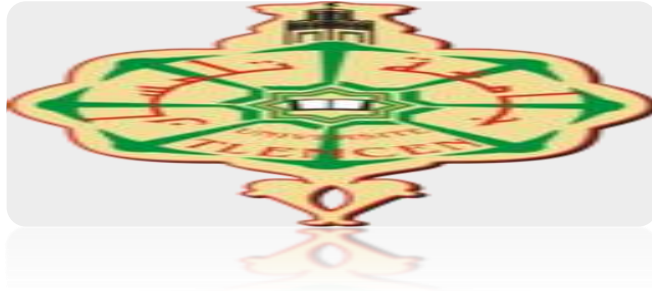


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**Women's Social Position during the Nineteenth Century**  
**In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice***

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization (LC).

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## **DEDICATION**

I 'am really appreciative to my mother for her love, prayers, care, and sacrifices in educating and preparing me for my future. I love you, mother. Also, this fruit of work is dedicated to my dear father (God keeps his soul in peace), who gave me the freedom of choice. I am here today to make both of you proud of me.

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# ABSTRACT

Jane Austen, is a pure feminist; a strong-willed woman born to disobey the rules. However, the author and Elizabeth Bennet have the same pleasures and similarities. Elizabeth's happy ending came through marriage, while Jane Austen's came through her published books. These experiences in both lives raise questions about feminism and the value of Jane Austen's novel. In light of this, this research intent's to use a broad net over Jane Austen's thoughts on women and how they are portrayed in the novel. To succeed the goal of this project, the researcher used an analytical method to portray the situation of women in British author Jane Austen's opinions. Therefore, this study has demonstrated how ladies find consolation in literature, notably in books, to conduct their existence on earth and declare their independence, empowering them to air much of their ideas and sentiments. The novel's feminine concept has caused it to compete with male authors. Besides, the researcher describes how the novel investigates women's suffering and how they overcome obstacles and attain accomplishment. The researcher deduced from this masterpiece that Jane Austen's illustration of her protagonist is inspired by her own life and experiences. In her books and her handling of women's social positions, particularly in marriage, she accepted herself as a unique feminist.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When the nineteenth century began, women had no choice regarding their future. The majority of them faced slavery-like life conditions. Because men often controlled all the resources and women had no independent means of livelihood, they were forced to submit to men, or they could either get married or become governesses if they were educated enough. They were expected to remain under the power of their fathers or husbands. Their life was primarily shaped by their families, which made an effort to marry them with a supportive husband. As a result, many changes occurred in the Victorian era in Britain, and English literature flourished at that time. On the other hand, Jane Austen published her romantic novel *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813. It is regarded as a classic novel that represents a genre and handles the romantic subject of marriage; she selects this core theme since, in her world, marriage was a woman's primary goal both financially and socially.

Furthermore, this was the issue that Jane Austen dealt with throughout her life. Thus, social classes, values, marriage, and women's roles in society were all discussed in this dissertation. The focus of the *Pride and Prejudice* novel is on the various ways that love can develop or die, as well as whether or not society allows for marriage and romantic love to coexist. However, *pride and Prejudice* presents a vital theme: marriage in the late 18th century. In that masterpiece, the novel's heroine is Elizabeth Bennet, who portrays a lively and intellectual lady who resists social standards and rules. She struggled with gender inequity in her society, perfecting the art of being excellent in public while maintaining her strong ideas in private.

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen views women as a reflection of her own life. As a result, the subject of this extended essay is one of the most well-known romance books. The novel *Pride and Prejudice*, will gain readers a general comprehension of nineteenth-century women's social status from this research.

In addition, there is a focus on the position of women and the portrayal of marriage in Victorian society in this contemporary study, which raises the following questions:

- 1- How were women treated in Victorian society in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*?
- 2- What feminist attitudes does Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* portray?

This research work consists of two chapters entitled: *The Reversal of the Victorian Age literature and Female Writers and the Position of Women in Pride and Prejudice*. It contains two main chapters. The first chapter deals with structure of the current research, shedding light on the Victorian age and female writers. The second chapter focuses on the position of women that sums up the significant aspects that were prominent and revolved around being married, ideally to a wealthy man, to protect their social standing.



# **Chapter One:**

## *The Reversal on the Victorian Age Literature and Female Writers*

# Chapter One: *The Reversal on the Victorian Age Literature and Female Writers.*

## 1.1- Introduction

Literature has served as a person's safe place where is able to escape reality and enter the fictional world. Literature, as a form of art, provides joy, fulfillment, and various experiences to those interested in it. It makes us appreciate life more since literary works can show us the issues of human life, society, and the environment. However, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen was released in 1813, yet it does not have conventional romantic elements. Instead, its characteristics and design could reflect the future Victorian age; it depicts and comments on Victorian social customs, like many Victorian books. It is widely acknowledged that nineteenth-century England was not like today: class inequalities were evident, and courteous manners were highly valued.

This chapter introduces the first Victorian-era British and Victorian-era literature, regarded as the world's first Industrial Revolution, political reform, and social change in human history. Female writers of the Victorian era, on the other hand, often chose the literary life because they faced social censure, low salaries, and a critical double standard. As a result, this chapter concludes with Jane Austen's life as a feminist and novelist and her incredible works, ranging from the novel *Sense and Sensibility* to *Mansfield Park*. In her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen attempted to change the materialistic mentality and marital stereotype that women should marry at the perfect time to the right person, regardless of wealth or social position. That is why she created the character of Elizabeth Bennet, which shares many similarities to successfully deliver her message.

## 1.2-The Victorian Age in England

The Victorian era was Queen Victoria's reign that began on June 20, 1837, and ended on January 22, 1901, when she passed away. Following the passing of her uncle, William IV, she ascended to the kingdom at the age of 18. In the Victorian era, Britain was a strong country with a rich history and culture. It had a strong political system, a state that was expanding quickly, and a growing business. Despite having a majority of working-class citizens, it nevertheless possessed a large, rich empire thanks to its high level of industrialization and imperial conquests. Later in the century, although not until after World War II, Britain started to lose its dominance as a major political and economic force in comparison to other large nations, especially the United States. Additionally, 1830 is a great starting point for Victorianism because it is frequently seen as the end of the romantic era in Britain. Because Queen Victoria died so suddenly at the start of a new century, the end of the previous century also serves as an acceptable cut off point for the time (The Victorian Period).

Similarly, William Ralph Inge was an English author, Anglican priest, and professor of divinity at Cambridge, who claimed in *The Victorian Age* that "one great interest of the Victorian age is that it was the time when a new social order was being built up, and entirely new problems were being solved."<sup>(5)</sup> This quote denotes a period of rapid technological advancements and widespread adoption (Allen 02).

Moreover, the industrial revolution was also in full swing at the time. Women continued to be heavily restricted and suffered maltreatment from both men and society throughout this revolution, which mostly focused on the sources of inventions, and overlooked their significance. They were restricted in numerous ways, including the capacity to vote or own property, the opportunity to exercise accomplishments, and manufacturing and agricultural work, which all permanently confined women to the responsibilities of housekeepers or homemakers. Victorian women, on the other hand, had restricted rights and advantages. For example, wives were subject to their husbands' behavior in everything from bringing up children to assisting them in household tasks, and women were viewed as machines that performed domestic duties.

After a long period of suffering and prejudice, women are finally playing a vital part in society, as seen by the arrival of feminism, which had sparked a global debate and represented women's interests when they were unable to speak for themselves.

### **1.3-The Victorian Age in Literature**

Queen Victoria governed Great Britain and her Empire during the years of the Victorian literary age. (1837-1901). the movement relates to the years 1830 to 1900 within this period, though there are numerous differences in this simple fact. However, the one that has difficulties because both traditions share so many characteristics, it is difficult to distinguish with any degree of certainty where the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century ends and the Victorian era begins. The transition from Victorianism to modernism is also difficult to pinpoint. Periods of literature are never the isolated, self-contained kingdoms that anthologies imply. On the other hand, a literary epoch resembles a frayed rope on both ends. The entire artistic and cultural environment is built from the interconnected threads of the rope. While simultaneously pushing arts and letters in fresh and exciting areas, Victorian writers carried on some long-standing traditions from earlier eras. Indeed, some later Victorian novelists and poets resemble later modernists in almost every way. Despite the terminological uncertainty, specific conclusions regarding the characteristics of Victorian literature and the intellectual milieu that sustains it can be drawn. Victorian authors wrote works depicting and commenting on the time's religious, economic, social, and philosophical ideas. On the other hand, Victorian stories were intended as messages to teach moral lessons to the audience (Victorian Literature 01).

The Romantic Renaissance marked the start of a new stage in the Victorian era. The literature of this time period was a combination of pure romance and harsh realism. Though many brilliant poets emerged during the Victorian era, it is equally remembered for its exceptional prose. This era's literature reflects its practical challenges and interests by bringing it closer to everyday life. It became a vital instrument for human advancement, socially and economically. Different reform movements were rising; include women's rights, child labor, freedom, and evolution. It appears to depart from "*art for the sake of art*" by emphasizing its moral significance. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin-all were the teachers of England with faith in their moral message to instruct the world. It is also known as

the age of doubt and pessimism. The impact of science can be felt in the entire epoch appears engrossed in the idea of evolution regarding man's place in the universe. Even though the era is known for being practical and materialistic, most writers exalt a pure idea of existence. It is a realistic age in which poets, essayists, and novelists highlight noble ideals such as truth, justice, love, and fraternity.

#### **1.4- Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

A woman in the 21st century finds it extremely difficult to imagine what her life would have been like in the past. They were forced to obey males because, in the majority of circumstances, men controlled all the resources and women lacked independent means of survival. Women of the mid-19th century had no such options and most lived in conditions that were barely better than slavery. A fortunate exception was a wealthy widow or spinster. If a lady stayed single, she would be looked down upon and treated with sympathy. Because of the severe societal consequences, she was unable to have children or live with a guy. Because of this, the daughters of Bennet always travel in the company of respectable married women or close relatives. While Jane stays with the Gardiners, Elizabeth stays with Charlotte, who is now married (Women in the Victorian Era).

Girls received less schooling than boys, were denied admission to universities, and were limited to low-wage employment. Women were made exclusively for marriage and procreation. Women dominated men by 360,000 at the turn of the century, and 30% of women over 20 were unmarried. Men predominated in the colonies, and spinsters were urged to immigrate (Pandora, 1982).

The majority of women had little choice but to marry, and after doing so, their husbands instantly became the owners of everything they owned, inherited, and earned. This meant that only her partner may file a lawsuit if she was the victim of a crime. Additionally, he was entitled to the woman's personal rights, including access to her body. Not only was this guaranteed by law, but the woman herself gave her verbal consent to it. Every woman was required to declare before God and earthly witnesses during the marriage ceremony that she would obey her husband. Women did not have the option to remove the declaration from their marriage contract until the late 20th century (Ibid, 1982).

A journalist who had been a midwife, Florence Fenwick Miller (1854–1935), simply summarized the status of women in 1890:

Women have been reduced to the most terrible form of legal slavery under laws that are entirely man-made, in which it is possible for people to be held under the arbitrary dominance of another will and depend for acceptable treatment only on the particular master's goodness of heart (1890).

Every man had the legal right to force his women to have sex and childbirth. He may kidnap her kids and raise them elsewhere without giving them a reason. He had the option of using his wife's inheritance to pay a prostitute or a mistress. All of these events, along with a huge number more, took place at some point. For instance, Susannah Palmer, who endured years of harsh beatings at the hands of her adulterous husband, managed to flee him in 1869 and start a new life. She put in work, saved money, and built a beautiful house for her kids. When her husband discovered her, he took all she owned and left her penniless with the approval of the law. She stabbed him out of rage and was charged right away.

Nearly often, a woman had little she could do about her position if she was unhappy with it. A woman could not often get a divorce, and up to 1891, her husband might have put her in jail if she fled an unhappy marriage and was caught by the government. All of this was sanctioned by the church, the law, custom, history, and society at large. It was not caused by antiquated, out-of-date legislation either; the new Divorce Act of 1857 reiterated the moral injustice. Even adultery was not enough for a woman to get a divorce from a man, but it was enough for a man to get a divorce from his wife.

Fathers, wives, and even brothers quickly put an end to any signs of female independence. As late as 1895, Edith Lanchester's father had her kidnapped and put in a mental institution for cohabiting with a man; Judge William Blackstone had stated that husbands might provide "mild punishment" to rebellious wives.

Marxist and feminist theories hold that women were morally and politically opposed to marriage with wealthy husbands who could offer a secure financial life; if a daughter was able to inherit anything, it was a small percentage, and this came only if she had no brothers, came from a very wealthy family, and remained unmarried. Only then could a woman become independent. The majority of the time, marriage deprives a woman of all her assets and

transfers them to her husband. A very wealthy woman might negotiate a premarital agreement for her wealth to be held in a trust fund.

The idea of a woman as a goddess adored on a pedestal matched this condition of affairs quite awkwardly, if not hypocritically. R.J. Has done a fantastic job of describing this conflict Cruikshank:

“...Woman in the abstract was as radiant as an angel, as dainty as a fairy - she was a picture on the wall, a statue in a temple, a being whose physical processes were an inscrutable mystery. She was wrapped by the Victorians in folds on folds, and layers on layers of clothes, as though she were a Hindu idol. She was hidden in the mysteries of petticoats; her natural lines were hidden behind a barricade of hoops and stays; her dress throughout the century emphasized her divorce from reality....” (Cruikshank, 2003)

It is simple to overlook that the vast majority of women in Victorian society were working class due to reading Victorian novels and watching costume dramas on television: born into poverty, they started working between the ages of 8 and 12 and continued until marriage. After that, a woman's future was determined by her husband. She would usually stop working if he was making enough money to support her; otherwise, she worked all her life, only taking brief intervals to give birth. Anything she made was his to keep.

Women were forced into a relatively restricted range of professions because they were prohibited from any well-paying work; half of these were in domestic service, and the majority were unskilled factory workers or farm laborers. The bespoke clothes industry offered nearly the only skilled employment for women, and even that was poorly compensated and low status. In the 1840s, seamstresses attracted widespread attention.

According to Simone de Beauvoir who was a significant philosopher of existentialism and a pioneering figure of contemporary philosophical feminism, he wrote the renowned book *The Second Sex*, prostitution was common in Victorian England, with the majority of cases being "casual" and only occurring when there was no other option. Women were obliged to

turn to specific males in their time of need because there was no safety net provided by a welfare system and all wealth was held by men.

Stretched corset lacing and heavy multiple-layer skirts that trailed on the ground illustrate how restricted women's lives were in their attire, which limited their freedom of movement. The cage crinoline, which replaced the numerous layers of petticoats, was popular among the elite between 1856 and 1878, although it was uncomfortable and embarrassing. The cage came up at the front in an uncomfortable manner as it was seated. Since the skirts were so broad, several ladies perished in the flames when the fabric caught fire from a candle or open grate. (Infoplease2011).

Women were taught from infancy to accept their poor status, but many rebelled, and others wrote works that analyzed, questioned, and discussed the situation of women. Dale Spender's *Women of Ideas* contains a fantastic overview of these (Pandora, 1982).

In The early 19th century, social order was under attack, and a new philosophy infused with values of liberty, individual freedom, and legal reform was beginning to take shape. Black slavery was being denounced, resisted, and outlawed, while working-class men requested that they be granted the right to vote instead of simply a small group of wealthy aristocrats. Women like Barbara Leigh Smith started to believe that women should also be freed from their enslaved existence in this environment.

## **1.5-The Victorian Female Writers in the Nineteenth century**

The Victorian era is known for the galaxy of female novelists. Many female writers appeared against women's iniquity and dire situation during the Victorian era through their novels. They questioned the structure of the male-dominated society in which they lived. It is also impossible to provide them with the necessary information. Some of these female writers are Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and Elizabeth Gaskell, who saw at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries many problems that women's rights movement and the first suffragettes were born out of issues like a wife's right to ownership, a mother's right to nurse her children and control her body, and the capacity to vote. This was the era of the professional female author, when more women started writing for a living and wanted



equal status with men in the literary community to voice their demands for gender equality and the end to injustice and suffering.

### 1.5.1- Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Wollstonecraft, also known by her married name Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, was an English writer and ardent supporter of women's equality in society and education. She was born in London, England, on April 27, 1759, and died there on September 10, 1797. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), regarded as a classic of feminism, she expressed her convictions.

Farmer's daughter Wollstonecraft gained teaching and governing experience, which influenced her views in her essay "*Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*" (1787). Beginning in 1788, she began translating for London publisher Joseph Johnson, who published several of her works, including the novel *Mary: A Fiction* (1788). In her mature essay on women's position in society, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she argues for equal access to education for men and women.

Wollstonecraft traveled to Paris, where she resided with an American named Captain Gilbert Imlay, in 1792 to see the French Revolution. She gave birth to a daughter named Fanny in the spring of 1794. She made an attempt at suicide the following year because she was upset about how her relationship with Imlay had ended.

Wollstonecraft relocated to London to continue working for Johnson and joined a strong radical group that gathered at his residence. William Godwin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Holcroft, William Blake, and later William Wordsworth were members of this group. And Mary was still pregnant on March 29, 1797, when their relationship with Godwin had only begun, they got married. The marriage was happy but short-lived; Mary died 11 days after giving birth to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, a writer well known for her work on *Frankenstein* and the second daughter of the couple. *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798), a posthumously published incomplete novelistic sequel to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*

are two of Wollstonecraft's later famous works (1796), a travelogue with a sociological and philosophical bent.

One of the main writings of feminism is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In a book that was first published in 1792, Wollstonecraft made the case that the educational system in place at the time was designed to produce frivolous, incapable women. She argued that if females were given the same educational opportunities as boys, they would become wonderful husbands and mothers as well as competent employees in a variety of fields. Similar calls for greater education for women had been made by other early feminists, but Wollstonecraft's work stood out because it proposed that political change, such as the radical overhaul of national educational systems, could improve women's standing. All of society would profit from such a transformation, she concluded.

Although the publishing of *Vindication* generated a great deal of controversy, no immediate changes were made. But as the American and European women's movements developed beginning in the 1840s, some of the book's ideas were revived. It had a particularly strong impact on American women's rights pioneers like Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Wollstonecraft has been the subject of several biographies, beginning with her husband's *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798, reissued 2001, in an edition edited by Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker) The controversial aspects of her life—rather than her contributions to society—tended to be highlighted in 19th-century accounts. Women's rights began to gain popularity again in the latter part of the 20th century, and Mary Wollstonecraft was once more the subject of several books, such as Charlotte Gordon's *Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* and Janet Todd's *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* published in 2003 (2015).

### **1.5.2- Jane Austen**

Jane Austen is regarded as one of the greatest English authors. Her works are primarily about women in society, and her primary subjects are marriage and the dominance of men in many different areas of life. While making women the critical characters in her novels, Austen attained tremendous reputation and success. Austen influenced English literature tremendously in her day and continues to do so today since her works are still the subject of

countless literary studies due to their historical setting and creative approaches. Even though she only published six novels, they have been reissued in large numbers, translated into twenty-nine languages, and frequently adapted into films and dramas. Furthermore, Jane Austen's name was only mentioned "by a lady" in her first published novel "*Sense and sensibility*," and all of her future novels were attributed to "The Author of *Sense and Sensibility*" for no apparent reason; her name was never attached to any of her published novels during her lifetime. Nonetheless, Austen's identity became known a decade after her death, and her name could finally be linked to the renowned heroes she created.

Jane Austen invented the middle-class English comedy of manners in her period. Her prose style is known for its wit, realism, astute sensitivity, and excellent prose. She was the first to give the novel a distinctly modern aspect by portraying ordinary people in everyday life. Her works were published anonymously, and two were only published after her death. Otherwise, she believed that women should fight for justice in their lives and live a happy life, and this is reflected in Austen's heroines.

Jane Austen's writings were influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's support for women's rights and viewpoints on their place in society. The majority of Austen's characters want to be married, and they almost always want to do it out of love, which was not possible in her day.

### **1.5.3- Charlotte Bronte**

Charlotte Bronte is the author of *Jane Eyre* and the most well-known female novelist in literature. The novel *Jane Eyre* and Charlotte Bronte's other writings were initially published under Currer Bell. When Bronte was actively writing, this moniker represented the manly persona required for success. *Jane Eyre* is one of the most significant pieces of literature in history and is now being published under Charlotte Bronte's real name. However, in her novel, Charlotte Bronte defied Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and William Thackeray. She was complimented in glowing terms in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, although she never attempted anything similar to herself. Her works are about feelings and the naked soul, not about manners. Her characters are elemental figures yearning against the backdrop of elemental nature, largely the effusion of her soul.

Charlotte Bronte, an English author also known by her married name Mrs. Arthur Bell Nicholls and pen name Currer Bell, was born on April 21, 1816, in Thornton, Yorkshire, and passed away on March 31, 1855, in Haworth, Yorkshire.

Anglican priest Patrick Bronte (1777–1861) was her father. He was born in Ireland. He had substituted his new name for the more conventional Brunty. After serving in many parishes, he went to Haworth in the Yorkshire moors in 1820 with his wife, Maria Branwell Bronte, and their six young children after being appointed to the rectorship there.

The father was left to look after the other three girls—Charlotte, Emily, and Anne—and a boy named Branwell after the death of Mrs. Bronte and the two eldest kids not long after. Elizabeth Branwell, an aunt who moved in with the family in Haworth after leaving her native Cornwall, helped with the children's upbringing.

Before their deaths, their older sisters, Charlotte and Emily went to the Clergy Daughters' School in Cowan Bridge, Lancashire, not far from Kirkby Lonsdale in 1824. Low fees, bland food, and strict rules were all present.

Long years later, Charlotte decried the school in *Jane Eyre* under the flimsy guise of Lowood Institution, and its headmaster, the Reverend William Carus Wilson, has been recognized as the literary equivalent Mr. Brocklehurst's.

After Charlotte and Emily left in June 1825, the Bronte kids learned and played at home for more than five years while creating imaginative games to play indoors or on the desolate moors. They also wrote and told romantic stories to one another.

#### **1.5.4- Elizabeth Gaskell**

Elizabeth Gaskell was a novelist. As evidenced by her novels *North and South*, *Mary Barton*, and *Ruth*, she was fascinated by social issues, industrial life, laborers, and women in general. She is an example of many feminist writers, especially with her novel *Cranford* during the Victorian era. Therefore, Gaskell's industrial and romantic novel *North and South* features Margaret as the main character that her works were a reflection of the reality of her

period, and when her family moved from the south to the north of England, she experienced a dramatic change in her life (Gaskell 301-311).

Ruth, as a result, is a good illustration of women in Victorian culture, as the primary protagonist, Ruth, is bereaved of her parents, and even though her child is illegitimate, she becomes a mother. According to Elizabeth Gaskell, people reject "*fallen women*" because Victorian society did not accept women who had children outside of marriage. On the other hand, north and South is both an industrial and a romantic tale, with Margaret as the protagonist who undergoes a significant transformation in her life when her family relocates from the South to the north of England, and the reality of her time were reflected in Gaskell's writings (ibid).

Gaskell enjoyed traveling and was always eager to get away from Manchester's Smokey atmosphere. She particularly enjoyed visiting Silverdale in Lancashire, the Lake District, and North Wales. She had a strong desire to make new friends, and her travels gave her ideas for settings, stories, and other content for her writing. She had a strong sense of independence and frequently traveled abroad, visiting France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. She was generally joined by at least one of her daughters, rather than her husband, as William preferred to holiday alone (Gaskell society).

She was a loving mother and wife, as well as attractive and well-liked. She was talkative, social, and a prolific letter writer who was at ease in any environment. She had a large group of acquaintances, including Florence Nightingale, Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin, the Carlyles, and Charlotte Bronte. Elizabeth had a contentious working relationship with Charles Dickens, who, as editor, frequently wanted to change what she wrote, despite the fact that they shared many creative values. One day, frustrated by what he thought was her waywardness as a contributor, he said to his sub-editor, "Oh! Mrs. Gaskell is terrified! Oh my goodness, how I would beat her if I were Mr. G! It's understandable why they sometimes didn't get along (Gaskell society).

On November 12, 1865, Elizabeth Gaskell passed away unexpectedly at The Lawn, a home in Holybourne, Hampshire that she had been bought covertly as a post-retirement surprise for her husband and family. The Cornhill Magazine, a prestigious literary journal that

specializes in the serialization of books, published *Wives and Daughters*. In 1866, it was published in volume form posthumously.

Elizabeth Gaskell writing had a lovely, rural feel to it before the beginning of the 20th century, but she is now acknowledged as one of the greatest British Victorian authors. She is now recognized for the excellent artist that she was, and for the past thirty years or more, she has drawn more and more scholars, academics, and readers who simply appreciate a good story about her work. As a result, more nuanced and insightful analyses of Gaskell life and works are currently being written for her expanding audience (Gaskell society).

Finally, these women are just a few of the numerous female writers who fought for women's equality and challenged nineteenth-century social structures. Despite all the challenges and restrictions, they sought to transform the status of women in Victorian society and the world.

## **1.6-Jane Austen as a Feminist**

Taking a deep dive into Jane Austen's works reveals her to be a fanatical feminist who created a protagonist with a solid independent personality who does not require the support of men, but the majority of them marry the love of their lives, a wealthy and attractive man, and this is what we call the contradiction. Jane Austen, on the other hand, used to make satirical pronouncements against men in her works when she said in her quote:

"I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men..." (Austen 26-27)

This declaration is similar to Elizabeth Bennet's responses. It could indicate that Elizabeth's spirit is haunting Jane Austen. This may conflict with this study's mission to expose the anti-feminist side of Jane Austen, but the truth is yet to come. Moreover, it is true that Jane Austen lived in a world governed by males and took their freedom and rights from

them, but they never gave up and showed society their possibilities. They needed to be treated very carefully at the time. However, Jane Austen was well aware of the consequences of stepping outside of her heroes' comfort zones; while none of Austen's characters displayed an overt feminist impulse to question and defy conventional norms, Austen herself did. Austen defied the stereotype that unmarried women could not sustain themselves by refusing to marry, and instead of that, they wrote books.

### **1.7- Jane Austen, the Novelist**

Jane Austen was an almost unknown author during her lifetime (1775-1817). In the majority of her books, she criticized sentiment and nostalgia. She was the daughter of a preacher in England. She went to boarding school with her sister for a short time. Her formal education mainly consisted of reading books that her father and brothers recommended. Austen began creating stories, plays, and poems for her family's enjoyment in her teens. Her six finished works, including the widely adopted *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, made her famous. Gained the books, which were first published anonymously, gained a Reputation among readers and scholars in the twentieth century with two published after her death. She was her generation's first significant female novelist. However, her field of view was restricted. She demonstrated the bond between people in small groupings, usually centered on the heroine's search for a husband and her subsequent discovery, but the form was always excellent. Austen's works also contain aspects of fairy tales. They have substantially more dialogue than other early nineteenth-century novels and have less narrative or scenic description. Austen gives each character a distinct and delicately built voice. She was a comedian who was concerned with how people behaved regarding ethics.

Moreover, Austen contributed significantly to the comedic drama of middle-class English life during the period. Her writing style was praised for its believability, wit, sensitivity, honesty, and superb prose. She was the first to give the novel its uniquely modern character by portraying ordinary people in everyday life.

## 1.8-Jane Austen's Major Works

The English author Jane Austen wrote four significant novels. Her first novel to be published during her life was *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), written in her early twenties, followed by *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1815). On the other hand, Jane Austen's writing style is based on a series of parodies, burlesque, sarcasm, free indirect speech, and a degree of realism. She used parody and burlesque for comedic effect and to criticize women's representation in romantic and Gothic books from the eighteenth century. She was a polished gem of English writing, reminiscent of several well-known masterpieces such as:

### 1.8.1- Sense and Sensibility

*Sense and sensibility* became the first published novel by the English author *Jane Austen*. She began to write it sometime around 1797 and worked on it for many years before its publication in 1811. It was the first title to be republished in England after her death. *Sense and Sensibility* had elements that would later become Austen's signature. The novel's title page is said to be written "by a lady," and only her family knew that Jane Austen was the author. *Elinor Dashwood* was the protagonist of this novel. She is known for being calm and reserved but in charge of her emotions. She coped with the family's financial problems while hiding her frustrated romantic hopes. Her sister *Marianne Dashwood* tumbled into a fairy tale romance that went sour. She was emotional, wildly romantic, intelligent, and attracted to all aspects of the arts. Both are looking for a husband, but neither *Elinor's* reason nor *Marianne's* passion can lead them to protect happiness-as Marianne falls for an unscrupulous rascal, and *Elinor* becomes attached to a man who is already engaged. However, at the end of this novel, these two sisters decide to live side by side with their husbands. The book *sense and Sensibility* is a richly rewarding story of manners from one of the world's greatest novelists, full of feelings, humor, and beautifully realized characters.



### **1.8.2- Pride and Prejudice**

Jane Austen's romance novel was created in the late 1700s, updated in 1811-1813, and eventually published in the early 1813 century. *Pride and Prejudice* were originally entitled *First Impression* and has remained one of the most popular novels in English literature. Austen published four novels during her lifetime, the second of which was *Pride and Prejudice*. Since its first publication, it has remained popular. Jane Austen centers her story on a family with five daughters who will not inherit their family's estate, which is entailed to the nearest male relative. Therefore, it is paramount to the family that at least one of the daughters must marry a wealthy man who can provide for the other four sisters. This novel, one of the first of its kind, is considered the original romantic comedy in English literature. The two main characters, Elizabeth Bennet, the daughter of a rural gentleman, and Fitzwilliam Darcy, an affluent landowner, do not like each other at first but develop feelings for one another throughout the story, despite outside forces trying to keep them apart. However, in the end, Elizabeth eventually accepts Darcy's marriage proposal.

The novel dealt with misjudgment that often occurred at the beginning of acknowledgment.

### **1.8.3- Emma**

Jane Austen began writing *Emma* in January 1814. She finished the novel a little over a year later; her purpose in this novel was to change the shape of what is possible in fiction. *Emma* is widely acknowledged as her masterpiece, calling it her most perfect book. Austen took her suggestion as it was intended as a command. *Emma* was thus dedicated. It is a novel about youthful hubris and romantic misunderstandings. It takes place in the fictional country hamlet of Highbury, as well as the nearby estates of Hartfield, Randalls, and Donwell Abbey, and revolves around the relationships between members of a limited number of families.

As in her other novels, Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in Georgian–Regency England. *Emma* is a comedy of manners and depicts marriage, sex, age, and social status issues. Although, before she began the novel, Austen wrote, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." She introduces the title

character in the opening sentence. "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and a happy disposition... had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." Emma is spoilt, arrogant, and conceited; she overestimates her matchmaking powers; she is blind to the consequences of interfering in other people's lives, and her imagination and senses frequently lead her astray. This novel deals with a young woman's maturing into puberty and the problems she gets herself.

*Emma*, written after Austen's transfer to Chawton, was her final novel to be published during her lifetime, whereas *Persuasion*, Austen's final complete novel, was released after her death.

### **1.8.4- Mansfield Park**

Mansfield Park was written between 1811 and 1813 and published in 1814. It was the first novel that Jane Austen produced after a ten-year hiatus. Fanny Price is raised with her aristocratic cousins at Mansfield Park in this story, taken from the poverty of her parents' house in Portsmouth, acutely conscious of her humble position and her cousin Edmund as her lone ally. During her uncle's absence in Antigua, the Crawford's arrive in the neighborhood, bringing with them the glamour of London life and a reckless taste for flirtation. With its calm protagonist and nuanced analysis of social position and moral integrity, Mansfield Park is considered Jane Austen's first mature work and one of her most deeply. This novel was Jane Austen's most complex novel that dealt with many different themes, from children's education to the differences between appearances and reality.

### **1.9-Conclusion:**

To summarize what has been mentioned in this chapter, it is worth saying that there is a relationship between what Jane Austen lived and what she wrote. Like most Victorian female writers impacted by their conservative society's beliefs, their works reflected their experiences. For instance, Jane Austen's life was not especially interesting or long-lasting, yet it had a lasting impact on her classical literature, which is why her novels are as they are. Family, life, and circumstances influence different components of the novel's pride and

Prejudice. In other words, Jane Austen was inspired by her society and family, which is why she created a protagonist who resembled herself. However, this chapter has shown the characteristics of the Victorian period in different phases and the general conditions of Victorian social life. It also examined the position of Jane Austen as a feminist and novelist. It develops an overview of women's position in Britain's history concerning Jane Austen's literary tendency. This part proved that the impact of Jane Austen's life helped produce such a masterpiece, *Pride and Prejudice* novel.

***Chapter Two:***  
***The Position of Women in Pride and  
Prejudice***

## Chapter Two: The Position of Women in *Pride and Prejudice*

### 2.1-Introduction

In *pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen presents an exciting reality in England in the late 18th to the early 19th-century life. Most of which are related to marriage. During this period, women were treated as accessories or enslaved people under the control of men. Their thoughts and feelings were not considered to be of importance. They passed through numerous problems, obstacles, and barriers to becoming an essential member of society. Jane Austen wanted to show that women are rational creatures and must be loved and respected. She also revealed her interests in women's development toward self-knowledge and social position, suggested in her loving dependence on a mature, conscious man, as is shown in Elizabeth's marriage to a wealthy man, "Darcy." Thus, in the novel, Austen illustrated the female heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, as a brave, intelligent, and independent woman, with a witty sense of humor. However, at the novel's end, she chooses the life of a 19th-century wife. However, the women's position in this chapter represented different characteristics, themes, and social classes to demonstrate how the ideal was necessarily the most desirable.

### 2.2-General Summary of *Pride and Prejudice*

"*Pride and Prejudice*" are set in rural England in the early 19th century, and it follows the Bennet family, which includes five very different sisters; Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Lydia, and Katherine. They all live in a small country called Hertfordshire. Mrs. Bennet is anxious to see all her daughters married to a single rich man with a good fortune. However, the novel opens with one of the most famous lines in English literature: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." (Austen 1) The statement is seemingly what Mrs. Bennet is pondering something while she focuses her attention on Mr. Bingley, whom she believes will make a great husband for one of her daughters.

Mrs. Bennet attempts to persuade Mr. Bennet to see Charles Bingley, a wealthy young gentleman visiting the country with his two sisters, Louisa and Caroline Bingley, and his

friend Fitzwilliam Darcy. Charles rented Nether Field Park estate, disturbing the neighboring area of Long Bourn, particularly among the Bennet family.

The Bennet daughters met the guests at the first ball, and their father introduced them. Everyone liked Mr. Bingley because he had a kind and upbeat personality that made him popular among the visitors. He looks attracted to Jane Bennet (the eldest Bennet daughter), with whom he dances throughout the night. While his friend Mr. Darcy, who is reputed to be twice as wealthy, is arrogant and distant, he declines Elizabeth's (the second-eldest Bennet daughter) invitation to dance with him, claiming that she is not attractive enough to seduce him (Austen 15) and those other females are more fascinating. When Elizabeth heard those comments, she knew he was a haughty man with a cold heart and an odd mentality.

Caroline and Louisa Bingley, Mr. Bingley's sisters, later asked Jane to have supper at Netherfield. On her journey home, she gets caught in a downpour and becomes ill, forcing her to stay at Netherfield for several days. When Elizabeth goes to see Jane, she climbs across muddy fields and arrives in a spattered dress, much to Mrs. Bennet's delight, increasing her hate for Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley's sister. She feels even more envious when she discovers Mr. Darcy's complete focus is on Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy is becoming increasingly enamored with Elizabeth's wit and charm. On the other hand, Elizabeth is unaware of his increasing attraction to her. ("Overview")

When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they discover Mr. Collins has given them a visit. He was Mr. Bennet's cousin, the heir to the Long Bourn estate, and an obedient clergyman intent on marrying one of the Bennet girls. He promptly chose Elizabeth, the next daughter in age and beauty, after knowing that Jane may be engaged soon. Shortly after his arrival, he proposes to Elizabeth for marriage, and she rejects him, injuring his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennets' daughters have become friends with Sir Wickham, a gorgeous young soldier who is friendly with Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cheated him of an inheritance (Spark Notes Editors).

The Bingleys and Darcy leave Nether Field and return to London, much to Jane's shock. Caroline Bingley writes a letter to Jane to inform her that Mr. Bingley intends to marry Darcy's sister. Elizabeth was distraught by this news and correctly recognized that Bingley's sisters were horrified at the thought of being connected to the Bennet family by marriage.

Another impact comes with the news that Mr. Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas after Elizabeth's rejection. Charlotte was her best friend of Elizabeth and the poor daughter of a local man who was already aged 27. She was thankful for a proposal that gave her a secure future and a comfortable home. Charlotte and Mr. Collins marry, and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, a heartbroken Jane visits her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner in London to raise her spirits, hoping she might see Mr. Bingley. However, Miss Bingley visits and mistreats her, while Mr. Bingley does not pay attention (Spark Notes Editors).

In the spring, Mr. Collins and Charlotte are visited by Elizabeth in Kent. She was invited to Rosings Park, the house of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the insistent patroness of Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy's wealthy aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make several visits to Collins's home, where she is staying. Later, Mr. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth, declaring his love for her, but she rejects him angrily. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and could never love a man who caused his sister such unhappiness and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her, but he sends her a letter soon after that. He explained that Wickham, the son of his late father's steward, had refused the living his father arranged and was instead given money for it. Wickham immediately spent the money and became impoverished, begging for a new life. After being refused, he tried to escape with Darcy's 15-year-old sister, Georgiana, for her considerable dowry. Regarding Jane, he reveals that he pushed Bingley to separate himself from her, but only because he believed their love was inaccurate (Spark Notes).

Shortly after, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has run away with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, suggesting that they may be living together without marriage. The whole family was ashamed of her mistake with Mr. Wickham and had been avoided by almost all the neighbors. Furthermore, the respected Mr. Collins scolds Mr. Bennet: Your daughter's death was better than that which happened... Who shall be bound to such a family? However, at first, Elizabeth refuses to believe the letter, but after rereading it and thinking back on Darcy's circumstances, she soon realizes, with a great deal of shock and chagrin, that it is entirely accurate. In shock, Elizabeth informs Darcy about what Wickham has done. Meanwhile, Mr. Gardiner sends a letter claiming that the couple has

been caught and that Wickham has consented to marry Lydia. After that, Bennet's family realizes that Darcy paid Wickham for this work (Spark Notes).

After a few days, Mrs. Catherine came into the house of Mr. Bennet and asked Elizabeth to decline any offer made to her by Mr. Darcy, but Elizabeth was unaware that such a thing would happen, yet she told Mrs. Catherine that she would not refuse to submit to her. Two days after this, Darcy and Bingley return to the nether field, go directly to Bennet's house, and take a walk with Jane and Elizabeth in the country. After becoming alone with Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth decided to thank him for what he had done and save her sister Lydia's Reputation and told him that her feelings for him had been lost, and she changed, and nothing pleased Mr. Darcy than this. He proposed to Elizabeth for the second time and told her that his feelings had remained the same. Moreover, she gently accepts his proposal. However, Bingley also ends his story love with genuine affection for Jane and asks for her hand, and both of the sister's ends up in marriage and true love (Spark Notes Editors).

### **2.3- The Position of Women in *Pride and Prejudice***

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* are set firmly in the nineteenth-century period. The novel revolves around the women's strict life period in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Women in Austin's time believed that they could only do what was expected of them; men controlled them. Marriages were primarily arranged within the same social class. Even middle-class parents want their daughters well situated. When it came to picking a husband, love was unimportant. Women did not have much choice; unmarried women over the age of twenty were considered a burden to their families, so many women got married to avoid being looked down upon by society. For that reason was a position beneath the social rank and standing of middle and upper-class young women. It was considered humiliating. Until she married, a woman's happiness was utterly reliant on her parents' approval. Women can be portrayed as subjugated victims of patriarchal society, serving first their dads and subsequently their husbands, who were, of course, chosen by their fathers. However, Jane Austen's heroine Elizabeth is portrayed as a woman with her thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Elizabeth's strength of mind is demonstrated in her propensity to speak and say what she believes is right, whether or not it suits the hearer's ears or social restrictions placed upon her. She may live in a culture full of annoying Prejudice and strict social standards, yet she defies convention, thinking that



women have every right to be as happy as men (EduBirdie). Elizabeth affects society's perceptions, particularly those of parents.

Marriage is not an excellent way to change the social status in society. The statement is supported in the following quotation: "I never considered the distance as the reason for a wedding, said Elizabeth." "I would never say that Mrs. Collins decided because he would live adjacent to the family" (p 264). According to the saying above, Elizabeth longs to meet a wealthy partner who can ensure and defend her safety. Furthermore, the parents constantly pressure their girls to find wealthy husbands, and it is due to their money. Elizabeth encounters a number of circumstances throughout *Pride and Prejudice* when her attitude and character are put to the test through her words, behavior, and interactions with other people. She is a woman who was decades ahead of her time in terms of her strong personality, support for open marriage, and ground-breaking ideas regarding social class. Jane Austen maintained that women deserved to share equal rights with men and have opportunities for living. Finally, with the novel's use of entailment, women were given a certain place in society and were expected to remain innocent and subservient.

## **2.4-The Major Themes in *Pride and Prejudice***

The novel has various motifs that contribute to the story's overall themes. Jane Austen's primary motive behind her masterpieces was to portray her society during the regency period. The *Pride and prejudice* novel had many themes that were noticeably selected, from love and marriage to deception and prejudices:

### **2.4.1- Love and Marriage**

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1). From the first, very famous sentence and a common theme in *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen introduced a humorous perspective on marriage, not love, ideas that were not always strongly associated in 19th-century England. Jane Austen is known for her discussions on romantic relationships. Her novels start with love and end

with a marriage. She gives every novel a happy ending. "Love and Marriage" is a common theme in her novels, including "*Pride and Prejudice*." *Pride and Prejudice* dramatize women's economic inequalities, demonstrating how women were forced to marry unsuitable partners to obtain financial security.

In Jane Austen's time, marriage was a major social issue, and she was well aware of the difficulties of being single, as she wrote to her niece Fanny Knight, "Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor....which is one powerful argument in favor of matrimony". However, Elizabeth and Darcy are examples of love and marriage. Based on proper comprehension and cross-examinations, it is similar to the perfect marriage. The story surrounds two classic couples, Darcy and Elizabeth, who share their own unique and individual versions of happiness but cannot reach their point of bliss until each character works hard to overcome personal prejudice and flaws, Even though their relationship was the result of misunderstandings and poor first impressions.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth represented pure love. Regardless of their differences, love blossoms; Austen's protagonists are in true love, which allows them to overcome any obstacle. Although Elizabeth's pride caused her to misunderstand Mr. Darcy, she overcame her prejudice and fell passionately in love with him. Elizabeth, "...with tears in her eyes [replied], "I love him." Similarly, Mr. Darcy overcame his shame and prejudices to declare his love for Elizabeth (study moose). Thus, Elizabeth initially disapproves of Mr. Darcy in the *Pride and Prejudice* novel (1813), thinking he is arrogant and aloof. She grows more fixated on Darcy as the plot develops, and he is the one to whom she ultimately commits her heart (Austen1813)

Finally, although it is true that real life begins with marriage, Jane Austen demonstrates that love should be the foundation of marriage. Love cannot exist without respect, in addition. If a couple respects and loves one another, they can get married. That, in Jane Austen's opinion, would be the ideal union.

#### **2.4.2- Personality in *Pride and Prejudice***

During the early nineteenth century, Jane Austen and Elizabeth Bennet were independent young women who continued to defy the arbitrary conventions of British society. When both

women were frightened of being single, they believed in marrying for love. As mentioned in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813): "Oh, Lizzy! do anything rather than marry without affection" (Austen 460). As a result, both Jane Austen and Elizabeth Bennet were surrounded by a few people they trusted, which is why people assume they are not particularly social.

"There are a few people whom I really love, and I still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more I am dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my beliefs of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of merit sense." (Austen 169) They had a judging personality as well. In Elizabeth's speech, "but people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them forever" (Austen 52) Elizabeth Bennet has the same nosy judgment personality as Austen. No one can deny that Jane and Elizabeth showed significant intelligence and wit compared to other women their age.

In beliefs, Both Elizabeth and Jane are pretty able-minded in that they can recognize the benefits of what they have. They were both able to take something and see its true worth. They both had diverse perspectives on society and did not let others' beliefs influence their own. They believed in what they believed and expressed their feelings, even if it was inappropriate. This is demonstrated by Elizabeth when she speaks to Lady Catherine, "You can now have nothing further to say. You have insulted me in every possible way. I must beg to return to the house" (Austen 346). Elizabeth does not hide her emotions; she expresses them out loud and displays her anger and attitude. Jane is not scared to own her failures or surrender.

### **2.4.3- Pride**

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen examines prideful individuals and the consequences it has on both their own lives and the lives of others. Although everyone in the book exhibits some degree of pride, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine de Bourg are frequently shown as caricatures of arrogant individuals. Darcy and Elizabeth evolve as personalities during the course of the novel and they are also seen to have pride as part of their personality.

Elizabeth, who, unlike everyone else, is not intimidated by Lady Catherine, challenges her. When Elizabeth responds to Lady Catherine at Rosings and again when she enters Longbourn, Lady Catherine is incensed. She initially tries to intimidate her by telling her not to love Darcy before insulting her by suggesting that doing so would taint Pemberley's noble colors. She demands immediate compliance, and when it is not given, her pride suffers greatly.

This demand has long been met by Mr. Collins. Although he was brought up with "humility of demeanor," his time at Hunsford has turned him into a mixture of "pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility," and this lapdog servitude only serves to increase our distaste for him. The crucial moment in which Collins's pride is on display is when he proposes to Elizabeth. Collins tells Elizabeth that she should choose him since he is the best option available and that he will not scorn her for not having a dowry.

Elizabeth is guilty of the pride that underlies this discrimination, despite being the main symbol of it. "Had not your heart been injured," says Darcy when he proposes, "(my shortcomings) may have been disregarded," and in the crucial chapter that follows, she acknowledges this. Regarding Bingley's treatment of Jane, Charlotte and Collins' union, Wickham's goodness, and Darcy's lack of value, she was confident she was correct. She discovers that her bias was a result of her faith in the superiority of her own judgment. She also recognizes that her ego has been hurt.

Darcy is the main personification of pride in the book. He is described as being pleased with his introduction in Chapter 3. He exudes a detached, arrogant, and cynical aura. He makes a patronizing remark about Elizabeth's appearance and dismisses her harshly. Later, in spite of his infatuation, he feels above Elizabeth and graciously chooses to ignore her toward the end of her visit to Netherfield so that "nothing might raise her with the hope" of marrying beyond herself. Darcy is persuaded by pride that interfering in Bingley's relationship with Jane is the correct thing to do, and pride prevents him from degrading himself and his family by revealing Wickham's negative traits.

Of course, Darcy was not always terrible. Elizabeth's bias is largely responsible for how we perceive him. His reputation for being arrogant is largely a result of his shyness and abhorrence of social situations. He may be little others, but he also supports them because

they are his buddies and dependents. Consider the sweet words of his housekeeper, who said, "Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw anything of it."

Darcy still has some pride at the book's conclusion, but for good reason. Elizabeth has matured and we have learned that pride can be good or terrible. Despite the fact that pride will always be under good management, Darcy asserts that vanity is a weakness if one has a superior mind. Elizabeth grinned, assuming he was responsible for both. Darcy is correct, though. Vanity is immoral, as evidenced by Lady Catherine, Mr. Collins, Elizabeth, and even Darcy himself, yet pride is also wrong but might be justified under the right circumstances. Darcy has a lot of control over his ego. The Darcy who saves Lydia and weds Elizabeth is a mature, well-balanced person. He is the master of Pemberley, which Elizabeth views favorably; he has many admirable qualities and the ability to assist his family, tenants, and friends. She argues with Darcy in front of her father, saying that while he is proud, he does not possess "improper pride." (Vinhaley)

Elizabeth and Darcy undergo change, while Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins remain the same. They are both prepared to move into the Palace and establish dominance at the center of Austen's universe now that they have both learned a crucial lesson.

#### **2.4.4- Social class**

The theme class has a connection to reputation. Another form of discrimination against women is based on social class. Wealthy individuals and others who were less fortunate were on opposite sides of society. The Darcy and Bingley families are clearly upper class with a good reputation in the town, but the Bennet family is clearly middle class with less income and riches. This is evident from *Pride and Prejudice*. For instance, the two characters, Darcy and Elizabeth, are depicted in the disorganized 19th century experiencing a wide range of emotions in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Due to his excessive self-confidence, Darcy was unable to trust others and was constantly looking for ways to criticize them.

Elizabeth always shows prejudice toward people she mocks, as evidenced by the following statement from Lady Catherine, who visits Elizabeth to explain why she is unfit to marry Darcy: "In marrying your nephew, I should not consider me as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal." (56.51) She meant to say that I

am a gentleman's daughter and that he is a gentleman. His birth and character are exactly as good as mine, but he has more money. Accidentally attracting these two young people to pay more attention to him or her, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth kept making comments about each other. However, they soon found several misconceptions. In order to solve them, they crossed social boundaries. Jane Austen, who frequently criticized herself for being a classist, still demonstrates the ability of love and happiness to overcome prejudice and class distinctions.

#### **2.4.5- Wealth of *Pride and Prejudice***

Wealth plays a central role in *Pride and Prejudice* and a partnership that leads to marriage, but in most cases, has little to do with love. The following excerpt from Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* illustrates the theme of the impact of riches and money on marriage rather than genuine love: "Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man with a large fortune, four or five thousand a year, what a fine thing for our girls! (Austen 06). Mrs. Bennet planned for the marriage of her daughters Elizabeth and Jane so that they could marry a man of high class and wealth. She is also trying to secure her future when she needs at least one of her daughters to marry a wealthy man, or she will have nowhere to go because her husband's property is at risk, which means that if he dies, he cannot leave it to any of his daughters and it must go to the next closest male relative. For Elizabeth Bennet, love is the essential element of marriage, and she does not accept a marriage that is not based on love, not wealth. However, Jane also shows how selfish Mrs. Bennet is and explains a realistic business-like view on life and preparation for the future and her obsession with her daughters marrying a wealthy man because if they do not, their lives could be ruined. Jane Austen has experienced a family not precisely well off in society, and this is what Austen has been struggling with in her own time when she accepted a proposal from a wealthy man.

#### **2.4.6- Sisterhood**

When you read all of Jane's books, you will notice that every one of her heroines has a sister, two sisters, or more. If this means anything, it means that Jane was influenced by her sister Cassandra, and the evidence shows that the letters were sent to Cassandra.

Jane's heart belonged to her sister Cassandra, who was around three years her senior. Sisterly affection for one another could hardly be surpassed. Perhaps it started on Jane's side with the natural admiration that a loving youngster has for her lovely older sister. Even when her powers grew more robust and her success developed, she would still refer to Cassandra as if she were speaking of someone wiser and more significant than herself. However, Austen portrayed five distinct types of sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*. The first two are the foundations. Jane and Elisabeth had the ideal friendship since they both admired each other (Bloom 23).

Jane admires Elizabeth's intelligence and wit. They are both overprotective and constantly trying to change the other's behavior (Austen, 1813). However, according to James Austen-Leigh (1886) in his book, Elizabeth and Jane have a close friendship similar to Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra. Because only two girls were in the family, they were confidants of each other and were described as inseparable. Also, Jane Bennet and Cassandra Austen were the two older sisters of the Bennets. In the eyes of Austen, Jane is similar to Cassandra in that she is helpful and pleasant, and she always wants the best for others. As it is mentioned in the novel: "to take the good of everybody's character and make it better and say nothing of the bad" (Austen 19). Elizabeth claims that Jane likes to take only the good things that characterize everybody, and she does not say anything wrong about others.

In addition to the above, the sister's love was strongly shown in *Pride and Prejudice* by Elizabeth walking miles to Bingley's house to visit her ill sister. "I shall be very fit to see Jane- which is all I want... I do not wish to avoid the walk. The distance is nothing when one has a motive; only three miles, I shall be back by dinner" (Austen 33). Elizabeth and Jane can do anything to make each other happy.

### **2.4.7- Prejudice**

Jane Austen provides several specific examples of people who mistake appearance for reality due to their personal bias against this backdrop of societal prejudice.

The funniest illustration of this is probably Mrs. Bennet, who sees everything in terms of possible husbands' charm and fortune. She is therefore unaware of Collins' flaws, falls for Wickham's trick, and is unable to appreciate Darcy for who he truly is: "I despise the very

sight of him."(However, concerningly, she accepts Wickham as Lydia's spouse despite the fact that he almost destroyed her reputation and the reputation of her family) (Vinhanley)

Darcy first participates in this social snobbery despite being generally educated and clear-sighted in his attitude to life. Elizabeth's lack of beauty and her subsequent lack of connections contributed to his initial impression of her. He used his elitism to dissuade Bingley from Jane and to restrain his own love for Elizabeth. Only until Elizabeth calls out his arrogance following his initial proposal to her does he recognize his error and sincerely try to behave differently. By the book's conclusion, he respects Elizabeth's family and no longer considers Elizabeth's social standing when deciding who to date (Vinhanley).

Elizabeth most exemplifies prejudice. She dislikes Darcy because of the way he treats her when they first meet. From that point on, instead of trying to understand him, she merely responds to his arrogant demeanor and takes great pleasure in exaggerating her prejudice. She can initially be excused for not liking a man who insulted her, but as she later admits, her motivations were flawed. She wanted to appear smart, get favor, and say something amusing.

Elizabeth doesn't start to question her judgment until the first proposal. Because of Darcy's offensive comments, she already had preconceived notions about him, and in Wickham's case, physical attraction and flattery obscured her judgment. Elizabeth considers Darcy's letter in the key Chapter 36, and what follows is a meticulous account of how she overcame her prejudice. Initially completely biased against Darcy and lacking "any wish of doing him justice," she later comes to the conclusion that she must have been deceiving herself if his version is accurate. Observe how she blatantly rejects the reality by putting the letter aside. She quickly finds the courage to reread the letter, and Elizabeth is able to properly understand the situation. She gains understanding of the circumstance and her own nature and acknowledges that she is "blind, selective, and prejudiced." She acknowledges her mistake to Jane, and by telling Wickham that she can distinguish between appearance and reality, she declares her newfound self-awareness in front of everyone (Vinhanley).

From this point on, she starts to see things more clearly, looking at Pemberley objectively and meeting Darcy with an open mind. She starts to comprehend his criticisms of her family as well, perhaps for the first time ever in her life. She eventually comes to see Darcy as a suitable mate and makes a concerted effort to dispel her family's misconceptions about him by portraying him honestly.



To conclude, Elizabeth has gained a great deal of knowledge. She is aware that 'first impressions' are rarely sufficient and has come to understand actual worth as reality rather than appearance. We could learn something from this as well. The obsession with image, spin, external appearances, and social snobbery is a hallmark of our time. It won't be simple for us to find our own Mr. Darcy or Elizabeth either! (Vinhaley)

#### **2.4.8- A Women's Reputation**

Pride and Prejudice portrays a society where a woman's reputation is of the most significant importance and the clearest example of how reputation affects engagement and marriage prospects. Thus, Lydia's decision to go with Wickham illustrates the strong effect of a woman's reputation. When Lydia runs away and lives with Wickham out of marriage, Jane Austen emphasizes how catastrophic this is for Lydia, the other Bennet sisters, and the entire family. Elizabeth criticizes Lydia's choice and goes as far as to say that "she is lost forever" if she does not marry Wickham. Her sister Jane knows how this decision would impact her and Elizabeth's futures if the marriage had not happened. By not marrying Wickham and living with him, Lydia straightforwardly violates social standards society does not accept well. It is acceptable for Elizabeth to challenge female beliefs in little ways, such as dirtying her skirt or being vocal in situations where women usually would be silent, but Lydia's decision can create a considerable mark on the family's reputation. However; this may not seem like a big deal from today's viewpoint; but this decision could have pulled the entire family down. A woman was only as valuable as her reputation would allow, and Austen masterfully portrays the impact reputation had on women. If Darcy had not paid Wickham the money for the wedding, Elizabeth would have been disturbed by her sister's decision, incapable of marrying well due to the shame it would bring, and the novel would probably have had an entirely different ending (Spark Notes).

## 2.5- Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter sheds light on *Pride and Prejudice* in a novel set in a world where expectations and reputation matter. It revolves around whether to marry for love or money. The novel focuses on Mrs. Bennet, who wants to force her girls to marry a wealthy guy just for money and her future. She did not even care about her daughters' lives. On the other hand, Mr. Bennet did not want his daughters to live in a relationship they did not want to be in. However, both Elizabeth and her sister Jane experience love, but not without sorrow. They want to build an independent life with a partner they genuinely love and respect, not because of wealth, and Jane Austen used the character of Elizabeth Bennet to epitomize the harmonious balance between mind and emotion in a woman, making her a truly admirable and attractive character. Finally, throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, women's rights were described as those of a wife and mother who belonged in the house and who should marry a man who could support their family.

# General Conclusion

To conclude, in various aspects, Jane Austen's life is to prove that she was not the person many people believed in. The woman is born to break the laws and stand against the 19th society's rules. This study tried to reveal the truth and to remove the ambiguity about Jane Austen's life and discover the real one through her famous work *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), which is considered a love story for the ages which we still after 200 years ago swooning over the relationship between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy.

This research included Austen's social life and the social class pyramid to establish a new relationship between her life and her works. When it comes to her works, a great bridge cannot be built from one side alone; this is why *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) has been given a prominent place in this study, beginning with the storyline and summary and progressing to Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist in the 1813 novel. By adopting all that surrounds Elizabeth Bennet, her friends, her family, and even her talking under the sheets to listening to doors with her older sister Jane, this work has demonstrated that the heroine Elizabeth Bennet is the key to Jane Austen's existence.

Jane Austen's life was influenced by family and society, leading her to retreat to the pages of her books to escape the real world. According to the study, even if she was strong enough to publish her book under a female name, she at least admitted that she was a woman, but this was insufficient because she was not strong enough to face the world with her autobiography, which is why she chose auto fiction to stay in her comfort zone. Jane Austen chose the cover of auto-fiction to shield her ideas and wishes from the critics; she took advantage of the fact that auto-fiction is when actual life is transformed into a fictional novel.

Jane Austen attempted to portray society of her period as accurately as possible in her novel, and given her gender, one could argue that she understood women's position better than any other male author. As a result, it is no surprise that the novel's narrator expressly asserts on many occasions that marriage is first and foremost an institution through which women can find security and respect. It is sufficient for them to be able to tolerate the selected man in order to bear his heirs and, perhaps, someday, to learn to love him. This is the socially created definition of happiness for them. When the role of women in the family and society is examined in the novel *"Pride and Prejudice"*, it is possible to conclude that the author employs such resources not only to draw the reader's attention to a specific aspect of the work but primarily to criticize English society at the end of the 18th century. The novel depicts not just incorrect behaviors and morals, as well as unethical members of society, but also various perspectives on marriage. Marriage is not a result of desire in society; instead, it is a result of economic stability or a moral and social decision of a wife's companion. As a result, young middle-class ladies of the time desired to marry a wealthy aristocrat. The researcher then observed that a woman's duty is not simply to enjoy particular privileges associated with a high social position but that women's feelings also play a significant role in society. When Elizabeth and Darcy ultimately become engaged, they have learned the value of humility and patience from each other. As a result, the woman's duty is not limited to being by the side of a wealthy guy; her emotions, such as love, are essential.

This study demonstrates a depiction of Victorian society and demonstrates how Victorian literature mirrors most of the historical and social standards of Victorian England, highlighting the novel as a distinct literary form. It also concentrates on English female writers and the critical issues that interest women. The chapter one then moves on to the

author Jane Austen's background and the novel "*Pride and Prejudice*." As a result of this research, it can be shown that Jane Austen and her protagonist Elizabeth Bennet share a similar ground and that the work includes many characteristics and events from Jane Austen's life, implying that the novel mirrors Austen's real social life. Jane Austen portrays the central theme of her period through the analysis of the novel's characters, which causes her great suffering since she believes in love and is self-reliant; As a result, she picks Elizabeth Bennet as her mirror, reflecting her personality. Furthermore, Jane Austen addressed an essential topic in the 18th century with *Pride and Prejudice*: segmenting women's personalities based on their attitudes. Jane Austen's work always defended women; she was particularly interested in their personalities, manners, and intentions toward one another.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, we discussed the characteristics of Victorian society, and we demonstrated how Victorian literature reflected historical and social standards in Victorian England, giving light to a sort of literary work known as the novel. Although, female writers from the United Kingdom. We discovered that most female novelists depicted their actual experiences in their works due to their conservative society's social standards. On the other hand, this chapter focused on Jane Austen's life and how her beautiful works helped her become renowned.

The themes of *Pride and Prejudice* were discussed in the second chapter. One of them is love and marriage, as we saw in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, a brilliant satirical work depicting several types of marriage. Jane Austen succeeds in highlighting the search for a suitable husband, as well as how people are willing to participate in a marriage with a wealthy man despite the lack of love because in Victorian society, marrying for wealth and social status was more common than marrying for love and stability. Nevertheless, Elizabeth makes

the courageous decision to wait for love, even though she knows it may never come. This happened to Jane Austen, who chose to remain single for the rest of her life rather than marry a man she disliked. Jane Austen's portrayal of the main subject of her period, which caused her so much suffering because she believes in love and self-sufficiency, is shown by examining the novel's characters. For this reason, she picks Elizabeth Bennet as her mirror, reflecting her personality.

Furthermore, this chapter addressed the status of women in terms of *pride and Prejudice*. Women who marry solely for the attraction of physical beauty, a lack of social stability, or a lack of income do not last in their marriages and are likely to be unhappy couples. Jane Austen's primary goal appears to be to show how things might fall apart when one only looks at the physical world rather than the intellectual one. She also illustrates this well-known work based on her personal experiences.

Finally, we may state that Jane Austen was a literary great and one of the most well-known novelists in English literary history. Elizabeth Bennet is also one of the best heroines who amazed the literary world and reflected the Victorian era's atmosphere. The novel depicts history on paper, written by a woman with a gold pen, and is still read and enjoyed by readers today.

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# Appendices

**Appendix 01:** The Cover of the First Edition, *Pride and Prejudice*



## Appendix 02: Jane Austen



