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Subject Area - English

Jane Austen's novel, Pride and Prejudice.

Jane Austen's novel, Pride and Prejudice presents five married couples. No two are alike. From the pure love which was experienced through Elizabeth and Darcy. To the love and attraction shared by Jane and Bingley. The convenience of marriage was portrayed through Charlotte and Mr Collins while Lydia and Wickham's marriage was based on their desire, attractions and financial status. Mr and Mrs Bennet's marriage was for their necessity. Austen reveals many messages through her characters on her major theme, being marriage.

Elizabeth and Darcy share common interests that help reflect their love and marriage. During Elizabeth's stay in Pemberly while Jane is ill, Austen reveals to the readers, that Elizabeth and Darcy share a common interest. For example, Miss Bingley states that 'Miss Eliza Bennet is a great reader' p34. While in a conversation between Darcy and Miss Bingley, it is stated, 'What a delightful library you have at Pemberly,' p34. This illustrates to the readers that the two share the same interest of reading. Having the interest reading portrayed to the readers as an interest, reveals that Elizabeth and Darcy may be suitable match for one another. It clearly shows how common interests can increase the chance of marriage as it makes the bond for one another stronger. Thereby demonstrating that the love between Elizabeth and Darcy reflects on their interest shared by each other.

The marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy was also pure love for one another. Though this is not established until the end of the novel. Darcy's love for Elizabeth is expressed from his heart. Austen illustrates this when he states to Elizabeth, 'You must allow me to tell you I admire and love you,' p157. Austen portrays Darcy's character as being very proud, so they way he expresses his love for Elizabeth seems pure and genuine. A proud man would find hard to express such feelings in that manner. Thus it proves his love for Elizabeth is clear. Elizabeth also shows her love towards Darcy. Mr Bennet calls Elizabeth into the library after his proposal. In a conversation between the two Elizabeth states, 'I do like him, I love him.' P303. She is aware that her feelings towards Darcy haven't always been this positive, but she believes that he is able to make her happy. Elizabeth believes happiness is the first sign to a good marriage. Therefore, this reflects Elizabeth and Darcy marry for love.

The marriage of Jane and Bingley was one for physical attractions and love. This is portrayed to the readers during the early stages of the novel. For example, Bingley states at the ball, 'she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld!' p13. This clearly illustrates his attraction towards Jane. Bingley's love for Jane is strengthened by her beauty. The love between them is shared equally. Jane's idea of marriage is to find someone who loves her and respects her as much as she does him. Jane married Bingley for love. Their marriage was a perfect match and their feelings for one another were undeniably from the heart. Thus showing Jane and Bingley married for love and attractions.

Charlotte and Mr Collins' marriage was one for convenience. Mr Collins was in the position of needing to be married whilst Charlotte was never romantic and wanted to be happy. For instance, in a conversation between Charlotte and Elizabeth, she explains, 'I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr Collins' character, connections, I am convinced happiness with him is as fair' p105. Charlotte's idea of marriage is completely different of that of Elizabeth. Charlotte doesn't need love to make her happy, just that of social security. Charlotte wishes for a stable life. As Mr Collins was a man of connections, a tolerable situation in life, and offering her a comfortable home, Charlotte thought

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her reasons for marriage were as reasonable as Elizabeth's. Hence, the reason for Charlotte and Mr Collins' marriage was convenience.

The marriage of Lydia and Wickham was mainly that of desire, attraction and financial reasons. Lydia married Wickham as she believed he was one with large fortune and high social status. For example, 'their elopement had been brought on by the strength of her love, rather than his,' p256. Lydia believed that a man of this fine countenance could not go unnoticed and was immediately drawn in by his charm. Lydia found Wickham to be good looking and was sure that these reasons were good enough for marriage. Wickham, however, married Lydia for her money and position in society. He saw Lydia to be good looking but never married her for love. For instance, 'Wickham's affection of Lydia not equal to Lydia's for him.' P256. Wickham was not a young man to resist an opportunity of having a companion. So when Lydia reveals her feeling towards him, he jumps at the chance to obtain a wife. Therefore, Lydia and Wickham's reasons for marriage were desire, attraction and financial problems.

The marriage of Mr and Mrs Bennet was not love, like Jane and Bingley. Nor was it for social advancement like Charlotte and Mr Collins. Mr Bennet was captivated by youth and beauty and married a woman without intelligence. Affection had worn off between the two. This is evident when it states, 'he had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem and confidence had vanished forever.' P194. Mr and Mrs Bennet married purely for necessity. Austen reveals in the time the novel was written a man of large fortune should be in want of a wife. Though Mr Bennet was not a man of large fortune, he did however, need a wife so that in the event of his death, he had a heir to pass on family fortune to. Mrs Bennet married Mr Bennet simply because women wish to get married. It seemed a perfect match, Mr Bennet had to marry someone to pass on family heritage whilst Mr Bennet married for her own needs. Those being, for connections and fortune of another man. This reflects how marriage between Mr and Mrs Bennet is conveyed to the readers as entirely different reasons. Thus showing how Mr and Mrs Bennet married for necessity.

Five married couples are married together for different reasons. Austen's major theme discussed during the text is marriage. Many messages are put forward to readers as to what an ideal reason for marriage is like. For instance, Elizabeth and Darcy marry for love and interests. Jane and Bingley marry for love and attractions. Charlotte and Mr Collins marry for convenience. Lydia and Wickham marry for their desire, attractions and financial reasons, while Mr and Mrs Bennet marry for necessity. This is established in Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Wickham and Lydia's marriage is also one of little "understanding of one another's characters," no "good dispositions," no "similarity in feeling and taste" and as we later find out, there is no "financial security" either. The initial attraction was based on good looks and affection for one another. But after the initial attraction, Mr Wickham becomes disinterested in Lydia and this is even more of a problem. Lydia doesn't understand the shame she has brought upon her family and boasts that all her sisters should "look up" to her because she is a "married woman."

We see many incidents through Elizabeth's eyes; even when we first meet Wickham, we see that he is never really shown to the reader as a potential partner for her. Her first potential partner is in fact Mr Darcy, who at the first ball "drew the attention of the room" and Elizabeth, with his "fine tall person and handsome features." Unfortunately, for his reputation and Elizabeth's, he refuses to dance with her. She overhears him speaking to Mr Bingley, saying that she is "tolerable" but then he also says that she "is not handsome enough even to tempt me." Because of this, throughout the novel, Elizabeth misreads his forthcoming conduct.

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Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, set in Nineteenth century England, is a novel about marriage. Austen's feminine writing and weaved storyline creates a novel which can be interesting to read and which women especially enjoy. The novel has a strong theme of marriage as a mother (Mrs. Bennet) desperately trying to marry her daughters off. She didn't care about the quality of the men her daughters were marrying, but was satisfied just as long as they found a man. When her sixteen-year-old daughter Lydia marries Wickham, she is thrilled and proceeds to make plans for visiting her neighbors with her, despite the fact that they had lived together for over a year without being married, and that Wickham was forced into marrying her. Mrs. Bennet's strong desire to marry off her children and her unsatisfactory attempts at matchmaking show that in her society, marriage is held in high regard.

It is a person's personal worth and the transfer of family fortunes that occurs during a marriage in this time that is probably the most important factor, not how the couple gets along or likes each other. Austen plays on this social behavior and seems to be making a statement. Therefore, I believe that *Pride and Prejudice* is a social satire. The language of *Pride and Prejudice* is astonishingly simple and the verbiage frugal, especially for the period in which it is written. There is no drastic action or heroic characters; however, Austen convincingly develops character with it, and her characters, each with their own dialogue and linguistic nuances, stand apart very well. Another interesting note about her characters is that at the end of the novel, all of her characters are punished or rewarded according to their actions throughout the course of the book. This shows her moralistic side.

This quote, a typical Mr. Bennet speech, occurs when the issue of Kitty going to Brighton is brought up: "This is a parade which does one good; it gives such an elegance to misfortune! Another day I will do the same; I will sit in my library, in my night-cap and powdering gown, and give as much trouble as I can - or, perhaps, I may defer it til Kitty runs away." Contrasting this to someone like Mrs. Gardiner, as she is quoted here speaking to Elizabeth about Darcy's estate, one can see a completely different tone and manner of speaking: "My love, should you not like to see a place of which you have heard so much? A place, too, with which so many of your acquaintance are connected. Wickham passed all his youth there, you know." It must also be noted that her male characters are not nearly as developed and refined as her female ones. Men never gathered alone to discuss, or have parties - this is reserved for the women. Most of the men aren't even taken seriously.

But I must give credit to Austen, for as Mark Twain once said, "Write what you know about," and Jane Austen probably wouldn't have done so well with her men as she did with her women. This is the basic argument that she is a feminine author, appealing mostly to women. Most importantly, she uses language to make her society's view a marriage look like a joke as evidenced in the language of Mrs. Bennet and of the Miss Bennets. Furthermore, marriage and matchmaking is downplayed in the novel's playing with first impressions and their effects. Had Darcy acted a bit more polite at the first dance and Elizabeth less critical of him, then the two of them would probably have been married by Chapter VI and what is now a 250+ page novel would have been a 50 page short story. But, contrary to what the romance novels of the past two hundred years seem to tell us, life is not always like that, and oftentimes our personal prejudices and imperfect selves get in the way of our best will, leaving only our libidinous egos to judge.

Her treatment of characters helps us to see the shallowness of the peoples of her time. Mrs. Bennet, the matchmaker,

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makes us laugh at the very notion of marriage between some of the people in the novel. Kitty and Lydia, however, are caught up in their own frivolous worlds and in the end get what they are eventually seeking, anyway. Lady Catherine, an extremely proud woman, simply looks foolish. Sir William Lucas is the epitome of all that is arrogant and pompous. These characters help to play a part in showing the one-sidedness of the people of this time and in portraying the lack of depth in their marriages, which are usually only for money or prestige. As a conclusion, romance is what a writer like Austen is really good at, and the people of her time would buy it (if it sold well in her time, then she'd be financially worry-free). That is why it is written in the form that it is. *Pride and Prejudice* is essentially a satire of social behavior, especially of marriage. What Austen appears to be asking is 'Can love really be found in society?' According to her book, it is hardly likely. Even though Darcy and Elizabeth appear happy at the end, it is hard to imagine the Darcy from the first part of the book married to Elizabeth. This long, interwoven theme of marriage can appeal today as social classes and position are factors in people's marriages - Austen seems to be saying that none of this is important, and one should marry someone that he/she really likes as a person, not as a means of prestige.

In my opinion, pride comes in for the sharper criticism by Austen. She has chosen to personify this trait in several characters in "*Pride and Prejudice*" although it is hard to find one character who portrays prejudice alone, throughout the novel. When prejudice does occur in this novel, Jane Austen has shown it in the hands of a notoriously proud character. Because prejudice is not personified (ie. depicted as a major characteristic flaw) I believe that it was not to be the object of Jane Austen's sharper criticism.

Jane Austen has depicted pride in her minor (functional) characters as a means of demonstrating its importance as a theme of this novel. Lady Catherine is one of the main offenders, her airs, arrogance and pride are fuelled by other characters like Mr Collins who is put there to satire proud people and their followers. Another important character to note is Mr Darcy. He is an extremely important character in this novel, a major character, and I think that the fact that he was perceived to have been 'proud' at the beginning of the novel by the reader, Elizabeth, and the community of the shire, and our perception, along with Elizabeth, of his character, has changed throughout the novel points to Jane Austen's criticism of pride and snobbery (insinuating that once pride is done away with (and along with it, prejudice) a character becomes much more favourable. (Note that Lady Catherine does not sway from her proud arrogant position, from beginning to end of the novel, this partly to provide a contrast between the supposed arrogance of Mr Darcy at the beginning of the novel, and his behaviour by the end.)

Throughout this novel we are shown the arrogant and haughty dispositions of the upperclass of this society. (We are also shown the exceptions to the rule, namely Mr Bingley and Miss Darcy.) These people are exceedingly proud of their great fortunes and estates and as a result of the emphasis at that time on monetary issues, they are prejudiced (and commit acts of prejudice) towards their financial, and social, "inferiors". An example of this is the beginning of the novel, the ball, when Mr Darcy snubs Elizabeth Bennet in an act of prejudice. He refuses to dance with her on account of her not being "handsome enough to tempt me." After being described throughout the chapter as being "the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world" because he would not socialise ("he danced only once with Mrs Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party") his refusal to dance with Elizabeth Bennet is consistent with the rest of his snobbery and it is logical that he is slighting Elizabeth Bennet because he is excessively proud and does not feel that her handsomeness is worthy of his.

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Another example of proud character executing prejudice on an “inferior” candidate is Miss Bingley and Mr Darcy’s conspiracy against Mr Bingley and Miss Bennet’s courtship and inevitable marriage. Together, Mr Darcy and Miss Bingley decide that Mr Bingley and Jane are not suited and therefore should not be married because Jane’s background is not worthy of Mr Bingley’s rich, socially handsome estate. Firstly, Mr. Darcy influences Bingley to leave Netherfield, then Miss Bingley “fails” to tell him of Jane’s presence in London (although she knows that it would be of great interest to him.) It is because of their pride, and their warped perception of their own, and in this case their brother or friend’s pride, that influences to think they would be “doing the right thing” by keeping Jane and Mr. Bingley apart.

Lady Catherine’s bullying of Elizabeth (at the end of the novel) in an effort to dissuade her from marrying Darcy is a result of her feeling that her own daughter was entitled to Mr. Darcy more than Elizabeth (who was not worth as much socially or in monetary value.) She argues “are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?” This is an act of extreme arrogance stemming from her prejudice against Elizabeth. Lady Catherine, as a result of her pride, believes she is more important than everyone and that everyone else should respect and honour them (in this case Elizabeth) by rejecting a proposal from a man who she loves and who loves her. This obscene assumption on Lady Catherine’s behalf is as a result of her prejudice towards the Bennets because of their lower income, and social status. The prejudice against them for such a reason is rooted in her own arrogant pride.

In the case of the characteristics pride and prejudice (two key themes of the novel) I think that pride comes in for the sharper criticism by Jane Austen. I think this because of her personification of pride (in characters like Lady Catherine) and the fact that the prejudice which does occur in the novel is accompanied by, if not rooted in pride. Through the incidents spoken on above, prejudice has been shown to be a result of arrogant pride and because it is an underlying emotive in the prejudiced actions of the characters I feel it is more sharply criticised.

Most people of the day thought that marriage “was the only honorable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune.” It became a source of financial security that in many cases went no further.

Elizabeth is the first woman in the story to be proposed to, and she did a very peculiar thing. She is proposed to by Mr. Collins, the very man who is going to inherit her father’s estate. She refuses his offer even though his “situation in life... [his] connections....and [his] relationship to [Elizabeth], are circumstances highly in [his] favor.” Elizabeth simply says that “[he] could never make [her] happy...and [she] is the last woman in the world that could make [him] so.” What makes her decision so peculiar is that in marrying this man she could keep her father’s estate in the family and become financially sound for the rest of her life.

Being a woman in this time and being in a situation where she looks as to inherit almost nothing a marriage such as this does not seem unreasonable but she thinks differently. Even though her economic outlook does not look good at all it does not constrain her and she still treasures love and happiness above her financial standing. This decision is extremely brave considering that once her father is dead she will have almost no means to support herself. Her constraint is that she will not enter marriage for any other reason but love, and she proves this by denying Mr. Collins her hand in marriage.

Charlotte is constrained by the fact that all she desires is wealth and stability and the only way to achieve those things is through marriage. Love is not a necessity in her relationships, but she believes that love between Mr. Collins and herself would probably blossom in time.

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Marriage in Jane Austen's society marriage is the status all the women strive to achieve. Money and looks are essential for a good marriage, youthfulness also counts. If a woman never got married, because of lacking money or looks, she would go and live with a married sister or brother. If she did not have any brothers or sisters to live with, she would become a governess.

Pride and Prejudice's first sentence, 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife,' introduces the theme of marriage, and money, in an ironic way. Jane Austen starts off using intellectual sounding words to introduce the hunt for a rich husband. The sentence contains a mixture of comedy, humour and irony that will continue throughout the novel. In 'Pride and Prejudice' we see two established marriages, the Bennets and the Gardiners. Throughout the novel four other marriages take place, Lydia with Wickham, Charlotte with Mr Collins, Elizabeth with Darcy, and Jane with Bingley.

Mr and Mrs Bennet have been married for twenty-three years, but they do not really communicate with each other. They have five unmarried daughters. Mr Bennet has a good sense of humour and likes to tease his wife. He pretends not to understand her. He makes outrageous statements that his wife believes. He does not demonstrate any affection towards his wife and is tired of the way she behaves. Mrs Bennet does not get upset when she is the object of her husband's sarcasm and is not intelligent enough to discriminate between important and trivial information. When she is frustrated she complains about her nerves. Mrs Bennet does not understand Mr Bennet, and whilst Mrs Bennet's aim in life is to get her daughters married to rich men, Mr Bennet is not interested in family affairs and does not seem to think much of his daughters, or girls in general. 'They are all silly and ignorant like other girls.' Jane Austen tells us his favourite daughter is Elizabeth. 'I must throw a good word for my Lizzy.'

'Mr Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice.' 'Mrs Bennet is a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temper.'

Their marriage was based on an initial physical attraction. Mr Bennet was 'captivated by youth and beauty' and the appearance of good humour that goes with these. The initial physical attraction dies quickly and all Mr Bennet's 'views of domestic happiness were overthrown'. He lost all respect for his wife. Furthermore, Mrs Bennet has 'low connections' and little money. She was beneath him socially. Therefore they were not well matched in character or social background. He made the wrong choice. At the end of the novel he confidentially admits his mistake to Elizabeth.

Unlike the Bennets, the Gardiners are a sensible, lively and intelligent couple. They seem to love each other and work well together. Mr Gardiner is Mrs Bennet's brother. He is a tradesman. The couple live in Gracechurch, a street in the City of London. Elizabeth looks up to Mrs Gardiner, not to Mrs Bennet.

Mr Collins is a distant cousin to the Bennets and he is the one to inherit Longbourn after Mr Bennet's death. He is a clergyman who has recently been made vicar of a parish on the estate of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, in Kent. Charlotte is the eldest daughter of the Lucases. She is 27 years old and Elizabeth's best friend.

Mr Collins is introduced to Charlotte by the Bennets. They first talk at the Netherfield Ball. At that time Mr Collins was paying attention to Elizabeth. Charlotte 'helps' her friend. 'She owed her greatest relief, Miss Lucas, who often joined

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them and good naturally engaged Mr Collins' conversation to herself.' The day Mr Collins proposes Charlotte is there. She overhears all the conversation and how Mr Collins withdraws his offer of marriage. She deliberately stays in the room and is pretending to look out of the window. The Bennets are invited to dine at the Lucases. Elizabeth is grateful to Charlotte for keeping Mr Collins company. Charlotte is really out to get Mr Collins, 'its object was nothing less, tan to secure her from any return of Mr Collins addresses, by engaging them towards herself'. The next day Mr Collins goes to Lucas Lodge. Charlotte perceives him from an upper window and instantly sets out to meet him accidentally in the lane. Mr Collins proposes to Charlotte who immediately accepts.

Charlotte knew how to delight Mr Collins, and after engaging him to herself, accepts his offer of marriage. Charlotte does not like Mr Collins; 'his society was irksome'. She also knows he does not love her, 'his attachment to her must be imaginary'. Charlotte just accepts the value society places her on. But he offers her the opportunity of marriage. 'Without thinking highly of men or matrimony, marriage had always been her object.' At twenty-seven, with little money, no beauty and younger brothers and sisters sees marriage as her best chance of securing a reasonable standard of living. 'I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home.'

After they are married Charlotte seems to be happy enough, she keeps a straight face and ignores her husband's silliness, 'in general Charlotte wisely did not hear'. She tries to keep her husband out of the way, for example, by encouraging him to do the gardening, 'when Mr Collins was forgotten there was a great comfort throughout'. But she is always loyal to him. She never says anything bad about her husband.

The marriage between Lydia and Wickham was the result of irresponsible behaviour. They met at a dance where the Malatia Regiment, to which Mr Wickham belongs, and the Bennets were invited. When Wickham is first introduced in the novel he pays attention to Elizabeth but he knows that Miss King had inherited a fortune draws his attention to her, and away from Elizabeth. When it is known that the regiment is moving to Brighton, Lydia and Kitty (as much as Mrs Bennet) want to go to Brighton with them but Mr Bennet won't allow it. Mrs Forester, Lydia's friend and the wife of the Colonel of the regiment, invites Lydia to accompany her to Brighton. Once there, Wickham invites Lydia to run away. Wickham did not mean to elope with Lydia, but he had to leave Brighton because he had many debts. He took advantage that Lydia wanted to go with him, and made believe he had run away to elope. Wickham finally married Lydia thanks to Darcy. He bribed Wickham and took care of all the financial arrangements.

Lydia is an irresponsible, immature girl, who likes to flirt about, and is insensitive to other people's feelings. 'She had high animal spirits', 'which the attentions of the officers', 'had increased into assurance'. She is described as being 'a stout, well grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good humoured countenance'. Wickham is an ambitious man. He loves money. He first had tried to elope with Darcy's sister, Georgina, who inherited 30000. Then he started paying much attention to Miss King, a young lady who had inherited a fortune.

Their marriage was not a happy settled one. They were always in debt, and Lydia often writes to her sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, asking them for money. They were always moving from house to house, and they stay for very long periods with the Bingley's, so much that even kind Mr Bingley thinks of telling them to move on.

Bingley's and Jane's marriage is based on love and rational respect. Jane is the handsomest of the Bennets' daughters, which is why she is the daughter Mrs Bennet had the highest hopes for. She is humble and unassuming. She always sees

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good in other people. 'I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.' In a partner, she looks for sensibility, good humour and liveliness. Bingley is rather impassive. He has 'a pleasant countenance and easy affected manner'. He is easygoing and much influenced by his best friend, Mr Darcy. This shows when he proposes to Jane, he does this after Darcy gives his consent. They both are kind, nice, and optimistic people. They always see the bright side of things. Mr Bennet thinks the couple is so nice and easy going that people might take advantage of them. We later see that the Wickhams do take advantage. They spend long periods of time in their house and Lydia often writes to Jane asking for money.

They first meet at the Meryton Assembly. Mr Bingley is a young man of large fortune, from the north of England, who is going to rent Netherfield Park. He goes to the Meryton Assembly to meet the people of town. The Bennets attend. Mr Bingley shows a lively interest in Jane and dances with her twice. Jane also likes Mr Bingley but does not show it much. This makes Darcy think that Jane is indifferent to Bingley, and is only interested on Bingley's fortune. He makes Bingley go away on a business trip and when Jane goes to stay with her aunt and uncle, the Gardiners, she goes and visits the Bingleys. She only sees the Bingley sisters, who never tell Mr Bingley about her being in London, so she doesn't have any news from Bingley. After a long time the Bingleys, along with Darcy, return to Netherfield. They visit the Bennets and Mr Bingley still seems to be interested in Jane. Finally he proposes and is accepted.

We are told it is a happy marriage. They have a happy and uncomplicated marriage, though sometimes complicated by other people. They live in Netherfield at first but after a year they want to get away from Mrs Bennet and other relations. So Bingley buys an estate in Derbyshire near Pemberley.

Just as Jane and Bingley, Elizabeth and Darcy also first meet at the Meryton Assembly. They don't feel attracted to each other initially and their relationship doesn't start as smoothly as theirs. Darcy offends Elizabeth. Bingley suggests that Darcy dances with Elizabeth, but Darcy thinks 'she is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt' him. Furthermore, he says he is not going to dance with women that have been 'slighted by other men'. Elizabeth overhears this and is not left with many 'cordial feelings towards him'. This makes Elizabeth prejudiced against Darcy. Later on Darcy starts to feel attracted to her. He admires 'the beautiful expression of her eyes', her figure and above all the 'playfulness' of her character. The stay in Netherfield, when Jane gets sick, shows that Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth despite himself. He seems to enjoy talking to Elizabeth and is beginning to feel the danger of paying too much attention to her. Elizabeth still is prejudiced, but she seems to enjoy the challenge of talking to him. Wickham's story that Darcy refused to keep his father's promise after his death affects her opinion on Darcy.

At the Netherfield Ball Darcy asks Elizabeth to dance. They talk about their respective characters. They meet again in Kent when Elizabeth goes to visit Charlotte and are sometimes invited to dinner to Rosings. Mr Darcy is there, along with Colonel FitzWilliam, to visit their aunt. Here their relationship develops and Darcy starts to feel attracted to Elizabeth. He enjoys Elizabeth's company and does not get annoyed when she teases him. He thinks they share a similarity. 'We neither of us perform to strangers.' Darcy visits the parsonage when Elizabeth is alone and he makes to meet her in the Rosings Park when she goes for walks. Colonel FitzWilliam tells Elizabeth the Darcy had stopped Bingley from 'a most imprudent marriage'. Elizabeth is very angry indeed with Darcy and blames him for causing her sister great unhappiness.

That same day Darcy proposes to her. He says that he has tried to suppress his feelings but cannot. 'In vain have I

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struggled.' What made him try to stamp out his love was the 'inferiority' of her family and it would be a 'degradation' for him to marry her. Elizabeth is first astonished then flattered but most of all angry at his proposal. She refuses the proposal. Darcy is taken aback by her refusal. 'His countenance expressed real security.' He wasn't expecting that. He thought Elizabeth would accept because of his rank and money. She explains that she refuses because he has insulted her by saying her family is inferior, because he is responsible for the unhappiness of her sister, because he had behaved very badly towards Wickham, and because Darcy's conduct had been ungentleman-like. The next morning Darcy waits for Elizabeth in the park and gives her a letter. The letter explains why he interfered in the relationship between Bingley and Jane, and the real story about Wickham. He also reveals that Wickham had tried to elope with Darcy's sister, Georgina. When she re-reads the letter it is Wickham's story which starts to make Elizabeth doubt. She then comes to the realisation that Darcy is saying the truth and that she has been mistaken. 'She had been blind, partial, prejudice, absurd.' From now on Elizabeth's attitude to Darcy starts to change. She now feels gratitude and respect for Darcy but does not love him or like him.

When Elizabeth goes with the Gardiners to Derbyshire they visit Pemberley, Darcy's house. The house impresses her. To Elizabeth's acute embarrassment Darcy arrives whilst they are leaving. He is polite towards her. Elizabeth does not know what to think, her feeling towards him are changing rapidly. Elizabeth admits to herself that she no longer hates him, that she is grateful to him and respects him. When Elizabeth receives the news about Lydia's elopement, she is very upset. Coincidentally Darcy arrives immediately after, he is concerned for her and is protective. After Lydia and Wickham had finally got married, and they return to Longbourn before going to Newcastle, Lydia reveals that Darcy had been present at her wedding. It was supposed to have been a secret. Elizabeth writes to her aunt, Mrs Gardiner to find out about Darcy's involvement. Mrs Gardiner's letter confirms Darcy's involvement in getting Lydia and Wickham married. He found them, bribed Wickham into marrying Lydia, and convinced Mr Gardiner to allow him to take care of all financial arrangements. Mr Darcy told the Gardiners he was doing this because he felt responsible, because of his 'mistaken pride' he had not let anybody know about Wickham's real character. Elizabeth feels very grateful. She now acknowledges that she loves him and is very proud of the way he has acted. She feels now that he will never marry her because he could not stand having Wickham for a brother-in-law. 'Every kind of pride must revolt from the connection.'

Shortly after Lydia and Wickham's departure Mr Bingley arrives in Netherfield, and so visits the Bennets accompanied by Mr Darcy. Mr Darcy's behaviour is more reserved. They are both invited to dine at Longbourn and Elizabeth is puzzled by Darcy's behaviour, as he is polite but quite and distant. When Mr Darcy returns to London Elizabeth's hopes fall, she feels he will not propose again.

After Bingley's engagement to Jane, Lady Catherine visits the Bennets unexpectedly. She walks in uninvited and is very rude. She asks to speak to Elizabeth in private and they walk out to a copse in the park to talk. Lady Catherine says she has come because she has heard rumours that Elizabeth is to be engaged to Mr Darcy and is alarmed. She has travelled from Kent to Hertfordshire to stop it. She says Darcy is to marry her daughter because she and the late Mrs Darcy arranged it so, and because that arrangement would be in accordance with the honour of the family. That Elizabeth is of inferior birth, has low connections and is not good enough for Darcy. Even worse her sister Lydia has just been involved in a scandal. Elizabeth picks up the weakness in Lady Catherine's arguments. 'If you believe it impossible to be true,' 'I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far.' She refuses to be intimidated and defends her right to privacy and to make her own decisions, 'You may ask questions which I may not choose to answer'. She declares herself equal to Darcy. 'He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal.' She refuses to give Catherine an open promise

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about what she is going to do in the future. When Lady Catherine insults her by saying she will 'pollute' 'the shades of Pemberley', Elizabeth firmly but politely terminates the conversation. Now Elizabeth wonders what influence will Lady Catherine have on Darcy's decision.

When Darcy visits Longbourn, they go out on a walk and he and Elizabeth get to be on their own. Elizabeth thanks Darcy for saving Lydia. Darcy tells Elizabeth he did it all for her sake. 'But your family owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I thought only of you.' This leads to the proposal. This second proposal is different to the first one. Darcy is less sure of himself, humble whereas before he was proud. He is considerate towards Elizabeth, anxious not to hurt her feelings. The proposal shows how Darcy has changed, improved, and shed his 'improper' pride. Elizabeth accepts. Both of them are ashamed of their behaviour in Kent when Darcy first proposed. Lady Catherine's interference had the reverse effect of what she had intended. They talk about why Darcy wrote the letter and how it affected Elizabeth. Darcy says that Elizabeth has completed his education. 'You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled.' After the news of their engagement is broken to their families, Elizabeth and Darcy discuss their relationship. He admits 'I was in the middle before I knew that I had began'. When they marry, they go to live in Pemberley. We are told that it is also a happy marriage. Darcy's sister, Georgiana, learns from the example of Elizabeth and Darcy what a happy marriage is and how a wife can speak to her husband, as an equal. Lady Catherine at first sort of freezes her relationship with the Darcys but then is eventually reconciled and visits Pemberley. Mr Bennet misses his favourite daughter so much, he often visits her unexpectedly.

On the contrary to Jane and Bingley's relationship, Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship is complicated by themselves. They have a complex relationship, they complement each other. They both have enough independence of mind not to follow all social conventions but do have high moral values. They both are intelligent, honest and value the proper behaviour.

Jane Austen says the ideal relationship is Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship. They have similarities but also differences. They love but mostly respect each other. 'Pride and Prejudice' is a love story but does not only reflect the romantic side. It gives you all kinds of relationships; none of them are the same. It shows that the ideal couple was not easy to get. They learned from each other. It makes you question if there will be many couples like that

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