women married bases on their desire to find security and comfortable happiness. Throughout the novel Charlotte's purely pragmatic marriage to Mr. Collins is a manifestation of social pressures and norms. Charlotte's criteria for marriage are based on the necessity for a comfortable home and happiness not love, *"I'm convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most of people can boast on entering the marriage."*

(Austen, 2008: 175)

Charlotte believes that it is better to face the opportunities presented to you from marriage rather than to face the solitude and dependence that would necessarily come from the remaining in her father's house. Charlotte's choice may seem cold practicality but some people have the same values and way of thinking concerning this holy arrangements, she represents the classical woman during this time period that portrays marriage as the only door to happiness.

2.3.2 Romantic Marriage

In early eighteenth century the word romantic or love meant something similar to foolish or fanciful because marriage was more a matter of money, power and survival than a matter of sentiments. Love was considered as an absurd reason for matching. By the late eighteenth century early nineteenth centuries the idea of marring

for love was gaining support when enlightenment thinkers developed the idea that life was about the pursuit of happiness. They advocated marrying for love rather than for wealth or status. This support enabled young men to select a wife and pay for a wedding, regardless of parental approval. As people took control over their love lives they began to ask for the right to end unhappy arrangements.

Many of Austen's novels comment on marriage and provided countless examples concerning this context. In her novels she made her beliefs of marriage evident and stressed on the importance of affection between husband and wife though she was aware of the consequences of being single woman. Through her character 'Elizabeth Bennett', Austen expressed the central theme of marrying for love regardless the strict rules of the eighteenth and nineteenth century society.

Elizabeth Bennett is a character of self-determination and moral independence who wanted to marry on the basis of love, she is willing to sacrifice the assurance of being comfortably married in the hopes of obtaining greater happiness by marrying someone whom she actually loves. By the end of the novel Elizabeth ends up not only with a marriage based on love and mutual affection but also with one of more financial advantages.

Elizabeth Bennett modeled for women a strong feminine character who gained respect based on her sharp mind and principled behavior.

2.4 Female Choice and Ideal Man Features in "*Pride and Prejudice*"

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in a possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife"

(Austen, 2008: 2)

Pride and Prejudice begins with one of the most famous opening sentences in the history of the novel. These opening lines already introduce the novel's central point which marriage, as stated before in Austen's time marriage had a great

importance to any middle class family. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett had five daughters whom their future depends on their successful union with suitable husbands.

The portrayal of women in the novel was significant and glittering, and the wide view of female figures in the male dominated society, in addition the description of men is also remarkable in the novel, these include the complex personality of Mr. Darcy, the sensitive good natured Mr. Bingley, the moderate Mr. Collins and the hypocritical Mr. Wickham. In Austen's time the sole way for woman's happy life was to marry well and the wrong choice of the partner could lead to social and financial disaster. Nearly every woman's ideal man was a wealthy single gentleman with a piece of estate, however Jane Austen through her novel and through her character "*Elizabeth Bennett*" showed us her views and her personal values about happy marriage and the ideal man. From Austen's perspective, the ideal man is a single man with extraordinary understanding, integrated personality, a good fortune and a social status.

Jane Austen embodies her values in her heroine. Throughout the novel "*pride and prejudice*" brought to us three features of the ideal man that woman would end with, (see diagram below).

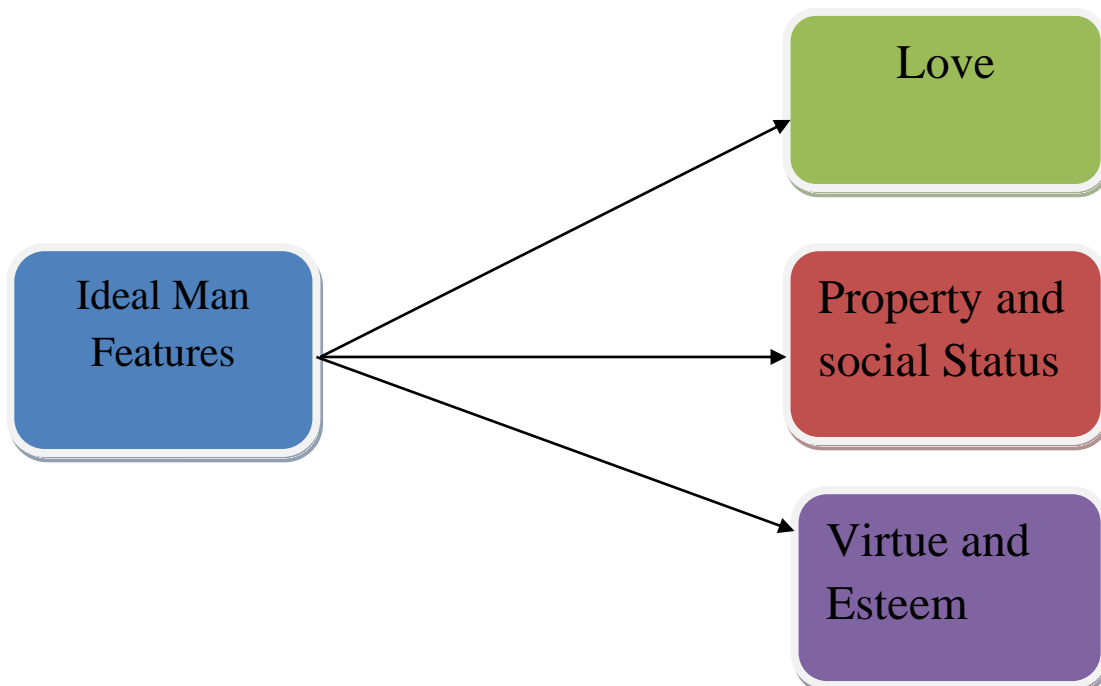


Figure 2.2 Jane Austen's Ideal Man Features

2.4.1 Love

The first one who proposes to Elizabeth is Mr. Collins, his proposal and his reaction to Elizabeth refusal strengthens Austen's view of him. The proposal itself is delivered in such a way that seems a business arrangement than a request of love. The reasons behind his desire to marry are that firstly he wants to make amends for the difficulties involved in the entailment of the Longbourn estate, secondly he wants to please Lady Catherine de Bourgh. None Mr. Collins words express his thoughts or feelings and his arrogant attitude prevents him from seeing why Elizabeth would not want to marry him, Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins proposal because she was convinced that he is someone who sees marriage more as partnership for financial and social advantage rather than a relationship to express the love of two people, and according to Elizabeth attitude towards love she believes that Mr. Collins could not make her happy, "*You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make you so.*" (Ibid: 150)

To say more concerning this point, Elizabeth rejects the proposal of Mr. Darcy, who is the second one to propose to her, "*In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feeling will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.*" (Ibid: 257)

Mr. Darcy is a handsome wealthy gentleman and the owner of Pemberley estate, in Austen's time Mr. Darcy is the ideal man for any middle class lady. Elizabeth rejects him because she didn't fall in love with him and she dislikes him because he was proud and arrogant in dealing with everybody, but after that Darcy decided to make change of him by inviting Elizabeth and her aunt and uncle to visit her Pemberley, and asking Elizabeth for forgiveness after his arrogant and selfish behavior, the he does his best to save Lydia and Wickham from their trouble and preserving the family's reputation. So Darcy's behavior and manners showed hid true love for her and changed Elizabeth's attitude towards Darcy's second proposal. Jane Austen insists that love is the primary base of her ideal man.

2.4.2 Property and Social Status

Jane Austen was a genteel-class woman without property who decided to remain single rather than to marry for fortune and social status, but she never denied the fact that economic consideration is an especial element in marriage, she says marriage is not determined by property and family status; but it is unwise to marry without money. Austen uses Elizabeth's story to illustrate the happy marriage with love and fortune. At first Elizabeth loved Mr. Wickham who she considers the most agreeable man she ever met, she had good feeling for him but once she learned about his poverty she thinks it is unwise to fall in love with him. Actually for Elizabeth and for Austen herself a man without property is not the ideal man.

Elizabeth Bennett and Fitzwilliam Darcy lived a life of two different social classes, one being wealthy and the other not. Elizabeth has strong intention to marry Mr. Darcy for true love rather than wealth, property or class but no one can deny that Elizabeth's choice is partly because of his wealth and social position. After Mr. Darcy is rejected by Elizabeth he invited her to visit Pemberley, Elizabeth was pleased when she had seen the place, and on that moment she imagined herself to be the mistress of Pemberley. By the end of the novel Elizabeth gets married with Mr. Darcy and moves to Pemberley where she lives a comfortable interesting life. So the economic base is essential for their successful happy marriage. When Elizabeth's sister Jane asks her how long she loved Mr. Darcy she replied: "*it has been coming on so gradually that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley.*" (ibid: 507)

Elizabeth confesses that property and social status has a considerable role in their ideal marriage.

2.4.3 Virtue and Esteem

One of the reasons why Elizabeth breaks her relation with Wickham is because of his comportment. He possesses a deceiving appearance. He is charming well-manners, attractive, young officer in militia. "*But underneath his sleek exterior is a manipulative character prone to trickery and seduction. He is completely blinded by his own egoism and ambition and essentially has lust for women.*" (DiMauro, 2012: 2)

He gets married to Elizabeth sister, Lydia but at first he has no intention to marry Lydia or even escapes with her, his only hope is to make fortune by a good marriage and that why he tried to elope with Darcy's sister, Georgiana Darcy who was entailed to thirty thousand pounds. Furthermore, when he first met Elizabeth he criticizes Mr. Darcy, that he has been cheated out of an inheritance that Mr. Darcy's father has left him, but when Elizabeth receives Darcy's letter in which he explains the situation, she has a clear view of what Wickham is. Jane Austen has a negative position towards a man like Wickham and one of the features of her ideal man is integrate character.

The gentlemen man is one who is willing and able to judge well, Mr. Darcy Is a wealthy man who has always a tendency to judge too harshly and his high social status makes him overly proud. He judges Elisabeth arrogantly "*She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.*"

(Austen, 2008: 15)

Through These words he hurts Elizabeth's dignity and in his first proposal he kept emphasizing on Elizabeth's lower rank rather than asking her to marry him. In addition Elizabeth accuses him of separating her sister in Mr. Bingley, in which he admits his fault by writing a letter of explanation to Elizabeth, and the reason behind this letter because he loves her and he wants to make sure that she does not see his actions as shameful. Then when he meets Elizabeth in her visit to Pemberley he was very polite not as usually and finally the accident that completely changes Elizabeth's mind about Darcy is when Wickham escapes with Lydia Bennett. So Darcy feels involved n the event and seeks Wickham out and pays hid debts, and enforces him to marry Lydia. Actually Darcy wins Elizabeth's heart with his virtues. Virtue is one of the necessary qualities in Jane Austen's ideal man.

2.5 Different Types of Marriage in 'Pride and Prejudice'

The main subject in the novel is clearly stated in the first sentence in the novel which is marriage. She has prepared the reader for a chase in the novel of either a husband is in search for a wife or a woman in pursuit of a husband. The first line also defines the novel as a piece of literature that has a relation with the eighteenth century period. Marriage had a great importance in women's eye in the eighteenth century because there was no real way for young woman to live in their own and be independent. Universities, politics, etc. was not open for women. "*The only career for which girls of the mercantile and gentry classes were educated was marriage, and to graduate summa cum laude, a young lady had to find a rich husband, preferably title.*" (Fowler, 1977: 48)

Jane Austen showed in her novel "*Pride and Prejudice*" the daily lives and values of the middle-class Englishmen of that time, which was male centered. Many people simply regard "*Pride and Prejudice*" as a love story but in fact it is an illustration of the society at that time and the author showed many representations of unhappy marriages, many people think that she was an expert in telling love stories. The marriage in her book is not the result of love but it is the result of the economic needs, and once you read her book you will recognize what love is and what marriage is. Jane Austen perfectly reflected the relation between money and marriage in her time. Although she never married, but she pointed out several different types of marriages, she showed marriages based upon purely physical motives, upon the desire for stability and integration into the community, and finally, upon mutual respect, love, and affection.

There are seven types of marriages presented in the novel, excluding the Lucases and the Gardiners; the remaining five marriages contrast each other to reveal Austen's opinions and thoughts on the subject of marriage, (see table below).

Marriage	Characteristics	Austen's View
Mr and Mrs Bennett	Their marriage was unsatisfactory.	She stated that this kind of marriage will make the two people lose

		respect for each other.
Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins	Their marriage was based on the desire for stability and integration into community.	She shows that this kind of marriage will not end up happy and the couple will suffer in silence.
Lydia Bennett and Mr. Wickham	Their marriage was based on physical attraction.	She rejects this kind of marriage which she considers a forced one.
Jane Bennett and Mr. Bingley	It is an example of a successful marriage.	She believes that love alone is enough reason to get married.
Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy	It is based on love and mutual understanding and communication.	She considers this type of marriage as a successful and lasting one

Table 2.2 the Five Types of Marriage Presented in the Novel

2.5.1 The Marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett

The relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Bennett is an example of such a marriage. Describing Mrs. Bennett Jane Austen says: *“She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married.”* (Austen, 2008: 6)

Although little is told of how Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Bennett got together .but it is clear from their conversations that their marriage was unsatisfactory. Mrs. Bennett married Mr. Bennett for his estate and he married her just because of her good looking; he did not give much importance to individual character and behavior

“he had been captivated by her youth and beauty... ad had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. To his wife he was very little otherwise indebted than as her arrogance and folly had contributed to his

amusement. This was not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to award his wife”

(ibid: 318-319)

The results of this marriage drove him to isolate himself from his family and took a refuge in his library, or sometimes he makes fun of his wife. He ignored his family because he was not able to find peace with his wife's way of taking care of their children. Mr. Bennett's self-realization at the end of the novel in which he discovers that his lack of intention towards his family had lead his family to develop the way they are, he is Austen's example of a weak father. Mrs. Bennett was a lady who was focused on getting her girls married; she was very enthusiastic about the arrival of Mr. Bingley, a rich bachelor in their neighborhood, and then when Lydia eloped with Mr. Wickham she refused to get out of her bed making all her family worried and later when she heard that everything was settled for them to get married, she boast around the town telling everyone that her daughter Lydia is getting married.

Jane Austen shows that it is necessary to use good judgment to select a wife, and also she stated that this kind of marriage will make the two people lose respect for each other and could also forfeit the respect of the whole family.

2.5.2 The Marriage of Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas

The marriage of charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins is a different one; it is based on economics rather than love and appearance, it was a common practice during Austen's time for women to find a husband to save her from spinsterhood or to gain financial security. In the novel, charlotte who is Elizabeth's closest friend, she was plain and unromantic, she was only satisfied, without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony; marriage had been always her object. She married Mr. Collins despite how little she loved him, and also she knew perfectly well what kind of people Collins

was and she knows that she will be unhappy in her married life. In fact Charlotte asks only for a better wealth and a high social status, she once explained to Elizabeth

“I am not romantic, you know. I never was, I ask only a comfortable home and considering Mr. Collins character, connections and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most of people can boast on entering the marriage state.”

(ibid: 175)

When Elizabeth visited her, it is clear from Charlotte's attitude that there is tension in Charlotte when Collins is around boasting with his belonging and Elizabeth also observed that Charlotte feels relieved when her husband is gone. Mr. Collins is a man who does not know what love is at all, he first proposes to Elizabeth but after she rejected him straightway with certainty he immediately turned his affections to her best friend Charlotte Lucas who accepted at once his offer of marriage. The reason behind marrying Charlotte is because of Elizabeth's refusal. All that he needs is a wife who helps him not to be a single man and also to please Lady Catherine.

Jane Austen disapproved gender inequality and shows that women like Charlotte who offer themselves to this kind of marriage will not end up happy and will suffer in silence as Charlotte does.

“When Mr. Collins said anything of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, which certainly was not unseldom, she [Elizabeth] would involuntarily turn her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice she could discern a faint blush; but in general Charlotte wisely did not hear.”

(ibid: 213-214)

4.5.3 The Marriage of Mr. Wickham and Lydia Bennett

Lydia Bennett is Mr. Bennett's third daughter, was spoiled by her mother, so she excessively proud and arrogant, and behave frivolously. Lydia's lack of understanding revealed when she eloped with Mr. Wickham disappointed, she thought that she is in love with him, *“For there is but one man in the world I love, and he is an angel.”* (ibid: 389), but this love is not serious and she married him for his physical attraction. Although Wickham might have liked Lydia for her youth and vitality, this

shows that he did not have much affection for her as she had for him. Lydia was proud of being the first daughter to be married, but she did not know how much problems her family went through and how her actions had ruined the family's reputation.

Wickham who appeared to be the perfect gentlemen but is not trustworthy at all, he has no other advantage except his attractive physical appearance. In his opinion love is just pleasure. *“Mr. Wickham is blessed with such happy manners as many ensure his making friends whether he may be equally capable of retaining them is less certain.”* (Simon Laden, 2012: 87)

Wickham has no intentions to marry Lydia since she has no money to offer him but he elopes with her to get away from Meryton because he was indebted, so he married her because Mr. Darcy interfered and gave him money. Obviously Lydia and Wickham marriage is an example of a bad marriage which is based on appearances, good looks, and youthful vitality. Austen showed a hasty marriage based on superficial qualities quickly cools and leads to unhappiness, it is evident that Jane Austen rejects strongly this kind of marriage which she considers forced marriage, Lydia married someone who does not love her and Wickham married someone who have not money to offer him.

2.5.4 The Marriage of Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennett

Jane is the oldest of Mr. Bennett daughter, she is a pretty girl with sweet and sensitive tendency, Jane has a good impression on Bingley when they met at the first Netherfield ball *“he is just what a young man ought to be, she said, ‘sensible, good humored, lively; and I never saw such happy manners! So much ease, with such perfect good breeding!’* (Austen, 2008: 18)

And it is the same for Bingley who was instantly attracted by her beauty, soft temper ad lovely heart; Jane adored Mr. Bingley because he has no objection on her family's position. From this we can sum up Jane's opinion for Mr. Bingley, it is clear that she fell in love with him from the first time she met him. Jane's ability to hide her feelings led Mr. Darcy to doubt about her love to his friend, and also Darcy's sisters who

thought that their brother should choose Darcy's sister as a wife whom considering superior to Jane. So under the influence of his sisters and Mr. Darcy he began to doubt about Jane's affection to him, therefore he left and moved away from Longbourn without saying goodbye. Later they overcome this obstacle when all the misunderstanding was clarified at the end, they married happily and they showed their passionate love for each other.

Jane and Bingley are so kind hearted that can be easily deceived. The marriage between Jane Bennett and Mr. Bingley is an example a successful marriage, through Elizabeth Jane Austen expressed her view of this *“really believe all his [Bingley] expectations of felicity, to be rationally founded, because they for basis the excellent understanding, and super-excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself.”* (ibid: 468)

Jane Austen did not agree with marriage based on money and physical attraction, she believed that love alone is enough reason to get married, in her opinion marriage should take time to build up in order to reach respect and understanding to each other.

2.5.5 The Marriage of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennett

These two people are the main characters in the novel. They had prejudices opinion on one another from the first meeting. Elizabeth the second oldest daughter, and Mr. Bennett favorite daughter, she is intelligent, perceptive and full of life. Darcy is the richest man in the novel and who is also a very good friend to Mr. Bingley. For Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth is tolerable but not handsome enough to attract him, in Elizabeth's mind, Darcy is very cold, arrogant and extremely proud who look down upon middle-class girls.

Elizabeth and Darcy dislike each other at the beginning due to their pride and prejudice. Elizabeth prejudice makes her midjudges and insults Darcy in order to defend her family honor, while Darcy's pride against Elizabeth lower social status blinded him. Later when they met again Elizabeth found out that Darcy's behavior had

changed and when she discovered that her sister's marriage with Wickham was the result of Darcy's sacrifice and hard works, she realized that she had been wrong in many things about him. "*How despicably have I acted! I, who have prided myself on my discernment! I, who have valued myself on my abilities!*" (ibid: 281)

Elizabeth refused to accept Darcy's proposal, this shocked him and later, his pride was corrected by his love for her. In the end his passionate feelings were to overcome all the obstacles and the objections, and they got to understand each other and this led them to a happy marriage. As the heroine of the novel Elizabeth considers love as the most important element for marriage, she refused Mr. Collins because she did not love him and at first, she rejected Mr. Darcy the wealthy gentleman because she thought that he was arrogant and proud.

The marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy reveals the characteristics that constitute a successful marriage; one of these characteristics is love which is something that develops gradually between two people. Elizabeth and Darcy were very distant from each other but through a series of events they got the opportunity to know each other and the time to develop their feelings, thus the mutual understanding and communication is the basic principle of their relation and it will lead them to a successful and lasting marriage.

2.6 The Role of Marriage in Jane Austen's '*Pride and Prejudice*'

Young women today have different options open to them regarding their future, they can marry, they can go to college, follow any career that may interest them or they can live by their own independent of their relatives. The importance of marriage in the lives of Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters may be difficult for modern readers to understand. In "*Pride and Prejudice*" Austen creates a world which reflects the social background of this time, Austen's major concern in her novel it would be undoubtedly have to marriage, the importance of marriage in "*Pride and Prejudice*" set in the late eighteenth early nineteenth centuries England in which the novel depicts the search of women for the suitable husband, within no woman can be considered successful without the support of a man of good fortune.

Elizabeth and her sisters depend greatly upon their father while he is alive, but the fact that they have no brothers, their situation could quite different and desperate when he dies. Therefore in the novel Jane Austen showed Mrs. Bennett main concern is to find suitable husband for her daughters, because she felt that since her daughters are remaining single they pose a problem similar to that faced by most women in Austen's time. The relations of Darcy and Elizabeth, Jane and Bingley, Charlotte and Collins and Lydia and Wickham are involved in developing the theme of marriage. In Jane Austen's society, marriage is the status that all women strive to achieve. Many marriages in the novel show that marriage is not always based on love but actually based on money and social status. Throughout the novel it is evident that there is a conflict between reason and emotion which is conveyed through these different marriages.

In "*Pride and Prejudice*" Jane Austen has very strong view on marriage, she presents five types of marriages in this novel and at the same time she also presents different contrasting attitudes to marriage and there are four mainly attitudes of marriage namely: the marriage for money, marriage for the satisfaction and bodily desires, marriage based on physical look an marriage for love. In the novel Elizabeth challenges the expectation of marriage in the Regency England when women were expected to marry single, wealthy men showing both jot and gratitude, while the men were expected to be in possession of wealth in order to attract a wife.

The five marriages in the novel contributes to the theme that a happy and strong marriages takes time to be built and must be based on mutual respect and understanding, hasty marriages acting on impulse, and based on superficial qualities will not survive and will lead to inevitable happiness. In "*Pride and Prejudice*" Austen has denounced the elements of marriage and society that she found unpleasant. She puts a great deal on the heroine in the fiction, Elizabeth Bennett followed her affection. She encourages Jane to pursue true love with Mr. Bingley. Actually Elizabeth is on the behalf of Jane Austen, she expresses everything that Austen wants to express; they both believe that a happy marriage is based upon mutual attraction.

In this novel Jane Austen explores the importance of marriage and its major role in shaping the whole story.

2.7 Conclusion

Pride and Prejudice explores the moral and social conditions of life in the late eighteenth early nineteenth centuries in that enables us both to understand the earlier time. Austen had allowed her personal feelings of the characters to be expressed in her work, the characters in this novel were depicted all as unique individuals, and however the protagonist Elizabeth Bennett displays the features of a rather self-confident woman by seeing her manners and behaviors, she acts less accordingly to what was generally expected from a young woman of her time. In this novel Austen has denounced the elements of marriage and society that has found distasteful. Jane has also reflected her own enjoyment in life among these people with and without their faults. The next chapter will conclude Jane Austen's feminist perspective and a comparative study between the submissive woman and the new woman.

Chapter Three

*The Representation of Women and Female
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3.1 Introduction

As soon as you hear the word woman it emerges into our minds their beautiful appearance, engagement in heavy housework and too much talk. In the 18th century women has been forced to meet these expectations because of their subordinate status to men and male dominated society. Jane Austen is considered significant in the feminist convention because she reflects the condition of the middle class women in an intimate way in her novels she writes as a critical judge of her own society. “*Austen’s style is simple but not naïve, her themes are profound and not superficial, her language is satirical but not above the sincerity and good humor*” (Bonnell, 1974:387)

In the previous chapter we dealt with the concept of marriage in relation to Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. This chapter will look to Jane Austen’s “*Pride and Prejudice*” which portrays a society which does not focus on woman making their own choices. In fact women were treated as accessories or slaves under the control of men. Jane Austen wanted to show that women are rational creatures and must be loved and respected. This chapter aims to conclude Jane Austen’s feminist perspective and a comparative study of the submissive woman and individual woman.

3.2 Woman in the 18th century

The status of woman in society has become very important in almost all around the world, so that it is hard for woman of the 21st century to realize what her life would have been like had she been years ago. In the eighteenth century English society there seems to be a certain cultural and traditional belief that men and women are different from each other. The society treated boys and girls as they grow up, in unequal basis. The eighteenth century was a very significant period in order to analyse and study how the society at that time dealt with women. The concept of superiority of men and the ownership of women is terribly supported by the English laws, middle class women in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were not expected to think of themselves as members of the nation. The English society has generally favored one sex over the other; the one sex has the right to excel in life.

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Women in the eighteenth century had no choices; most of them lived in a state little better than slavery and because in all cases men held all the resources and authorities they had to obey them, in other words women had no independence means of subsistence. The social penalties were too high for the women, who remained single and who could not have children and get along with men, so they would attract social pity. Most of women had no choice but to marry and by doing so everything they owned automatically belonged to their husbands, furthermore woman herself, it means her body was his, and this was not only confirmed by law but the woman herself agreed to it verbally: written in the marriage ceremony was a promise to obey her husband. It was man's right to force his wife into sex and childbirth, he was able to take her children from her away. And if woman runs away from an unbearable marriage, the police would capture her and return her. All this were accepted by the church, law, custom, and approved by society in general. Woman's situation there was brutal, until 1857 when a new divorce act restated the moral unfairness, this act allowed women to obtain divorce.

Women's education in the eighteenth century had a relation with training them on domestic roles and that was one of the results of an inequality of education. In Austen's time most of the influential writers believed that because the business of a woman was marriage, she should be taught those things that would attract a husband. "The goal of education for women was the development of good nature." (Horwitz, 1994: 135)

The educational system for women was unfair; girls received less education than boys, they were mostly taught at home either by their parents or a governess, they were barred from universities; however Middle-class boys had the opportunity to attend educational institution and private schools "*education has been the men's in so much a higher a degree*"(Austen, 1972 :206)

Poor education has many consequences on women firstly, women were powerless because men had privileged access to writing and producing knowledge; they were able to keep women subjugated and maintain their powerful position in society, secondly they were not intellectually stimulated, they were interested only in domestic

thing and finally, they were bored. To conclude Jane Austen who was one of the feminist writers depicted the world in which men enjoy the privilege of having access to a higher education, and a world in which women were subjected to an inferior education, through her writings she created awareness about of the importance of an equality of education between men and women.

3.3 Feminism and Woman's Identity

Feminism⁷ is a name given to a political in 1960s movement giving a call for the liberation of women from certain forms of discriminations that deprived women of the opportunities for self-promotion and equality with men. Feminist criticism is a theory and a movement in the evaluation of literature. It has its origin in the struggle of women's rights which emerged in the late eighteenth early nineteenth century. It reflects many centuries of struggle for the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements, and for women's social and political rights. "*Feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce and undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women*" (Tyson, 2006: 80)

It aims to at championing the identity of women and promotes women's writing as a representation of women's experience. Feminism attacks the notion of male value in literature by offering critiques of male authors and representations of men in literature. The patriarchal ideology permeated those writings and considered them as great literature, in which have been written mainly by men and for men.

Feminism is linked to women and their need for change in society, identifies inequalities and injustices in the way women are treated in particular society, and the disadvantages that resulted from this situation. The main purpose of feminism is to eliminate the mistreatment of women and creating means to bring out changes

⁷ According to oxford dictionary the word feminism refers to the belief in the principle that women should have the rights as men.

concerning situation of women, and also feminism asserts the values of women and their abilities in life.

In this regard Jane Austen, the author of “*Pride and Prejudice*” proves herself to be a clear feminist; Austen has used this novel as a tool to assert and portray her views on the unequal and unjust society of men where women had always been discriminated, and she depicted this in her novel regardless of what she experienced in her own life. Jane Austen is without any doubt a feminist writer because her works are characterized by a feminist issues especially those in “*Pride and Prejudice*”. She spoke highly about feminist issues by creating characters, incidents, story, theme and so on

If Austen’s works read from a feminist perspective it draws our attention toward such issues as women’s lack of education, marriage as patriarchal institution and women’s identity. Literary critics such as André Brink and Claudia Johnson believe that Austen to create feminist awareness in her works, however there are do not see Austen as necessarily feminist in her writings such as Barbara Seeber who argues in “*the schooling of Marianne Dashwood*”⁸ that Austen’s works should be understood as dialogic, and Patricia Beer⁹ believes that Austen’s fiction is primarily to be about marriage since all her novels end with matrimony.

Jane Austen’s texts emphasize that individuals are responsible for much of their behavior, and the value governing their action, the character learn through experience and the most important lesson reveal how knowledge can be gained. Jane Austen believed that written words could be invested with power, and fiction in itself providing a political force.

3.4 The Portrayal of Female Characters in Jane Austen’s “*Pride and Prejudice*”

⁸ See Seeber, B.K. “‘I See Every Thing As You Desire Me to Do’: The Scolding and Schooling of Marianne Dashwood.” *Eighteenth Century Fiction* Vol. 11. 1999.

⁹ See Beer, P. 1974. *Reader, I Married Him: A Study of the Women Characters of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot*. London: Macmillan.

Compared to the male characters the female characters in the novel appear more alive and interesting, thus Elizabeth Bennett in some studies for example Tanner (1986) thinks that Jane Austen gave immense charm to Elizabeth Bennett and this heroine was too perfect, because the heroine of the novel appeared to be highly attractive figure, she could never be silly like other sisters, her cleverness gave her a kind of natural superiority. However Mary Waldron (1999) believes that Elizabeth was not portrayed as a perfect woman, in other words she was a character who cared about money like other women of her time. In addition Arnold (2006) confirms that though Jane Austen wanted to establish a new female image for readers but she was totally influenced by the stereotyped women.

Besides Elizabeth there was her sister Jane who appeared in the novel as an impressive character, she was the example of a sweet, simple village girl who attracted everybody. Some studies also talked about other female characters such as Mrs. Bennett and Charlotte Lucas, Mrs. Bennett was portrayed as a tiresome character. Noisy and foolish her career in life was to get all her daughters married. Tanner (1986) thinks that Mrs. Bennett's mental space is limited and incapable for reflection, in other words, there is '*very few other thought in her head*' (Waldron, 1999: 39). Mrs. Bennett proves such an unattractive figure lacking the social graces.

Charlotte Lucas appeared in the novel as a desperate character who cared mostly about the establishment through marriage, Newton (1981) argued that Charlotte Lucas was a victim of social and economic force of that time that is to say we should sympathize Charlotte rather than to blame her, because being materialist was the only choice and the only way for woman in order to survive in that time period.

3.5 The Conflict between the New Woman and the Submissive Woman

There are two kinds of conflicts which are internal and external conflict the external conflict, a character struggles against some outside force either another character or society as a whole or even some natural force, however an internal conflict it is about emotions, desires and needs within a single person. It is evident that the novel carries different conflicts, for example the conflict between Mr. Bennett and

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Mrs. Bennett and their disagreement in every issue, “*an unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do*” (Austen, 2008: 77). In addition to the internal of Mr. Darcy and his struggles with his emotions it is a kind of a heart head conflict, because he appeared in the novel as a character with a complex comportment who did not know what he exactly want, either to be pride or to confess his feelings to Elizabeth.

Pride and prejudice is the perfect image of the conflict between the individual woman and submissive woman, because it is apparent for the reader that the female characters in the novel are different in term of attitudes, principals and behaviors. So in the female characters are divided under these two categories. (See table below)

	<i>The Characters</i>	<i>The Characteristics</i>
<i>The Submissive Woman</i>	Mrs Bennett	She is a comic character her only purpose in life is to get her three eldest daughters married; she is loud, empty-minded and hysteric.
	Jane Bennett	She is the example of the innocent character beautiful, naive and a person who cannot express her feelings.
	Charlotte Lucas	She is sensible and intelligent; she has always seen the necessity of practical marriage.
<i>The New Woman</i>	Elizabeth Bennett	She is a character known of her intelligence and independent thinking, in addition to her strength and courage in facing the social rules of that time.

Figure3.1 the Submissive Woman vs. the New Woman

3.5.1 The Submissive Woman

Some women get married because it was seen as the right thing to do as women, and because it was the only opportunity to get a house of their own. Women of the early 19th century had no such choices they lived in a state little better than slavery, because they had no independence or means of subsistence. Austen presents a variety of characters that have some common features.

3.5.1.1 Mrs. Bennett

Mrs. Bennett is described by the author as “*a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper*” (Austen, 2008:04) she is a comic character of the novel, her only purpose in life is to find acceptable husbands for her daughters. She does her possible to make her eldest daughter Jane go to Mr. Bingley’s place and making her stay as much as possible, and she gets angry when Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins, furthermore, after the elopement of Lydia and Mr. Wickham she fears the reputation of the family but as soon as she heard about their marriage she gets mad of joy. She is loud, empty-minded, noisy and frequently hysteric; she does not have good manners and shares all her thoughts in public whether they should be aired or not.

Mrs. Bennett is not intelligent and sensible like her husband she fails miserably in her role as a parent; she often embarrasses her daughters with her behaviors and hurtful remarks, she is simply not capable of holding the family in bad moments but even makes matters worse. She is a humorous figure; she exemplifies for the reader a character who failed to sustain her husband’s interest for long because of her crude behavior because their marriage was based on early sexual attraction. At the end of the novel she gets what she wants, her three eldest daughters are married, but unfortunately she remains the same gawking, foolish woman.

3.5.1.2 Jane Bennett

Jane Bennett is the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett; she is beautiful, charming, and sweet tempered as Darcy described her “*you are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room*” (Austen, 2008:08) she is also beautiful from her inner too

that she genuinely and naively believes that everyone else in the world is the same, Elizabeth even tells her that “*you never see a fault in anybody. All the world is good and agreeable in your eyes. I have never heard you speak ill of any human being*” (Austen, 2008: 10) Jane cannot express her feelings and this trait of her nature leads her to some miserable conditions, she is greatly disappointed when she left her, but she patiently waits him. She is the example of the innocent character.

3.5.1.3 Charlotte Lucas

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth’s best friend, she is described by the author as being sensible and intelligent she has always seen the necessity of practical marriage. Charlotte is a character that represents the submissive woman in “*pride and prejudice*” she agrees to marry Mr. Collins although she is not in love with him; she does this because she preferred to be married than to live as an unmarried woman. She prefers to take care of the entire house, cleaning and taking care of her husband just as a good wife should be during this era.

Charlotte even gets the advice from Lady Catherine on how to be a good wife, “*she enquired into charlotte’s domestic concerns familiarly and minutely, and gave a great deal of advice, as the management of them all; told her how everything ought to be in so small a family as hers’.*” (Austen, 2008:100)

Charlotte is submissive because she first agrees to marry Mr. Collins without hesitation and then allows herself to be domesticated, she cannot escape her own reality and feel free from the constraints of the society.

Although Charlotte is Elizabeth’s best friend, but she acts as a contrast to her and the difference between the two is very clearly shown in the novel, they are different in terms of practical and rational attitude in life.

3.5.2 The New Woman

During the nineteenth century was an era of a tremendous change in arts, politics and society, by the emergence of new theories that challenge the tradition. The most radical change of all concerned the role of women and the increasing number of

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opportunities becoming available for them in male dominated world. Marriage followed by motherhood was no longer seen as the inevitable route towards security a level of financial security.

The term “*New Woman*” or individual woman is used at the end of the nineteenth century to describe women who were pushing against the limits which society imposed on women. Today she might be called a liberated woman or feminist. Gail Finney gave a concise description for her: “a new woman typically values self-fulfillment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine ideal of self-sacrifice, believes in legal and sexual equality, often remains single because of the difficulties of combining such equality with marriage, is more open with her sexuality than the “*Old Woman*”; is well educated and reads a great deal.

In *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen has managed to convey that a woman can be intelligent and her intelligence can be impressive. Elizabeth Bennett is good looking and Mr. Darcy is influenced by her intelligence rather than her beauty. Austen through her character Elizabeth Bennett showed that intelligent woman can succeed in society.

Elizabeth Bennett is the heroine of the novel; she is one of the favorite heroines of Jane Austen herself. Elizabeth’s basic character is clear, out of all her five Bennett sisters; she is the one who stands out of the group. She is witty, courageous, confident and capable of her own. She does not regulate behavior to please others, in fact she can be sharp tongued and quite capable of teasing and challenging people.

Elizabeth shows her courage by declining two marriage proposals both undesirable but attractive in her own way. Mr. Collins’ proposal promises the comforts, economic security, and security of home, if no love. The second proposal is that of Mr. Darcy’s, his proposal is attractive for even she realizes that to have been mistress of Pemberley would be something. In these situations it needed a great moral and spiritual courage to reject these proposals, but Elizabeth did not want to marry where there was no love, she resists the pressure and the temptation. It is only these marriage proposals where she shows her strength of character that she is gifted with. It

is in fact Elizabeth does not doubt her own perspective and “*she is confident in coverstation and sure of her opinion. Elizabeth does not hesitate to convey either her certainty of her views.*”

(Kaplan, 1992: 186)

Elizabeth is not satisfied with the social rules and believes that woman should never marry a man out of anything but love and tried to persuade her sister that their friend charlotte should not marry Mr. Collins since he “*is conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man*” (Austen, 2008: 89) and she continues to tell her sister that “*you must feel, as well as I do; that the woman who marries him cannot have her proper way of thinking*” (ibid). It is important to remember, though that this was the proper way of thinking at this time. In this regard, Austen creates Elizabeth as a young woman ahead of her time.

Generally Elizabeth perception is quite admirable. She claims that she fully comprehends Bingley, and we see that is right. She knows Mr. Collins to be a fool man from the very first letter he writes to his father. She also takes a full measure of Lady Catherine de Bourgh at their first meeting, and she alerts her father of the danger of Lydia’s flirtations, Elizabeth seems to be awake to all of them.

“Austen’s conviction that Elizabeth was a delightful creature as ever appeared in print, was well founded, for as she could not fail to realize, no heroine like Elizabeth Bennett had appeared in print before (...) standing where we do tend either to overlook or to underestimate Elizabeth’s outrageous unconventionality which, judged by the standards set in the conducts looks and in conservative fiction, constantly verges not merely in impertinence but in impropriety.”

(Kaplan, 1992:185)

Elizabeth does not feel submissive and she also feels that she can revolt against the views of that society has about women in general.

3.6 Conclusion

When reading Jane Austen’s “*Pride and Prejudice*” one realizes that the major themes are marriage and the distinction between the two genders within Georgian

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society. It is clearly described that women do not possess much power in society in relation to men. This chapter develops an overview of the submissive woman and the new woman in the history of Britain with a reference to Jane Austen's literary tendency which is "*Feminism*". Furthermore Austen questioned the constraints placed upon women in male dominated society that prevented the growth and development of the minds of women, she creates a character who has become one of the most famous heroines in the history of English literature, known for her intelligence and independence thinking from the stereotype of her society. To sum up I can say that the new woman has pushed the limits which society imposed on women.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General conclusion

General Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation is to shed the light on the status of woman in the late eighteenth early nineteenth century in Jane Austen's "*Pride and Prejudice*", the real reason behind the novel writing and Jane Austen's choice of heroine is to treat the question of woman. The novel also has tackled to study and evaluate women and the position they held and their conditions in "*Pride and Prejudice*" work from feminist perspective and relied on feminist ideas about women conditions. Furthermore Austen tried to depict in a world in which she lived.

Jane Austen's "*Pride and Prejudice*" is considered a classic; it focuses on a mother who wanted her daughters to become married for financial reasons. The novel is good for those who like romantic stories the novel itself was strong, the plot made the reader go on because Austen created a variety of characters and personalities and also created a kind of connection between the reader and the characters.

We can say that Jane Austen was a literary giant and one of the prominent novelists of the history of English literature, also Elizabeth Bennett is one of the greatest heroines that astonished the literary world and reflected the atmosphere of Austen's time. In the novel Elizabeth produced completely a new type of female characters who is determined to marry in accordance with her feelings and expectations. She had the courage to resist the pressure of her mother and the conventional way of thinking, she wanted to decide about her own life herself.

Austen portrayed different married couples in the novel but she did not exemplify the bad consequences, she also emphasizes the importance of a prior affection that it could lead to a future happiness on the sides of both, husband and wife, resulting a mutual understanding and respect.

Jane Austen's writing are always defending women, her main focus was on their manners and intentions. After reading the novel reader could easily notice two categories of woman: a submissive woman who is influenced by the convention of the eighteenth century, while a new woman is a woman who rejects all the social rules and acts.

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