

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A GUIDEBOOK FOR MARRIAGE**

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***PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A GUIDEBOOK FOR MARRIAGE***

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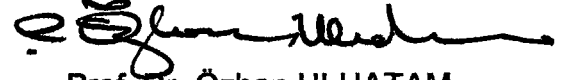
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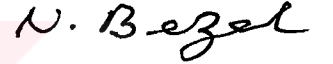
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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



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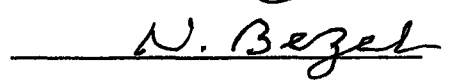
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## ABSTRACT

Although criticized for her indifference to the Industrial Revolution or Napoleonic Wars, Austen was a keen observer of her society in terms of relations between man and woman. She reflected her observations in her novels by describing pre-marriage and marriage interaction, as she was aware that in any society matrimony was an institution that best revealed the characteristics of the broad social structure.

Austen questioned the marriage types she witnessed: She saw that marriages were either for money or for sex. Thus, neither man nor woman was happy. For Austen, simple love, too, was not a reliable ground on which marriage could be based. To reveal her successful matrimony concept, Austen compares different marriage types in *Pride and Prejudice*. In her opinion, readers would be able to find the "ideal marriage type" by reading in between the lines.

For Austen, the ideal marriage is an agreement between social demands and personal desires, and this makes the union fulfilling and

respectable. Yet, this respectability does not mean “noble” family title, wealth, or “influential” acquaintances. At this point, by stressing the importance of individuality, Austen challenges the bourgeois viewpoint, which gives priority only to social rank and money. She is aware that equalizing the public and private forces is a difficult task. However, she shows the readers that individuals like Elizabeth and Darcy are able to go through this laborious formation and find happiness in marriage.



## ÖZ

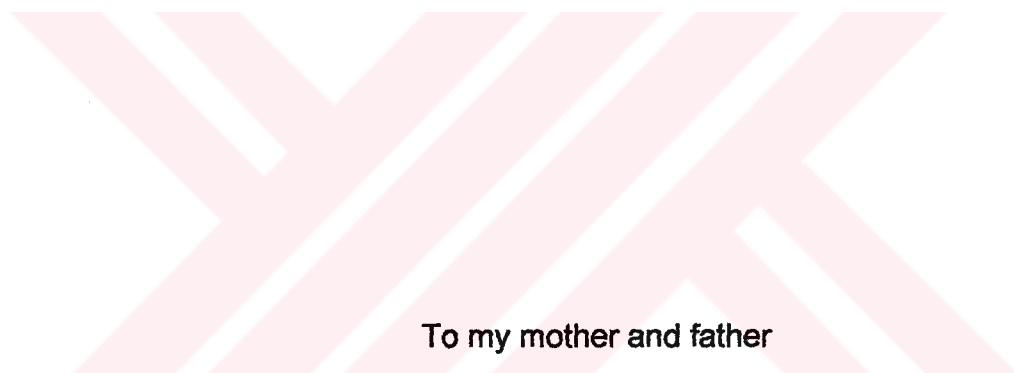
Jane Austen Endüstri Devrimi ve Napolyon Savaşları'na bir yazar olarak ilgisiz kalışı nedeniyle eleştirilmesine rağmen, toplumu kadın-erkek ilişkileri açısından yakından gözlemlemiştir. Yazar bu gözlemlerini romanlarında evlilik ve evlilik öncesi ilişkiler olarak aktarmıştır; çünkü evliliğin her toplumda, geniş toplumsal yapının özelliklerini en iyi ortaya koyan kurum olduğunun farkındadır.

Austen tanık olduğu evlilikleri sorgulamış ve bu evliliklerin ya para, ya da cinselliğe dayandığını görmüştür. Bu nedenle ne erkek, ne de kadın mutludur. Austen için basit aşk da evlenmek için sağlam bir neden olamaz. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* adlı romanında başarılı evlilik kavramını tanımlarken, değişik evlilik türlerini karşılaştırır. Yazarın düşüncesine göre okuyucular "ideal evlilik tipi"ni satır aralarını okuyarak bulabilirler.

Austen için ideal evlilik, toplumsal beklentiler ve kişisel istekler arasındaki uyumdan oluşur. Topluma uygunluk ve aynı zamanda bireysellik birlikteliği hem tatmin edici, hem de saygın hale getirir. Ancak,

bu saygınlık yalnızca ailenin “asil” soyadı, serveti veya “nufuzlu” tanıdıkları olması demek değildir. Austen bu noktada çağının sadece statü ve paraya önem veren burjuva değer yargılarını, bireyselliğin önemini vurgulayarak sorgular. Yazar toplumsal ve bireysel istekler arasında denge kurmanın zor bir iş olduğunun farkındadır. Ancak, Elizabeth ve Darcy gibi bireylerin bu zor süreçten geçerek evlilikte mutluluğu bulabileceklerini okuyucularına gösterir.





To my mother and father



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen is a unique novelist, who cannot be classified as either eighteenth or nineteenth century writer. Although criticized for being ignorant of the social changes of her time, in *Pride and Prejudice*, through the subject matter she uses—marriage—Austen criticizes her society, especially the rising bourgeois paradigm of her age. In the novel she deals with pre-marriage relations between the heroine and the hero (Elizabeth and Darcy), who are on the way towards individualism and maturity. By depicting such characters, her aim is to guide her readers, both men and women, before and in marriage. Austen does not dictate her ideas. Yet, there are didactic overtones in her work. To show her concept of “ideal” matrimony, she introduces different marriage types, and uses these marriages as the foils of Elizabeth and Darcy's union, which is the exemplary one in the novel.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the stylishness, mannerism, and decorum of Austen's age will be studied in accordance with the aims

of the writer herself. Austen lampoons the bourgeois viewpoint concerning the institution of marriage. She shows that materialism, an outcome of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the middle classes have already permeated into this institution, and the mercenary or sentimental type of marriages in the novel can be thought of as the representatives of the broad socio-economic picture.

In the second chapter, the stereotypical bourgeois marriages are studied in detail. Austen depicts three different, but cliché marriages in the novel. These can be grouped as “marriage for physical attraction, marriage for money status, and marriage for love.” All these marriage types are dysfunctional, and the author uses these as the foils of Darcy and Elizabeth’s marriage. Hence, the reader is able to distinguish between the dysfunctional and the successful marriages.

In the third chapter, the progression of Elizabeth and Darcy’s relation into marriage is analysed. Through this relation, Austen demonstrates that marriage should be an institution in which both woman and man must have the chance to reform themselves and become individuals. Not only Darcy is able to overcome his pride, but also Elizabeth, the focus of Austen’s attention, manages to overcome her prejudice. What the couple achieves at the end is a successful and fulfilling marriage. Finally, through *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen gives the audience, especially to women, courage, and guidance.

## CHAPTER I

### JANE AUSTEN, HER AGE, AND *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

Jane Austen completed *Pride and Prejudice* in 1797 under the title *First Impressions*. However, the novel was published in 1813, after Austen had made some revisions, and changed the title to *Pride and Prejudice*. In other words, it was written in the late eighteenth century but could be published in the early nineteenth century. The novel is, therefore, illustrative of the two centuries, carrying both the eighteenth and nineteenth century traits of fiction. Critics agree that she represents in her six complete novels—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*—the domestic, personal, and emotional realms, and the informative mimesis of the social world of the two centuries.

Austen is an exceptional novelist and for literary historians she is difficult to classify. As Christopher Gillie observes:

Jane Austen appears historically, both in her social attitudes and formally in her art, as a kind of connecting link or hinge. Her attitude to society was still an eighteenth-century one: [She reflected its habits, tastes, and appearance]. But in her attitude to the individual she looks forward to the later nineteenth century: not only is the individual ensconced within a distinctive social setting, but he or she is faced with decisions that are primarily personal, although they have an unavoidable social bearing (1985: 153).

D.W. Harding explains that “she remained fully committed to the good sense and moral principles of [the eighteenth century]” (1982: 54) but she criticised the “sentimental” side of society as the nineteenth century novelists, such as Dickens, Eliot and Hardy, did. Austen’s mirroring the eighteenth century trends like stylishness, mannerism, and demeanour, is combined very cleverly with a strong emphasis on the individualism of the nineteenth century. Her heroines belong to two centuries, that is, they are neither entirely sentimental, nor purely rational; they are in between. They live in a social world and confront human situations.

In the eighteenth century literature, heroines are depicted as faultless angels since authorial licence protects them from the very beginning. This protective attitude towards the female characters reflects the sentimental world of bourgeoisie and their devotion to decorum, whereas Austen’s leading female characters, though they “belong” to the sentimental world, make some mistakes, and this makes them more

engaging. Heroines are tested through difficult love affairs. Austen avoids stereotyping in describing the feelings of her heroines. The developing bourgeois heroine, though stereotypical and sentimental at the beginning, is on the way towards being an individual, and she is eventually able to reform herself. This is the non-conformist side of Austen for she almost always reforms her main characters.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen presents an unconventional heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, who is lively, witty, self-confident, assertive, and unyielding. Elizabeth has the core to be an individual: She is able to change herself in accordance with what she experiences. Although she makes mistakes, she learns something in return, and acquires maturity. As she develops herself, she starts listening to both her mind and her heart. Her mind stands for the rules of the society she lives in; her heart denotes her own private wishes and ideals. She manages to keep a balance between the two. Besides, she can express her individuality by defining her own priorities and by confronting the consequences of her decisions.

Biographers like Park Honan and Claire Tomalin draw parallels between Austen and her heroine, Elizabeth Bennet. Honan explains this autobiographical element:

[Austen] as a girl had married herself to a "Fitzwilliam" in any case- funnily. . . – by jotting in a specimen page of Steventon's Marriage Register. . . Her larking about in the register itself suggests that she had, even at twenty, portrayed some perceived aspects of herself in Elizabeth. Both took less kindly than exuberantly to fools, both were inoffensively smug, jokey and high-spirited as well as prejudiced and comforted by the appearance of good sense and worldly realism in their illusions as young women" (1997: 310).

Although the novel is not autobiographical, Elizabeth is the mirror image of Austen. The author shares her thoughts, emotions, and ideas with her heroine. Throughout the course of events, Elizabeth becomes the persona of Austen. Therefore, the novel can be seen as a wish-fulfillment of the narrator whose marriage plans never came true. Austen, by creating a strong personality like Elizabeth, and by her ideal marriage, satisfies not only her own alter ego, but also the expectations of her married or unmarried female readers for whom the heroine becomes a model, and her marriage, an example.

Austen codifies the ideal woman in Elizabeth, and the ideal pre-marriage procedure and marriage concept in her and Darcy's union. Hence, her novel, to some extent, assumes the form of a book of conduct for her female readers whose only future relied on a "successful" marriage. Although her aim is said to be drawing a picture that would amuse the reading public, she is, in fact, didactic. By giving the examples of different



relations between various types, Austen shows that Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage is the best because throughout their relationship they acquire the chance of becoming more than what they are. This is especially true for Elizabeth, who, by this way, can step out the conventional, sentimental world of her age, and who still attracts the attention of modern readers and film-makers. By revealing the inner machinations of a burgeoning bourgeois society, and by depicting characters who refuse to be types, and who are able to assert their individuality, Austen appeals to our own modern taste of nonconformity. She deals, though covertly, with the social problems of her age as opposed to what most critics think of her as a conformist. In fact, she is not, and therefore, she is universal.

At the time the novel was published, British society had undergone a very difficult experience: The Industrial Revolution. It meant the shift in manufacturing that resulted from the invention of power-driven machinery to replace hand labour. Nonetheless, the Industrial Revolution completely changed the social structure of British society that had been based on an agricultural life. Landed gentry were the outcome of the previous paradigm. In the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, however, British society became "capitalist, materialist, market-oriented; worldly, pragmatic, and responsive to economic forces" (Porter, 1990: 2). A new

“landless class” and a new middle class ideology were the consequences of this revolution. In the novel, Austen presents examples of the new capitalist individuals like Mrs Bennet, Charlotte and Mr Collins. Their ideology is based on acquiring more and more money. Karl Marx explains this ideology by defining the capitalist:

Fanatically bent on making value expand itself, he ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production's sake; he thus forces the development of the productive powers of society, and creates those material conditions, which alone can form the real basis of a higher form of society, a society in which the full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle . . . It compels him to keep constantly expanding his capital, in order to preserve it. . . by means of progressive accumulation (*Capital*, 1999: 332).

As Marx points out, the materialist person created a new world where only money and progressive accumulation of it mattered. The capitalist (or, *homo-economicus*) used everything, whether things or human beings around, and turned them all into profit. Briefly, the new world was a place where “avarice, and desire to get rich, [were] the ruling passions” (Marx, 1999: 333).

Those “ruling passions” influenced most institutions of the British society. Marriage was one of them. In those ages, the sole aim of parents was to marry their daughters to rich men, and this created a “marriage market.” That meant a harsh competition for parents and young women

towards well-to-do suitors. Seeking rich husbands resulted in "mercenary marriages," which were based on having money, social rank, power, and status. It was a process that undervalued the importance of emotions in establishing a union between man and woman.

Austen knew that in a money-oriented society everything and everyone is considered as commodity, and the institution of marriage is no exception. She was also aware that the concepts like familial love, friendship, and kindness belonged to the world before the Industrial Revolution. She observed that in her age their connotations had already changed in accordance with money and materialism. Yet, as a member of the capitalist society, she had to compromise with its norms. If her early works like "Juvenilia" or "Catharine" are taken into consideration, (these two manuscripts were also the first versions of her six complete novels) they will display a younger author attacking severely on sentimentalism. In other words, her attitude was contemptuous towards materialist and sentimental people. Mature Austen, however, reached a compromise between the society's demands like financial security and desires such as physical attraction, love, affection and esteem. In addition, she became more tolerant towards people with different viewpoints.

In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen shows that marriage for middle class people is one-sided. It is an emolument of the capitalist society, and females are the marketed goods. However, she takes marriage as the source of a rebirth contrary to what middle class families think it to be. For her, if the couple manages to be both financially and emotionally independent of people, their marriage will be a progressive and liberal one. Marriage is freedom, a liberated land in which both sides can escape from the imprisonment of their previous lives, and develop themselves. Hence, matrimony is both an escape from familial and social constraints, and a way towards individualism. Accordingly, Austen, to describe this "life," takes this concept as the theme of her novels, and disapproves of the world view of those who take marriage *only* as an economic institution. Man and woman marry to strengthen their social standing both financially and socially. This is also the only respectable way of procreation. Economic stability being the sole reason of marriage is what Austen indicts.

Austen criticizes society's double standards and reveals her own ideal concept of marriage as a harmonious partnership in which partners share similar moral codes, likes and dislikes. One of the requisites for this balanced union is to gain self-awareness. A person should learn about his or her own weaknesses, strengths, and limits in order to acquire an

awareness of his or her true nature. Another condition is to know one's partner. Mutual respect and affection are the two other components in a compatible union to enrich the lives of man and woman. On the one hand, Austen does not ignore the importance of money because she observes that lack of wealth will soon strain the familial bonds. On the other, overestimation of money in matrimony turns a union into a business contract. She criticizes this kind of marriage since focusing on the materialist demands concerning the individuals creates new prisons from which escape is impossible, as divorce is unthinkable.

To define her notion of successful marriage, Austen presents foil marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*. These are the unions of Mr and Mrs Bennet's, Lydia and Wickham's, Charlotte and Mr Collins's, and Jane and Bingley's. All these are the typical marriages of Austen's age. For her, these marriages are not complete since none of these four couples is able to meet Austen's criteria for the ideal marriage: These couples cannot gain self-awareness, and do not have enough courting time to understand each other. They are financially dependent on other people, especially on their families.

From Austen's viewpoint Elizabeth and Darcy's union is the ideal one. Both the heroine and the hero learn their own and each other's characters through pre-marriage interaction under many difficult

circumstances. They manage to overcome the prejudice and the pride of their own social classes. Elizabeth and Darcy become aware of the importance of appreciating and loving each other. In their exemplary union, Elizabeth has the dominant role in shaping the relation. She helps Darcy alter his "snobbish" behaviors toward people around him. With this strong heroine, Austen displays her preference for female characters: Darcy's minor role in the novel shows that the author's focus is on Elizabeth.

Consequently, Austen wrote novels that have enlightened the world of women of all times: She depicted how the real world was and how the ideal one had rather be. Austen gave advice to her female readers who had no choice other than getting married. While dealing with the theme of marriage, she indicated that the social barrier, that is, the difference between social ranks, could be removed, and this would pave the way for a healthy matrimony, and thus for a healthy community.

## CHAPTER II

### FLESHLY MARRIAGES MAKING FOILS FOR AUSTEN'S IDEAL MATRIMONY

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters (Austen, 1994: 5).

The opening words of *Pride and Prejudice* describe the middle class ideology concerning marriage. The aim of middle class parents is to find wealthy husbands or wives for their children. Austen's ironic remark at the very beginning denotes the middle class tendency: A wealthy single man in the neighbourhood means that there is the chance for a single young woman to marry well as marriage is the key to financial and social protection for females. Besides, matrimony is beneficial for men, particularly if they choose brides with "proper" amount of dowry since well-to-do wives also mean opportunities for suitable occupations.

The novel, however, is not only limited with indictments of mercenary marriages. Austen classifies the marriages of her age. She tells five marriage stories. She uses these marriages as the foils of Elizabeth and Darcy's union, through which she shows her concept of ideal marriage. These cliché marriages (except Elizabeth and Darcy's), as the social historians like Stone, Porter, Davidoff, Hall, Hay, and Rogers claim, consist of three types: Marriage for physical attraction, marriage for money and status, and marriage for love. Austen's classification coincides with the definitions of these historians. For her, such grounds are insufficient for marrying because none of these matrimony types includes the most important factor in the ideal marriage: Individualism. Hence, Mr and Mrs Bennet's, Charlotte and Collins's, Lydia and Wickham's, and Jane and Bingley's unions are not exemplary ones for the readers because none of these couples in matrimony can achieve both being individuals and being integrated into the social life. These stereotypical characters are unaware of the importance of balancing the two sides of existence.

Mr and Mrs Bennet's marriage stands for the marriage for physical attraction since Mr Bennet fell in love with the beautiful face of younger Mrs Bennet. Austen tells their story in the novel:

[Mr Bennet], captivated by youth and beauty and that appearance of good humour and which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak and 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 for ever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown (Austen, 1994: 183).

Mr Bennet fell in love with Mrs Bennet's good looks. After getting married, he understood that Mrs Bennet was not an intellectually grown up person. Besides, she was "a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper" (Austen, 1994: 7). This awakening, or rather disappointment, destroys his love and respect for his wife. Mr Bennet confines himself into the library, disclaiming all his responsibilities.

The elder Bennets' marriage turns into a failure after losing their interest in each other very early. This is the natural consequence of not acquiring intellectual and emotional compatibility. Mr Bennet escapes his wife's "weak nerves." He avoids all his domestic and paternal responsibilities such as financially securing his daughters' future as stated in the novel: "his estate being entailed, he has made no effort to secure his family against his death, and by reason of his otiosity he is impotent to protect his family's good name" (Austen, 1994: 292). For Austen, such tactlessness on behalf of a man is a great deficiency. However, it is Mr Bennet's ignorance that forces Elizabeth to be an individual. Elizabeth learns to be on her own by making decisions about her life without the help of her father and mother. The already broken marriage of Elizabeth's parents turns out to be a chance for her to acquire a unique personality.

Mrs Bennet is also materialist. Her sole aim is to marry all her daughters to rich men and to secure them financially because the house is entailed and it will pass on to the hands of Mr Collins, a distant relative of Mr Bennet. Mrs Bennet is insensitive to her daughters' emotions, expectations and needs. She only cares for the quantity of money that will be obtained through marriages. When she learns that Elizabeth will be the wife of Mr Darcy, the rich aristocrat, she says:

What pin-money, what jewels what carriages [she] will have!  
Jane's nothing to it- nothing at all. . . A house in town!  
Everything that is charming! . . . Ten thousand a year. . .  
(Austen, 1994: 292).

Mrs Bennet does not question whether Elizabeth loves Darcy or not since such "details" are not her concern. Her daughter Lydia's elopement with Wickham ends "happily"; they get married. Mrs Bennet easily forgets the disappointment Lydia has caused and enjoys being a mother-in-law. She ignores the significance of parental guidance. She is so focused on being a mother-in-law that she does not miss the opportunities of marrying her daughters and does whatever she can afford. Her obsession with being a mother-in-law stems from the strong desire of financially guaranteeing her future. For instance, when Jane is invited to dine with the Bingleys, Mrs Bennet forces her daughter to go on horseback in the heavy rain. Mrs Bennet's plan is to make Jane stay the night at Bingley's residence. According to her calculation, being under the same roof would hasten

Bingley's "expected" proposal. This scheme costs Jane her health. Austen, by depicting a mother like Mrs Bennet, suggests that materialism had already permeated into the middle class families. Such behaviours of Mrs Bennet make her one of the representative figures of the capitalist viewpoint.

Like Mr and Mrs Bennet's union, Lydia and Wickham's marriage is based on physical attraction. Lydia is after a husband in uniform. Wickham is a liar, a womanizer, and a gambler. For Austen, neither Lydia nor Wickham can comprehend the fact that marriage means responsibility. Neither of them pays attention to social rules. They are completely absorbed in satisfying their basic instincts. Life means having fun for Lydia and Wickham. Their families or friends mean nothing to them.

Lydia elopes with Wickham without having the idea of marrying him. In that age, living with a man without a matrimonial tie makes the female a fallen woman. She seems to be unaware that her elopement, if not ended in marriage, will be a disaster for herself and her family because if Wickham abandons her, Lydia will probably become a prostitute, and this will affect her sisters' future, too. As usual, Lydia displays her typical "carelessness of consequence and irresponsibility" in this matter, too (Craik, 1968: 73). Although Austen does not punish Lydia and Wickham severely, she denounces such an irresponsible attitude towards matrimony as Elizabeth's comment given through the voice of the author

on Lydia and Wickham's marriage reflects: "... neither rational happiness nor worldly prosperity could be justly expected for his sister..." (Austen, 1994: 235). Austen points out that Lydia and Wickham's marriage will become a dysfunctional one as the elder Bennets' union turned out to be.

Austen's criterion for a successful matrimony is partners' knowing each other and themselves during the courtship period. This process also includes physical attachment to one's partner. In Elizabeth and Darcy's relation there are "Undercurrents of sexual attraction and challenge [that] accompany the antagonism" (Fergus, 1997: 65). The conversations between Darcy and Elizabeth are full of sexual overtones. However, Austen does not give credit to marriages that are based only on love at first sight or physical attraction. These are short-living reasons for marrying because the couple, after satisfying their appetites, will lose interest in each other. Austen criticizes such unions because "little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue" (Austen, 1994: 239). The best example for the failure of a marriage based on physical attraction is the elder Bennets'. Neither Mrs Bennet's beauty nor Mr Bennet's intelligence could save their matrimony after their excitement disappeared.

The other type of marriage is the one for financial security and social prestige. This type was the most popular among middle and upper

middle class. The reason behind that trend was the new economic conviction called "laissez- faire," an outcome of the Industrial Revolution, and class distinction. In this new system, the state did not interfere with the people's pursuit of money and materialist interests. This attitude developed social instability, and people strived to ensure their economic permanence. Marrying well was a way to guarantee a financially free life. In this age, as Stone claims,

*Marriage is the economic or social or political consolidation or aggrandizement of the family. If these are objectives, marriage is primarily a contract between two families for the exchange of concrete benefits, not so much for the married couple as for their parents and kin- considerations subsumed by contemporaries under the single rubric of 'interest' (1979: 182).*

Among the middle and upper classes, it was believed that the popularity and acceptance of mercenary marriages were bred by the urge to stabilise fortune and position in the society. Through business-contract sort of marriages people could be politically and socially worthy. Even in newspapers one could come across news which "trumpeted an heiress' worth in hard cash" (Hay & Rogers, 1997: 39). Such "advertisements" do not only indicate the materialist approach to matrimony but also present women as commodities to be sold and bought.

In the novel, Charlotte and Collins exemplify this new social philosophy of the age that witnessed this shift from the old economic order

to the new one. When Elizabeth refuses Collins's proposal, he has no difficulty in finding another bride: She is Charlotte Lucas, the close friend of Elizabeth. Their union represents the concept of money-oriented marriage. Mr Collins openly expresses his materialist aims and even boasts of them. His anger with Elizabeth's rejection of his marriage proposal demonstrates his materialistic views on marriage:

*My situation in life, my connections with the family of de Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into further consideration, that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small, that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications (Austen, 1994:88).*

Mr Collins seems to be too sure that he is the best choice that any woman, including Elizabeth, can ever come across. For him, being a clergyman and being an acquaintance of the "great" Lady Catherine makes him an extraordinarily "important" man in the materialist community. He lives in a make-believe world; he himself is the only one "aware" of that significance.

Collins and Charlotte's marriage is a mercenary one. Money is the primary reason for Charlotte to accept Collins's proposal. There is neither love nor respect in their relation. She consents to marry him since Collins can give her money and home. Having financial security and being the lady of her own home are important for Charlotte, a woman on the edge of spinsterhood. Collins chooses her as his future wife because, though she

does not have wealth, Charlotte is a knight's daughter. Moreover, she is a cunning woman and she knows that she has to "capture" a husband in order not to be a burden on her siblings. Thus, she is aware that

Mr Collins, to be sure, was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband. Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object, it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it (Austen, 1994: pp. 98-99).

Afraid of becoming a spinster, Charlotte prefers offering her body and service to a man like Collins just for the sake of financial security as the majority of women did in that age.

Collins's aim to get married is to gain a higher social status as a clergyman. He explains his reasons for marrying as follows:

My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly- which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. . . (Austen, 1994: 84-85).

In his explanation, Collins does not mention love, respect, or shared interests and tastes. He sees marriage as a duty imposed by his

patroness Lady Catherine. He thinks that marriage is necessary to create the ideal clergyman image. Obviously, Charlotte knows that living with Collins will be a difficult life as she does not feel any emotional or sexual attachment. She designs her house in such a way to avoid seeing her husband. Collins and Charlotte stand for the people who accept a loveless but financially and socially beneficial marriage. Nevertheless, as Charlotte tells Elizabeth:

Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation; and it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life (Austen, 1994: 20).

In other words, Charlotte and Collins's grounds for marrying are to maintain their social positions in the community they live. Hence, happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of "chance" for Charlotte.

In her life, Austen observed the difficulty in which people would end up if they did not have enough money. People were unable to nourish their relationships if they failed to satisfy their basic needs. She knew from first hand experience that a person without money was considered nobody in her society. While giving the panorama of the age in which she shows the importance of money in the lives of characters, Austen's personal experiences concerning marriage seem to have contributed a lot to the



picture she draws in *Pride and Prejudice*. In her early twenties, she felt a strong attachment to Tom Lefroy, a poor but promising lawyer. Since Austen did not have enough money to deserve being the Lefroys' bride, his relatives who were looking for a rich bride interfered in the affair and separated them (Honan, 1997: pp. 106-111). This experience must have hurt her deeply and have awakened her to the middle-class ideology of her society. She learnt that "land and money [initiated] love" (Honan, 1997:88). This disappointment in her first love affair must have left such deep wounds in her that Austen never allows her heroines to get married to poor men. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet marries Mr Darcy, the richest man of the country. Furthermore, Austen gives the exact income of Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy, the would-be-husbands described at the very beginning of the novel. Yet, Austen frowns on business-contract marriages. She does not overemphasize money as the supreme criterion in a marriage. Therefore, Darcy's stunning fortune is not the sole, but one of the important reasons for Elizabeth to arrive at the serious decision to accept him as her husband. Austen's approach to money in marriage demonstrates that a woman like Elizabeth, who has insufficient dowry and no noble title, can attract the attention of a rich and charismatic man like Darcy with her liveliness and intelligence. Both Elizabeth and Darcy realize that although they belong to different social backgrounds, they have that although they belong to different social backgrounds, they have similar

attitudes towards life. Besides, they are fond of each other and show respect to each other.

Austen's disapproval of Charlotte's offering her body and service to such a man like Mr Collins for the sake of financial security is reflected in Elizabeth's losing esteem for her close friend. She "felt persuaded that no real confidence could ever subsist between [Charlotte and herself]" (Austen, 1994: 103) since Elizabeth "could not have supposed it possible that, when she called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage" (Austen, 1994: 101). For Austen, too, it is not worth wasting one's talents as Charlotte does.

Elizabeth's elder sister Jane, and Darcy's best friend Bingley's marriage is the fourth marriage depicted as the opposite to Austen's ideal matrimony. W.A. Craik explains both Jane and Bingley's characters "Bingley's weakness also matches Jane's, he being too easily influenced while she is too good-natured" (1968: 74). Although both are good-natured and sensitive to others' feelings, they cannot reach maturity. Their marriage is based on pure love. However, they discard the mundane reality. They are always dependent on other people. As Mr Bennet comments: "You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income" (Austen, 1994: 268). In a

hypocritical society like theirs, Jane and Bingley do not question people's real motives. Both Jane and Bingley have the same flaw. They cannot assert themselves easily; even their marriage is realized by the assistance of other people. They do not have any chance to make mistakes and correct themselves through their experiences. Jane and Bingley are so dependent on the people around them that they cannot achieve maturity like Elizabeth and Darcy.

Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* in 1796, just after her enforced separation from Lefroy. She must have written the first draft of the novel under bitter disappointment because she was twenty years old, a delicate age indeed. Nevertheless, the time gap between the writing and publishing dates of the novel suggests that a younger Austen wrote the novel, but a mature Austen edited and had it published. During that time, Austen made some changes in the novel. She herself mentions that edition in one of her letters to her sister Cassandra: "I have lop't and crop't so successfully" (Woolsey, 1892: 182). The date was January 29, 1813. In eighteen-year-period, that mature female writer perceived that neither fortune nor affection is the only reliable criterion for a successful marriage.

Austen approaches the concept of marriage from the female viewpoint. For her, men could save themselves simply by finding jobs, whereas women had to be more careful in choosing a life long partner

because marriage was the only way to survive and divorce was impossible. In her complete novels, except *Persuasion*, her focus is constantly on single young women who go through the process of learning in order to get married to the men who are mentally their equal. In other words, marriage is a reward for people who are able to achieve both privacy and being a member of society. The male characters stay off the stage until the very last chapters. Austen does not give the hero's side of events or his thoughts. The hero comes to the stage, or rather uncovers his inner self, when the heroine needs his assistance to overcome social barriers. Austen's aim in bringing the hero onto the stage almost at the end of her novels is to show the hero in action and make the reader comprehend that the main male character's emotions for the heroine are sincere.

Austen gives more importance to deeds than she does to speech. Wickham is a master of dialogue, whereas, Darcy's conversation seems snobbish. Wickham allures women, including Elizabeth with his sweet words. Darcy's aloofness reflected in his speech drives Elizabeth off. However, Elizabeth falls in love with Darcy when he rescues the Bennets' honour. Hence, Elizabeth thoroughly discovers Darcy's just and noble soul. This shows that knowing a person is only possible after seeing the person in action.

All the four foil marriages in the novel are deficient and unbalanced unions. None of the characters involved in them has gone through getting-to-know period, a must for Austen; therefore, they are doomed to be unhappy, and their marriages will be dysfunctional ones.

Austen is against the cliché marriages of her age although she does not say it aloud in her novels; she just shows the results of such ill-matched marriages as she does while depicting the elder Bennets. Her revulsion against marrying for only money can be read in between the lines. None of her heroines in all six complete novels accepts the proposals of rich men unless they love and respect them. Her personal letters addressed mainly to her sister Cassandra, and her comments on marriages she witnessed make her notion on marriage clear. In one letter she ironically states that

Miss Sawbridge is married [to] Mr Maxwell [who] was Tutor to the young Gregorys- consequently they must be one of the happiest Couple[s] in the World, & either of them worthy of Envy – for she must be excessively in love, & he mounts from nothing, to a comfortable Home (Woolsey, 1892: pp. 116-117).

Her private letters are full of wedding news and her bitter comments on them. Yet, she gives some advice to her niece "I . . . entreat you not to . . . think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection. . . ." (Woolsey, 1892: pp. 278-279). This reveals the main idea of her novels and perhaps

more than that, her philosophy of life. Such an idea requires great courage on behalf of a woman who has to live under male domination in that age, and Austen probably endured the difficulties of being a single woman with insufficient income. She could not find the ideal marriage in real life, so she fulfilled her wish of marital happiness through her heroines.

Austen displays her own courage to fight against the established authority by creating a resolute heroine in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth Bennet, like her creator, makes her own decisions without any fear and leads her own life in accordance with her own principles. As a woman living in the eighteenth century, she is able to achieve the emancipation from masculine repression.

In the following chapter, Elizabeth Bennet, a non-conformist heroine and Darcy, the richest hero of Austen will be dealt with to comprehend Austen's definition of the ideal marriage.

## CHAPTER III

### ACHIEVING THE DIFFICULT: THE EXEMPLARY UNION OF ELIZABETH AND DARCY

Austen's marriage concept consists of a compromise between society's demands like "wealth and title," and individual's own wishes such as "mutual love, respect, and sexual attraction." Each of these is to be defined in accordance with the aura of the age, and Austen shows that reaching an agreement between the social and the individual is difficult, especially for women. She creates a heroine, Elizabeth (who belongs to the middle class with insufficient income), and a hero, Darcy (who comes from aristocracy with fabulous fortune) and on purpose Austen creates a status conflict between the classes these characters belong to. She shows that an agreement can somehow be achieved despite the difficulties. Through this conflict, she demonstrates the social problematics of marriage in her age. Meanwhile, her focus is on her female character(s). Elizabeth is very different from the other famous

heroines of the age like Samuel Richardson's Pamela or Fanny Burney's Evelina, because she is depicted (within the limits of the age) as an "individual." In the eighteenth century, as Stone defines,

Individualism . . . [comes to mean] . . . two rather distinct things: firstly a growing introspection and interest in the individual personality: and secondly, a demand for personal autonomy and a corresponding respect for the individual's right to privacy, to self-expression, and to the free exercise of his will within limits set by the need for social cohesion: a recognition that it is morally wrong to make exaggerated demands for obedience, or to manipulate or coerce the individual beyond a certain point in order to achieve social or political ends (1979: 151).

The definition Stone makes does not seem to accord with the expectations of social institutions of the eighteenth century. Yet, Austen's age should not be underestimated as a whole for it could create individuals, and according to Stone's definition, Elizabeth is a complete individual. She can assert herself without manipulating the others. She is introspective, that is, she is able to acquire the knowledge of her own self, which makes her develop continuously. For her, money is of secondary importance. Her verbal duel with Lady Catherine concerning her marriage to Darcy shows that she cannot bear to be manipulated by others. She is, thus, self-confident, and self-critical. She easily takes the initiative when it comes to her own well-being. Elizabeth makes her decisions about her life by resisting the society's sanctions on women.



Hence, within the limits of the eighteenth century conception, Elizabeth is an individual.

Darcy, too, is an exceptional hero. He learns to appreciate the virtues, the personality of the woman he loves by disregarding her social class and financial status. Darcy is able to change. He overcomes his pride and he is able to reformulate his opinions about females. Before, he was a man who judged the opposite sex by their social rank and looks. When Darcy meets Elizabeth at a ball held at Netherfield, he refuses to dance with Elizabeth by making a comment on her beauty. Darcy tells Bingley that "[Elizabeth] is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt [him]; and [he is] in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (Austen, 1994: pp.11-12). It can be deduced from this remark that earlier Darcy gives preferences to appearance in a woman, and Elizabeth is not "beautiful." For Darcy, a "perfect" woman should fit the definition Miss Bingley makes:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages [French or Italian], to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be half-deserved (Austen, 199: 33).

Miss Bingley's definition of a "perfect lady" indicates the middle class decorum concerning the young women of Austen's age. An "accomplished

lady” is just an appearance. Furthermore, the middle class ideology depicts heroines as faultless angels. These innocent leading women are virtuous and obedient to the men they love. They are supposed to be blind to weaknesses in the heroes they adore. When the heroines lose the men they love, they become violently ill and even die in the end. Austen vehemently rejects this sentimental attitude. She finds such characters as anodyne and unengaging.

By describing the heroines who are not completely accomplished, Austen shows her rejection of the cliché. She is aware that the women of her age are under pressure. They are asked to be decorous, submissive, generous, and sensitive to the men they love. This is the woman the masculine society creates and puts on the pedestal.

Darcy, too, belongs to this masculine culture, yet his love for Elizabeth alters his perception of women. Although Elizabeth has neither beauty nor social status, she is different from the other women Darcy has met. She is not sentimental. Unlike Miss Bingley, Elizabeth does not hide her wit or strength before men, and she does not avoid arguing with them. She is not after a husband. She does not comply with the decorum of her age: Elizabeth can walk in the mud in the heavy rain to look after her ill sister, displaying that she is not only a semblance, but a compassionate and humane being.

Yet, Elizabeth has an important flaw to overcome. She is prejudiced in the sense that “[her] first impressions consist of not liking and they are [sometimes] misleading and wrong” (Wilson, 1982: xiv), and she “has . . . a strong inclination towards a perverse estimate” (Craik, 1968: 78). Elizabeth is, sometimes, overconfident of her own personal judgements. Although she overcomes her shortcomings later on, earlier Elizabeth fails in judging Wickham and Darcy because she is “Pleased with preference, and offended by the neglect of the other” (Austen, 1994:162). Elizabeth admires handsome and talkative Wickham, who seems to be attracted by her. As Audrey Hawkrige explains, “sweet-smiling Wickham . . . is a practised scrounger, schemer and spendthrift” (2002:129). As a womanizer, Wickham knows how to attract young women. Elizabeth, though logical, is inexperienced in love affairs because she has had no lover, and there is no one in her family to guide her. Consequently, Elizabeth misjudges Wickham's “intimacy” with her. She enjoys being admired by such a charming man. Even as a naïve girl she violates the accepted code of behaviour at this point because women are thought to be sexless, and they should not accept any compliment from men. Elizabeth does not hide her pleasure at being admired by men. As opposed to conventional sexless heroines who try to capture a husband, Elizabeth is able to assert her femininity without that intention.

Elizabeth takes an instant disliking for Darcy, the arrogant and aloof aristocrat, particularly after his insult at her at the ball. Unlike Wickham, Darcy does not show any sign of noticing her even when he falls in love with Elizabeth because he

wisely resolved to be particularly careful that no sign of admiration should . . . escape him, nothing could elevate her with the hope of influencing his felicity; sensible that if such an idea had been suggested, his behaviour during the last day must have material weight in conforming or crushing it (Austen, 1994: 49).

Darcy suspects that Elizabeth's insufficient dowry, and her low-profile parents and relatives will make her an unsuitable bride for his noble family. Elizabeth's prejudice stems from the middle class society's attitude towards the aristocracy. For Elizabeth, aristocrats are detached and snobbish people due to their fortune. Like Lady Catherine, they are rude and patronising over other people. Thinking that Darcy has the same characteristics with the members of that social class, she misinterprets his words and behaviours. For Austen, this mutual misunderstanding between Darcy and Elizabeth is the most important barrier to overcome. Whenever Elizabeth mentions Darcy, she hints that he is pretentious:

She hardly knew how to suppose that she could be an object of admiration to so great a man . . . she drew his notice because there was a something about her more wrong and reprehensible, according to his ideas of right, than in any other person present (Austen, 1994: 42).

Elizabeth interprets Darcy's attitudes toward herself and other people as the sign of his superiority due to the class he belongs to. Darcy seems to support her viewpoint: He is aloof and scornful of people in Meryton, whereas Wickham becomes the favourite man with the people since he easily makes friends with them, especially with women. Yet, these first impressions are proved faulty.

Elizabeth learns that Wickham is a womanizer. Darcy's letter explaining his active role in keeping apart Jane and Bingley, and his dismissing Wickham from Pemberley, Darcy's residence, helps Elizabeth see the reasons behind Darcy's acts. Her disappointment about her misjudgement is shown thus:

But vanity . . . has been my folly. . . . I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment I never knew myself (Austen, 1994: 162).

Despite her embarrassment, Elizabeth has the courage to face her mistakes. Moreover, her visit to Pemberley plays an important role in the change of her feelings towards Darcy. Elizabeth learns there, with the remarks of the housekeeper, the core of Darcy's character. The housekeeper says that

He is the best landlord, and the best master,. . . that ever lived; not like the wild young men nowadays, who think of

nothing but themselves. There is not one of his tenants or servants but what will give him a good name. Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw anything of it. To my fancy, it is only because he does not rattle away like other young men (Austen, 1994: pp.190-191).

A person is best observed in his/her natural state, usually when s/he is outside society. Elizabeth carefully listens to the housekeeper because that employee has known him since he was four. Through that frustration of misjudging, she becomes aware of her own mistake: First impressions are not always correct, as knowing a person requires longer time and involvement.

Elizabeth is not self-righteous. However, she is a daring woman and this makes her an active and vivid character. She says "There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me" (Austen, 1994: 136). She is not afraid of anybody or anything because she does not feel inferior in "important" people's presence, whether it is Darcy or Lady Catherine. Besides, Elizabeth is not afraid of breaking some strict social codes tailored for middle class women. In her age, women were forced to behave in accordance with conduct books that taught "female gentility." For instance, women could not travel alone. However, Elizabeth shocks the Bingley sisters because

That she would have walked three miles so early in the day, in such dirty weather, and by herself, was almost incredible to Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley; and Elizabeth was convinced that they held her in contempt for it. (Austen, 1994: 28)

She does not care for being wet and wearing a muddy petticoat since she walks such a distance to attend her sick sister, Jane. The Bingley sisters are so focused on keeping up with appearances that they do not comprehend the *real* grace in Elizabeth's behaviour.

Elizabeth Bennet is a new woman type, an individual. She is a new female in English literature as she is lively, healthy, and witty. She is not perfect; she makes mistakes. Yet, she has the courage to confront her flaws and the ability to change her viewpoint. Hence, she is able to make her own choices that concern her life.

Austen reveals her ideal marriage notion through Elizabeth's choice of husband. During her lifetime Austen witnessed "institutionalized male dominance, operating through social structures like the law, education, employment, religion, the family and cultural practices" (Morris, 1993: 4). Marriage was more important for women than it was for men because they could gain financial security and respectability by their husbands' positions in society. By creating a heroine like Elizabeth, Austen shows the female readers how to reach a compromise between personal needs such as affection, respect and physical attraction and the society's demands like

sufficient wealth to provide the couple's needs and ensure social respectability. Elizabeth manages to balance her individual wishes and society's demands by choosing Darcy as her husband. On the one hand, Darcy loves and respects his partner: He appreciates Elizabeth's mental capability. On the other hand, she is attached to Darcy since he proves his love for her by turning a scandal that her sister Lydia and Wickham have caused into a respectful marriage. Moreover, their matrimony is respectable since they follow the conventional marriage procedure, unlike Lydia and Wickham; yet, they manage to stay as individuals. Elizabeth and Darcy make their own decisions about their lives. They are not influenced by other people's opinions like that of Lady Catherine's. Both defend their shared moral standards.

For Austen, man and woman should have the chance to discover about each other. In other words, courtship is a learning process. She uses misunderstandings and artificial social barriers between the heroine and the hero in the novel as a means of courtship because through these internal and external crises, the leading characters acquire the self-knowledge and the recognition of the other person. Elizabeth and Darcy's relation, despite its ups and downs, sets a good example for Austen's notion of courtship.



Austen's stress on courtship originates from dating habits of her age. Going out was out of question in that age. Balls were especially important for both sexes because ballroom was the only place where men and women came together and had the chance to know each other as much as possible (Lucas, 1996: 6). During the dances, partners had a chance to talk (Honan, 1997: 84). Hence, courtship period was too short for young couples. Through Charlotte and Elizabeth's conversation about Jane and Bingley, Austen complains about the shortness of the time for man and woman who are fond of each other, and who try to gather information about each other:

[Elizabeth says that]

'But if a woman is partial to a man, and does not endeavour to conceal it, he must find it out.'

[Charlotte answers as the following]

'Perhaps he must, if he sees enough of her. But, though Bingley and Jane meet tolerably often, it is never for many hours together; and as they always see each other in large mixed parties, it is impossible that every moment should be employed in conversing together. . .'

[Elizabeth insists that]

'As yet, she cannot even be certain of the degree of her own regard nor of its reasonableness. She has known him only a fortnight. . . This is not quite enough to make her understand his character.'

[Charlotte reply is as the follows]

'Had she merely dined with him, she might only have discovered whether he had a good appetite . . .'

[Elizabeth comments]

'Yes; these four evenings . . . I do not imagine that much has been unfolded.' (Austen, 1994: pp. 19-20)

This conversation reveals Austen's notion of courtship. She claims that dating means getting to know the other person's "whole personality." This learning process denotes discovering whether partners share similar principles, likes or dislikes. A short period of courtship as required by most parents, is insufficient to discover the temperament of a person. For Austen, courting is a gaining-and-understanding progression (Monaghan, 1981: 116). She shows the disadvantages of not knowing each other completely in Mr and Mrs Bennet, in Charlotte and Collins, in Lydia and Wickham, and even in Jane and Bingley. In all these four couples, getting to know each other plays no role. These marriages are not based on serious trials of the partners. Their relations develop either from sexual appeal or from the "unbearable charm" of financial security. At the end, the withdrawal of one partner from his or her responsibilities will be unavoidable, whereas in Elizabeth and Darcy's relation, an almost twelve-month courtship with its ups and downs, which is unusual for that age, helps Elizabeth eliminate her prejudice against Darcy. From then on she changes her mind because

She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was a union that must have been to the advantage of both: by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved; and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the

world, she must have received benefit of greater importance.  
(Austen, 1994: 239)

Elizabeth finds her mental and emotional equal in Darcy. Their temperaments and mental abilities are alike. As Elizabeth discovers Darcy's true nature, her feelings for him change. Elizabeth does not feel strange about this emotional alteration towards him because this change is the result of indebtedness and regard which "are good foundations of affection" (Austen, 1994: 213).

As observed by Austen, Darcy's pride, typical of his social class, is another barrier to be overcome. His arrogance stems from his social position, given to him by his parents as he confesses to Elizabeth:

I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. . . Unfortunately, an only son . . . I was spoiled by my parents, who though good themselves. . . allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing – to care for none beyond my 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 own (Austen, 1994: 284).

Darcy's aristocratic parents teach him to care only for the members of his class such as his sister Georgiana, or close friends like Bingley. He protects and helps them settle their problems. When Darcy learns that Wickham has persuaded Georgiana to elope, he, being aware of Wickham's intentions to have his sister's fabulous wealth, saves

Georgiana from Wickham's trap. However, he is not so thoughtful about other people's needs before he meets Elizabeth. Darcy, too, acts within the limits of his class. His pride, as Elizabeth's prejudice, is typical of his social class. As an aristocrat, he is proud of his background, and scorns the "pretentious" air of middle class society at Netherfield. In Darcy's first proposal, Elizabeth senses that he despises her due to her low connections. She feels degraded (Austen, 1994:148). Darcy looks down on Mr and Mrs Bennet, who behave "improperly" in public. In addition, from the aristocratic perspective, her two uncles have disrespectful jobs: One deals with trade, the other with law. For Darcy, these are typical middle class occupations. In short, he adopts an attitude of greatness by proposing to Elizabeth, who has no "high connections" and "family title." Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine points out that Elizabeth is "a young woman without family, connections, or fortune" (Austen, 1994: 274). She thinks that Elizabeth, with her "inadequate qualifications," is not appropriate to become Darcy's wife. At the beginning of the novel, he has the same notion about Elizabeth. After meeting Elizabeth's uncle and aunt, the Gardiners, who belong to "lower middle class," Darcy changes his mind. In Mr Gardiner's personality Darcy sees that being a gentleman is "a kind of behaviour [and] a moral equality" (Jones, 1987: 45). He later comprehends that being a gentleman is not related to a person's social rank, but to

maturity. Here, Austen shows her readers what propriety is: Well-behaving does not mean good breeding. "Behaviour is as important as birth" (Brooke, 1999: pp. 77-78), and it is "manifest in one's *manners* [that is] *temper* [and] *address*" (Odmark, 1983: pp.165-166). As Odmark claims:

Moral behaviour is in most instances social behaviour; that is, an individual's moral character is manifest in his conduct in social situations. His manners may readily give him away, or for some time at least, he may succeed in passing off a false candour or elegance for the genuine moral quality; however, sooner or later, his neglect of his duty is exposed (1983:178).

As in Odmark's definition of moral behaviour, Darcy learns what genuine moral quality is after his involvement with Elizabeth. Elizabeth observes that Darcy's aloofness is the result of his pride, and being proud is not his true nature. Darcy proves his own positive and human quality by the deeds he performs such as his attempts to make his sister and Elizabeth close friends while Elizabeth is on tour with her uncle and aunt, and to save the Bennets' honour by bribing Wickham into marriage with Lydia. Darcy finally overcomes his pride, and Elizabeth sees the depth of Darcy's personality. He is a good-natured and generous man. He is a humane landlord who cares for his servants and tenants. Besides, he is a benevolent brother. He just seems to be "proud" because he does not rattle away like other young men" (Austen, 1994: 191). In Elizabeth and Darcy's relation leading to marriage, Austen indicates that class barriers

should be overcome not only for the bourgeoisie, but also for the aristocracy. For her, both middle class and aristocracy “must learn to respect merit [and the individual]” (Butler, 1987: 202). The members of these two social classes must take into consideration personal differences, but disregard class barriers. Thus, Elizabeth and Darcy’s marriage “signif[ies] growth into wisdom that reveals through the exorcism of . . . flaws, the possibility of a new social order” (Fay, 1998: 43).

Through *Pride and Prejudice* Austen criticizes the existing social order, and shows that a new paradigm is necessary. However, her attitude is not a heavy-handed one. Instead, she delights the reader by using some fairy tale motifs while describing something serious. Her underpinning of such weighty subject matters through fairy tale motifs is especially apparent in her characterization.

Generally, traditional heroines have a guide or confidant inside or outside their families, whereas Elizabeth has no such counsellor. Her parents are indifferent. Some critics and biographers like D.W. Harding, Glenda A. Hudson, and Ruth Bernard Yeazell call that absent parent leitmotiv “The Cinderella theme” in Austen. Yeazell claims that

[Cinderella is a fairy tale in most of versions of which] the heroine begins as an only and much-loved child; her rags and ashes are a temporary debasement, signs of the humiliation she is forced to endure when a stepmother and stepsisters invade her father’s house. At the crucial moment of transformation, degraded appearances are cast off as dirt,

and the heroine reveals herself to be worthy of a prince. . . . Cinderella . . . seems to have been simply waiting to be discovered her essential purity undefiled (1997: pp. 78-79).

Although Elizabeth lives in better conditions than Cinderella, the similarity between the two characters is still conspicuous. As the founder of the foundling princess theme in Austen, Harding explains the Cinderella motif in the novel as follows:

. . .the heroine is in some degree isolated from those around her by being more sensitive or of finer moral insight or sound judgment, and her marriage to the handsome prince at the end is in the nature of a reward for being different from the rest and a consolation for the distress entailed by being different (1998:16).

Harding takes Elizabeth as if she were a foundling princess separated from her real parents to endure her indifferent foster parents. Darcy is the Prince Charming, who comes to rescue his unhappy princess. Neither Elizabeth's father nor her mother is able to establish intimate relations with her, though Mr Bennet loves her more than he does his other daughters. Moreover, Elizabeth's marriage to Darcy is like a fairy tale ending. The happy-ending of the novel, though in accordance with the expectations of the age, is also a lampoon of middle class families' prospects, and of their demands on people who struggle to protect their individuality. In other words, Austen's use of the Cinderella story is not a coincidence. Hudson explains Austen's intentions:

Yet Austen does not resignedly reproduce the Cinderella story; instead, she transforms the novelistic paradigm of the fairy tale into an original artistic pattern. This paradigm . . . was rooted in a middle-class ideology obsessed with rising up the social ladder. . . [Austen] frequently twists and disfigures components of the Cinderella dream in order to highlight the misconceptions and false expectations to which they give rise. . . (1999: 97).

Austen takes this motif to attract the attention of the middle class readers to make them see their delusions about marriage for middle class ideology whetted the desire of many parents willing to achieve social mobility through money. Therefore, Austen, throughout the novel depicts recognisable and domestic characters and pictures for the middle class audience with the purpose of showing them their own vanities. As a non-conformist author who ridicules sentimental tendencies in people, Austen's dealing with the absent parent theme, whether called the Cinderella or foundling princess motif, is not just for the sake of making a love story more appealing to her readers. She deliberately uses dysfunctional parents in her novels. Spacks interprets Austen's aim:

Austen's fictional mothers and aunts seldom offer much to admire. They bear a comfortable relation to the society they inhabit, supporting that society's assumption that young women exist to marry and young men to be married: . . . They understand also the social connection of love and money and feel no shame at attempting to further prosperous matches for young people they care about . . . Fathers as well as mothers may concern themselves with wealth and status (1981:162).



From Austen's viewpoint, even the parents' ambition to run after money for their children's "social welfare" rather than their psychological well-being is the part of middle class ideology that requires continuous materialist demands in the British society. Consequently, the members of society aim at amassing more and more money by underestimating emotional satisfaction. For Austen, in a marriage, the personal wishes should be love and respect as she wrote in her letter to her niece Frances (Fanny): "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection; and if his deficiencies of manner, etc., etc., strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once." (Woolsey, 1892: pp. 278-279) And in another letter written to Cassandra she hints at the significance of esteem in matrimony: "Miss J. is married to young Mr.G., and is to be very unhappy. He swears, drinks, is cross, jealous, selfish, and brutal" (Woolsey, 1892: 7). Austen stresses that people should get married if they are in love with each other and have respect for each other besides sharing the same tastes and values. For her, man and woman will understand that they can live together happily - as much as possible- after a learning period. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's "affection [for Darcy] was not the work of a day, but had stood the test of many months suspense" (Austen, 1994:291). Attachment and

esteem in a union will strengthen the familial tie. Male and female can reach a compromise between social demands and individual needs by gaining self-awareness. An individual who knows his own limits, virtues, and flaws perceives her or his goals within the social norms. Moreover, she or he is able to maintain the balance between personal wishes and social demands.

For Austen, undisciplined upbringing "may threaten the individual's development, but, given the will to self-awareness, she can triumph over such obstacles" (Spacks, 1981: 163). For instance, Elizabeth takes lessons from her spiritually absent parents' failed marriage because "Had Elizabeth's opinion been all drawn from her own family, she could not have formed a very pleasing picture of conjugal felicity or domestic comfort" (Austen, 1994: 183). Hence, Elizabeth "felt very seriously that marriage was not worth having unless it was a . . . marriage based on love and respect" (Williams, 1985: 47). She puts that notion of not marrying for the sake of finding a husband into action by rejecting two marriage proposals, made by two "important" men, Collins and Darcy (who will pass Elizabeth's liability test next time), since these men ignore Elizabeth's needs. Yet, she joyfully accepts Darcy's second marriage proposal for he comes to appreciate her self-assertiveness and self-confidence.

Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage is an ideal one because both achieve maturity by overcoming social and personal barriers. As Jay Fergus summarizes

Darcy and Elizabeth come to know each other despite (and partly because of) early misjudgment and conflict. One reason Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth is that she is always teasing or challenging him, not flattering him like Miss Bingley. Darcy and Elizabeth's conflicts are resolved because both can move from misjudgment, testing and conflicts of will to those fundamental likeness in principle and perception that so often give rise, paradoxically enough, to antagonists (1997: 65).

Before getting to know each other, both Elizabeth and Darcy are mistaken for appearances and pretensions. Throughout their "stormy" relationship, they learn that having the same moral perspective is more important than being beautiful or having a lot of money. Both are honest, well-mannered, and sensitive to each other's and other people's needs.

The marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth that eventually takes place is thus an exemplary one, for this matrimony satisfies both social and personal demands. It is not one sided: It is neither completely materialistic nor purely emotional and/or physical. It is a balanced one. Austen is aware that equalizing two opposing forces is a difficult task. However, she argues that if both partners take the responsibility of forming a happy union, they can reach their goals as Elizabeth and Darcy do in the novel.

## CONCLUSION

*Pride and Prejudice* belongs to all centuries, not only for Austen's universal subject matter —marriage— also for the witty and fresh approach of the author to this topic. Her attitude is not like that of the male authors of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She deals with this topic through an anti-sentimental, anti-decorous feminine viewpoint. Until recent years, however, her novels, including *Pride and Prejudice*, were misinterpreted as just romantic love stories. In fact, Austen, in her novels, criticizes the deficient unions, and reveals her own concept of marriage.

Analyzing the unbalanced marriages such as mercenary ones or matrimony out of sexual attraction, Austen sees that usually women suffer in marriages and consequently they make their partners suffer. She observes that this disorder stems from the materialist, masculine culture itself, and this sophistication has already permeated into the institution of marriage. Austen must have seen the need to purgate this institution, and on purpose, she creates a non-conformist heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, who

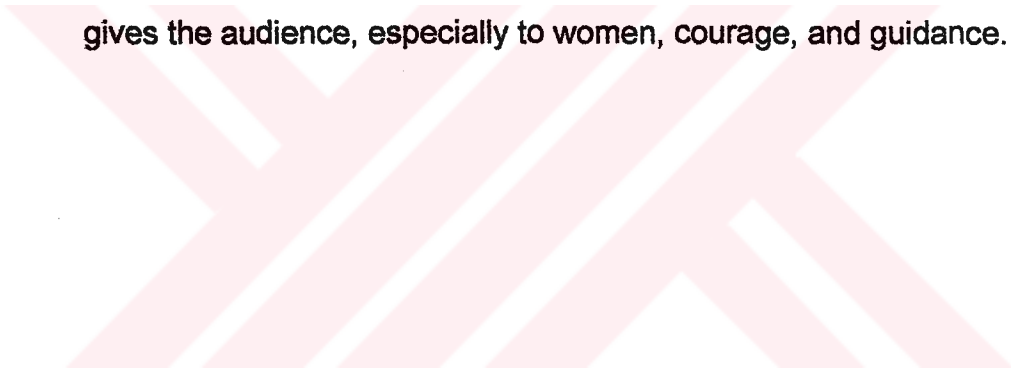
challenges male authority, class system, and its established code of behavior for females. However, Elizabeth's confrontation with the society is not destructive. She shows that women are also mentally developed individuals and can make decisions about their lives, particularly in choosing partners. Elizabeth, the mouthpiece of Austen, challenges the community she lives in. She does not accept being manipulated either by her mother or by other people. She takes the risk of making mistakes; yet, she is courageous enough to face and correct them. Her flaw stems from being inexperienced due to her indifferent parents, her overconfidence and due to being a female. However, Elizabeth is not completely against all social norms. She is just against hypocrisy. After correcting her mistakes, she comes to believe in sincerity, cooperation, and benevolence in relations.

Austen also draws a different hero in the novel: Fitzwilliam Darcy. At the beginning of the novel, Darcy is a proud aristocrat, and scorns other people. He is the symbol of male authority. After meeting Elizabeth, Darcy changes into a different man. The new Darcy is a man that gives more importance to personality, having similar values and tastes than having high connections and being proud. Through Darcy, Austen puts emphasis on the necessity of male reformation and it is the female that will reform the male.

For Austen, middle class ideology, giving priority only to amassing money, creates dysfunctional and failing marriages. She does not ignore the significance of wealth in such relations because she knows from first hand experience that sufficient income is necessary to sustain couples. Yet, she does not accept money as the sole prerequisite for marrying because wealth is just a means to buy necessities, not an aim in relations, especially in matrimony. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen shows her disapproval of women and men who waste their lives in order to marry a person they do not know and for whom do not feel any attachment or respect. She does not believe that marriages out of physical attraction can live long for such an attraction will soon fade away as she exemplifies in Mr and Mrs Bennet's, and Lydia and Wickham's marriages. The couples lose their interest in each other a short while after they get married.

In addition, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen claims that people must overcome the deep-rooted class-consciousness between middle class and aristocracy to found a healthy and balanced society. Elizabeth and Darcy are able to break down the prejudices against each other's social class. They learn the importance of personality, sharing the same viewpoint, loyalty and taking the responsibility of a relationship. Moreover, Elizabeth and Darcy accept each other as they are, and they give each other the chance to evolve and mature.

Consequently, the ideal marriage Austen depicts in the novel is the wish-fulfillment not only of the author herself, but also of the audience of all ages. Though failed in her own love affair in a capitalist society, Austen presents such a marriage in which opposites like male-female, rich-poor, aristocrat-middle class, and pride-prejudice come together. All these create something which is not like any of the opposing components, but something quite new and fulfilling. This is the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy. Although few people find such a chance to found a marriage like this, still there is the chance. Finally, through *Pride and Prejudice* Austen gives the audience, especially to women, courage, and guidance.



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