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Jane Austen's Critique of Patriarchal Society in
Pride and Prejudice

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my dearest parents who provided me with all the support I need to reach my objectives and to go beyond my expectations.

I take pleasure in dedicating this work to the bravest boy that I've ever met in my life, whom I wish he could be here to share with me my success . My dearest cousin Mehdi may he rest in peace.

I would not forget my whole family, especially my brothers, and all the family Benallel and Benkhaled.

To all my cheerful and dearest friends.

Yasmine

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Abstract

Through an examination of Jane Austen's portrayal of women and contribution to the feminist debate in her selected work *Pride And Prejudice*, this dissertation seeks to shed light on her radical position toward feminism. Austen's aim for progressive marriages based on equality and love is evident when reading *Pride and Prejudice* from a feminist perspective. When compared to other women and relationships in Austen's books, Elizabeth Bennet's traits and final marriages stand out as examples of women with agency who want more than what Regency England's society had to offer. By using such analogies, Austen masterfully illustrates her critique of patriarchal society and the restrictions it imposes on women.

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General Introduction :

In the old days women weren't in history books or on the surface of the major events that took place that time, they were somewhere else. They were hiding themselves under the roof of their houses bearing and raising children while men were playing a major role in society and history. Their walls witnessed their obstacles and problems that they were facing that time, and their desire to get released from that barriers was too loud that it exceeded the roof of their houses and became heard by many of other women that gathered their strength and fought for reform and change. Raising pen and writing lines was women's weapon during the Regency era, when some women started calling for their rights through letters and giving their thought of freedom shapes through different novels and love stories.

The richness of Jane Austen's writing and her critique of society as a whole are lost if her works are just seen as romances. The reader may appreciate the brilliance and historical relevance of Austen's satire of the patriarchal society she was a part of as well as her desire for reform in women's rights within the society by reading her books from a feminist and historical viewpoint. Additionally, Austen's books exhort readers to evaluate moral excellence on an individual basis rather than according to their sex.

In England, the Regency era was characterized by patriarchal rule and rigidly established gender roles. Women were held in subordination to their fathers, husbands, and even brothers because of these social norms. It was via one's socioeconomic position within the community that social borders were in part formed. It is crucial to consider the larger socioeconomic context of Austen's time, as well as the limitations on behavior and conduct that context imposed, when reading her books. One may delve deeply into the inner workings of middle-class society in England in the late eighteenth

and early nineteenth century by reading Austen's books. It is clear from Austen's books that she subscribed to Mary Wollstonecraft's revolutionary teachings on women's rights. Because of this and her critique of conventional conventions, Austen is seen as a writer who was ahead of her time. Austen's female characters exhibit first-wave feminism in terms of their freedom of speech, character, and total autonomy. It is crucial to first identify the aims and background of first-wave feminism because each wave of the movement sought for various forms of women's freedom and equality.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine *Pride And Prejudice* by Jane Austen in order to evaluate the numerous instances in which Austen challenges patriarchal society and demonstrates the need for change. The researcher will make the case that Austen established a setting in her book where women could marry for love and express their opinions to both men and women by analyzing the characters from the book. The researcher will analyze the novel . Elizabeth Bennet has independence that goes beyond what was expected of women at the period. Elizabeth may be studied more progressively than they have in the past due to Austen's inclusion of such strong female characters, who are complacent within the patriarchal system of control and who rebel against it. she takes advantage of the patriarchal environment they live in while yet maintaining agency and a measure of freedom.

The present thesis is divided into two chapters. Hence, chapter one will highlight the general background about female role in society that time. Thus, in this chapter the researcher will review the most dominant criteria of women in society that time by referring Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* for being the focal subject of the current research. While chapter two will focus on the writer herself and the different aspects of feminism. To this end, the researcher will raise questions to be answered at the end of this work :

- How did Austen defy gender stereotype ?
- What was Austen's aim behind producing a range of female character in *Pride and prejudice* ?
- What issues of feminism are reflected in the *Pride And Prejudice* ?

- What are the dominant roles of women deserted in the pride And prejudice novel ?

Chapter one:

Women's Position in Society
During the Regency Era

1-1-Introduction :

The regency era started by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The society in that era privileged men over women which created a patriarchal society.

Men had a lot of freedom and rights comparing to women who were underestimated by the society. Composing papers and shaping their claims through words was the first step for women to start calling for their rights and revolt against the patriarchal society which was controlled by men. Hence in this chapter the researcher will define the key terms that are related to this thesis beside highlighting the position of women in patriarchal society during the regency era.

Definition of key words : Feminism, Pride and Prejudice Novel, patriarchy

1-2-Patriarchy :

In many feminist theories, the idea of patriarchy has been at the center. It is an effort to explain the gendered stratification of privilege and power that is evident through a variety of objective measurements. An ancient Greek term for a society where the older males retained and passed down authority was a patriarchy. In a "patriarchal society," as defined by contemporary historians and sociologists, males are in positions of authority and privilege, including those of head of the household, social group leader, employer, and head of government. A hierarchy among the men exists under patriarchy as well (Hannam,2007). In traditional patriarchy, older males had authority over younger male generations. Because of their positions of authority, some males possess more power (and privilege) under the modern patriarchy, and this power structure is accepted. Its root word is pater, which means father. In a patriarchal society, the father or father figures are in charge. The inheritance of titles and property occurs through male lines in traditional patriarchal civilizations, which are typically patrilineal as well (Hannam,2007).

The term "patriarchal society" has been broadened by feminist theorists to include a bias against women that is institutionalized. Second-wave feminists saw female leaders and families headed by women while studying society in the 1960s. Of course, they

were interested in whether this was unusual. More crucial, though, was the way society saw women in authority as an exception to a collectively held idea of women's "place" in society. Most feminisms felt that women's subjugation arose from the underlying prejudice of a patriarchal culture rather than from specific males.

1-3-Feminism :

The purpose of feminism is to define, create, and realize equal political, economic, cultural, personal, and social rights for women. Feminism is a collection of groups and philosophies working toward this end. This includes working to ensure that women have equal access to job and educational opportunities. «feminism is a kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice People » (Ritzer,2004 :448)

1-3-1-Feminism in England :

Many of the historical events that characterized the Victorian era sparked debates regarding women's nature and role. From the Revolution of 1848 to the dislocation of industrial revolution, the subject of women's place in society and politics arose most sharply during times of conflict. In addition, the boost for empire at the end of the nineteenth century. However, the woman question was also debated on a daily basis. Due to the fact that women challenged the restrictions imposed on their education, property rights, and social standing. The British suffrage movement's beliefs were directly derived from the Enlightenment (Ashley,1953).

According to the separate sphere concept, a respectable woman's only legitimate role was at home, caring for and comforting her husband and children. By describing the intrinsic traits of women, this ideology was created to explain why this separation was required (Ashley,1953).

Women were said to be unable to function in public because of these characteristics. Physically, women were deemed to be inferior to males, but morally superior. Religion helped to solidify this notion. Women's superiority in the domestic realm was seen to suit them best. Women were also required to instill moral characteristics in the next generation in order for civilization to survive (Ashley,1953).

1-3-2-Feminism from the late 18th to the 19th in England:

A married woman did not have property and was not allowed to vote , and had no

claim to her kids in the eyes of the law. They called long and hard for their own rights. Amid the nineteenth century, the state of coverture was part of the English common law system. On the other hand, It was possible for single and widowed women to own property and have money while married women couldn't have the same rights as single women, and their claims were dismissed. Emmeline Pankhurst was a founding member of the Women's Franchise League, an anti-coverture organization. Chartism was a blatantly hypocritical popular radical movement that advocated for universal male suffrage. Meanwhile, it drew a large number of ladies. Many women actively supported and helped their husbands' participation in the Chartist movement.

Tens of thousands of working women joined this movement. "There were about 150 female Chartist associations, one for every 9 male associations" (Matthew,2000 :177).

The National Society for Women Suffrage, created in 1867, was the first organization under the aim of securing women the right to vote. It encouraged petitions and scored a significant win in 1869 with the passage of the Municipal Franchise Act., allowing unmarried and widowed women ratepayers to vote in borough elections. Women could be part in municipal government as a result of this important legislation. Many women, including Mary Corbett, Emmeline Pankhurst, and Charlotte Despard, took advantage of this opportunity. They were terrible at enforcing the law (Matthew,2000).

In 1880, almost 1 million women in England and Wales held local franchises.

Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Franchise League in 1889. She campaigned for the right to vote and was successful when the Local Government Act was passed in 1894. This Act granted married women equal voting rights and the right to serve on municipal councils (Matthew,2000).

In 1897, Mrs Millicent Fawcett founded the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, the United Kingdom's largest suffrage organization. This was a confederation of women's suffrage organizations that already existed. The National Society for Women's Suffrage was replaced by this organization (Nancy,1987).

Women's suffrage was supported by these suffragists. Some women, however, became increasingly aggressive as a result of the impasse.

The female suffrage clause of the Representation of the People Bill was approved by 385 votes to 55 in the House of Commons on June 19, 1917. It was approved by a majority of 134 to 71 in the House of Lords. The Representation of the People Act enfranchised all

women over the age of thirty who were on the local government register or were the wives of men on the local government registration. 8.5 million women voted alongside 12.9 million males in the 1918 general election. Women above the age of 30 who were local government electors were still denied the right to vote.

With the cooperation of both opposition parties, the Conservative Party equalized the franchise laws in 1928. Women in the United Kingdom were granted political equality for the first time with this Act.

1.4 General Background About Female of Regency Era :

The Regency Era is a period which began in 1811, when the Regency Act was passed and George, Ruler of Wales, succeeded his father George III who was mentally sick as Sovereign Official.

George III's death marked the end of the era. Throughout this period, some women established themselves as distinct scholars. Jane Austen was one of them, and she decided to reflect traditional female roles throughout the Rule era. It was tough to be a woman in those days, especially a lady novelist (Ascarelli,2004). Women's writing fashion was seen to be inferior to men's writing fashion. The disdain for ladies journalists that Austin confronted all through her career is clearly visible in her memoir *A Journal* whose creator James Edward Austen-Leigh, Austin's nephew, expresses his concern around his aunt's composing, worried

that his aunt's letters will be seen as being too gossipy and discursive. He believes, like Henry Tilney, that women's letters do not contain enough full stops. He therefore imposes his own masculine definition of order and theme on what he takes to be the chaos of her writing (Knight ,1864:80).

It is clear that males underestimated, mistreated, and separated women. Flaw became a synonym for women, especially when it comes to their writing style. As a result, it is not surprising that women had subservient lifestyles and had to acknowledge:

the symbolic authority of fathers and husbands, the self-sacrifices of motherhood and the burdensome responsibility for domestic servants, housekeeping and family consumption. The fact that these elements were so abiding perhaps accounts for the extent of acquiescence- rebelling against roles that appeared both prehistoric and preordained would profit nothing. (Vickery, 1878:90)

In other words, in Austin's time ladies thought that they might do nothing but what was expected from them; they were overwhelmed by men. Relational unions were organized, generally inside the same social course. Indeed middle-class guardians needed their girls well arranged. Adore was not vital when it came to choosing a spouse (Nancy,1987).

Ladies did not have much choice; single, more seasoned than twenty, ladies were considered to be a burden to their families and numerous ladies got hitched, so that society would not see down on them. They could become governesses; yet, that was a position beneath the social rank and status of middle and upper class young women and was thus regarded as humiliating. A woman's happiness depended entirely on her parents' approval until she got married i.e women can be seen as oppressed victims of a patriarchal society, subordinate first to their fathers and, then, to their husbands who had, of course, been selected by their fathers (Nancy,1987).

Besides, ladies might not acquire property. Once hitched, they misplaced control over both their belonging and their destiny and got to be their husbands' property:

A married woman or feme covert was a dependent, like an underage child or a slave, and could not own property in her own name or control her own earnings, except under very specific circumstances. When a husband died, his wife could not be the guardian to their under-age children. Widows did have the right of "dower," a right to property they brought into the marriage as well as to life usage of one-third of their husbands' estate. (Blackwell,1984:20)

Ladies were, hence, not autonomous; independency was related to maleness. It is clear that the only way a lady may achieve fortune and autonomy was through her husband's passing. However, indeed at that point, they were not secure since, fair as girls of well-to-do guardians, they got to be casualties of fortune-seeking men.

Additionally, a lady whose guardians did not possess a huge fortune had an awfully contract chance of finding a spouse.

When it came to their instruction, ladies were either instructed at domestic or in girls' schools and i.e these studies were thought to be sufficient to provide a girl with the accomplishments necessary to attract a suitable husband. It is obvious that the sole point of women's education was marriage. In their lifestyle, ladies, particularly those of higher lesson, gone to and organized supper parties, but indeed there ladies had to comply to rules such as:

“The ladies sit a quarter of an hour longer, during which time sweet wines are sometimes served, then rise from the table. The men rise at the same time, one opens the door for them, and as soon as they are gone, draw closer together. Every man is, however, at liberty to follow the ladies as soon as he likes. “ (Hughes, 1970).

It is very self-evident that the same rules did not apply to men and to ladies; men had much more freedom. Besides, ladies, as much as men, delighted in the nation balls and gatherings: “Assemblies provided the opportunity for social advancement and were the perfect venue for matchmaking“ (Hughes, 1970).

Youthful single ladies were presented to society amid these occasions. It was an fabulous opportunity for them to meet men and discover a idealize coordinate but indeed when it came to happenings of this kind, there were rules of conduct for youthful ladies: “Public balls are not much frequented by people of good society, except in watering places and country towns. Even there a young lady should not be seen at more than two or three in the year“ (Hughes, 1970)

Appropriately, there were numerous imperatives on women's flexibility and way of living in Rule Britain, so it is no ponder that numerous journalists of the time chosen to investigate this issue in their work and delineate women's life.

1.5 Conclusion:

Something had changed in the representation of women in literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. Because of patriarchal culture, males held authority in all aspects of life, including literature, which influenced the depiction of women in literary works prior to the romantic period.

Women were portrayed as dependent on males, following men's dictates, and becoming housewives. However, with the Romantic feminist Jane Austen, all of that changed. Her works, which feature strong, independent female protagonists, altered the way women were portrayed in literature. There was no such thing as "feminist" or "feminism" during Jane Austen's time, but the problem of gender inequality aided in the emergence of a feminist perspective.

Chapter two :

Aspects of Feminism in *Pride And Prejudice*

2.1 Introduction :

Jane Austen is a British author who was dynamic amid the Regency era. In those times it was difficult to be a lady, particularly a lady author. Women's fashion of writing was considered to be second rate to men's composing fashion. In Austen's time ladies thought that they might do nothing but what was anticipated from them; they were overwhelmed by men. Relational unions were orchestrated, for the most part inside the same social lesson. Indeed middle-class parents needed their girls well arranged. Love was not vital when it came to choosing a spouse. In her books Jane Austen depicts women's life and position in the Rule Britain. Women's life rotated around getting married, ideally to a rich man, to secure their social position. "Pride and Prejudice" (1813) is likely her most celebrated novel. It deals with the life of Elizabeth Bennet, who is the second of five daughters within the Bennet family.

2.2 Biography of Jane Austen :

Jane Austen was born on the 16th of September in 1775. born to Cassandra Austen of the Leigh family and Reverend George Austen of the Steventon rectory. She was to be the couple's second daughter and the seventh child overall. Because most of her siblings were males, Cassandra, her older sister, and she were obliged to have a close connection (not to be confused with the mother whom also carried the name Cassandra - but further referred to as Mrs. Austen). The Austen children were born in the following order: James, George, Edward, Henry, Cassandra, Francis, Jane, and Charles. Henry would be the sibling to whom Jane would feel the most connection, acting as her literary agent in the latter phases of her work (Bailey, 2015).

The Austen children were raised in an environment that emphasized open communication, creativity, and education. As his family grew, Mr. Austen labored away in the rectory and even dabbled in farming on the side. In addition, he tutored outside children at home to supplement his income. All of the Austen children would grow up in this close-knit family. with Jane developing a particularly strong relationship with her father (Bailey, 2015).

In 1783, Jane and her sister Cassandra, both eight years old, were sent to boarding school to receive their formal education. Music, dancing, and foreign languages,

specifically French, were appropriate things to teach at the time.

Jane's schooling after returning home was mostly based on what her father, brothers, and sisters had taught her and of course, what she could acquire through her own reading, could teach her. Mr. Austen had a substantial book collection in his home library since he was interested in the church.. Both Jane and Cassandra had access to this library, Jane took the lead in both reading and writing endeavors, and the two of them made extensive use of it. Mr. Austen supported Jane's interest in writing by making his books and paper available to her, and writing supplies so she could express her creativity. According to all accounts, the Austen household was a laid-back environment with many efforts at comedy and some wonderful side conversation.

It became rather common for the family to dedicate time and effort to writing and performing their own original plays or staging old plays at home.

Participation, improvisation, acting, and observation during these activities can only imply this., Jane Austen's actual gift was being developed (Bailey,2015).

The year 1787 arrived just in time for Jane to grow increasingly intrigued. in creating her own works and preserving them in journals for later use. Jane was able to debate and remark on intriguing topics in these volumes. on the times through stories and poems. These pieces were collected to form the Juvenilia, which filled three entire notebooks. After authoring the dark, satirical comedy *Love and Friendship* in 1789, Jane started to take writing more seriously. At the following four years, she would start composing plays, including *Sir Charles Garandison or the Happy Man*, a comedy with six acts that was based on the literature she was required to read in school. Sadly, the idea was scrapped in favor of another one, which eventually evolved into *Susan*, a novel recounted in the epistolary format, or as a sequence of letters. Before 1796, the Austen family members remembered Jane finishing the book *Elinor and Marianne*, which she would then read aloud to them for entertainment.

After completing their official educations at the boarding school, Jane and Cassandra go permanently back home, and Jane then begins to write the novel *First Impressions*. She had no idea that this particular work, which is now known as *Pride & Prejudice*, would go on to become her most well-known and lasting composition. Sometime around 1799, the first draft was completed.

Mr. Austen, ever the devoted father, makes a real effort to encourage his talented daughter's success. He made an effort to get Thomas Cadell, a London-based publisher, to publish one of her pieces. The endeavor was unsuccessful since Cadell dismissed the work without even attempting to open the box. It is uncertain if Jane was aware of her father's efforts to support her career.

Then, using the *Pride & Prejudice* manuscript, Egerton released this second work in January 1813 for general consumption. This time, Egerton spent a good amount of time and money promoting Jane's work, and both the general public and critics found the book to be a huge success. A second printing run is swiftly ordered by October due to the success.

Henry, Cassandra's brother, and their ill sister sought medical attention for her in May 1817. They brought Jane to Winchester so she might receive therapy for a condition for which there was no known cure at the time. Jane Austen passed away in Winchester on July 18, 1817, taking with her the conclusions to her unfinished works. Henry used his contacts to arrange for his sister's burial at the Winchester Cathedral. Henry and Cassandra attempted to get *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* published as a set collection by Murray because they were dissatisfied with having her final finished works remain unpublished.

Although the creator of the works was still unknown to the public at this point, Henry wrote a very sympathetic account of her in this work. He identified her as Jane Austen, giving her a first-ever professional connection to her writing.

2.2.1 Theme of Austen's Novel :

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century social structure in England, which was patriarchal and dominated by males in terms of both economic and social power, is the main subject of Austen's work. Austen discreetly and humorously highlights flaws in the system in a depiction of the men and women trying to make a living that is sometimes satirical, challenging the principles of English society and the political system of the nation.

2.3 Summary of Pride And Prejudice :

At a ball, Mrs. Bennet thinks as she saw Mr. Bingley "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." (Austin, 1813 :01) who, she is confident, will be a good match for one of her daughters. The attractive and reserved Jane immediately piques Bingley's interest. His friend Darcy and Elizabeth's interaction is less pleasant. The pride of rank and riches and prejudice against the social inferiority of Elizabeth's family keep Darcy distant, and the pride of self-respect and prejudice against Darcy's snobbery keep Elizabeth equally far, despite the fact that Austen depicts them as being captivated by one another.

Soon after, the arrogant Collins shows up with plans to wed one of the Bennet sisters. Elizabeth, whom Mrs. Bennet directs him toward, declines his proposal of marriage. Instead, he marries Charlotte, a friend of her. Elizabeth runs into the attractive Wickham at this moment. The two are attracted to one another, and he confesses to her that Darcy declined to give him his fortune.

Elizabeth's distaste for Darcy grows when Bingley goes for London in an impulsive manner because she believes he is trying to sabotage Bingley's relationship with Jane. Darcy, on the other hand, has grown to like Elizabeth more and more, appreciating her brains and energy. Elizabeth runs into Darcy while visiting the now-married Charlotte, who declares his love for her and proposes to her. When Darcy demands an explanation for Elizabeth's rejection of his offer, she claims that he is responsible for the breakup of Jane and Bingley and the deprivation of Wickham's fortune. Later, Darcy writes Elizabeth a letter in which he clarifies that the main reason for their separation was his belief that Jane did not share Bingley's feelings for her. He also reveals that Wickham attempted to marry Darcy's sister, who was then 15 years old, in order to acquire her wealth after wasting his inheritance. With this new information, Elizabeth starts to view Darcy differently.

Lydia, the youngest Bennet sibling, marries Wickham shortly after. Elizabeth is extremely alarmed by the news since the scandalous romance, which is unlikely to result in marriage, may damage the image of the other Bennet sisters. When Darcy learns, he offers Wickham money in exchange for his engagement to Lydia. Darcy tries to conceal his interference, but Elizabeth finds out about it. Bingley later makes a comeback, and

with Darcy's support, he proposes to Jane. At last, Elizabeth accepts Darcy's second marriage proposal.

2.4 Feminism in Pride And Prejudice

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen focuses on the idea of marriage and how it serves as a microcosm of society as a whole, depicting a number of different partnerships at various stages of life. The reader gets the distinct feeling throughout the book that Elizabeth Bennet's marriage is far better than the ones that are mentioned. In contrast to the other weddings that occur in the book, Austen's deliberate attention on Elizabeth's union demonstrates her illingness to favor unions based on affection and equality. When the many marriages in the book are contrasted to Elizabeth's, it is clear that Austen was criticizing the limitations and restrictions that women in her time and place had to live with (Brown,1973). These marriages lack characteristics that Austen views as essential, such as love, respect, or the capacity for the parties to the marriage to develop one other's character.

In a society dominated by patriarchal control in marriages, Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam Darcy's enduring love story was meant to shake the foundations of marriage ideology as it was known in Austen's time and place—and perhaps still our own. As I have noted, Austen includes an in-depth description of several marriages throughout the novel. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage represents an unhappy union as the woman is not educated enough to be an equal partner to her husband. Austen's critique of Mrs. Bennet can therefore be seen as a critique of the society that created her. The scandalous connection between Mr. George Wickham and Lydia Bennet is a prime example of a relationship that blatantly flouts social norms and leads to an unhappy forced marriage. The modest union of Mr. Charles Bingley and Jane Bennet epitomizes the desired marriage of the time. Even if Austen contends that it stops the individuals from becoming better people, such a pairing was formerly seen to be the ideal (Bailey,2015).

The union of Mr. William Collins and Charlotte Lucas is shown as being one of convenience rather than of love or respect. First wave feminism was made possible because to Austen's depiction of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship as one based on love,

respect, and mutual action rather than mere convenience. First-wave feminism carries up on the agency for women that Austen's novels promote by showing a woman who is intelligent and eager to speak her thoughts as they fight for women's suffrage among other rights.

2.4.1 Mr. and Mrs. Bennet

While Elizabeth's mother, Mrs. Bennet, is ridiculed throughout the novel for being intolerable and in total want of propriety, her behavior is founded in concerns that are quite logical given early nineteenth century laws, especially in relation to entailment. Even while her actions may be considered foolish, they are actually her reaction to the limitations that her society has set on her, and as such, they may be interpreted as a critique of the patriarchal culture of the period. The character of Mrs. Bennet clearly reflects Mary Wollstonecraft's critique of the women her society created, drawing comparisons between Wollstonecraft's philosophy and Austen's books. Her deceitful schemes to marry off her daughters to affluent men are motivated by the real worry that she and her daughters may become homeless following her husband's passing. She informs her husband that her desire for her daughters to have successful marriages devoured her life. "If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield (said Mrs. Bennet to her husband) and all the others equally married, I shall have nothing to wish for" (Austen, 1813 :5).

Through her works, Austen gives her readers a singular glimpse into the rules and traditions that governed her society. The regulations that Jane Austen alludes to in the first few chapters of *Pride and Prejudice* are described by Martha Bailey in "The Marriage Law of Jane Austen's World." Since Mr. Bennet has five daughters but no sons, his inheritance won't be distributed to a daughter after his passing but to a male cousin instead: "If a son had been born to the Bennets, the son, rather than Mr. Collins, would have been entitled to the family property on Mr. Bennet's death" (Bailey, 2015 :2). Since there was no male heir, Mr. Collins would inherit the whole family's estate upon Mr. Bennet's passing. The logical cause of Mrs. Bennet's urgent wish for her daughters to be married is this unavoidable reality.

Jane and Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet's two oldest daughters, are ardently sought after by prospective husbands. In order for the family to be financially secure in the case of her husband's passing, her daughters must marry someone wealthy. Mrs. Bennet's tale is driven by her desire to settle her daughters throughout the whole book. Mrs. Bennet is first overjoyed when word of Mr. Bingley's presence in the area spreads because of the opportunities his wealth could present for their family. Upon being asked if he was single, she replies, "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!" (Austen, 1813 :1).

Such a declaration demonstrates Mrs. Bennet's intention to practically hurl her daughters in the path of men who will be able to provide for the family financially from the start. Her apprehension demonstrates how estates were valued over women and children under England's succession rules. The inheritance rules did not protect women; rather, they used them as a tool to safeguard estates and preserve socioeconomic order. When we consider the historical setting, her sense of lawlessness is comprehensible even though this desire does not always explain her odd behavior.

Social customs of the day required that Mr. Bingley be properly presented to the Bennet family because they were a lesser status family than Mr. Bingley's. The Bennet women would be unable to properly meet Mr. Bingley if he neglected to introduce himself to them and if Mr. Bennet, the male household member, did not make an effort to make sure this happened. This would make it more difficult for Mrs. Bennett to marry off her daughters in what the book already depicts as a desperate attempt to improve their dismal prospects. Such a case of Mr. Bennett's seeming carelessness demonstrates that, despite the fact that he first seems to be the epitome of common sense, Mrs. Bennett is the one protecting her kids to the best of her ability within the confines of her society (Brown, 1973). When Mr. Bennet jokingly states that he will not make the initial visit to Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Bennet is beside herself as she is sure the other chances for introduction will fall through: "I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her" (Austen, 1813 :3).

Austen illustrates the competitiveness among families that results from the social pressure to identify potential husbands for young ladies with her reaction. For all the available women in the middle-class society of the Bennets, there aren't nearly enough unmarried, wealthy men. This information prompts Mrs. Bennet to quickly put her friendship with Mrs. Long on hold since she believes that supporting her daughters' futures comes before supporting another mother. Mrs. Bennet's answer to a terrifying reality for women in her time period is not just a foolish competition (Brown,1973).

This opening dialogue gives the reader a great understanding of the first marriage that Austen wishes to depict: that of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. In ““A Pair of Fine Eyes”: Jane Austen’s Depiction of Sex,” Alice Chandler argues that the Bennet marriage functions as a foil to Elizabeth and Darcy’s eventual union. Chandler writes, “Mr. Bennet’s marital disappointment in his silly wife shows us what happens when a person of lively talents fails to choose an equal mate” (Chandler ,2019 :8). Austen’s words support such a claim when she writes:

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. 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. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news. (Austen,1813 :3)

Austen was criticizing the society that had put Mrs. Bennet in a position of ignorance, unhappiness, and lack of understanding when she criticized Mrs. Bennet. It is evident from seeing the limitations Mrs. Bennet is under to that her actions are motivated by the ignorance and desperation that the patriarchal society of the period imposed on her. Instead of being built on a foundation of love, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's relationship depends on ongoing, challenging negotiation. Mrs. Bennet is revealed to be stupid and uneducated, while Mr. Bennet is seen to be weary of his wife and eager to make fun of her to pass the time. However, readers must look past the marriage's outward appearance

since Mrs. Bennet is the parent most focused on securing a brighter future for her kids. If Austen's sharp condemnation of their relationship wasn't harsh enough, she also elegantly links Mrs. Bennet to the societal prejudices that were prevalent at the period regarding middle-class women: "its solace was visiting and news"(Austen,1813:3). Mrs. Bennet's only goals were to marry her daughters off and maintain her family's status as "a family had status only as long as it was represented within the community—in person and in the more indirect symbolic depictions of oral and written gossip, of news" (Kaplan,1992 :34). The future of the Bennet family rested with Mrs. Bennet because Mr. Bennet, the person in a position of actual power, did not want to socialize and worked to arrange matches for his daughters.

One instance of how Austen adapted Wollstonecraft's concepts for fiction is Mrs. Bennet's portrayal. In particular, Mrs. Bennet is portrayed by Austen in a way that supports Mary Wollstonecraft's conception of motherhood.

Wollstonecraft writes, "I will go still further, and advance, without dreaming of a paradox, that an unhappy marriage is often very advantageous to a family, and that the neglected wife is, in general, the best mother" (Wollstonecraft 1792 :18).

This phrase seems to apply to Mrs. Bennet because she is able to give her girls her undivided attention because of her husband's neglect. In "Replacing Romantic Sentiments with Just Opinions: How Austen's Novels Function like Wollstonecraft's 'Judicious Person,'" Kristine Hansen compares Wollstonecraft's writings to Austen's novels to show the likelihood that Austen was a follower of Wollstonecraft's work. Hansen outlines the "undesirable outcomes" of what Wollstonecraft saw as "deficient education of girls and women." These outcomes are its aim "to make women pleasing," which will eventually "lead a husband to become contemptuous of his wife's weakness and vanity as she ages" and "prone to infidelity" causing the wife to "resort to "cunning," or manipulation, to achieve their desires" (Hansen,2022 :663). The wife will be compelled to employ manipulation as her sole means of surviving in a world dominated by men, according to Wollstonecraft, if she is not educated to be her husband's equal after her physical charm and beauty wear off.

These unfavorable consequences, which point to women's inadequate education, offer insight on Mrs. Bennet's personality and conduct. Despite Austen's unfavorable portrayal of Mrs. Bennet, she criticizes the culture that gave rise to the character rather than the person. Hansen thinks back to Jane Austen's account of Mr. Bennet's marriage to Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* where Austen writes :

Her father, captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humor, which youth and beauty generally give, 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. Respect, esteem, and confidence had vanished forever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown. (Austen,1813 :164)

Mr. Bennet's employment of a superficial approach to finding a wife—which led to his unhappiness—is what Hansen is condemning in this passage. Mrs. Bennet was made by society, but Mr. Bennet's self-centered goals caused him to choose a spouse he does not respect or value.

Austen creates an image of a connection founded on an old physical attraction right at the start of the book. Due to the fact that Mrs. Bennet only received education on how to find a spouse for herself, the loss of her attractiveness leaves her with no other option than to manipulate her husband. She frequently makes comments to her ill health as a result of her husband's actions or inaction, which is one such manipulative approach. When Mr. Bennet tells his wife that he won't be making the first introduction to Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Bennet exploits her worry to make him feel guilty: “When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous” (Austen,1813 :3). Her response to his refusal is to say, “You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves” (Austen,1813 :2).

By accusing him in this manner, Mrs. Bennet plays on the myth that women are emotionally unstable in order to control her husband's behaviors and behavior. As for her

parenting abilities, she can only pass down what she learned for herself as a young lady—namely, that a woman must use all available methods to find a spouse. I contend that Austen paints Mrs. Bennet in such a negative light in order to highlight an issue with how society puts women into such duties.

By teaching her five daughters to be manipulative throughout the novel, Mrs. Bennet perpetuates the cycle of manipulation that society has placed upon her. It is significant to note that in this instance, the term "manipulation" refers to actions that were perceived by society as manipulative, but in reality also reveal a degree of cunning on Mrs. Bennet's part because she had to find a way to assert herself on her own in a world designed by men for men. She manipulates the situation when Jane goes to visit Mr. Bingley by refusing to allow her to have access to the family carriage in order to prolong her visit and increase Jane's chances for attachment with Mr. Bingley. Her strategy succeeds since Jane contracts a severe cold while traveling and needs to stay in Bingley's house for a longer period of time to recover.

Such a plan demonstrates Mrs. Bennet's extreme determination to have Jane and Mr. Bingley reconcile to the point where she would jeopardize her daughter's health. Due to this, Mrs. Bennet finds herself in a challenging situation where she must choose between doing what is right for her daughter and putting her in danger in order to secure an invitation that society would not have permitted her to obtain in any other manner. Given that she is compelled to prioritize this dread over Jane's health, Mrs. Bennet's actions reflect her true concern for her daughters' futures. Mrs. Bennet has been compelled by society to play the role of a good mother while also being prevented from playing this role in regards to marrying her daughters. She has no choice except to use deception.

Mrs. Bennet continues to represent Wollstonecraft's argument about the need for better education for women through her lack of discernment. Mrs. Bennet's priority is for her daughters to marry a wealthy man in the beginning of the book in order to support them and the family, but by the book's conclusion, she has even given up on this requirement. Mrs. Bennet insists that Elizabeth accept Mr. Collins' marriage proposal

despite the fact that he lacks the virtues and character of a gentleman and has little money aside from his future possession of Longbourn. Mrs. Bennet is unconcerned that Elizabeth finds him repulsive since she is more concerned with protecting their land than with the pleasure of any one daughter.

2.4.2 Lydia Bennet and George Wickham

Even while Mrs. Bennet's actions can sometimes be excused by recognizing that they are a result of the constrictive society she lives in, there are still certain cases where they are wrong. She exhibits a variety of reactions to Lydia's elopement with Mr. George Wickham, which calls for criticism. The youngest Bennet sister is fixated with Mr. Wickham and finds him to be the focus of her obsession. Lydia is devastated when Mr. Wickham and his regiment relocate to Brighton, but Mrs. Forster eventually invites her to the celebration. Lydia is permitted to accept the invitation despite Elizabeth's protests to their father that "her character will be fixed, and she will, at sixteen, be the most determined flirt that ever made herself and her family ridiculous" (Austen, 1813 :161).

Lydia's obsession with the officers' company demonstrates the effect of her mother, who has tried to marry off her daughters because of societal pressures to the point that she exposed her immature sixteen-year-old to adult society. Once again, Mrs. Bennett's action is influenced by the limitations placed on women in her society; she would rather have her daughter risk controversy than forgo marriage and end up poor. What other option does Mrs. Bennett have when her motherly error causes controversy and her daughter's reputation to be ruined? A higher chance of avoiding familial ruin was offered by five daughters than by four. Therefore, while such behavior is unacceptable for a mother by today's standards, it might once more be justified by the patriarchal culture that imprisoned Mrs. Bennet.

While in Brighton, Lydia runs off with Mr. Wickham without a care for the impact that it will have on her family's reputation, let alone her own. Her blindness to the seriousness of the situation is apparent in the note she leaves behind where she writes, "You will laugh when you know where I am gone, and I cannot help laughing at myself at your surprise to-morrow morning, as soon as I am missed" (Austen, 1813 :202). When

news of this reaches Longbourn and the family gathers to determine a plan of action, they find Mrs. Bennet exactly as might be expected; with tears and lamentations of regret, invectives against the villainous conduct of Mr. Wickham, and complaints of her own sufferings and ill usage; blaming everybody but the person to whose ill judging indulgence the errors of her daughter must be principally owing.

Although her wailings appear to be sincere, they only linger until she learns that Mr. Wickham would genuinely do Lydia right and marry her. (Although nobody in the family is aware at this time that Mr. Darcy is pressuring Wickham into making this choice).

There is little doubt that Mrs. Bennet cares more about the idea of marriage than the moral character of her daughters. By examining the moral failing, Mary Wollstonecraft's critique of patriarchal society is once more linked to Mrs. Bennet. Such a mistake exemplifies Wollstonecraft's claim that women should be educated to a higher level so that they might place a greater emphasis on their moral worth than on worldly ties (Wollstonecraft ,1792 :68). Mrs. Bennet's almost quick change in mood reveals that she is more concerned with her daughter's position and material wealth than with the lack of morality and character that led to Lydia's situation. As soon as word of the marriage reaches Mrs. Bennet, she forgets all about the villainous Mr. Wickham and instead embraces Wickham and the need for Lydia to have proper wedding clothes Mrs. Bennet is roused from her sorrow by the entrance of marriage into Elizabeth's situation, which will always be a source of shame for her. She then breaks out in tears of delight at the nuptials of her youngest daughter. Mrs. Bennet's seeming inability to contain both joy and sadness, necessary in such a circumstance, shows her to be an unsuitable mother in Wollstonecraft's view as "reason is absolutely necessary to enable a woman to perform any duty properly" (Wollstonecraft ,1792 :44).

But as it was already indicated, Wollstonecraft also contends that the finest moms are neglected wives. I contend that these two opposing ideas are intertwined in Austen's work; Mr. Bennet's disregard for his wife causes Mrs. Bennet to give her girls her undivided attention, but this attention is only as great as society allows it.

Mrs. Bennet demands that Lydia and her husband come home after the scandalous wedding so they can make their marriage public among their company. Everyone in the family makes an effort to convince her otherwise because the marriage is still very much a shame to the family, but in the end Mrs. Bennet gets her way. When Lydia and Wickham arrive, Mrs. Bennet naively presents them as her treasured married daughter and son-in-law and parades them about society Mrs. Bennet lacks the knowledge that Wollstonecraft believes women required in order to have moral ideas beyond those of a frivolous, ignorant wife, as seen by her inability to look past the marital status of her children. Mrs. Bennet would have been better equipped to direct her daughters into marriages and circumstances that would have improved society and morals if she had acquired a thorough education.

The underlying scandal of Lydia's impulsive and unwanted (for Wickham) marriage becomes clear when their union is contrasted with that of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. While Lydia stands out for rejecting constraints placed on women's sexuality, Elizabeth stands out for her reluctance to accept societal restrictions despite the financial consequences. In a society where women were to remain mysterious in the eyes of men until marriage, « *Lydia would never be easy until she has exposed herself in some public place or other , and we can never expect her to do it with so little expense or inconvenience to herfamily as under the present circumstancesv* »(Austen,1813 :161). Austen was advocating a shift within the patriarchal paradigm, even though such a step would be welcomed under more contemporary feminist thinking. Lydia, the youngest Bennet sibling, is immature and pursues every man she meets.

Austen emphasizes how the people are viewed differently based on their behavior and maturity by using comparable features between sisters Lydia and Elizabeth in remarkably different ways In *Laughing at Mr. Darcy*. Lydia and Elizabeth both utilize laughter to stand out, but in very different ways. Lydia's laughter is seen as socially unacceptable because of its sexual nature and its implication of disrespect to those being laughed at, especially when male.

Lydia doesn't take the problem seriously when it damages her image to the point that she runs off with Mr. Wickham, a dubious figure who has no desire to wed her. When ending

her letter revealing her potential elopement with Mr. Wickham, Lydia writes, “What a good joke it will be! I can hardly write for laughing” (Austen,1813 :202).

What Lydia mistakenly believed to be a joke actually had the potential to inflict major harm to both her image and the reputation of her family.

Elizabeth Bennet, in contrast, uses laughing more seriously as a method to engage with people around her and assert herself in a social situation while still, for the most part, maintaining within the confines of decorum. Her laughter serves as a subliminal attack on the patriarchal paradigm, making its point without departing from it. Elizabeth makes an effort to establish a connection with Colonel Fitzwilliam by making fun of Mr. Darcy's arrogant behavior during a dance . Elizabeth utilizes laughing to take control of the story in relation to the same arrogant incident during the dance. Mr. Darcy basically tells Elizabeth that she isn't worth dancing with, and Elizabeth decides to tell Charlotte the tale by making fun of him and taking charge of the story rather than letting her shame overtake her. In contrast to Lydia's laughing, which Casal perceived as a manifestation of ignorance, Elizabeth's laughter, in my opinion, demonstrated authority. While Elizabeth and Lydia's laughing defies social conventions, it is received in exactly the opposite way that Austen intended. Lydia uses laughter to expose herself and her family while Austen has Elizabeth use laughter to take back power from the patriarchal powers that be⁴ The reader can conclude from this that Elizabeth is still in charge, just as she was when she was married to Mr. Darcy.

2.4.3 Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley

Jane and Bingley's partnership, though it still lacks the agency and freedom inherent in a really equal union, exemplifies a marriage that looks appropriate for the period and highlights the lack of fulfillment found in unsuitable unions like Lydia and Wickham's. Although neither one speaks much, Jane's actions indicate that she will keep silent and submit to her husband's wishes. The relationship between Jane and Bingley doesn't appear to accomplish anything to develop either of their personalities. Jane continues to be the endearingly nice person she was before the union, despite gaining financial security and social standing. She does not advocate for herself and her affections, leading Darcy to believe her to be "*without any symptom of peculiar regard*" (Austen, 1813 :138). Jane would have been content to forget her love for Bingley if he had not approached her for a rekindling of their passion. Similar to how Bingley is portrayed as the epitome of a Regency gentleman, even this picture is revealed to be imperfect. Mr. Bingley lacks the depth of character that is likely only possible via the support and guidance provided by a moral wife. This deficiency is made clear towards the book's conclusion when he insists for Darcy's approval of the union.

Bingley started out as a wealthy, well- liked people-pleaser and stayed that way all the way to the end because he still needed Darcy's approval to marry Jane. His marriage to Jane did not change him from his habits or push him to grow. Jane and Bingley have a passive relationship that develops without any effort from either of them. Despite the fact that this can appear advantageous, resilience and growth are discovered in the difficulties. These conflicts between Darcy and Elizabeth persisted throughout the book as Elizabeth berated his arrogant actions at every turn.

When Elizabeth finally agrees to his marriage proposal, Darcy finally confesses his conceited, haughty character and says: *Such I was, from eight to eight and twenty; and such I might still have been but for you, dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled.* (Austen, 1813 :259)

If Elizabeth had not been there to support him and give him constructive criticism, Darcy would not have developed as a person. Again, we can see how Wollstonecraft

influenced Austen here. According to Wollstonecraft's philosophy, both men and women must realize their full potential in order to avoid the conflicts that Elizabeth's audacity in challenging societal conventions and expressing her mind caused.

The differences in the relationships between Bingley and Jane and Darcy and Elizabeth can be partly attributed to the women's personalities. Jane is reserved and submissive, in contrast to Elizabeth's frankness. Even when Elizabeth muses on her sister's new relationship, she:

considered with pleasure that it was not likely to be discovered by the world in general, since Jane united with great strength of feeling, a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which would guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent. (Austen, 1813 :14)

Austen uses Jane to represent the ideal lady of the Regency age, whose strength comes from her kindness and beauty rather than her brains, via such observations from Jane's sister who is closest to her. I contend that Austen demonstrates the necessity for more agency and voice to be included as a method for the woman to be a genuine partner to her husband, while Jane's beauty and reserve promotes her to any man. Mr. Bingley has demonstrated a propensity for being easily swayed and led, thus he needs a lady who will act as a voice of reason in order to prevent him from taking incorrect counsel.

Because of her reserved nature, Jane cannot be the voice of reason to Bingley like Elizabeth is to Darcy. Due to this deficiency, Jane and Bingley's union falls short of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship's depiction of the ideal marriage based on equality and mutual improvement. Charlotte Lucas, a friend of the sisters, questions Jane's reserved demeanor and contends that a more assertive and over the top attitude is required to win Bingley's heart for Jane. Charlotte informs Elizabeth that “in nine cases out of ten, a woman had better show more affection than she feels. Bingley likes your sister undoubtedly; but he may never do more than like her, if she does not help him

on” (Austen 1813 :14).

Elizabeth responds that such a scheme would not lead to the marriage that Jane is after, but is instead used to secure “a rich husband, or any husband” (Austen ,1813 :14). Jane “is not acting by design” and therefore does not need to rely on her ability to oversell her affection to win Bingley’s heart.

His sisters and Mr. Darcy are frightened by Bingley's impending marriage to the Bennet family and the ensuing disarray and probable immorality as their relationship deepens. His sisters persuade him to give up his commitment to Jane and go to the city for the winter, serving as yet more illustration of how society reduces women to manipulative strategies. Because Bingley is so easily tricked, Jane is unaware of the family dynamics that drove his departure. Jane works to reason away his departure by informing Elizabeth that their attachment was not “more than an error of fancy on my side, and that it has done no harm to anyone but myself (Austen ,1813 :95). As opposed to assuming agency over the situation by means of determining Bingley’s feelings, Jane forces herself to be content to see him as a memory. She assures Elizabeth that “He may live in my memory as the most amiable man of my acquaintance, but that is all” (Austen ,1813 :95).

Both Jane and Mr. Bingley lack the ability to choose their own wishes and carry them out at this stage in the story. The Bingley sisters and Darcy's devious schemes would not have succeeded if Jane had the self-confidence of Elizabeth, Austen's ideal female heroine. When Bingley eventually makes it back to Longbourn, he instantly asks Jane to marry him, and she says yes right away. Their journey toward marriage did not develop Mr. Bingley's character because he only came back after Mr. Darcy paved the road by letting go of his animosity toward the Bennets. There was no turning point where Jane stood up for herself and demanded respect and an explanation from Bingley, or where Bingley's character was reinforced. The romance does lead to a marriage that is considered perfect for the time, but Austen's judgment of such a union is clear when contrasting their relationship to that of Elizabeth and Darcy, in which both characters improve as a consequence of the relationship. Here, Austen contends that a marriage

should aim for more than just happiness, social stability, or even financial security but to educate each other.

2.4.4 Charlotte Lucas and William Collins

The purpose of Charlotte and Mr. Collins, like with Jane and Mr. Bingley, is to provide as a counterbalance to Elizabeth's eventual connection with Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth wants to marry for love and respect, but Charlotte embodies the standard of the day—marriage for social and financial stability. Charlotte's goal for marriage is to secure her future and not to find joy in a companion. An example of this is when she tells Elizabeth, "It is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life" (Austen 1813 :17).

After a choice has been made and retreating is not an option, Charlotte would prefer to witness her spouse's failure. The complete opposite of this mindset is that of Elizabeth, who will not marry someone she does not respect and goes even farther by refusing to accept Darcy's proposal unless he is made to change his proud, haughty demeanor. Elizabeth refers to the characteristics of Darcy that she finds objectionable when she says:

From the very beginning—from the first moment, I may almost say,—of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain for the feelings of others, were such as to form the groundwork of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry. (Austen,1813 :135)

Elizabeth is convinced that Darcy must change in order to live up to her level of moral integrity. She is not just keen to see all of Darcy's merits before consenting to marry him. Elizabeth believes Charlotte's statements of practicality to be a joke and tells her, "You would never act in this way yourself" (Austen 1813 :15). This is a crucial issue since Charlotte will soon wed the guy Elizabeth considers to be the most foolish and uneducated marriageable man she has ever encountered. The narrator begins by

introducing Mr. Collins by writing:

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance. (Austen,1813 :49)

Austen makes sure the reader perceives Mr. Collins as uninformed and lacking in all the qualities that make a man of honorable character from the moment they first meet him. He believed he was above social conventions, which made it difficult for him to adapt to them. As previously evidenced by her insistence that Mr. Bennet introduce Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Bennet would not have even attempted to do what Mr. Collins does when he decides to present himself to Mr. Darcy at a party. He goes against Elizabeth's advice as "Elizabeth tried hard to dissuade him from such a scheme; assuring him that Mr. Darcy would consider his addressing him without an introduction as an impertinent freedom, rather than a compliment to his aunt" (Austen 1813 :69).

Elizabeth has a bad opinion of Mr. Collins since he disregarded her advice. Elizabeth's feminist beliefs demand a partner who, at the very least, will listen to her instead of pushing her into a position of reliance and subservience, as is shown from her final relationship with Darcy.

The rift between Mr. Collins and Elizabeth resurfaces again when Mr. Collins takes it upon himself to propose to Elizabeth. Collins believes this act to be one "of amends-or atonement-for inheriting their father's estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part" (Austen 1813 :49).

What he believes to be a thoughtful gesture hinging on charity, Elizabeth finds to be an insult of the deepest magnitude. Upon attempting to politely refuse Mr. Collins, Elizabeth is offended when Collins likens her to women who "reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies to their favour" (Austen 1813 :77).

This impulse to distort and control the story infuriates Elizabeth, who is desperate to be heard in a society dominated by men. Such a charge also implies that women are weaker and more easily influenced.

Elizabeth makes the following declaration to show her strong resolve:

Your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. -You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make you so. (Austen 1813 :76)

From a feminist standpoint, Elizabeth's reaction is intriguing because she introduces a subject that was absent from Mr. Collins' proposal: happiness. Despite having the potential to make Elizabeth happy, Mr. Collins was more interested in what society at the time deemed to be important: money and connections. He believed himself to be the key to the family's overall security because he was slated to inherit the Bennet estate once Mr. Bennet passed away. By offering marriage to Elizabeth, he felt there was no way he could be refused as he was the heir of all that the family possessed. Elizabeth's disregard for this fact and obstinate refusal of Mr. Collins is the most blatant portrayal of Austen's feminist agenda in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth goes against the will of her mother who insists that "Lizzy shall be brought to reason" (Austen, 1813 :78).

Elizabeth's unwillingness to follow her mother contrasts the two characters since Mrs. Bennet does not conform to Wollstonecraft's ideal of the rational woman, but Elizabeth's independence and pursuit of happiness may be seen as reasonable action in Wollstonecraft's eyes.

The Bennets' reactions to this botched marriage proposal make for an intriguing ending. Elizabeth must rethink and accept the proposal or risk losing

her mother's love forever, according to Mrs. Bennet, who is worried about the financial ruin of herself and her children. Upon bringing Mr. Bennet into the discussion, Mr. Bennet declares: "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 1813 :79).

Austen uses this occasion to shed light on the persistence of such anti-feminist attitudes. In Deborah Kaplan’s *Jane Austen Among Women*. Austen depicts that women consented to their own subordination because domestic femininity was inextricably connected to high social status when Mrs. Bennet tries to force Elizabeth into a loveless marriage and womanly servitude, showing that she learned these behaviors from her father, in a way that Mr. Bennet, the patriarchal control symbol, is hesitant to do.

Mrs. Bennet insisted that her daughter accept the ludicrous man's offer merely because she was raised to believe that's what a lady was supposed to do. However, Mr. Bennet, the alleged patriarchal household head, defended his daughter because he thought Elizabeth's rejection showed common sense and morality, more proof that she was one of Wollstonecraft's reasonable women. Due to his lack of concern for his daughters' financial futures and his wife's determination to see them married, Mr. Bennet exhibits a level of carelessness that may even be defined as callous indifference. Austen utilizes this circumstance to criticize the fact that women are not only being relegated to a second-class status, but that the women who came before them were also setting the pace. Such comments shows her willingness to utilize her novels to communicate her feminist beliefs and is quite progressive for her period.

Elizabeth declines Mr. Collins' proposal, but he swiftly accepts his humiliation and moves on to propose to Charlotte Lucas. Elizabeth is completely shocked when her buddy agrees to this marriage of convenience right away. Austen explicitly states that the match is completely motivated by Charlotte's desire for financial security in the following passage:

The stupidity with which he was favoured by nature, must guard his courtship from any charm that could make a woman wish for its continuance; and Miss Lucas, who accepted him solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment, cared not how soon that establishment was gained. (Austen 1813 :87)

Such a statement perfectly captures Charlotte's realistic perspective on being engaged and getting married as well as Mr. Collins' failure to be a charming beau. Elizabeth is surprised to learn that Charlotte does not have grand plans to wed for love, but rather sees marriage as more of a contract to set up security.

Charlotte's pragmatic view on marriage is strikingly different from Elizabeth's forward thinking desires for marital unions. In "Charlotte and Elizabeth: Multiple Modernities in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*," Melina Moe focuses on Charlotte's pragmatic view and suggests that Charlotte may have not been settling in her match with Mr. Collins as Elizabeth believes when she first hears of their engagement. Instead, Charlotte may have had a completely different expectation of marriage more typical of the time-period as "Charlotte neither asks for nor receives the kind of marriage Elizabeth demands for herself" (Moe,2016 :1077).

Charlotte serves as a counterpoint to symbolize the more conventional marital goals of women during the Regency period in England, whereas Austen portrays Elizabeth as wishing a more progressive marriage based on mutual affection and equality. By illustrating the potential consequences of marriages of convenience like Charlotte's, I contend that Austen promotes an increase in unions like Elizabeth's:

When explaining her acceptance of Mr. Collins to Elizabeth, Charlotte says I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. (Austen 1813 :87)

This scene exemplifies how Austen appeals to the twenty-first century woman as it displays "the costs of such a system of individuation" (Moe ,2016 :1076)

As Charlotte receives the benefits of marriage at a cost to her own personal happiness. Elizabeth, who embodies feminist values more than any other character in Austen's work, is unable to comprehend Charlotte's justification and regrettably ends the talk for her friend: Charlotte the wife of Mr. Collins, was a most humiliating picture!—And to the pang of a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem, was added the distressing conviction that it was impossible for that friend to be tolerably happy in the lot she had

chosen. (Austen 1813 :92)

Austen uses Charlotte's acceptance of the offer to highlight the ideological contrasts between Charlotte and Elizabeth. Elizabeth, the most renowned feminist heroine in Austen's works, is looking for a partnership that would encourage her to develop intellectually, provide a place of equality and love, and satisfy her social and financial demands as well. This perspective on marriage was ahead of its time since English society would not adopt it as the norm until many decades after Austen's passing. Given that Charlotte is only interested in safeguarding her financial future, it is clear how much she adheres to the patriarchal worldview. Charlotte believes that marriage is a necessary instrument that women must utilize in order to be supported; frequently, it is not critical who the guy is as long as he is able to do so. Austen highlights the traumatic nature of such marriages by placing Elizabeth and Charlotte next to one another. Austen's thesis is made plain by her portrayal of Mr. Collins, a grotesquely ignorant and repulsive figure, as well as Charlotte's passivity. The patriarchal marriage is unsatisfying to the woman. “ When Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr. Collins after they wed, Charlotte’s lack of fulfillment from her marriage is evident as she often “wisely did not hear” (Austen,1813 :110)

Charlotte’s husband as a means of sparing herself the embarrassment of his words. However, Mr. Collins' marriage completes his character. Is Austen implying that women would always feel unfulfilled in marriages based on patriarchal principles? The only respect Mr. Collins obtains comes through his ties to both Lady Catherine DeBourgh and his new wife since he lacks the common sense required to earn any respect on his own. Despite the fact that he is a guy, he seeks approval from the upper-class people around him, both male and female. His relationship with Charlotte demonstrates that despite his dubious morals, he finally has the ability to make the right choice in a marriage. His relationships with Lady Catherine DeBourgh demonstrate his strong ties to wealth and power. Given these facts, it is clear that Mr. Collins' tenuous standing in society is a result of his relationships with others rather than any accomplishments he may have had on his own. Due of Mr. Collins' circumstance, Austen is able to parody the notion of patriarchal marriage because it is meant to elevate women, even if it might be claimed that Mr.Collins benefits more from the marriage

than his wife.

Charlotte does not feel very satisfied after the game. Although she increases her money and stability, she diminishes in the eyes of people around her. Her loss of respect is evident as Elizabeth, her best friend, finds that she

“could never address her without feeling that all the comfort of intimacy was over” (Austen 1813 :103). Elizabeth’s inability to understand her friend’s actions in being tied to a man described as “not sensible” and having “a deficiency of nature” (Austen 1813 :107)

Austen is shown as a progressive thinker in terms of marriage in this condemnation of getting married for money. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte marries Mr. Collins for his meager financial resources and ends up with a tarnished image as having married a fool. The story contrasts this with Elizabeth refusing to wed for Mr. Collins' wealth and achieving a marriage based on equality, education, and respect that also happens to be accompanied by a sizable fortune and high social position.

A range of instances of typical and unusual weddings in England during the regency era are included in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. However, only one of these unions—that of Elizabeth and Darcy—is seen to be genuinely fruitful. By contrasting it with the other relationships in the story, their partnership is seen to be rewarding. The marriages shown in the book vary from the uncommon ones founded on social gain and/or the woman's survival to the forward-thinking ones based on mutual love and appreciation. Austen, however, demonstrates to the reader that a perfect union necessitates character development, particularly from the man. Darcy is frigid and haughty in the start of the book, and Elizabeth is critical. Through their interactions, Darcy’s walls come down and he admits the error of his ways as he was raised “to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond his own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my [his] own” (Austen 1813 :259).

If Darcy and Elizabeth had not been together, he may not have come to these conclusions.

It is evident from contrasting Elizabeth with the other female characters in the book that Austen meant Elizabeth to be a singular illustration of female agency and the capacity to influence people in positions of power around her. In “The Impact of the Feminist Heroine: Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*,” Hui-Chan Chang writes, “*Elizabeth’s ability to exert positive influence over one of society’s most affluent men, Mr. Darcy, offers evidence for a feminist ability to subvert the male-dominated society of Regency England*” (Chang, 2014 :76).

Chang uses the characters of Caroline, Charlotte, and Jane to contrast Elizabeth's character in order to demonstrate how Jane Austen utilized Elizabeth to promote feminist principles. A compelling case is presented in support of a conversation about what defines an accomplished lady between Caroline, Elizabeth, and Darcy. As a counterbalance to Elizabeth's persona, Caroline says :

“A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word” (Austen 1813 :27).

Darcy goes one step further and adds that in order to be considered accomplished, a woman must also be a proficient reader. According to Chang, this amendment addresses the need for women to have access to education (Chang, 2014 :79). Darcy views this as a progressive idea that demonstrates his belief that women should obtain a good education, while Elizabeth disagrees, stating that “*education for women at the time was dependent upon social class and wealth, and thus an unfair standard by which to judge all women*” (Chang, 2014 : 79).

Elizabeth's outspoken disagreement with Darcy's viewpoints exemplifies Austen's feminist worldview, while Caroline makes it clear in her responses that she is just interested in making Darcy happy .

“Caroline’s fixation on gaining Mr. Darcy’s attention by tempering her own opinions is a principal portrayal of the assumption that a woman’s primary goal is

obtaining an affluent husband” (Chang ,2014 :79).

Caroline feels assaulted along with the patriarchal portrayal of femininity that she stands for since Elizabeth won't conform to society's expectations of a successful woman. By claiming that Elizabeth is not one of them and that she *"is [not] one of those young women who want to promote themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own," she responds by trying to "other" Elizabeth (Austen 1813 :27).*

In reality, Caroline's adherence to the patriarchal culture that denigrates women's education has been shown to devalue her sex. Austen provides herself plenty of opportunities to express her feminist beliefs via her protagonist by showing characters like Caroline and Elizabeth in a confrontation like this.

Because of this, knowing the first-wave feminist goal that Austen aimed to advance in her book through these connections is essential. In a later point in their marriage, Mrs. Bennet and her interactions with her husband serve as an interpretation of Wollstonecraft's ignorant woman, whilst Lydia and Wickham serve as an example at the beginning of the relationship. The relationship between Bingley and Jane is viewed as ideal, yet it lacks the self-reflection that results in character development. The union of Charlotte and Mr. Collins stands for the widely held patriarchal belief that women are inferior to men and must marry in order to maintain their social and financial standing. All of these relationships provide insightful criticisms of society conventions, but we are only able to appreciate how they support Austen's feminist philosophy when we read them side by side and in comparison to Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship and character development. While the males in the book have access to the authority that comes with their status and sex, *“the men in Pride and Prejudice are essentially set up—to surrender, to misuse, to fail to realize the power that is their cultural legacy” (Newton ,1978 :32).*

The power vacuum that is created due to their lack of wielding what they are given is filled by Elizabeth:

But to allow a nineteenth-century heroine to get away with being critical and challenging- especially about male power and feminine submission - is still to rebel, no matter how charmingly that heroine may be represented, no matter how

safe her rebellion is made to appear. (Newton, 1978 :35)

The author's ambition to transform the patriarchal society is furthered by Austen's emphasis on Elizabeth and her connection with Darcy while also portraying a number of other partnerships in various stages. We as readers would not have understood the depth of the argument that Austen was trying to make if she had only focused on Elizabeth and her love story as the only connection in the book. Elizabeth's evolving relationship emerges as the superior attachment when it is contrasted with more conventional partnerships of the day. By providing names and backstories to the women she describes in her texts—both the stereotyped and the progressive—Austen brings Wollstonecraft's thoughts to life throughout the book.

2.5 The Dominant Roles of Woman Deserted in the Pride and Prejudice Novel :

2.5.1 Women Resistance to Patriarchy Culture :

In the British culture of the nineteenth century, it is not precisely defined how the forms of resistance used by women in reorganizing the living systems that have been dominated by males. Streams are only summaries of the factors that contribute to women's oppression across time, how it is implemented, and the goals of a society where equality prevails and there is no more discrimination between the sexes. To uncover Elizabeth's forms of resistance against the unfair treatment she experiences as a result of men's dominance throughout the years, the researcher observes and understands the main character's way of thinking, attitudes, and behaviors in keeping with the description in the paragraph above. The quotation that follows is related to the earlier explanation.

'upon my word sir,' cried Elizabeth, your hope is a rather extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation'

(Austen,1813 :76)

The remark from Elizabeth above illustrates the many perspectives on how society views and expects women. Women are said to desire wealthy and affluent men in order to be happy in their lives. Elizabeth is brave enough to turn down Mr. Collins, who is also her father's heir. The legal heir, who coordinates the distribution of the family's money to sons or brothers, is to blame. She will have monetary happiness if she accepts Mr. Collins' proposal. Elizabeth does not consider that because she has no feelings for Mr. Collins.

2.5.2 Women as Second Person :

Amid the nineteenth century in British society , males rule over women. Women were viewed as a second class citizen who lack in many facets of life, including the social, educational, and economic spheres. In such society, males were portrayed as beings who were superior to women in every way. As a result, prejudice against women occurs often. Due to this issue, women came in second place to males. The quotation that follows is related to the earlier explanation. 'I'm thinking about story' replied Elizabeth. 'Behavior cousin hurt my feelings. What underlies Vigilante attitude itself is it?' (Austen,1813 :276)

Elizabeth receives the treatment described in the aforementioned passage from Mr. Darcy. She feels insulted in this situation, which offends her. She is not a perfect woman, which is why. Elizabeth believes that this makes her feel like a second person who is vulnerable to harm and contempt. This assertion shows how males view women as secondary individuals who are vulnerable to harm and even intimidation. According to the study, women in that British society are viewed as being weak in all respects and are susceptible to intimidation and physical harm from men. The position of women as a second person is further shown in the following quote.

' I certainly shall not, you know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.' (Austen,1813 :7)

In the quote above, Mr. Darcy declines Mr. Bingley's offer to select a woman to dance with him. On the other hand, Mr. Darcy feels that the party's women do not meet his standards. A dancing party is one means and a chance for men and women to interact in nineteenth-century British society. Actually, Mr. Darcy is not interested in dancing with a woman who is not in his social level. The researcher comes to the conclusion that because Elizabeth comes from a low social level, Mr. Darcy discriminated against her. This is a form of societal prejudice against women by men.

2.5.3 Woman to change of society's view :

People live in a materialistic culture in nineteenth-century Britain. In order to achieve happiness, parents take advantage of their daughters. Consequently, the parents believe that getting married is a wonderful approach to accomplish a goal. It is due to the behaviors of parents who are prepared to find their daughters wealthy and aristocratic husbands. These parents want their daughters to find real happiness through marriage to admirable people.

In the *Pride and Prejudice* novel, society life is described. Parents always want their daughters to marry a wealthy man. Elizabeth Bennet, the novel's primary heroine, so modifies society's perception. Elizabeth is openly changing how society, particularly parents, are viewed. Marriage is a poor strategy for raising one's social standing in the community. The citation that follows backs up the claim. 'I never considered the distance as the reason for a wedding, said Elizabeth.' I would never say that Mrs. Collins took the decision because he would live adjacent to the family'. (Austen, 1813 :80).

According to the passage above, the woman (Elizabeth) has a fantasy to meet partners who are rich in treasures and who can ensure their survival.

Therefore, the woman won't be influenced by the long distance relationship.

Additionally, the parents consistently encourage their daughter to search for a husband with a high social rank. It is because the riches will become the prominent of objective. Elizabeth challenges the notion that marriage to a man from a wealthy and high social

standing family can ensure a woman's happiness.

2.6 Aspect of feminism in Pride and Prejudice :

Most of the education was reserved for men, and women were allowed to do only domestic work. All women were expected to reject the conventional beliefs of a patriarchal society. Women were marginalized relative to men in terms of education, work and social status. They were only taught how to do their homework. They had no chance to stand on their own feet or establish financial or financial security. During the 19th century, courtship was one of her top priorities in a woman's life, as she relied on profitable marriages for economic survival. A passionate and astonishingly brilliant woman, Elizabeth Bennet recognizes that she does not want to be associated with the weak, meek and submissive women who are part of society. We may live in a culture steeped in racism, but we refuse to be bound by them because we firmly believe that women have the same right to happiness as men.

Elizabeth's ability to speak her mind and express what she feels is right, regardless of whether others agree with her or other social constraints, is a testament to her mental strength. For example: She may live in a culture steeped in intolerable snobbery and rigid social norms, but she firmly believes that women have the same rights to happiness as men, so she respects them. Refusing to be bound. Through her thoughts, actions, and interactions with other characters, readers will learn that Elizabeth was a woman far ahead of her time, whose strong personality, her belief in marital freedom, and her revolutionary ideas about social class. Realize that it is her bottom line. Run. In Her Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth faces many situations that test her character and way of thinking.

2.7 Issues of Feminism Reflected in the Pride and Prejudice Novel

Austen's novel is considered as one of the literary feminism's pillars since this last has reflected many issues of feminism at that time. Austen uses her female characters to criticize the British society and to break with old traditions. In the following part, the researcher will discuss the asymmetry between man and woman in the Pride and

Prejudice novel.

6.7.1 Social Asymmetry The effect of patriarchy culture:

Social asymmetry in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* exemplifies the social structure or distribution system that British society used to implement the primogeniture system. The Norwegian feudal system inherited the practice of primogeniture, with the eldest son of the first boy receiving all inheritance. The position of women in the distribution of inheritance is poor. They are not entitled to an inheritance. Men and women are treated differently because of the inheritance system based on primogeniture. In addition, the satirical-styled novel *Pride and Prejudice* shows a mother's fear that her five daughters will not find compatible partners. The author also tries to bring the atmosphere of 19th-century Europe into the modern world. Through her literary genre of romanticism, she adequately portrays the social situation, the culture as a whole, including its patterns, and the state of nature of the time.

2.7.2 The limitations of women's rights

At the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth was not allowed to choose her husband. In addition, there are too many events in this story that show the social trends of the time. For example, if the annual flat rate for a woman who is already married uses William Darcy, a solo traveler and male role model, to portray the fantasy of the ideal male body as the female character in this novel, then the female is considered lewd. fan. They are said to frequently hold balls (ball dances) to entertain visitors and turn them into activities of finding soul mates and acquaintances. This justification relates the quotation that follows.

To walk three miles or five miles, or whatever it is, above her ankles in dirt, and alone, quite alone! What could she mean by it? It seems to me to show an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum (Austen, 1813 :43)

The above remark refers to Elizabeth traveling many miles alone to check on her sister's health and to check on her sick sister at Mr. Bingley's house. She decided to go to Netherfield, even though the roads were still muddy from last night's heavy rain. On entering Mr. Bingley's house, she wears dirty clothes, as the street is occasionally damp. Unlike her sister, who mocks her Elizabeth for her behavior and believes that her women should not travel alone, Mr. Bingley graciously accepts Elizabeth's arrival. In their eyes, Elizabeth's behavior is despicable.

Their views differed, and Mr. Darcy showed little interest in Elizabeth's willingness to go to five factories alone. Elizabeth was discriminated against by Mr. Darcy for her unkempt clothes. This makes it clear that women's rights are restricted in this situation and that men are always making fun of women's behavior. The following events are related to this data.

Elizabeth was really anxious to see her sister. The carriage was being used and she decided to walk 'how silly you are!' cried her mother 'you will be covered with mud when you get there. You will not be fit to be seen'. 'I shall be fit to see Jane which is all I want. It is only three miles. I shall be back for dinner' she went alone, quickly crossing field after field. (Austen, 1813:24)

The above phrase speaks to Elizabeth's courage and strength to match men. She has her audacity to do what perhaps few men are willing to do: she doesn't need a man's help to stand alone. She decides to walk and travels alone through some fields. In this situation, Elizabeth suffers alone with no male help. Elizabeth, as she had the right to do so, decided to go alone.

2.8 Conclusion :

Jane Austen is considered to be one of the greatest of all English novelists, and *Pride and Prejudice* is probably one of the best English novels. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen reflects her thoughts about the place and outlook of women that are unlike the daily conventions of the Regency Era. Besides, Austen emphasizes that there should be a balance between genders in society. She encourages women to gain a female voice in society with which they can act autonomously. In other words, Jane Austen points out the significance of equality between genders in the eighteenth-century, which is something revolutionary considering the values of her time.

As a conclusion, Austen reflects the need for the defense of women's rights in her novels mainly in *Pride and Prejudice*. Apart from manipulating proper themes in her works that reveal the problems of femininity, Austen gives importance to construct appropriate characters so as to reach a point in terms of expressing the female voice.

General Conclusion:

As a reminder of the freedom obtained and the beauty to be discovered in going outside of society's institutions, Austen's novel—once a demand for reform in the education of women, the social parameters of marriage relationships, and gender roles—remain popular in today's culture. The appeal of this story even now, decades after women won the agency they battled for, speaks much about the significance of the ideal marriage that Wollstonecraft and Austen promoted. Each novel's central love story is brought into the present as it transports us to a period that is vastly different from our own. I contend that, despite the fact that we read Austen's writings to immerse ourselves in a previous period of English history, what we discover there still resonates with and applies to us now. The necessity for women to speak up, to control our own narratives, and to reject the labels placed upon us are still important challenges in today's culture, even if women may not be silenced in the same manner.

Austen produced a range of female characters for *Pride and Prejudice*, all of whom, when compared to Elizabeth, demonstrate the need to free women from patriarchal constraints that place tradition over agency and love. Elizabeth's actions to push patriarchal suppression to its breaking point are understandable when looking at Mrs. Bennet and her lack of agency and forced ignorance. Her mother's behavior illustrates the depressing results of having little education and being forced to keep quiet in the private sphere. In a same way, contrasting Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy with Jane and Mr. Bingley and Charlotte and Mr. Collins enables Elizabeth's forward-thinking relationship to stand out as a beacon of hope for agency and love. Although financial stability arrives with her marriage, Jane marries for love. However, she does not develop as a person or aid Bingley in his development as a person via the union. As a result of their dedication to a guy who is so out of touch with reality, Mr. Collins does not improve as a person as a result of their relationship, and Charlotte loses her social standing.

Austen's intention to defy gender stereotypes is clear since she makes characters of different sexes share similar traits. By depicting traits like dependence, determination, and outspokenness in both sexes, Austen challenges the patriarchal dichotomy prevalent at the time and compels the reader to judge the traits' value independently of the carrier's gender. This action gives opportunity for women to choose their own path and allows for the reinvention of both masculine and female characters.

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