**INRODUCTION**

**The Historical Context of *Pride and Prejudice***

According to eNotes, Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* in England's Georgian era, named for a series of kings named George, including George III, familiar to Americans as the reigning king during the American Revolution. Austen revised the novel during the Regency era, which began in 1811, the year George III was deemed insane and his son, the eventual George IV, began ruling as regent.

During the Regency era, the French military leader Napoleon Bonaparte seemed determined to rule the world, and the English worried that his troops might cross the English Channel. As a result, militias formed throughout England. The temporary posting of the militia in Meryton, the town where much of *Pride and Prejudice* takes place, reflects this concern about invasion.

The Regency era also marked the beginning of the industrial revolution. Changes in manufacturing processes would soon bring sweeping social and economic changes to England. Because of changes in the country's economic structure, more people had the opportunity to become truly wealthy through manufacturing and trade. In fact, one of the main characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Bingley, comes from a family that inherited its wealth from their father's business in the north of England—the seat of heavily industrial cities like Manchester. Another character, Mr. Gardiner, Elizabeth's uncle, gains upper-middle-class status through business in London. But in the early stages of industrialization, England was still an agrarian, or farming, economy. In fact, until well into the 19th century, wealth accumulated through landownership and passed down through inheritance was considered the very best kind of wealth.

**Social Context**

Landownership was a true mark of status. Anyone who owned more than approximately 300 acres of land was a member of the landed gentry and thus highly respectable. The landed gentry weren't the top of the social heap by any means. In Austen's England, the social hierarchy can be likened to a pyramid, with the following classes listed in descending order, from the top tier to the bottom:

Royalty (kings, queens, princes, and princesses) Aristocracy or nobility (dukes, marquises, earls, and barons) Upper-class gentry, including landed gentry with large. estates, high-level clergy and government officials, bankers, merchants, and barristers (lawyers) Middle-class gentry, including landed gentry with smaller estates, various professionals, military officers, and lower level clergy Lower and working classes.

For the most part, *Pride and Prejudice* represents the interactions of characters from the middle of the pyramid—the gentry. Austen, like the Bennet family portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*, belonged to the educated upper-middle-class gentry. Even though the members of this class often lacked the wealth and resources of the aristocracy, they were free to socialize with them. Because only the eldest son inherited land, other sons of the landed gentry might serve in the clergy (like Austen's father) or the military. These professions are specifically represented in *Pride and Prejudice.*

Women of the gentry in the Regency period did not have careers. They did not even have legal rights—though some were beginning to discuss the topic openly. Unless a gentlewoman became a governess (a live-in tutor of wealthy children), her only acceptable role was as a wife. To attract a husband, women of the gentry were expected to accumulate a list of "accomplishments," including being skilled in needlework, music, foreign languages, and art. To prepare for her role as wife, mother, and hostess, a gentlewoman was expected to master intricate rules of etiquette, including detailed rules for making social calls and accepting guests.

With the exception of women who were fortunate to inherit some wealth from their parents, marriage was also the only way for a woman to determine her financial destiny. By law, women had little control over their finances; money was controlled by the men of the family. Women who did not marry did not have a clear role in society. Called spinsters, they might at best be relegated to running the household of an unmarried brother. Austen herself never married. When her father died, she lived off money provided by her brothers.

**Literary Context**

Unlike her literary peers, Austen gave her novels everyday settings and characters who lead relatively normal lives. Her protagonists struggle with real problems—usually involving courtship and marriage—through trial and error. Her genius lay in her use of satire to ridicule the follies and vices of early 19thcentury English society. The lively dialogue, sharply drawn characters, and observations in Pride and Prejudice have entertained generations of readers, and Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy remain among the most beloved couples in literature.

As already seen above, the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the British territory had experienced a period of change, dislocation and unprecedented crisis. This period was marked by industrialization which is extremely attractive from the historical perspective. Industrial and cultural transformations, political and social unrest, the emergence of social structures, war, economic reconstruction, colonial expansion, scientific progress and efforts to abolish slave trade represents the crisis and the social anxiety in the British territory.

Living in a time of ideological conflict and social unrest and witnessing the profound alteration of the stable society that she lived. Jane responded to the turmoil of her time in a way suitable to her environmental and social class. As Radu Maria points out, ‘’Her novels are a proof of what that period of social change meant. Although she wasn’t actively involved in politics, her writing have shown in their own way her answer to the great events of the time, the response of a person deeply interested in the question of how individuals must live in a society and how this society must be organized. Her work coincides with a period of the British culture in which there was a general consensus on the interaction between morality and social norms’’(359).

***PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, A BRIDGE OF THREE GENERATIONS**

Jane Austen’s *Pride and prejudice* is a bridge of three generations, i.e. there are traces of letters which borrows from epistolary novels of the eighteenth century, secondly, the elements of romanticism appear in her novel. Finally, she looks at the future in a realist perspective.

Jane Austen inherited the epistolary mode of writing novels from the 18th century, notably from Samuel Richardson, whose novels are written completely in the form of letters. She retained the device and adapted the method successfully weaving her letters into the natural narrative of dialogue and description. Often these letters form narrative crisis points or indicate a new direction in the plot. The letter is thus used as a dramatic device in the novel to further the plot, aid in the revelation of character and in the exposition of the theme.

The definition of the epistolary is "Novel told through letters written by one or more of the characters." The advantage is that it presents an intimate view of the character's thoughts without interference from the author and that it conveys the shape of events to come with dramatic immediacy. Some disadvantages of the form were apparent from the outset. The characters speak to us and we therefore get a small point of view of what's happening.

In all there are mainly six to seven letters in the novel that help in the unraveling of the plot. The first letter written by Mr. Collins, announcing his arrival anticipates the role he is to play in the plot. His later letters about how Mr. Bennet should treat Lydia or his retailing the gossip that Elizabeth will shortly be engaged to Darcy, show Jane Austen using the letter as a plot device. This she does naturally and unobtrusively, with Jane’s letters to Elizabeth (at first misdirected) providing information on Lydia’s crisis, and Mrs. Gardiner’s letter to Elizabeth revealing Darcy’s part in the arranged wedding of Lydia and Wickham. Elizabeth’s letters to her aunt, Mrs. Gardiner are also significant in revelation of character and relationship between the two. Darcy’s letter to Elizabeth explains his past dealings with Wickham. Jane Austen avoids dialogue by using the letter instead in providing important information to the reader.

The primary focus of romance novels is on the relationship and romantic love between two people and must have an ‘’emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending”. On the other hand, the writers of the romantic literary movement have different goals and objectives. Romanticists, shocked by greed of the newly rich bourgeoisie, revolted against the industrialization in Europe and romanticized the past, nature and purity of the child as the ideal state to which people should return. The most respected English novelists of the period of Romanticism, Sir Walter Scott wrote historical novels that looked to the past glory of England with nostalgia. The Romantic poets, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats turned back to nature and the innocence of the child to restore the purity of the human soul

During Austen’s career, Romanticism reached its zeneths of acceptance and influence. The romantic extolled power of feelings, whereas Austen upheld the supremacy of the rational faculty. Romanticism advocated the abandonment of restraint. Jane was a staunch exponent of the neoclassical belief in order and discipline. The romantics saw in nature a transcendent power to stimulate men to better the existing order of things. Austen supported traditional values and the established norms and viewed the human condition in the comic spirit. The romantics exuberantly celebrated natural beauty, but Jane’s dramatic technique sparse description of setting. The beauty descriptions are not many in the novel. Since one of the tenets of romanticism is going to the past, Jane also keeps an eye in the past where she is categorically concerned with the British past.

Pride and Prejudice can certainly be classified as a realistic novel. We see the evidence of this in Austen's choice and treatment of topics, in the setting that she selects to develop her story, and in the type of characters that represent it. Austen's topics are not far-fetched, nor fantastic: the novel is about the want for true love within a society in which marriage is a financially-bound institution.

The **Realism literary movement** began developing in the mid-1800s as a reaction against Romanticism, just as Austen reacted against Romanticism. In contrast to Romanticism, Realism authors strove to **capture life the way it truly was**. Authors strove to be objective and not make any value judgments about life, which is the way in which Austen's novels diverge from Realism. Austen uses her realistic novels to **moralize** about humanity, class, and society.  
  
Austen's creation of **realistic characters, settings, situations, and story lines** can be seen all throughout her works. Looking at Pride and Prejudice as an example, we see that, while Longbourn is fictional, it exists in England's real county of Hertfordshire. In addition, the characters in Austen's Bennet family **can exist as real people**: There certainly are men like Mr. Bennet who marry women for their beauty and soon fall out of love with such women because the women are too ignorant and self-serving; there truly can be a family consisting of five sisters; there certainly can be women like Elizabeth who are attractive, witty, and intelligent but think a bit too well of themselves; and there certainly are vain, dangerous flirts like Lydia, etc. The characters also participate in **realistic activities** fitting of Jane Austen's own social class, the landed gentry, such as attend balls, travel to London, and take summer trips. In short, Austen strives to capture life and society the way it truly was among her own social class, and, in doing so, she moralizes about the actions of members of her own class.

**Life of Jane Austen**

According to Britannica website**,** Jane Austen, (born December 16, 1775, Steventon, [Hampshire](https://www.britannica.com/place/Hampshire-county-England), England—died July 18, 1817, [Winchester](https://www.britannica.com/place/Winchester-England), Hampshire), English writer who first gave the [novel](https://www.britannica.com/art/novel) its distinctly modern character through her treatment of ordinary people in everyday life. She published four novels during her lifetime: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), [*Mansfield Park*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mansfield-Park) (1814),and *Emma* (1815). In these and in [*Persuasion*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Persuasion-novel-by-Austen) and [*Northanger Abbey*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Northanger-Abbey) (published together posthumously, 1817), she vividly depicted English middle-class life during the early 19th century.

Her novels defined the era’s [novel of manners](https://www.britannica.com/art/novel-of-manners), but they also became timeless classics that remained critical and popular successes two centuries after her death. Jane Austen was born in the Hampshire village of Steventon, where her father, the Reverend George Austen, was rector. She was the second daughter and seventh child in a family of eight—six boys and two girls. Her closest companion throughout her life was her elder sister, Cassandra; neither Jane nor Cassandra married. Their father was a scholar who encouraged the love of learning in his children. His wife, Cassandra (née Leigh), was a woman of ready wit, famed for her [impromptu](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/impromptu) verses and stories. The great family amusement was acting. Jane Austen’s lively and affectionate family circle provided a stimulating [context](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/context) for her writing.

Moreover, her experience was carried far beyond Steventon rectory by an extensive network of relationships by blood and friendship. It was this world—of the minor landed gentry and the country clergy, in the village, the neighborhood, and the country town, with occasional visits to [Bath](https://www.britannica.com/place/Bath-England) and to London—that she was to use in the settings, characters, and subject matter of her novels.

Her earliest known writings date from about 1787, and between then and 1793 she wrote a large body of material that has survived in three manuscript notebooks: *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second*, and *Volume the Third*. These contain plays, verses, short novels, and other prose and show Austen engaged in the [parody](https://www.britannica.com/art/parody-literature) of existing literary forms, notably the [genres](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/genres) of the [sentimental novel](https://www.britannica.com/art/sentimental-novel) and [sentimental comedy](https://www.britannica.com/art/sentimental-comedy). Her passage to a more serious view of life from the exuberant high spirits and extravagances of her earliest writings is evident in *Lady Susan*, a short [epistolary novel](https://www.britannica.com/art/epistolary-novel) written about 1793–94 (and not published until 1871).

In 1802 it seems likely that Jane agreed to marry Harris Bigg-Wither, the 21-year-old heir of a Hampshire family, but the next morning changed her mind. There are also a number of mutually contradictory stories connecting her with someone with whom she fell in love but who died soon after. Since Austen’s novels are so deeply concerned with love and marriage, there is some point in attempting to establish the facts of these relationships. Unfortunately, the evidence is unsatisfactory and incomplete. Cassandra was a jealous guardian of her sister’s private life, and after Jane’s death she censored the surviving letters, destroying many and cutting up others. But Jane Austen’s own novels provide indisputable evidence that their author understood the experience of love and of love disappointed.

The earliest of her novels published during her lifetime, [*Sense and Sensibility*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sense-and-Sensibility), was begun about 1795 as a novel-in-letters called “Elinor and Marianne,” after its heroines. Between October 1796 and [August](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/August) 1797 Austen completed the first version of [*Pride and Prejudice*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pride-and-Prejudice), then called “First Impressions.” In 1797 her father wrote to offer it to a London publisher for publication, but the offer was declined. [*Northanger Abbey*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Northanger-Abbey), the last of the early novels, was written about 1798 or 1799, probably under the title “Susan.” In 1803 the manuscript of “Susan” was sold to the publisher Richard Crosby for £10. He took it for immediate publication, but, although it was advertised, unaccountably it never appeared.

Although the [birth of the English novel](https://www.britannica.com/art/English-literature/The-novel#ref12912) is to be seen in the first half of the 18th century primarily in the work of [Daniel Defoe](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Daniel-Defoe), [Samuel Richardson](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Samuel-Richardson), and [Henry Fielding](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Fielding), it is with Jane Austen that the novel takes on its distinctively modern character in the realistic treatment of unremarkable people in the unremarkable situations of everyday life. In her six major novels—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*—

Austen created the [comedy of manners](https://www.britannica.com/art/comedy-of-manners) of middle-class life in the England of her time, revealing the possibilities of “domestic” [literature](https://www.britannica.com/art/literature). Her repeated fable of a young woman’s voyage to self-discovery on the passage through love to marriage focuses upon easily recognizable aspects of life. It is this concentration upon character and personality and upon the tensions between her heroines and their society that relates her novels more closely to the modern world than to the traditions of the 18th century. It is this modernity, together with the wit, realism, and timelessness of her prose style, her shrewd, amused sympathy, and the satisfaction to be found in stories so skillfully told, in novels so beautifully constructed, that helps to explain her continuing appeal for readers of all kinds. Modern critics remain fascinated by the commanding structure and organization of the novels, by the triumphs of technique that enable the writer to lay bare the tragicomedy of existence in stories of which the events and settings are apparently so ordinary and so circumscribed.

**THEMES IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE***

The novel Pride and Prejudice represents two major themes. Due to the setting of the novel, within the upper and the upper middle class, it is safe to assume that one of the major theme is class and class difference. In James Fordyce’s *Addresses to Young Men* , he addresses class or social rank in his chapter concerning ‘Friendship’. Though Fordyce writes about male friendship, most of what he says can be transferred to relationships between men and women. He claims that “some people that belong to the upper class can be arrogant and callous. They can use you, but when they have no further use of you, they will ‘throw you off’” (Fordyce 142).

Class is different from pride and prejudice as this is not a personal quality, but more a background which colours Mr. Darcy’s perception of society and limits his personal freedom. Even though Mr. Darcy struggles with his pride and prejudice, it is the difference of social rank that becomes the most difficult challenge. In the end, when he overcomes this he is at last able to be with Elizabeth. There are three instances in the novel where class plays an important role. The first example is Mr. Darcy’s first proposal to Elizabeth. It is an example of his inner struggle between his individuality and his position inherited through birth. The second example will take a closer look at Mr. Darcy’s social background and family in order to understand his improper conduct. The third and final example is Mr. Darcy’s second proposal. This example is in line with his internal change and symbolizes his development into the perfect gentleman.

In his first proposal to Elizabeth, she turns him down, because Mr. Darcy has been the cause of her sister Jane’s unhappiness. Elizabeth still believes Wickham to be the innocent and Darcy to be the brute; his address to her is proud and rude. Mr. Darcy’s proposal is evidence of his inner struggle between his individuality and his pride inherited through birth. ‘In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you’ (Austen 125). Unconcerned with Elizabeth’s feelings and pride, he insults her and her family before making the proposal. He does not consider that Elizabeth might find it hurtful to listen to how he has tried in vain to fight the feelings of love towards her because she and her family are not good enough for him.

At last he finds himself defeated and reluctantly proposes to her. Elizabeth explains her feelings to him and how he has hurt her. Mr. Darcy cannot understand this reaction; he expected a humbled and overjoyed girl from a lower class who found all of her financial wishes fulfilled. He is shocked and his pride hurt by Elizabeth’s refusal. “(…) Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?” (Austen 127).

In accordance with upper class rules, Mr. Darcy’s reply is acceptable. He is indeed marrying financially beneath himself and risks his good reputation and good will among the richer and more powerful part of his family. Elizabeth’s reply is interesting: she points out that whatever regret she might have felt about her refusal of him is now gone because he did not act in a more gentlemanly manner (Austen 127). It is a good example of Austen’s wit and ironic style that she makes Elizabeth use the same rules of conduct to lecture Mr. Darcy that Mr. Darcy had felt it necessary to break in order to be with her.

This is an example of how the upper class had manipulated the common morals of everyday life into something that had to do with class and money. Marriage was not based on love, but rather on what would make good family connections and how much money would be added to the family fortune. One of the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* who represents these typical ideas is Mr. Darcy’s aristocratic aunt Lady Catherine de Bourgh. In order to discuss Mr. Darcy’s improper behaviour, it is necessary to emphasize his family and his upbringing. Lady Catherine de Bourgh is Darcy’s aunt and also the family member that Darcy is most likely to have inherited his pride from. Catherine de Bourgh belongs to the upper class, the aristocracy, and is a woman.

In addition, Mrs. Bennet is hysterical in her search for a suitable - meaning rich - husband for her girls, and thus contributes to their already established bad reputation among the upper class. It is, however, interesting, considering Catherine de Bourgh’s strong objections towards Mrs. Bennet’s side of the family, how well Mr. Darcy gets along with the Gardiners. When Elizabeth introduces Mr. Darcy to the Gardiners

“(…) she stole a sly look at him, to see how he bore it; and was not without the expectation of his decamping as fast as he could from such disgraceful companions. That he was *surprised* by the connexion was evident; he sustained it however with fortitude, and so far from going away, turned back with them, and entered into conversation with Mr. Gardiner. Elizabeth could not but be pleased, could not but triumph. It was consoling, that he should know that she had some relations for whom there was no need to blush” (Austen 165).

This scene occurs after Elizabeth’s refusal of Mr. Darcy, and most likely Mr. Darcy has realized that there are more important things in life than social rank and annual income. He has clearly distanced himself from the aristocratic part of his family and their beliefs and seems content with his new-found independence.

However, it is perhaps necessary to raise the question of how Mr. Bingley came by his wealth. The only evidence of how he has made his fortune is when the Bennet family discusses his arrival to Meryton and Netherfield. “Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England” (Austen 3). The north of England was an industrial area, and Mr. Bingley would likely have made his fortune from trade or similar occupations which would characterize him as ‘new money’. It is interesting that the Bennet family is strictly speaking living off their land, in line with the social or aristocratic norms concerning honorable ways of income.

**LOVE**.

*Pride and Prejudice* is one of the most cherished work of literature in regard to love, as this can be evident in the relationship of two of Austen’s protagonist characters; Elizabeth and Darcy. For them to come to full realization of their feelings which eventually culminates over a period of time to real love, they hard to go past various things that prevented such desires. Because love goes together with marriage to some extent. It is therefore, worth nothing that in the opening of the novel, the author says, ‘It is truth universally acknowledged that a single man in procession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife’ (Austen, 1994).

Characters own personal qualities, is one of the things that prevented this characters from loving each other from the start. For instance, Elizabeth was proud leading her to misjudge Darcy as being unfriendly while the later misjudges the former of her poor background. Austen, makes the readers to understand and be aware that for people to realize and capture love, there is a great need of both of the individuals to come out of their social class. It is therefore evident in the novel that true love overcomes societal stratification.

Jane Austen, also addresses instances of fake love, where, individuals get involved in marriage for financial security or rather wealth. For instance, this evident by what Miss. Lucas said concerning her marriage with Mr. Collins, “I am not romantic you now, I never was, I ask only a comfortable home, and considering Mr. Collin’s character, connections and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair,” ( Austen 1994). Through this, the author, shows us that marriage without love will never lead to financial security for the woman but not happiness.

Parental love is also presented in the novel. Through Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, we see parents who always wants the best for their kids, they want their girls to marry rich men. For instance, when Bingley come to live near them, Mr. Bennet pays him a visit and even invites him for dinner so that he can secure a chance for her girls before anyone else could. When Lydia eloped with Mr. Wickham and went to London. Because of love, Mr. Bennet is force to go out and look for in an effort to take her back home to save the families name. The Bennet sisters loved each so much.

**MARRIAGE**.

Characters in Austen’s novel are revealed and developed through marriage. Throughout the novel, the author describes a series of marriages and various reasons behind them. Marriage is analyzed on two levels, in terms of external obstacles like patriarchy and property relations and in terms of characters personal attributes, with pride among the most harmful of such attributes since it has to be overcome by a process of self-education before love can culminate into marriage. Jane Austen wants to share her attitudes to the importance of love with the readers. She reasons that marriage should be based on true love instead of superficial feelings, pressure or wealth.

The entailment of Mr. Bennet’s Longbourn estate to his nephew, Mr. Collins, upon his death, leaves his five daughters; Jane, Elizabeth, Catherine, Mary, Lydia and their mother, Mrs. Bennet in a poor financial situation. Mrs. Bennet is socially and financially under pressure to get all of her girls married. She wants them to be financially secure in case of their father’s death. For instance, she says to them, ‘If you go on refusing every offer of marriage, you will never get a husband and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead.’ Women in this society, therefore, could not acquire money and wealth on their own without marrying into a good fortune. As marriage was their only career.

Jane makes Bingley confused by hiding her feeling towards him as she is afraid of being hurt. Mr. Bingley seeks Darcy’s advice. They think that Jane doesn’t have the feelings as Bingley’s. Because of Jane’s family social status, she is despised by Miss. Bingley. The marriage between Jane and Bingley finally has a happy ending. After he comes back from London, many misapprehensions are cleared up. Their love is based on true love.

Marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy is successful despite Elizabeth’s worry of not marrying him at first. They argue and quarrel with each other because of Darcy’s pride; he liked ignoring girls at various balls that he attended and also Elizabeth’s prejudice. Because of Darcy’s letter, Elizabeth realizes their shortcomings, they change and acknowledge their mistakes and develop their relationship gradually. Darcy loves Elizabeth not because of his physical desire but because of her personality. Jane Austen tells us that before we marry, we should know and understand our partner’s true personality. As this is the only way to achieve happiness in marriage. Through her characters, we should not relay on our physical attributions and financial desires in order to lead a life of happiness.

Lydia and Wickham’s marriage is based on first impressions, good looks. Once these qualities can no longer be seen by each other, the once strong relationship will slowly fade away. As in the novel, Lydia and Wickham’s marriage gradually disintegrates; Lydia becomes a regular visitor at her two elder sister’s homes when “her husband was gone to enjoy himself in London or Bath” (Austen, 1994)*.* Through Mr. Collins and Charlotte together with Mr. and Mrs. Wickham’s marriages, we come to understand that any marriage governed by superficial purposes, will never result in happiness.

These marriages contribute to the theme that a happy and strong marriage takes time to build and must be based on mutual feeling, understanding, and respect. Hasty marriages acting on impulse and based on superficial qualities will not survive and will lead to inevitable unhappiness.

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY.**

Women in England in the eighteenth century, which is when this novel was set, had one primary function, which was to marry, and marry well. The Bennet girls have a temporarily comfortable life, for in the absence of sons, when their father dies, his property will be inherited by their cousin, Mr. Collins. Therefore, for Mrs. Bennet, the most important thing was to marry their daughters, especially to wealthy young man, ‘a single man of large fortune; five thousand pounds a year. What a fine thing for our girls.’(Austen, 1994).

Because of patriarchy, the society could not accept women to enter professions like medicine or law. Hence, limited formal education. If unmarried, they would remain dependent upon their relatives, living with or receiving a small income from their fathers, brothers. In Elizabeth’s case, she is dependent upon her father while he is living, but because of the entail and the fact that she has no brothers, her situation could become quite worse when Mr. Bennet dies. She and her mother and sisters would be forced to rely upon the help and good will of their relatives, such as Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner.

Unmarried women were not supposed to live alone. If a single woman who had never been married was not living with her family, she was to stay with her relatives. Therefore, when the Bennet daughters travel in *Pride and Prejudice*, they always stayed in the company of a relative or a respectable married woman. Jane visits the Gardiners, Elizabeth stays with the  
now-married Charlotte, and Lydia goes to Brighton as the guest of Mrs. Forster. When Lydia runs away with Wickham, however, her reputation is ruined by the fact that she lived  
with him without getting married. Therefore, it is only marriage that can save her from being disowned. Consequently, Darcy’s effort to buy Wickham’s marriage to Lydia literally saves not only Lydia’s reputation, but the whole Bennet family as well.

The role of the woman is not only to enjoy special privileges of a high social status. Her feelings play an important role for the society. When Elizabeth and Darcy finally get engaged, they  
 both learn the wisdom of humility and tolerance.

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.**

The original title of Jane Austen’s novel, *Pride and Prejudice* was *First Impressions*. Austen wanted to convey to her readers the importance of first impression and how we form them so quickly. Pride and prejudice were both influences on the characters and their relationships. Darcy alienated himself from the others at first because of his intense pride. His prejudice against the Bennet’s because of their poverty was also something that he would have to overcome. For Elizabeth, her prejudice against Darcy came from his snobbery. It caused her to not see his feelings for her and to believe Wickham’s words against him. Darcy’s fierce pride often alienated him from others. For instance, he acted so snobby and superior at the first ball with the Bennet’s that they all hated him. His eventual love, Elizabeth, was disgusted at his behavior and had no option but to form prejudice towards him.

The social status in which Lady Catherine De Bough finds herself makes her to be a proud woman. Because of wealth, she is seen as a pride woman in the novel. Her pride makes her think that she can do anything in the novel. And that her feelings are more important than others. Talks rudely with no conscience. She said that, “I have told Miss Bennet several times that she will never play really well, unless she practices more; and though Mrs. Collins has no instrument, she is very welcome, as I have often told her, to come to Rosings every day, and play on piano forte in Mrs. Jenkinson’s room”. (Austens,131). This shows how Lady Catherine was so rooted in pride due to her status that she doesn’t care of any insensible statements she made.

Prejudice was also an issue for Darcy in that he disliked Elizabeth in the beginning because of her social status. He was forced to deal with his prejudice when he fell in love. Though it was necessary, it was not easy for him. In the end, he overcome his pride and gave in his feelings by marrying her. Elizabeth also had her own issues with prejudice to overcome. Darcy’s cold arrogance and snobbery prejudiced her from the beginning.

This novel’s theme was tied up in the title of the book, *Pride and Prejudice*. The pride that Darcy felt and his initial prejudice against all of the Bennet family was eventually overwhelmed by his love for Elizabeth. For Eliza, she needed to overcome her prejudice about Darcy and see through his snobbery. In the end, all the pride and prejudice is dealt with and Darcy and Elizabeth were left in love.

**MATERIALSM.**

Money plays an important role in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The Bennet women will have a bleak financial future after Mr. Bennet dies. Money was to support women and also their families. In the novel, Mrs. Benet is much concerned with fortune in which her daughters will marry into. She tries as much she can to find good and well-off husbands for her daughters, her prayers are that one day all her five children will be financially secure. For it is said that, it is truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. This proves that women were to be married to rich men in order to be financially secure as the society never allowed them to work, inherit or own their own property.

**Morality and reputation.**

Reputation and morality played a major role especially for women of this age. In the novel, the society required women to behave themselves in certain ways and if they go against them they risked being disowned either by their families or the society. For instance, the step taken by Lydia to elope with Wickham then goes away without being married places her in a bad state in the society. As this to some extent, might tarnish their families’ reputation, they may never find husbands and might remain unmarried. Elizabeth tarnishes her reputation by walking to Netherfield by foot in which she becomes dirty with dust which covers the whole of her body.

**CHARACTER AND CHARACTERIZATION**

The characters of Pride and prejudice have original personality traits and common flaws. Jane Austen particularly describes the actions of the peripheral characters; she speaks about their peculiarities in a very amusing way, and she is very good at making the reader picture just how ridiculous the characters are. These characters can be analyzed in pairs of similar traits or contrasted behavior.

**Elizabeth Bennet**

The second daughter in the Bennet family, and the most intelligent and quick-witted, Elizabeth is the protagonist of Pride and Prejudice and one of the most well-known female characters in English literature. Her admirable qualities are numerous—she is lovely, clever, and, in a novel defined by dialogue, she converses as brilliantly as anyone. Her honesty, virtue, and lively wit enables her to rise above the nonsense and bad behavior that pervade her class-bound and often spiteful society. Nevertheless, her sharp tongue and tendency to make hasty judgments often lead her astray; Pride and Prejudice is essentially the story of how she (and her true love, Darcy) overcome all obstacles—including their own personal failings—to find romantic happiness. Elizabeth must not only cope with a hopeless mother, a distant father, two badly behaved younger siblings, and several snobbish, antagonizing females, she must also overcome her own mistaken impressions of Darcy, which initially lead her to reject his proposals of marriage. Her charms are sufficient to keep him interested, fortunately, while she navigates familial and social turmoil. As she gradually comes to recognize the nobility of Darcy’s character, she realizes the error of her initial prejudice against him.

Jane Austen, like her most beloved heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, is a keen observer of the nature of man in society. To simplify her studies, and to give her readers a better understanding of the concept of Pride and Prejudice, Austen does not focus our attention on the larger social structure as a whole, but skillfully directs our consideration only to a small, isolated segment of the society.

Finding a suitable marriage for the female characters that lived in a patriarchal society often became the solace of their lives. The character of Elizabeth Bennet does not fit this generalization. "Elizabeth Bennet is a literary device used by Jane Austen to represent her values and attitudes on the importance of marrying for love. We often see the world through Elizabeth’s eyes and we are positioned to empathize with her opinion on the absurdity of marrying for reasons other than love. Elizabeth is a free-spirited individual who differs substantially from the other female characters of the novel.

**Mr. Darcy**

Jane Austen’s male characters are diverse. Some are comical, mean, weak and even difficult to make out. Others are intelligent and strong-minded, like her female protagonists. In some of her novels, as in the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, the lead male character is rich and belongs, financially and culturally, to a class above that of the female protagonist. Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy has become a legend and the definition of a gentleman. Mr. Darcy was raised in true aristocratic style. He is versed in the arts of culture, conversation, and good conduct in general, a part of the upbringing of children from the upper class. He is described as handsome, fine and tall, and he overall gives the air of being a noble gentleman (Austen, 7). He is courageous, calm, intellectual and intelligent. In addition to these good traits, he is the owner of Pemberley and has an astonishing income of ten thousand pounds a year.

Despite his many good qualities, the readers’ first impression of Mr. Darcy is not at all positive. The good people of Meryton first perceive him as proud and rude. Although he is considered proud, the reader is still captivated by his character. One may wonder whether or not pride, prejudice and class make Mr. Darcy even more unreachable and attractive or if readers tend to forget or overlook these factors. The bad qualities are nevertheless vital to the story’s development as Mr. Darcy is not humbled until Elizabeth rejects his marriage proposal. After the refusal, however, Mr. Darcy overcomes his pride and Elizabeth her prejudice and they can finally accept each other and fall in love. In line with the characters’ inner struggle that results in the change in their personalities, the reader starts to like Mr. Darcy.

Mr. Bennet is a late-middle-aged landed gentleman of a modest income of £2000 per annum, and the dryly sarcastic patriarch of the now-dwindling Bennet family with five unmarried daughters. His estate, Longbourn, is entailed to the male line and is set to be taken over by his distant nephew Mr. Collins. Jane introduces him to the reader in the following statement,

*Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character.*

Mrs. Bennet is the mother of the five unmarried daughters. Mrs. Bennet is a hypochondriac who imagines herself susceptible to attacks of tremors and palpitations ("[her] poor nerves"), whenever things are not going her way.

*Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous.*

Her materialistic behavior is seen since her main ambition in life is to marry her daughters off to wealthy men. Whether or not any such matches will give her daughters happiness is of little concern to her.

Mrs. Bennet *"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"*

*Mr. Bennet "How so? How can it affect them?"*

*Mrs. Bennet "My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."*

She attempts to force Elizabeth her daughter to marry Mr. Collins merely to remain in possession of Longbourn because of the patriarchy inheritance system. She threatens not to ever speak to Elizabeth again if she refused to marry her choice of a man.

Mr. Bingley is described as gentlemanlike, lively and unreserved (p.10 and 11), and he does not seem to demand much to be satisfied. For example, when he is at the first ball, he says the following to Mr. Darcy: “Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty” (p. 11). This sentence really highlights the difference between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley.

At the ball in Netherfield, Darcy refuses to dance with the women in the room saying none was as handsome as not to be a punishment for him to stand up with. Bingley on the other hand dances with any girl that was available to dance.

*First of all, he asked Miss Lucas. I was so vexed to see him stand up with her! But, however, he did not admire her at all; indeed, nobody can, you know; and he seemed quite struck with Jane as she was going down the dance. So, he inquired who she was, and got introduced, and asked her for the two next. Then the two third he danced with Miss King, and the two fourth with Maria Lucas, and the two fifth with Jane again, and the two sixth with Lizzy, (p.15)*

A further proof of his tolerance toward people can be found at the end of the novel where it is stated that Mr. Bingley and Jane often let the troublesome couple Lydia and Mr. Wickham stay with them, and often “so long, that even Bingley’s good humour was overcome, and he proceeded so far as to talk of giving them a hint to be gone” (p. 299).

Mr. Bingley’s future wife Jane Bennet has a very similar personality; for example, when Elizabeth tells her what Mr. Wickham has told her about how Mr. Darcy has treated him, she tries to come up with a scenario in which both of them are innocent.

Jane clearly has an unprejudiced mind is the fact that she finds Mr. Bingley’s sisters amiable; even when they have followed Mr. Bingley to town and Caroline Bingley has made it clear that she does not want Jane to marry Mr. Bingley, Jane says the following: “Caroline is incapable of witfully deceiving anyone, and all that I can hope in this case is that she deceived herself” (p. 96). She wants to see good in everyone, and she actually manages to find good qualities in all people. For example, when Lydia and Mr. Wickham are getting married, Jane sees the marriage as a proof of Mr. Wickham’s capacity to change for the better. Mr. Bingley and Jane are static characters, but they do not have to change since they are humble and tolerant from the start.

However, Jane becomes less disposed to see everyone as nice people in the end of the novel; when Miss Bingley writes to Jane to tell her how happy she is that she will be her sister, the narrator states that Jane was not deceived by it. This is a sign of her being a good judge of motives and character.

Jane and Mr. Bingley are standard role models that the reader can measure more brittle characters up against. Jane and Mr. Bingley are probably the biggest contrasts to the characters who are flawed throughout the novel.

Mr. Collins, the vicar. His manners are so uptight and stiff, and in addition to that his politeness is extremely exaggerated; Jane Austen really highlights his ridiculous character. However, with his uptight manners come both pride and prejudice. It is very clear that Mr. Collins is proud; the narrator states it on p. 57: “his veneration for her [Lady Catherine] as his patroness, mingling with a very good opinion of himself, of his authority as a clergyman, and his right as a rector, made him altogether a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance, and humility”.

He also possesses a more positive kind of pride, similar to Elizabeth’s pride (or vanity); one example of it is when he sneaks out of Longbourn House to propose to Charlotte Lucas. He does not want the Bennets to know that he is going to ask for Charlotte’s hand before she has said yes because he does not want his humiliation to be public if she turns him down. That is a more positive kind of pride since it does not affect himself or other people negatively; it is natural to want to avoid being embarrassed.

As mentioned before, Mr. Collins is also prejudiced. He thinks that the Bennets are inferior to him, and that is very clear when Elizabeth urges him not to introduce himself to Mr. Darcy at Mr. Bingley’s ball. Mr. Collins answers her in a very patronizing way and implies that she has a limited understanding of things and that she does not know what is appropriate behaviour (p. 79). It is obvious by this speech that he is prejudiced toward Elizabeth, he judges her unjustly and has preconceived notions about her in the very beginning of their acquaintance.

Furthermore, Mr. Collins is also prejudiced against the upper class, or perhaps “prejudiced” is not exactly the correct word; he seems to believe that all people of that class are good, elegant and well-behaved. He is making a prejudgment, At Mr. Bingley’s ball, when Mr. Collins has introduced himself to Mr. Darcy, he returns to Elizabeth and says: “He answered me with the utmost civility [. . .] Upon the whole, I am much pleased with him” (p. 79). However, Elizabeth witnessed the meeting from where she was standing, and Mr. Darcy did not look very civil. It is therefore clear that Mr. Collins is prejudiced toward Mr. Darcy.

Another example of his prejudice is his admiration for Lady Catherine; even though she acts superior to almost everyone he still thinks that she is an extraordinary and flawless person. In short, one can say that Mr. Collins is a snob, because he thinks highly of himself and has an even higher regard for people of the upper class.

Lady Catherine, in her turn, also possesses pride and prejudice. She is extremely proud of all of her abilities; when Elizabeth dines at Rosings, Lady Catherine boasts about her musical taste and says that she would have been very good at playing the piano if she had ever learnt to do it. Furthermore, she possesses the bad kind of pride; she is condescending to the Collinses, the Lucases and Elizabeth, and Mr. Collins states that “she likes to have the distinction of rank preserved” (p. 126). She also believes Elizabeth’s family to be inferior, just as is Mr. Darcy’s attitude in the first half of the novel. When she tries to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Mr. Darcy, she says: “You are a gentleman’s daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition” (p. 274).

She believes that everyone of inferior rank is less elegant and less educated than herself, thinking of herself as a highly evolved being because of her abilities and of course, her rank in society, other people also see her as a highly evolved being because she is upper-class. For example, when Lady Catherine visits the Bennets to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Mr. Darcy, she is quite rude to Mrs. Bennet and Elizabeth, but Mrs. Bennet still chooses to see Lady Catherine as a very civil woman (p. 276), probably because of her high social rank.

A character who is very unlike Lady Catherine is Lydia Bennet; she is different because of her rank in society, and also because of how she is treated. However, they still have similarities. They are both certain that people always want to hear what they have to say about everything, and they are both static characters. They are both very outspoken, but their remarks are received differently, because people have more respect for Lady Catherine. Furthermore, Lydia possesses the less negative variety of pride; she is proud of her own abilities and is therefore fearless when it comes to social relationships. One example is when she reminds Mr. Bingley that he has promised to give a ball at Netherfield. The narrator says that she “abruptly reminded him of his promise” (p. 38). She does it abruptly since she does not care about behaving appropriately or politely; she only cares about what she wants. In addition to that, she does not consider what others think.

When Mr. Bennet states that she is very silly, she simply continues to talk about Captain Carter (p. 25), and when Elizabeth says that she does not want to hear about her and Mr. Wickham’s wedding, she tells her all about it anyway (p. 244). She has decided that people who do not want what she wants are wrong, and she cannot even consider that she might be wrong. This shows that Lydia seems to think that people who criticize or contradict her must be wrong, which is a kind of pride.

Mr. Bennet takes much pride in his opinions too. He considers himself to be witty and intelligent, and he loves to laugh at other people. He has those qualities in common with his daughter Elizabeth, but unlike Elizabeth, Mr. Bennet is quite arrogant. When Mr. Bennet laughs at others, he is supposing himself to be less ridiculous, or silly, or unintelligent, which makes him look superior, and he possesses therefore the negative kind of pride. Since he ridicules his wife, his three youngest daughters and Mr. Collins, it is clear that he feels himself to be better than they are. He is obviously bitter over his marriage to such a silly woman as Mrs. Bennet, so he laughs at her and shows very clearly that he lacks respect for her and that he thinks that she is stupid.

He does not act like that toward Mrs. Bennet only; he is very disrespectful in general, a flaw which is related to his pride. He is also prejudiced since he assumes that most of the other people in the world are less intelligent than him. This is a clear indication of pride and self-importance. The dynamic between Caroline Bingley and her sister, Louisa Hurst, seems to echo that of Lydia and Kitty Bennet's; that one is a no more than a follower of the other, with Caroline Bingley in the same position as Lydia, and Louisa Hurst in Kitty's.

The community in which these four characters live play a great role in the novel; William Deresiewicz claims that “the community turns out to be the novel’s true point of departure” (p. 503) and that the community is one of the novel’s principal figures in his article “Community and Cognition in Pride and Prejudice”. He also claims that the first scenes tell “the story of a community: of communal expectations, communal conventions, communal activities” (p 503). Later on in this article, he states that the community affects the thoughts of the individuals in it, and that the people in the community harden their opinions together when they speak (p. 507).

This is a truth universally acknowledged too, that the community certainly affect the thoughts of the individuals, and the community is prejudiced. As William Deresiwicz puts it: “Elizabeth, like her community, won’t let the facts stand in the way of what she wants to believe” (p. 509). So the community judges quickly without having enough information. Even though the community consists of individuals, the community’s judgments and opinions seem to be harsher than that of a typical individual in it. The community dominates the individuals and their thoughts, by convincing them that what they think is right since “everyone else”, which is in fact the community, seems to think it.

Lastly, I would like to point out that I believe the characters and the community in Pride and Prejudice to be more prejudiced than proud, even though the word “pride” is mentioned far more often than the word “prejudice”. Tanja Dromnes, Sandra Lee Kleppe, Kenneth Mikalsen and Sigrid Solhaug state in “*The Distribution and Frequency of the Terms ‘Pride’ and ‘Prejudice*’ in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*” that the word “pride”, and the related words “proud” and “proudly”, are mentioned 70 times, and the word “prejudice” is mentioned only eight times. I see this as a confirmation of my belief that the existence of prejudice in the novel is a bit subtler than the existence of pride.

**LITERARY TECHNIQUES**

Jane displays a masterful use of irony, dialogue, symbolism and humour that support the character development and heighten the experiences of reading the novel. Irony is an equally important feature in portraying realism in the novel. Irony is used to express the ideas about the reality which is the characters of people, how no one can understand some subtle situations.

Jane Austen’s irony is devastating in its exposure of foolishness and hypocrisy. Self-delusion or the attempt to fool other people is almost always object of her wit. There are various forms of irony in Pride and Prejudice: sometimes the characters are unconsciously ironic as when Mrs. Bennet seriously asserts that she would never accept any entailed property, though Mr. Collins is willing to.

Other times, Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth serve to directly express the author’s ironic opinion. Mr. Bennet turns to his wit on himself during the crisis with Wickham and Lydia, “Let me once in my life feel how much I have to blame. I am not afraid of being overpowered by impression, it will pass away soon enough” (222).

Elizabeth’s irony is light heartened when Jane asks when she began to love Mr. Darcy. “It has always been coming on so gradually that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it back from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley” (279). She can be bitterly cutting however, in her remark on Darcy’s role in separating Bingley and Jane.

Jane independent of any other character uses irony in the narrative parts of her sharpest- but unnoticed- judgements, The Meryton community is glad that Lydia is marrying such a worthless man as Wickham: “and the good-natured wishes for her well doing, which had preceded before from all the spiteful old ladies in Meryton, lost but little of their spirit in this change of circumstances, because with such a husband, her misery was certain. Austen uses irony to provoke laughter and to make veiled, bitter observations. In her hands and a few others are more capable and discriminating- irony is an extremely effective device for moral evaluation.

Dialogue also plays an important role in the novel. The novel opens with a talk between Mrs. Bennet and her husband. In this conversation, we learn a great deal about Mrs. Bennet expectations and preoccupation with marrying off her daughters. Mr. Bennet ironic and sarcastic attitude towards his wife, and her self-pitying nature. This stage is set for the family introduction to the Bingley group and the dialogue has given us information on both incidents of plot and attitudes which drive the characters.

The pieces of dialogue are consistently the most vivid and important parts of the novel. This is natural because novels were mostly read aloud in Austen’s time, so good dialogue was extremely important. Major turning points are learnt through dialogue and even intense inner change like Elizbeth’s famous self-recognition scene” How despicable have I acted!’’(156) is related to person talking to herself.

Another style used in the novel is symbolism, the houses and estates in *Pride and Prejudice* symbolize social class. The grander the house, the higher the social status of the occupants. More significantly, however, the houses come to represent their owners. Since readers learn more in Pride and Prejudice through dialogue than description, the parallels between characters and their houses are revealed as other characters react to the homes.

For example, the grandeur of Rosings leads visitors to become awestruck; it induces a sense of inferiority in the viewer. The owner of Rosings, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, elicits the same emotions with her haughty and untouchable attitude.

Pemberley, on the other hand, is equally grand but also charms its visitors. The estate feels natural and welcoming, and the care that goes into maintaining it is evident. In the same way, Pemberley's owner, Fitzwilliam Darcy, seems unreachable at first because of his elevated status, but he proves his fine character as others get to know him.

For the heroine of Pride and Prejudice, nature is a clear symbol of freedom. Elizabeth Bennet is never happier than when she can enjoy the outdoors, especially when she is alone.

Letters play a very important role in character development. The very first reference of a letter gives details of Mr. Darcy’s writing to his sister. The letter is substantial and composed with utmost care. This minute reference shows the intricacies of his character contrary to his social image that is arrogant and snobbish.

Similarly, Mr. Collins’ initial letter to Mr. Bennet is another spectacular example of letters playing a significant role in first revelations of the eccentricities of character. After reading the letter, Mr. Bennet deduces that Mr. Collins is pompous and foolish because “there is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter”. Hence, Austen shows how the style of writing and the choice of words used in the letter can depict a lot about the personality of the correspondent.

Exchange of letters between characters explains the complex nature of relationships. As the story unfolds the love and affection between the sisters and their impatience to hear news about family, beautifully explicates the invaluable contribution of letters.

The letter Jane writes to Elizabeth to express how her opinion of Miss Bingley has changed shows that the sisters relied to disclose their deepest secrets and sentiments. The correspondence between Mrs. Gardiner and Elizabeth in times of distress displays the bond, trust, and fondness between the two.

There is a reference of Mr. Bennet’s letter to Elizabeth mentioning how he misses daughter and asking her to hurry her return from visiting her cousin Mr. Collins. These modest acknowledgements show that the paramount significance of letters to announce love, longings and attachments.

On one hand, the letters cause conflicts and on the other, play a vital role in resolving the issues. When Lydia elopes with Wickham, numerous letters are exchanged between Mr. Bennet and Mr. Gardiner to resolve the incident. These letters carry details of the arrangements made and offer some hope of resolution in the appalling times. Mr. Collins’ hostile letter to Mr. Bennet mentioning the catastrophic action of Lydia eloping which Collins compares to “the death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this” perfectly demonstrates another example of the outset of the discord.

The most effective and distinguished use of letters is done to further the plot. Darcy’s letter to Elizabeth is a literary masterpiece. It presents the climax in the subtlest imaginable way through the letter. In the letter, Darcy describes how he views Jane’s and Bingley’s sentiments leading to an imprudent marriage and therefore he tries to interfere with the affair. He also explains the reasons for his resentment towards Mr. Wickham.

Not only does the letter provide the reader with invaluable insights into Darcy’s mind and personality but also has an essential impact on Elizabeth. Austen masterfully exhibits the manifold effect that this letter plays in changing Elizabeth’s perception of Darcy. She thinks she has “courted prepossession and ignorance and driven reason away”. She is left depressed and baffled and this marks her journey to rediscover Darcy.

Another crucial letter that further develops the plot is from Mrs. Gardiner to Elizabeth elaborating Darcy’s role in Lydia’s wedding with Wickham. Mrs. Gardiner confides in Elizabeth that Darcy and not Mr. Gardiner is responsible for finding Lydia and Wickham and to arrange a substantial wedding settlement. Mrs. Gardiner implies that Darcy was motivated out of love for Elizabeth.

This new perspective given in the letter helps Elizabeth to have a comprehensive understanding of Darcy. Austen has used letters impeccably well in selective situations, not only to build characters but also as a method to introduce them.

Letters are used to advance the plot of the novel and cohesively tie various events. Generally, Austen brilliantly uses the letters as a literary device to weave the story that represents the niceties, intricacies and complexities and priorities of the life and characters of her time. This along with the elements of eternity and universality makes the novel classic.

Of all the novels that Jane Austen has written, critics consider Pride and Prejudice to be the most comical. Humour can be found everywhere in the book in its character descriptions, imagery, but mostly in its conversations between characters. Her novels were not only her way of entertaining people but it was also a way to express her opinions and views on what surrounded her and affected her.

Austen uses a variety of comic techniques to express her own view on characters, both in her book and in her society that she lived in. We, the readers, are often the object of her ridicule and she makes readers view themselves in ways which make it easy for the readers to laugh at themselves. She introduces caricatures and character foils to further show how ridiculous a character may be.

The comic techniques, caricatures, irony and satire not only helped to provide humour to the readers but they also helped her to give her personal opinion on public matters. When an action is exaggerated on stage by an actor, it becomes all the more noticeable to the audience. An author can exaggerate a character in order to make fun of them. Austen exaggerates many of her characters and therefore makes caricatures of them in order to emphasize their ridiculousness.

Mrs. Bennet is such a character. Her extremely unpleasant manner and reactions causes readers to delight in the situations which Mrs. Bennet places herself into. Her harsh tongue and simple mind cause the reader to laugh because it is so exaggerated that the reader thinks such a person cannot exist.

However, such characters would not seem so humorous without somebody to react to them. Mrs. Bennet is placed beside her husband to make her look all the more ridiculous and Mr. Collins, when placed especially by Elizabeth, seems to be unbelievable at times. His proposal to Elizabeth would not be a humorous without Eliza’s reaction and response to him. Therefore, caricature and exaggeration of character is an essential tool to Austen as a means of portraying irony in the novel.

Another example of humour is when Mrs. Jenkinson comes visiting the Collins’s together with Miss De Bourgh, “Sir William was stationed at the doorway, in an earnest contemplation of the greatness before him, and constantly bowing whenever Miss De Bourgh looked that way” (Austen,120). In addition to that, when Collins and entourage visit Rosings, Mr. Collins was agreeing to everything that Lady Catherine was speaking, as for Sir William, “…did not say much. He was storing his memory with anecdotes and noble names that Lady said” (Austen, 126). Through this humour we learn the behavior of the different class of people.

**RELEVANCE TO KENYA**

Writers are humanist in nature. They see life in humane way. Jane Austen addresses many of these human needs and affairs which are very applicable to Kenya. The things that happen in *Pride and Prejudice* happen nearly to all readers- embarrassment at the foolishness of relatives, the unsteady feelings of falling in love, and the chagrin of suddenly realizing a big mistake.

Aristotle once said” humans cannot exist outside the social order” In *Pride and Prejudice*, The social hierarchy is divided into the following classes: Royalty (kings, queens, princes, and princesses), Aristocracy or nobility (dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons), Upper-class gentry, including landed gentry with large estates, high-level clergy and government officials, bankers, merchants, and barristers (lawyers) Middle-class gentry, including landed gentry with smaller estates, various professionals, military officers, and Lower and working classes. This also exists in Kenya where there is a gap between the rich and the poor. Many of the have nots struggle to keep pace with the exploitative nature of the upper class.

The tale of human weaknesses, friendships and most fundamental of feelings, escapist fantasies like marriages that try to uphold the social order, petty ambitions, desires and jealousies we like to think we keep hidden from our peers have been addressed in the novel and that apply to Kenyans in today’s world which make the novel relevant to us today as it ever was two centuries ago. For instance, through Elizabeth’s insight, we are able to see a marriage void of happiness in Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. The husband tries to find happiness in reading since his marriage to Mrs. Bennet lacks the same.

Social classes still get into the way of relationships today. Most rich people in Kenya will want to marry from their social circle. Poor parents would love their daughters or sons married off to the richer families. Most women would want to date men that have money and are well to do. The world today is about money and not love. People love money than they would love individuals. As Lizzy marries for love rather than class or social standing is a lesson Kenyans find appealing to them and that the class barrier should be broken and people allowed to marry across the classes as long as there’s love between the two parties involved since marriage is a lifelong commitment and propelled by love hence must not lack just because people would not want to marry out of their classes.

*Pride and Prejudice* is a novel that also advocates for morality, good manners and behaviour, mutual respect between all people, the need to beware of prejudice and mistaking arrogance and vanity for pride in our own behaviour like Mr. Darcy does are lessons drawn from the novel today including sensible use of finances demonstrated by Lydia and Wickham who are extremely extravagant .These lessons make it possible to co-exist together harmoniously as etiquette is also extremely important in the Kenyan context.

Lizzy doesn’t desperately need a man, just like today’s Kenyan women who feel no need to be married. Kenyan women are educated and allowed to have careers and this emancipates them to be independent and able to make their own decisions without necessarily consulting their male counterparts. As Bryan Burden quotes, a real woman makes her own decisions in life. She’s responsible and doesn’t follow but she leads. She’s always about accomplishing goals, and she never settles for anything less because she’s a woman, and nothing more.

Distinction based on power and wealth are the things to be avoided as rules of life, although life is always with them. Caroline Bingley looks down on the Bennets as people with vulgar manners, no sense and lower social standing. Today in Kenya, the upper classes mock the low class. Richer women feel that poor girls are less pretty with less class. Lady Catherine de Bourgh is a rich self-important woman used to getting her own way and her having the habit to give her unwanted and highly critical opinion to everyone, her likes are still widely found in Kenya.

The importance of the environment in shaping of an individual’s personality. People with wealth and instruction are sometimes the most horrible people to be with-they could be extremely overbearing and naughty-and on the other hand, people with no formal education can be charming and honest. Personality depends on the environment and the circumstances in the person’s life along with the attitude. In a nut shell, the novel as discussed above is very relevant in our country today.

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