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**BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI**

**COMPARISON OF JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*  
AND HELEN FIELDING'S *BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY* IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH THE "NOVEL OF MANNERS"**

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### YEMİN METNİ

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduğum “Comparison of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* in accordance with the “Novel of Manners” ” adlı çalışmanın, tezin proje safhasından sonuçlanmasına kadar ki bütün süreçlerde bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurulmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin Bibliyografya’da gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve onurumla beyan ederim.

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Mine Özge Ceri

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**ABSTRACT****COMPARISON OF JANE AUSTEN’S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* AND HELEN FIELDING’S *BRIDGET JONES’S DIARY* IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE “NOVEL OF MANNERS”****Mine Özge ÇERİ****Süleyman Demirel University, Department of English Language and Literature****Master, 138 pages, June 2012****Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Beture MEMMEDOVA**

The present thesis is significant for the field of comparative literature. Comparative literature studies have been gaining importance in literature studies recently. This study is significant in that it compares two novels of English Literature which were written at different times yet in the same country. This study reveals that even though Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* was written in the nineteenth century in England and Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* was written in the twentieth century in the same country, human psychology and manners have not changed that much. The concept of the “Novel of Manners”, which is unique for the British novel, is analysed and the two novels, one of which is part of the popular culture and one of which is a classic of English Literature, are compared in accordance with the “Novel of Manners”. The characteristics of the “Novel of Manners” tradition are explored in these novels. Also, the impact and influence of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* on Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* are observed. This thesis is innovative in the field of comparative literature with its new ideas.

**Keywords:** “Novel of Manners”, Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones’s Diary*.

## ÖZET

### JANE AUSTEN'İN *AŞK VE GURUR*, HELEN FIELDING'İN *BRIDGET JONES'UN GÜNLÜĞÜ* ADLI ROMANLARININ “ADABI MUAŞERET ROMANI” AÇISINDAN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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Karşılaştırmalı edebiyat çalışmaları son zamanlarda giderek önem kazanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, iki İngiliz romanını incelemesine karşın bir tür karşılaştırmalı edebiyat incelemesidir. Bu araştırmanın amacı; aynı ülkede fakat farklı zamanlarda yazılmış iki romanı, “Adabı Muaşeret Romanı” türünün özellikleri bağlamında karşılaştırmaktır. Önce İngiliz edebiyatına özgü bir tür olan “Adabı Muaşeret Romanı” etraflıca incelenmiştir. Daha sonra bu türün özellikleri, adı geçen biri popüler kültüre ait, diğeri İngiliz Edebiyatının klasiklerinden olan romanlar incelenerek saptanmıştır. Karşılaştırılan romanlar, 19. yüzyılda İngiltere’de yazılmış olan Jane Austen’in *Aşk ve Gurur* ve 20. yüzyılda yine aynı ülkede yazılmış olan Helen Fielding’in *Bridget Jones’un Günlüğü* adlı eserleridir. Bu iki roman; yaklaşık iki yüzyıl arayla yazılmış olmalarına karşın, yansıttıkları İngiliz insanının davranış biçimi çok az değişmiştir. Çalışmada ayrıca Jane Austen’in *Aşk ve Gurur* romanının Helen Fielding’in *Bridget Jones’un Günlüğü* romanı üzerindeki etkisi ortaya konmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** “Adabı Muaşeret Romanı”, Jane Austen, *Aşk ve Gurur*, Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones’s Günlüğü*.

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## CHAPTER I

### 1.1. Introduction

Why do many people still read and like Jane Austen? The popularity of the author in question has continued over the centuries with increasing enthusiasm. Many books, articles, biographies and critiques have been written on “this most reserved” and yet influential of writers to analyse her life, style and works.

Many writers and critics searched the answer to the question of the popularity of Jane Austen. According to Mary Lascelles:

What distinguishes Jane Austen’s manner of inviting us to share in the act of creation but a greater delicacy of intimation? Her invitation is not conveyed directly at any given moment-when it might be summarily refused. It is implicit in all her dealings with us, in what Raleigh called ‘a certain subtle literary politeness that is charm itself’, above all in her mood of hospitality. ‘The truth is,’ Katherine Mansfield writes, ‘that every true admirer of the novels cherishes the happy thought that he alone-reading between the lines-has become the secret friend of their author.’ How it has come about that we feel so towards this most reserved of writers? That very reticence may suggest a partial explanation: ‘[...] the personality of the author,’ Henry James says, ‘[...] however enchanting, is a thing for the reader only, and not for the author himself [...] to count in at all.’ (Lascelles, 1995: 219-220)

How eagerly we turn the pages as readers, how we wonder what is going to happen next, and how Jane Austen engages us in her story and characters is, indeed, the skill unequalled.

Virginia Woolf praises Jane Austen’s genius:

She is only humming a tune beneath her breath, trying over a few bars of the music for *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. But we know that there is no one else can sing like that. She need not raise her voice. Every syllable comes quite distinctly through the gates of time. And whatever they may say about her genius and her cousins and Mansfield Park we are content to listen all day long to Jane Austen practising. (Woolf, 1979: 107)

I think all praises, critiques, biographies and countless other works<sup>1</sup>, prequels and sequels should be crowned with a chapter of statement on Jane Austen's art and *Pride and Prejudice*.

*Pride and Prejudice*, as one of the most widely known novels of English literature, is one of the representatives of the genre, "Novel of Manners", which combines the individual desires with social conventions.

As a popular genre of the British literature, often referred to as the "British Novel of Manners", the popularity of it and the issues it is concerned with have been the main focus of writers and critics. Therefore, a close observation of the genre in question is included and the subjects it deals with are analysed to give a general understanding of the style.

The present thesis explores the features of the "Novel of Manners" tradition in *Pride and Prejudice*, one of the most celebrated novels of Jane Austen and a popular novel of the late twentieth century, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, by Helen Fielding. The study hopes to reveal the important issues of the genre in both novels.

The "Novel of Manners", a genre emerged in the eighteenth century, is concerned with the issues of manners, behaviours, marriage, love, class, rank, and money. This study aims at dealing with these issues that very much concern the genre, analysing *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

Teachman states that the problems of love, money, and proper behaviour have always been the issues of interest as well as concern of the world for centuries (Teachman, 1997: 23).

Therefore, a very close attention to all these issues of the "Novel of Manners" is required. Thus, the present thesis will then explore marriage and love as the main subjects of the tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Darcy's Decision : A Sequel to Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* by Juliette Shapiro, *Darcy's Passions : Pride and Prejudice Retold Through His Eyes* by Regina Jeffers, *Me and Mr. Darcy* by Alexandra Potter are few of them.

Ferris argues that Austen's novel is transformed in Fielding's fiction and its film version. "Fielding's debt to Austen is not surprising given their shared focus on the rituals of courtship as the central drama in a young woman's life." (Ferriss, 2006: 72)

As the name of the tradition suggests, manners and behaviours of the society are the great concerns of these novels. *Pride and Prejudice* probes particularly propriety and manners performed by the individuals of the society. Though, the rules of propriety and behaviour have changed through the centuries, the underlying psychology still remains more or less the same.

When giving significance to these manners and codes of behaviours of the characters in relation to their society, a close analysis of these manners and their companions such as class and money is given. Class, rank and money have often determined the state of behaviours and manners from the nineteenth century onwards. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, it is apparent that money and class though disguised, still go on to identify one's manners and existence.

The historicist criticism of Austen's work and its connected historical questions concerning class relations, economics, gender and sexuality have been debated over centuries. Laura Mooneyham White observes Sir Walter Scott's praise for Austen and concludes that Austen's advocates have valued her greatly on a wide area of interconnected socio-cultural values, those related to class, gender, politics and sexuality (White, 1998a: 1).

*Pride and Prejudice* was written at the beginning of the nineteenth century and *Bridget Jones's Diary* was written at the end of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, human psychology and behaviours have scarcely altered through the course of nearly two centuries in between.

The time when *Pride and Prejudice* was written was also the time for changing values of the society and the shifting codes of behaviour and rules of rank. Therefore, a close understanding of these changes at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries is also crucial at this point.

An examination of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary* in accordance with the "Novel of Manners" tradition requires an understanding of the times when the two novels were written. Thus, these values of class and rank and money are interconnected with the times that the novels were written.

*Pride and Prejudice* is viewed as the predecessor of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. And critics highlight the point that the novel owes much to Jane Austen's plot in *Pride and Prejudice*.

As Ferriss points out on the subject, "Without question, the phenomenal success of *Bridget Jones's Diary*-both novel and film-comes largely from pilfering plot and narrative strategies from a writer who knew nothing of film: Jane Austen." (Ferriss, 2006: 71)

Thus, despite the differences between the two novels under investigation, they show great similarities about which the chapters to come will deal with.

## **1.2. The Subject of the Study**

The subject of the study is two novels of English literature which are *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, written at different times yet in the same country and the comparison of the two in accordance with the "Novel of Manners". *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary* along with the tradition of the "Novel of Manners" are the main concerns of the present study. The features of the "Novel of Manners" which are manners, class, money, marriage and courtship are analysed on these two novels respectively. The subject of the study is wide as it covers two novels and a genre and it also widens to explore *Pride and Prejudice* along with its impact on *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

## **1.3. The Purpose and the Significance of the Study**

The aim of the present thesis is to show that even though Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was written in the early nineteenth century England and Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* was written in the late twentieth century England, human psychology and manners have scarcely changed. The comparison is made by analysing the characteristics of the "Novel of Manners" tradition on the two novels. In the course

of the study, various articles and books concerning the field have been explored and useful information has been quoted in order to support the study scientifically. Another aim of the study is to observe and show the impact of *Pride and Prejudice* on *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Jane Austen, who is a writer of the nineteenth century, has impressed various writers to this day including Helen Fielding. While *Pride and Prejudice* is explored in accordance with the characteristics of the “Novel of Manners” tradition, its impact on *Bridget Jones's Diary* can be seen clearly. The present thesis bears significance as it is produced in the field of comparative literature which has been gaining more importance recently. This study is also significant in that one of the most valued novels of English literature ever and a popular novel of the twentieth century are analysed with respect to the “Novel of Manners” which is, as a genre, unique for the British literature. *Bridget Jones's Diary* has been successful and its film version is also made. However, critical articles on this novel are scarce. The studies on *Bridget Jones's Diary* and the “Novel of Manners” are not many as well. As it is, the scarcity of the studies influencing the present thesis adds value to it. In this respect, this study gains its significance in the field of study.

#### **1.4. Methodology**

Text based approach, feminist approach, autobiographical approach and historicist criticism have been applied throughout this study.

#### **1.5. Review of Literature**

A vast number and variety of critical articles, books and biographies have been analysed for the study of the “Novel of Manners” tradition, its features and their reflections on the novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Dairy*.

Deborah Kaplan in *Circles of Support* focuses on the genius of Jane Austen and how this genius operated. The writer opposes the view that it was only her genius or the influence of her family that made her a successful writer. She points out Austen's unique ability to observe her social surroundings and to use this talent in her novels. In this context, Kaplan explores the influence of her family, various biographers' opinions on Jane Austen's life and art and the supportive impact and the importance of her female circle of friends and kin on Jane Austen's works.

In *Reading Jane Austen and Rewriting ‘Herstory’*, Devoney Looser deals with the arguments concerning Jane Austen and history in her novels which is recognised as a field of study worth examining. For a long time, the common idea among critics was that Jane Austen avoided the historical events of her time, however, Looser points out to the contrary. The critic argues that Austen subtly included history in her novels and applied it to her works for her own ends.

Mary Poovey in *Ideological Contradictions and the Consolations of Form: The Case of Jane Austen* analyses Austen’s novels in the context of the works of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelly and makes us aware of the fact that Jane Austen wrote about the change of ideas in the eighteenth century English society. The critic argues that despite her limited experience but due to her class position, as a member of the gentry, Jane Austen was concerned with the same issues as Wollstonecraft and Shelly. Poovey analyses the author’s novels to which these changes were applied with the help of her genius and artistic strategies.

In *{Austen’s Accommodation}*, Alistair M. Duckworth deals with Jane Austen’s social position in the eighteenth century English society, her years at Chawton cottage and how circumstances denied to her in real life appear in her works. Duckworth suggests that her situation as a member of the gentry enables her to be an observer of social differences. Duckworth further focuses on how Jane Austen’s knowledge of financial enrolments is apparent in *Pride and Prejudice* and how the novel achieves its comic power with the help of social criticism of marriage and manners.

In *Travelling to the Self Comic and Spatial Openness in Jane Austen’s Novels*, Laura Mooneyham White dwells on places in Austen’s world and her limitations. The critic argues that in Austen’s novels, places define human limitations and cultural merits and they also present the self. In this sense, the role of Pemberly on Elizabeth’s recognition of herself is analysed.

In her book, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time*, Mary Waldron analyses the critical opinions on Jane Austen’s art at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the period, critics debated over Austen’s restriction of everyday life events and how she achieved to be read through centuries. The book challenges the ideas of the twentieth

century which overall claim that Austen was unable to follow her fictional principles. Waldron analyses the opinions of various critics of the twentieth century and explores feminist and historicist criticism of Austen's work. She shows that it is possible to build a consolidating critique of the novels based on Austen's own idea of what she aimed at and what she knew of the society she lived in. She examines Austen's letters and novels which provide conclusive evidence to identify what drove her to write.

In the book *Readings on Jane Austen*, the unsigned article, *Jane Austen: A Biography* aims at portraying the writer's life in accordance with her works and style. In this sense, the social world in which Jane Austen lived, her family, her early works and her published novels, her character and her Chawton years are explored in order to give brief but concrete information about the author and her life and art.

Fay Weldon in *England in Austen's Time* portrays the difference between the rigid society in which Jane Austen lived and the more elegant society that she creates in her novels. According to the critic, the time and the society in which the writer lived are significant to explore her works. Weldon argues that Austen chose to depict an ideal fictional world rather than the disagreeable society of the real world.

Women of the eighteenth century were trained to prepare for the family life ahead of them and to become accomplished wives. In *Austen's Women in a Conservative Society*, David Monaghan explains that Austen does not agree with these approaches to women's education. Nevertheless, she holds a conservative view which sees women as the moral stabilizers of society. The critic further states that that Austen wrote at a time of changing values constitutes significance for the author's work.

In *Nineteenth Century Criticism of Austen's Novels*, John Halperin states that most novels of Austen's time were sentimental and romantic stories and that is why Austen received little critical attention during the nineteenth century. For the critics of the time, Austen was just another author writing about domestic affairs. Jane Austen was unknown in literary circles of her time as she lived a quiet life in the country. There were a few admirers of her novels among writers of the time whose approval and analysis are significant for the critics in the twentieth century.

In Austen's time, there were inhibitive social rules designed for women. In *Sex and Social Life in Austen's Novels* Jan Fergus claims that Austen treats these social rules of her time more freely than her contemporaries. Austen's heroines behave openly though the rules of manners and decorum of the time are stricter than they are depicted in her novels. Equality in marriage is very important to them and Elizabeth even wants to make sure that she has found it before marriage.

In *Humour in Austen's Novels*, Bradley who is a Shakespearean scholar, explains Austen's novels under the shade of her being a humorist. He argues that many scenes and characters of Austen's novels seem to be created for the theatre. In conclusion, he states, as most critics of Austen's work do, that she would have written more poetically, had she lived longer.

In *Jane Austen A Literary Life*, Jan Fergus explores the life and works of Jane Austen in detail by referring to many famous books and articles on the subject. He explores the situation of a woman writer in the nineteenth century England, along with the author's life and family. The part called *Pride and Prejudice, Sexuality and Romance* in chapter *The Idea of Authorship* has been of great use for this study as it looks at *Pride and Prejudice*, in the angle of its sexuality and romance of its hero and heroine, in respect to Jane Austen's style and form, analysing various other critics' ideas on the topic.

In *What Is a Novel of Manners?* Barbara Brothers and Bege K. Bowers examine the genre, "Novel of Manners" and its chief applier Jane Austen. They also look at the specific subjects of the genre along with its definition. Jane Austen's art is claimed to belong to the genre as the opinions of critics on the topic are stated.

Gloria Sybil Gross in *Jane Austen and Psychological Realism: "What Does a Woman Want?"* refers Freud's famous question, which is in the title of the article, to Jane Austen's works. She examines the harmony of "Novel of Manners" and psychological realism in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. She further focuses on Austen's novels and the characters in them.

In *Anthony Trollope and the Unmannerly Novel*, James R. Kincaid discusses the "Novel of Manners" as a genre. Moreover, the critic analyses the role of manners in the

genre and decides that manners play an artificial role in these novels as they cannot be manners as long as they are seen that way, and searches answers to place Trollope within this tradition.

In *Love, Marriage, and Manners in the Novels of Barbara Pym*, Barbara Brothers observes Pym's novels and this examination casts light on her predecessors as well. Therefore, the critic views the genre in question and its subjects throughout the nineteenth century by looking into Pym's novels. She studies love and marriage, also the class system as the subjects of the genre.

In *Jane Austen Real and Imagined Worlds*, Oliver MacDonagh casts light on the history of England at the time of Jane Austen's novels. The critic observes Jane Austen's novels in the light of historians' examinations of that particular period. *Pride and Prejudice* for him is the most suitable novel of Jane Austen to research the writer's position as woman in the century.

Mary Lascelles in *Jane Austen and her Art* observes Jane Austen's style in detail with reference to exact examples from the author's works. Lascelles further views Austen's narrative art with its relation to the substance of her novels. The writer further analyses and establishes the relationship between the narrator, Jane Austen and her readers.

In *Understanding Pride and Prejudice*, Debra Teachman observes Jane Austen's novels at the time of the changing values of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. The writer regards marriage as the central issue of the novel. The book views *Pride and Prejudice* by stating various different opinions of the time and illuminating the readers of the twentieth century about marriage, laws, customs, conducts, and education of women and single women.

In *Virginia Woolf on Women and Writing*, Virginia Woolf views women's literature from nineteenth century onwards concentrating on why and when at certain times women's writing bloomed, what their restrictions were, and what subjects they wrote about. Woolf researches Jane Austen's style, works, subjects of her novels, and her limitations. The critiques on women writers and Jane Austen are useful sources for Austen studies and literary criticism.

*Jane Austen The Critical Heritage Volumes 1 and 2* edited by B. C. Southam is a book consisting of critiques and reviews of Jane Austen's novels, the critiques of the first volume beginning in 1816, through the nineteenth century and the critiques of the second volume beginning in 1869, through the twentieth century. The reviews of the nineteenth century are important cornerstones of Austen studies, some of which are approved, yet some of which are opposed in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, these views determine the basis of today's criticism of Jane Austen's works.

J. B. Priestley in his article *Austen Portrays A Small World with Humor and Detachment*, analyses the writer's limited range and how she perfectly portrays the small world that she has chosen. In his opinion, Austen depicts the social life that she lives in with irony. The critic also suggests that Austen's characters possess a timeless value although they were created by their author in the early nineteenth century.

For some time, the popular idea of Jane Austen's life was that she lived a quiet and uneventful life away from the excitements of the world. However, recently this view has started to be challenged and repositioned. One of the writers who is reconsidering this view is Patrice Hannon. In *101 Things You Didn't Know About Jane Austen*, the writer's aim is to show the readers that Austen had various experiences in her short life. Hannon explores how 101 features of Austen's life enabled her to create her famous novels and other short fiction. Hannon also signifies that the fascinating characteristics of Austen's heroines may be found in their writer's life.

In Introduction to the book, *Chick Lit The New Woman's Fiction*, Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young seek the answer to the questions what chick-lit is and what its origins are. They mention *Bridget Jones's Diary* as the first example of the tradition and denote that Helen Fielding modelled her story on *Pride and Prejudice*. They discuss the varieties of the genre and claim that Austen's works are the foundation for the genre.

Stephanie Harzewski, in *Tradition and Displacement in the New Novel of Manners*, shows *Bridget Jones's Diary* as one of the first examples of chick-lit. In the part of the article called *Chick Lit and the Novel of Manners* it is analysed that chick-lit reviews the subjects of the "Novel of Manners". According to the critic, chick-lit can be

viewed as a new “Novel of Manners” as it bears the combination of the forms of the tradition.

In the article, *Mothers of Chick Lit? Women Writes, Readers, and Literary History*, Juliette Wells considers the question of the unimportance of and yet the success of chick-lit. The critic touches upon Austen’s ongoing importance in our popular culture. The love plot of chick-lit novels, the origin of which is the novels of Austen, is explored. Heroine’s quest to find true love and its connection to the self-growth of the heroine is viewed.

In *Narrative and Cinematic Doubleness: Pride and Prejudice and Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Suzanne Ferris examines the novels in accordance with their film and TV series versions. The success of *Bridget Jones’s Diary* owes much to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. The critic denotes the instances which are in direct similarity to each other in the novels. The critic also indicates that the film version of *Bridget Jones’s Diary* reinterprets many scenes from Austen’s novel.

In *About a Girl: Female Subjectivity and Sexuality in Contemporary ‘Chick’ Culture*, A. Rochelle Mabry revises the issues presented in chick-lit. The critic argues that the young woman dealing with relationships is the main topic of the chick-lit novels. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* while depicting the heroine’s desire to find the right man, focuses on her self-education.

In *A Room of One’s Own* Virginia Woolf examines the writings of women writers of the past. Women were excluded from professions, education and independence. Woolf longs for a future when women will have rooms of their own, their economical and professional independence to write freely.

Leah Guenther in *Bridget Jones’s Diary Confessing Post Feminism* analyses *Bridget Jones’s Diary* as an example of the chick-lit genre. The critic objects some dismissive views of the novel and urges a new reading of it as the article’s title suggests. Helen Fielding’s use of diary form as a confessional writing and the novel’s connection with feminism, second and third wave feminism and post-feminism are explored.

## **1.6. Limitations**

Even though there is much to examine concerning the novels and the genre in question, this study has focused on the comparison of the novels with respect to the features of the genre, “Novel of Manners.”

## CHAPTER II

### 2.1. Jane Austen's Art and *Pride and Prejudice*

#### 2.1.1. Austen's Limited Range

What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited sketches, full of Variety & Glow? – How could I possibly join them on the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour? (From Jane Austen's letter quoted in Jones, 2004: 198)<sup>2</sup>

This was what Jane Austen wrote to her nephew James Edward Austen on 17 December 1816, which testifies to the fact that she was far from being satisfied with her creation.

Limitation is one of the most widely discussed features of Jane Austen's art which has been emphasised by Jane Austen's critics for two centuries. Jane Austen would never go beyond the boundaries of what she knew and she was reserved in her writing. There are various arguments as to Jane Austen's limited range. For a long time, the narrow topic she mainly focused on was considered a flaw. In the nineteenth century, Austen's limitations were criticised rather severely. There were various arguments among critics as to Jane Austen's limited range.

In his essay, *Travelling to the Self: Comic and Spatial Openness in Jane Austen's Novels*, White explores the views of Austen's contemporaries on the issue of her limited range. George Eliot is of the opinion that she deals with "[...] too much of the littlenesses and trivialities of life, and limit{s} {herself} so scrupulously of the sayings and doings of dull, ignorant, and disagreeable people [...]" Emerson agrees with Eliot and states that Miss Austen's novels are "[...] imprisoned in the wretched conventions of English society." Mark Twain is also severe in his criticism, "Whenever I take up *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*, I feel like a barkeeper entering the kingdom of heaven." (White, 1998a: 4)

John Halperin, a well-known biographer of Jane Austen, states that some of Jane Austen's readers admired her wit and her incisive picture of provincial life; yet even her

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this study, the quotations from Jane Austen's letters are given from the source of V. Jones, *Jane Austen Selected Letters*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004.

admirers sometimes tended to see her fiction as having a narrow range and limitation. He explores Wordsworth's idea that though Jane Austen's novels were an admirable copy of life, he could not be interested in productions of that kind. He further mentions Charlotte Brontë's famous attack on Jane Austen's novels:

[...] a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but [there is] no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. [...] Miss Austen being [...] without 'sentiment,' without poetry, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great. (Halperin, 1997: 56-57)

Halperin is surprised at such an outburst of underestimation: "It is odd that a writer like Charlotte Brontë, so conscious as she is in her own novels of the psychology of her characters, should have failed to recognize the same pre-occupation in the fiction of her greater predecessor [...]" (Halperin, 1997: 57-58)

Lascelles explores Charlotte Brontë's criticism of Jane Austen's work as follows:

For it was in very unfavourable circumstances that she first encountered Jane Austen's work. George Henry Lewes had insisted that she should read *Pride and Prejudice*, and profit by its example; and coming to it under this compulsion she found it, and thought she found Jane Austen, commonplace and sophisticated, with no more than a knack of shrewd observation to her credit, and said so; [...] (Lascelles, 1995: 118)

White supports Lascelles's point that Lewes, who was an admirer of Jane Austen, encouraged Brontë to read her novels. In an 1853 issue of his magazine, the *Westminster Review*, Lewes wrote, "{She is} the greatest artist ever written, using the term to signify the most perfect mastery over the means to her end." (White, 1998a: 3)

Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own*, points out that Charlotte Brontë's anger prevents her from being objective. It must be that anger that dictated her criticism Jane Austen does not deserve. Woolf asks "Did not Charlotte Brontë fail entirely to understand Jane Austen?" (Woolf, 2008: 85)

Edward Fitzgerald writes in his letter to W.F.Pollock in 1871 about Jane Austen's limited range. "She is capital as far as she goes: but she never goes out of the Parlour". (from the letter of Edward Fitzgerald quoted in Southam, 2002: 300)

Waldron examines the nineteenth century criticism of Jane Austen's works which considered Austen's limitation as a failure and concludes that "Her only fault-if could indeed be rated a fault-was the restriction of the range of her attention." Yet, he also asserts the undeniable truth that according to her admirers, her excellence lay in her restriction of her fictional range. (Waldron, 1999: 4-6)

As regards Austen's limitation, Southam explains:

Slight and provincial, a period novelist of Regency manners, her success seemed limited to the small world of domestic comedy. The subtlety, restraint and concentration of her art were rarely observed, the commanding irony went unperceived; and it was left to a few enthusiasts to keep her name alive. As far as criticism and the public at large were concerned, Jane Austen was a minor writer of a past age. (Southam, 2002: 1)

However, though "two inches wide", it is sketched "with so fine a brush" came to be firstly assessed by the twentieth century critics.

At this point, the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger's statement from his work *Poetry Language Thought*, summarises the point "A boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing." (White, 1998b: 198) From this limitation, Jane Austen's works arise excellently.

Southam resembles Jane Austen's limitation to a noble art:

How fine, nay, how noble is your art in its delicate reserve, never insisting, never forcing the note, never pushing the sketch into the caricature! You worked, without thinking of it, in the Spirit of Greece, on a labour happily limited, and exquisitely organized. (Southam, 2002: 41)

Priestley claims that what Jane Austen aimed at doing has stayed unachieved by other novelists. "Jane Austen created for her own use [...] a tiny world of her own, but no novelist before or since has succeeded better than she did in bringing close to perfection what she set out to do." (Priestley, 1997: 83)

Kaplan treats "two inches wide ivory" of Jane Austen's as a representation of modesty. Kaplan argues that "Austen advanced such humble, albeit witty, self-representations with the intent, no doubt, of countering her society's general distrust of

the femininity and gentility of women with public reputations as writers.’’ (Kaplan, 1998: 27)

Virginia Woolf, a great admirer of Jane Austen, defines how limited yet how glorious is Jane Austen’s art:

At once our senses quicken; we are possessed with the peculiar intensity which she alone can impart. But of what is it all composed? Of a ball in a country town; a few couples meeting and taking hands in an assembly room; a little eating and drinking; and for catastrophe, a boy being snubbed by one young lady and kindly treated by another. There is no tragedy and no heroism. Yet for some reason the little scene is moving out of all proportion to its surface solemnity. (Woolf, 1979: 113-114)

Southam examines Walter Scott’s ‘‘enthusiasm’’ for Jane Austen:

Sir Walter observes, that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners, and sentiments greatly above our own. (Southam, 2005: 150-151)

Maugham gives a place to Sir Walter Scott’s praise of Jane Austen in *The Best Qualities of Pride and Prejudice*, Scott states that ‘‘That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with.’’ (Maugham, 1997: 126)

Why did Jane Austen choose to write in a limited range? Some critics of Jane Austen’s works argue that she experienced little in her life, therefore she only wrote about what she knew. Some others think that she experienced and knew quite a lot in her short life, however, she determined her limitation deliberately.

Maugham points out that Jane Austen experienced little and chose to write about a limited range. According to the critic, it was her humour that gave point to her observation. ‘‘Her range was narrow. She had common sense in a high degree and no one knew better than she her limitations.’’ (Maugham, 1997: 126)

Poovey supports the point: ‘‘Perhaps partly because of her limited experience, Austen did not choose to write about politics, nature, or metaphysics, and she

assiduously avoided the highly imaginative, melodramatic incidents that so fascinated her contemporaries.’’ (Poovey, 1998: 67)

Contrary to Maugham and Poovey’s opinion, Hannon claims that Jane Austen experienced quite a lot in her short life. However, the ordinary dealings of everyday life are what she chose as her object of study. Hannon suggests that:

Henry Austen said that his sister’s ‘was not by any means a life of event.’ For a long time this was the popular view of Jane Austen-as a genteel old maid, removed from the hurly-burly of the great world. In recent years we have seen reconsideration and a revision of this position. The greatest novelist who ever live in fact saw-at close range-and experienced quiet a lot in her too-short life. (Hannon, 2007: xiii)

Thus, while Jane Austen’s contemporaries criticised her limited range, the twenty century critics consider this feature of her writing to be a great advantage.

### **2.1.2. Historicist Criticism of Jane Austen’s Works**

Jane Austen writes about *Pride and Prejudice*, in her letter to Cassandra Austen on 4 February 1813:

- Upon the whole however I am quite vain enough & well satisfied enough. – The work is rather too light & bright & sparkling; - it wants shade; - it wants to be stretched out here & there with a long chapter – of sense if it could be had, if not of solemn specious non-sense – about something unconnected with the story; an Essay on Writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparte – or anything that would form a contrast & bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness & Epigrammatism of the general stile. (Jones, 2004: 138)

The writer considers *Pride and Prejudice* to be different from other contemporary works. As the novels of her time were so absorbed in the historical and political matters, she mockingly asserts that her novel needs these additions to be appreciated by the readers.

Looser states that ‘‘Austen’s account of what her novel should be to please readers focuses almost exclusively on history and literary criticism, which, she implies, range in value from ‘sense’ to ‘solemn specious nonsense.’’’ (Looser, 1998: 38)

It is obvious from Austen’s tone that she is ironic. She knows that her work does not need any additions to be great, and it is complete.

Looser summarises Austen's point below:

Austen is perhaps teasing when she notes that adding these historical and critical digressions will, by contrast, remind readers how much fun they are having otherwise. Regardless of her sincerity in this letter, Austen demonstrates her awareness that she is competing for readers with histories and historical novels, though she seems unwilling to modify her prose to resemble them. (Looser, 1998: 38)

Austen is ironic, "her pretended criticism of *Pride and Prejudice* and her mischievous suggestion [...] should by no means be taken seriously." (Waldron, 1999: 13)

Jane Austen disguisedly gives the historical and social background in *Pride and Prejudice*. This idea of her work is actually quite new. Even in the twentieth century, when criticism of Jane Austen's works was abundant, Austen was still considered ahistorical.<sup>3</sup>

White suggests that "[...] scholars were nonetheless slow to address Austen as a historical figure, a woman writing in and about her time." (White, 1998a: 6)

Looser points out the fact that:

The critical heyday of Austen's ahistoricism is now happily behind us, and myths of Jane Austen's 'extrahistoricity' or 'subhistoricity' appear to have been debunked. The new historicism of the last decades brought attention to all texts as potential forces of cultural change. This wider theoretical interest, coupled with the significant work of feminist literary critics, resulted in the emergence of Austen and history as a viable area of study. (Looser, 1998: 34)

### **2.1.3. Jane Austen's Irony, Humour and Wit**

Jane Austen wrote about the English country gentry to which she herself belonged. Though she knew the pretences of this particular class, she does not criticise them directly, but she states them and they are there for the reader to understand the gentry better. Waldron attributes this feature of Jane Austen to her irony:

Though securely contained within the particular section of English society of her birth and upbringing, Austen was acutely aware of its snobberies and hypocrisies. But with Elizabeth Bennet, she 'delighted in everything ridiculous' and like all ironists, wanted, not to change things, but to write

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<sup>3</sup> There is more information under the title *The Nineteenth Century England* in chapter III.

about them. She liked to poke fun at what she regarded as absurdities.  
(Waldron, 1999: 13)

According to Wright, Jane Austen uses irony for humour, “Jane Austen [...] often uses irony as a stylistic device and for quite unironic purposes- to flay, to poke fun, to underline a decided judgement-when there is no real contradiction involved.”  
(Wright, 1997: 86)

Jane Austen’s playfulness is apparent in *Pride and Prejudice*. The critic examines how she achieves to make ordinary things look great by using her wit and humour. “She had too much common sense and too sprightly a humor to be romantic, and she was not interested in the uncommon, but in the common. She made it uncommon by the keenness of her observation, her irony and her playful wit.”  
(Maugham, 1997: 128)

A sense of happiness pervades Austen’s novels. Cassandra Austen indicates in her letter to her sister that “You are indeed the finest comic writer of the present age.”  
(Lascelles, 1995: 3)

The critics refer to Jane Austen’s irony as her beloved device. In Priestley’s opinion, Jane Austen’s favourite weapon is irony. (Priestley, 1997: 81)

Jane Austen was a lover of humour and she liked to make fun of absurdities. Bradley suggests that absurdities and illusions, as long as they are not seriously harmful, are pleasant, because they are both ridiculous and appropriate for the writer. (Bradley, 1997: 71)

In this respect, Jane Austen resembles her heroine Elizabeth Bennet. When Miss Bingley states that it is impossible to tease or laugh at Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth explains her attitude toward humour:

‘Mr Darcy is not to be laughed at!’ cried Elizabeth. ‘That is an uncommon advantage, and uncommon I hope it will continue, for it will be a great loss to me to have many such acquaintance. I dearly love a laugh.’

‘Miss Bingley,’ said he ‘has given me credit for more than can be. The wisest and best of men, nay, the wisest and best of their actions may be rendered ridiculous by a person whose first object in life is a joke.’

‘But upon my honour I do not. I do assure you that my intimacy has not yet taught me that. Teaze calmness of temper and presence of mind! No, no I feel he may defy us there. And as to laughter, we will not expose ourselves, if you please, by attempting to laugh without a subject. Mr Darcy may hug himself.’

‘Certainly,’ replied Elizabeth – there are such people, but I hope I am not one of them. I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies to divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can. – But these, I suppose, are precisely what you are without.’ (PP: 62-63)<sup>4</sup>

The success of minor characters is attributed to the writer’s wit. ‘‘By selection, emphasis, and the constant sparkle of her own mind, she brings about a magical transformation. Boring types, from whom we would run away in real life, are transformed into enchanting comic characters.’’ (Priestley, 1997: 82)

#### 2.1.4. Jane Austen’s Characters

It is observed by critics that characters in Jane Austen’s works are genuine: ‘‘There has been much speculation about the identities of possible real-life prototypes for these characters, but for the most part it does not seem that Jane Austen modelled her characters upon specific people she knew.’’ (Hannon, 2007: 145)

Hannon states Jane Austen’s brother’s view on the issue: ‘‘Jane’s brother Henry also wrote that she never drew from individuals for her characters, despite speculation to the contrary [...] Austen-Leigh quite rightly says Jane Austen wanted ‘to create, not to reproduce.’’’ (Hannon, 2007: 146)

Wright argues that ‘‘It seems to me fully apparent that Jane Austen is as thoroughly original [...] in her style as she is in the other aspects of her work [...]’’ (Wright, 1997: 92)

Lascelles notes Sir Frank MacKinnon’s argument on the subject of original characters, ‘‘Jane Austen, I feel sure, never copied a character from a known person; I am sure she never delineated a known place under a fictitious name’’ and Lascelles goes on explaining that ‘‘thorough in this as in all else she undertook, she left no traces that

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<sup>4</sup> The quotations from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* are given as PP throughout this study. J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Penguin Books, London, 2006.

could give her acquaintance fair cause to suspect a likeness, and be made uncomfortable.’’ (Lascelles, 1995: 128)

However, Elizabeth Bennet is viewed as possessing her author’s characteristics such as her playfulness, wit, intelligence and humour:

Elizabeth comes closest, in motive and action, tone and style, not only of the characters in this novel but perhaps in all of Jane Austen’s works, to representing Jane Austen’s own attitude of mind and point of view. Even so, though her creator’s affection for and sympathy with Elizabeth are obvious, Jane Austen still does not entirely lose her detachment. It is this detachment, together with her power of selection, emphasis, and her constant unforced social and moral criticism, that makes Austen a great novelist. (Priestley, 1997: 83)

Among all her heroines, Jane Austen’s favourite appears to be Elizabeth Bennet with all her vivacity, love of the ridiculous, wit, rebellion and irony.

On 29 January 1813, Jane Austen writes to Cassandra Austen: ‘‘I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, & how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know.’’ (Jones, 2004: 137)

The intended effect of Elizabeth on readers is achieved: ‘‘In reading of Elizabeth Bennet, on the other hand, it is impossible for me to doubt either the author’s intentions or my own feelings. I was meant to fall in love with her, and I do [...]’’ (Bradley, 1997: 75)

Priestly views Elizabeth as distinguished from other heroines:

[...] she is lively and sensible, practical and affectionate, humorous and independent-minded. She is a real girl, a person in her own right, with a will of her own ... Literature is crowded with mere dream figures we are asked to accept as heroines. But real women are much better, altogether more satisfying, than dream figures; and Elizabeth Bennet is one of the first and best of them in fiction, not only English but all fiction. (Priestley, 1997: 82-83)

Jane Austen was proud of Elizabeth Bennet: ‘‘She spoke triumphantly to Cassandra, for example, about Elizabeth Bennet and the novel in which she figures, declaring her own superiority over those who either would not like or would not understand *Pride and Prejudice* [...]’’ (Kaplan, 1998: 27-28)

About the beloved character of Jane Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen denotes in her letter to Cassandra on 24 May 1813 that:

Henry & I went to the Exhibition in Spring Gardens [...] I was very well pleased – particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs Bingley, excessively like her. I went in hopes of seeing one of her Sister, but there was no Mrs Darcy; - perhaps, however, I may find her in the Great Exhibition [...] - Mrs Bingley's is exactly herself, size, shaped face, features & sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. (Jones, 2004: 142)

That Austen esteems and loves Elizabeth so much is apparent in the same letter. Jane Austen mentions another exhibition that she visited in London. She looked for a likeness of Elizabeth in vain. Jane Austen is disappointed not to be able to see Elizabeth in both exhibitions. In her letter, she writes:

[...] We have been both to the Exhibition & Sir J. Reynold's, - and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs D. at either. - I can only imagine that Mr D. prizes any Picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. - I can imagine he wd have that sort of feeling – that mixture of Love, Pride & Delicacy. (Jones, 2004: 144)

Whether deliberately or not male characters, in *Pride and Prejudice*, are never on their own, they are always heard and seen when females are around them. Jane Austen wrote only of what she knew; and it has been noticed that she never attempted to reproduce a conversation of men when they are by themselves, “which in the nature of things she could never have heard.” (Maugham, 1997: 126)

Characters like Bingley, Darcy and Wickham are always seen against a feminine background. “That cool though sparkling glance of hers always reveals the truth.” (Priestley, 1997: 82)

Bradley stresses that Jane Austen's point of view is different from the characters' and it is shared by the reader: “In all her novels, though in varying degrees, Jane Austen regards the characters, good and bad alike, with ironical amusement, because they never see the situation as it really is and as she sees it.” (Bradley, 1997: 71)

### 2.1.5. The Role of Family and Friends on Jane Austen's Works

The majority of critics and Jane Austen's biographers agree that her family always supported and encouraged her writing.

Kaplan mentions the role of the family influence in Jane Austen's art, "The most widely recognized influence has been Jane Austen's family. Biographers have credited her relatives with supporting and inspiring her to write." (Kaplan, 1998: 14)

Jane Austen read aloud her juvenilia and novels to her family in small gatherings. She wrote and performed plays with her brothers and sister.

Kaplan further observes this literary air in her family, "[...] biographers and critics have acknowledged the influence of her father and oldest brother but have credited too, the literary atmosphere generated by the whole family. They have been portrayed as lovers of wit, who play-acted and read novels." (Kaplan, 1998: 15)

Jane Austen was encouraged to read the novels and books in her father's library. One can see this attitude to books in Elizabeth. When Lady Catherine enquires after her and her sisters' education and asks her whether they have had a governess or not, to Lady Catherine's surprise, Elizabeth states that they have never had a governess and adds '[...] such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary. Those who chose to be idle, certainly might.' (PP: 186)

Moreover, Jane Austen's father encouraged her daughter to publish her novels. Later, when her father died, her eldest brother helped her to publish her novels. Lascelles explains the importance of her father in Jane Austen's writing and also how the whole family listened to her reading her works:

It was her father who, as soon as her first novel was completed, wrote to inquire of a publisher 'what would be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk'-meaning, presumably, at his own. And the dedications of the early burlesque pieces, besides the circumstances of their survival, show not only that parents and brothers enjoyed these first sports of wit when they were freshly written, but that they still valued them long afterwards-after the writer was grown up and before she was famous. The manuscript of her first venture outside burlesque was read aloud at home, and this custom of reading

aloud persisted, at first to Cassandra as sole auditor, later, when publication had given confidence, to a little company of nieces. (Lascelles, 1995: 4)

Her own family served as her first and most appreciative readers. In her opinion, the entire writing was connected with familial bonds. Her letters reveal that she talked of her novels as her children, and her characters as if they were family friends (Poovey, 1998: 95).

Female family and friends as well had a value that cannot be denied or underestimated in Jane Austen's works. Kaplan suggests the importance of female ties of Jane Austen as an impact on her art, and this issue, according to him, has been long neglected. Biographers "[...] have generally overlooked the difficulties for women who wished to write in a community committed to the domestic ideology, they have missed the significance of female ties for Austen's career." (Kaplan, 1998: 29)

The influence of female friends and family on Jane Austen's art started when her mother, her sister Cassandra and her friend Martha Lloyd moved to Chawton. "The shift toward a circle of female supporters is much more apparent during Austen's most productive period, beginning in 1809." (Kaplan, 1998: 22) Kaplan points out to the importance of female party for Jane Austen's works and states that she "had a community in Chawton worthy of or necessary to her talents." (Kaplan, 1998: 29)

Kaplan examines how the circle of female friends and family affected her works, "[...] in her private discourse with female friends, Austen was able to develop a self-assured, even professionalized persona as a writer, a self-image that surely helped her to write." (Kaplan, 1998: 27)

Her female friends and family, "served as the crucial bridge between modest, self-effacing femininity and the self-assertion and self-expression of authoring. They formed a social circle among whom she could produce fiction and to whom she could talk-easily, confidently-about that work." (Kaplan, 1998: 30)

Jane Austen's writing was a secret but not among her intimate family members and friends. She was cautious enough to hide her work from neighbours and strangers.

In her letter to Francis Austen in September 1813, Jane Austen writes:

Henry heard P. & P. Warmly praised in Scotland, by Lady Rob Kerr & another Lady; -& what does he do in the warmth of his Brotherly vanity & love, but immediately tell them who wrote it! – A thing once set going in that way – one knows how it spreads! – and he, dear Creature, has set it going so much more than once. I know it is all done from affection & partiality – but at the same time, let me here again express to you & Mary my sense of the *superior* kindness which you have shewn on the occasion, in doing what wished. – I am trying to harden myself. – After all, what a trifle it is in all its Bearings, to the really important points of one’s existence even in this World! – (Jones, 2004: 155)

It is clear in her sarcastic and witty tone that she does not want to be known as an author. Kaplan states that: “She attempted to keep her novel-writing and eventually publishing a secret from her reading public as well as her neighbors.” (Kaplan, 1998: 21)

Mary Lascelles points out that Jane Austen hid her writing from strangers: “[...] not wishing any one outside her own family to know what she was doing, she wrote on small sheets of paper and put them away when a creaking door warned her of one of these interruptions.” (Lascelles, 1995: 32)

Duckworth points out the same cautious attitude of Jane Austen: “writing her novels in the common sitting room, where, warned by a creaking door, she could slip her papers under the blotting-book before visitors discovered her at her creative work.” (Duckworth, 1998: 161)

In *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf states “At any rate, one would not have been ashamed to have been caught in the act of writing *Pride and Prejudice*. Yet, Jane Austen was glad that a hinge creaked, so that she might hide her manuscript before anyone came in.” (Woolf, 2008: 87)

Woolf goes on:

And, I wondered, would *Pride and Prejudice* have been a better novel if Jane Austen had not thought necessary to hide her manuscript from visitors? I read a page or two to see; but I could not find any signs that her circumstances had harmed her work in the slightest. (Woolf, 2008: 87-88)

Jane Austen’s novels were read aloud by the family members. And it is obvious from her letters that *Pride and Prejudice* was read and reread by her close friends and family members.

Kaplan's article denotes that Austen's nearest relations read her novel more than once:

In 1799 Austen's mocking responses to Cassandra and Martha Lloyd's requests to read one of her manuscripts suggest that both had already done so several times. 'I do not wonder,' she tells her sister in what must be a sarcastic tone, 'at your wanting to read 'First Impressions' again, so seldom as you have gone through it, and so long ago.' (Kaplan, 1998: 22)

Therefore, distinction should be made that she kept her writing from strangers, and she only shared it with her intimate friends and family.

## Chapter III

### 3.1. The Nineteenth Century England

Jane Austen is usually called a nineteenth-century writer, and with good reason: Her novels were either written or revised-and they were all first published-in that century. But most of her life (twenty-five of forty-one years) was lived in the prior century, and the events and literature of that time are so influential in her work that we might be justified in calling her an eighteenth-century writer as well. (Hannon, 2007: 4)

Patrice Hannon summarises why Jane Austen could be called both a nineteenth century and an eighteenth century writer. The time in which Jane Austen lived, wrote, revised, and published her novels was a transitory era between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. The influence of these centuries on Jane Austen's works cannot be denied. Social events, literature, politics, wars, and revolutions of these centuries affected her novels.

The beginning of the nineteenth century was the Regency Period in England.<sup>5</sup> England was affected by wars and revolutions inside and outside the country.

Priestley observes the time Austen depicts as follows: "Now the social world she described so minutely was that of the Regency, a period, partly in the 18<sup>th</sup>, partly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that had its own particular characteristics." (Priestley, 1997: 79)

At the end of the eighteenth century, there was the French Revolution; French protested against the monarchy and they executed the royal family members.

At this point, Duckworth states: "Jane Austen lived through the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which touched her family directly." (Duckworth, 1998: 167)

The French Revolution affected Austen family closely. Jane Austen's cousin Eliza de Feuillide was married to a French man and her husband was executed. Later

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<sup>5</sup> The Prince of Wales, Prince Regent ruled England from 1811 to 1820. The era faced many changes in different areas of life caused by the Napoleonic wars, and French Revolution. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Regency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Regency))

she married Austen's most beloved brother Henry Austen. Also, it was the time of Napoleonic wars with France and the political atmosphere was quite complicated.

The fact that Jane Austen ignored the wars and politics in her limited range has been the common idea among critics in the nineteenth century. According to Priestley, Jane Austen completely ignores the political events of her time,

Jane Austen was a great artist, and she knew very well that her fiction could only be effective if it were kept within certain definite limits...If we are made aware of the fact that nations are at war and thousands of men dying on battlefields, then we cannot bring ourselves to take any interest, for example, in one silly young girl's elopement. So Jane Austen, who knew exactly what she was doing, deliberately left out of her picture nine-tenths of life-war and politics and commerce and violent deaths and madness and terrible illnesses and ruin and starvation- and made all her characters reasonably cosy and comfortable, in a tiny world in which a cancelled dinner-party or a shower of rain is an important event, so that we could attend to and enjoy her delicate and subtle comedy. (Priestley, 1997: 78-79)

However, the twentieth century criticism of Austen's works suggests that Jane Austen secretly sets the political atmosphere. Politics, though disguised, underlie her plots.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, militia is situated in Meryton, and Meryton is within a walking distance of Loungbourn where The Bennets live. The Bennet girls often walk to Meryton in their leisure time to meet the officers.

When the regiment came to town, the Bennet girls were informed by their aunt Mrs Phillips who lives in town, "At present, indeed, they were well supplied both with news and happiness by the recent arrival of a militia regiment in the neighbourhood; it was to remain the whole winter, and Meryton was the head quarters." (PP: 31)

Patrice Hannon is one of the critics who support the point that Austen's works reveal the social and political atmosphere of the time: "[...] some elements of war and other political matters turn up in the novels. Soldiers and sailors certainly make their appearances and even discuss their military duties. Mr. Wickham and his fellow militia officers play an important role in *Pride and Prejudice*." (Hannon, 2007: 5)

Jane Austen, without depicting the world affairs at that time, actually reflects the time very well in her novels. The events of the time are seen without a deliberate reference to them.

On this, Woolf writes “And the boundary line is perfectly distinct. But she does not deny that moons and mountains and castles exist on the other side.” (Woolf, 1979: 108)

The Bennet sisters are invited to their aunt, Mrs. Philips’s house and there they spend the night with the officers among who is Mr. Wickham they have met during the day. “The officers of the ——shire were in general a very creditable, gentlemanlike set, and the best of them were of the present party; but Mr. Wickham was as far beyond them all in person, countenance, air, and walk [...]” (PP: 85) The reader is informed that when the regiment is in town, families spend time with the officers having parties and dinners together.

### 3.1.2. The Effects of Changing Values

The revolutions and wars brought about new ideas concerning women at the turn of the century. Patrice Hannon explains how revolutionary ideas appear in Jane Austen’s novels:

The political themes of the wider world-including revolution and liberation-show up in the novels as they relate in particular situations to women and marriage, women and work, women and independence, women and money-but they have been very much refined and domesticated. (Hannon, 2007: 6)

The ideas of women on marriage and on money were beginning to change. These changing ideas that are related to women are clearly evident in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Elizabeth’s aunt Mrs. Gardiner warns her against an attachment to Wickham. She emphasises Elizabeth’s sensibility and demands her to act accordingly. Elizabeth calms her aunt that she knows such an attachment would be imprudent and she has not fallen in love with him:

[...] In short, my dear aunt, I should be very sorry to be the means of making any of you unhappy; but since we see every day that where there is affection, young people are seldom withheld by immediate want of fortune, from

entering into engagements with each other, how can I promise to be wiser than so many of my fellow-creatures if I am tempted, or how am I even to know that it would be wisdom to resist? All that I can promise you, therefore, is not to be in a hurry. I will not be in a hurry to believe myself his first object. When I am in company with him, I will not be wishing. In short, I will do my best.' (PP: 164)

The thoughts of Elizabeth also reflect the changing attitudes of women toward marriage at the time. Women began to marry for love and they did not only think about money as before.

Revolutions also brought about social changes along with them. As social values were beginning to change, climbing the ladder of rank became easier. On these social changes of rank and class, Priestley examines:

It was a time when the rigid class system of the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century in England was breaking down, especially in the middle, between the top ruling class of the wealthy and influential land-owning aristocrats and the working classes. Now when you have a rigid class system, with everybody more or less fixed on one social level or another, there is very little snobbery, just because people know exactly where they are and it is no use pretending. It is precisely when the system is breaking down, without completely disappearing, that there is most snobbery, most pretense of social importance, and grandeur. (Priestley, 1997: 79)

French Revolution and wars between France and England caused a wind of change in distinctions of class and rank.

Teachman explains, "At the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, England was confronting many ideas and situations that were new and threatening to the status quo. Revolution was in the air." (Teachman, 1997: ix) Teachman further states that "Into this whirl of revolutionary zeal and the British government's repressive reactions came the novels of Jane Austen." (Teachman, 1997: x)

Laura Mooneyham White mentions that Austen's works depict these changes. "the rapid social and political changes of the Regency period" had certain place in Austen's plots. (White, 1998a: 1-2)

The shifts in rank and class became possible for people of the time which were formerly only determined by birth. In *Pride and Prejudice*, The Bennets' neighbour, Sir

William Lucas is not a gentleman by birth, he has later been accepted by the gentry due to his fortune: “Sir William Lucas had been formerly in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the King, during his mayoralty.” (PP: 19)

Teachman supports the point by showing how *Pride and Prejudice* reveals the social changes of class and rank:

*Pride and Prejudice*, perhaps more than any other novel of its time, places us clearly within the context of English society at the time of such revolutionary struggles. It shows us the effects of those struggles on members of the English gentry and lower aristocracy who have no direct connection to the revolutions under way. On the surface, it is a love story, but under the surface, it is informed by many facets of society [...] (Teachman, 1997: xi)

Charles Bingley has inherited his fortune from his father who acquired his wealth in trade. He has rented Netherfield, and lives there with his sister, Caroline Bingley. “They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother’s fortune and their own had been acquired by trade.” (PP: 16)

The fact that Mr. Bingley is a very close friend of Mr. Darcy’s shows the distinction between the classes is not very strict any more. Though Bingley is considered to be a gentleman, his fortune is acquired by trade.

Miss Bingley, whose fortune has been gained by trade, considers herself above the company in Meryton. Upon seeing Mr. Darcy standing alone at Sir William Lucas’s, Miss Bingley approaches not wasting her chance to speak to Darcy about the company which she is sure that he considers hideous:

‘I can guess the subject of your reverie.’

‘I should imagine not’

‘You are considering how insupportable it would be to pass many evenings in this manner-in such society; and indeed I am quite of your opinion. I was never more annoyed! The insipidity and yet the noise; the nothingness and yet the self-importance of all these people! – What would I give to hear your strictures on them!’ (PP: 29-30)

### 3.1.2. The Influence of Conduct Manuals

Conduct manuals were popular in Austen's time<sup>6</sup> and critics agree that Jane Austen knew and made use of the ideas of these books.

John Gregory's *From John Gregory, A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* is one of these popular conduct manuals of the time that Jane Austen made use of. On this issue, the critic asserts that "Internal evidence from the novels makes clear that Austen knew the Gregory treatise [...]" (Waldron, 1999: 3)

The fact that Jane Austen knew and read the conduct manuals of the time is apparent in literary studies of Austen's art and works. Teachman quotes much from *From John Gregory, A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*. Gregory warns women of the period "not to give their hearts too easily and not to mistake mere attraction for abiding love." (Teachman, 1997: 60) Gregory asserts that a woman should "keep a man guessing about the degree of feeling she has for him." (Teachman, 1997: 61)

This aspect of courtship that Gregory depicts is the case with Jane and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane does not want her love to be sensed:

It was generally evident whenever they met, that he did admire her; and to her it was equally evident that Jane was yielding to the preference which she had begun to entertain for him from the first, and was in a way to be very much in love; but she considered with pleasure that it was not likely to be discovered by the world in general, since Jane united with great strength of feeling, a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which would guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent. (PP: 23)

Regarding this matter, Fergus denotes that "The rule that a woman must not love until she is beloved is, of course, wholly contradicted in life, as private journals and letters witness. But even there, women are usually determined to conceal their love from 'the world' if not from themselves [...]" (Fergus, 1997: 62)

The famous lines of Charlotte Lucas about Jane's securing Mr. Bingley assert the opposite of what Elizabeth and Jane believe in. Charlotte's sentences may cast some

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<sup>6</sup> Conduct manuals became popular in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century. In Germany, Adolph Freiherr Knigge's book, *On Human Relations* "has the reputation of being the authoritative guide to behaviour, politeness, and etiquette." Knigge is used as a word meaning manners or conduct manuals. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph\\_Freiherr\\_Knigge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph_Freiherr_Knigge))

light on the point. Jane should make her feelings clear and encourage Mr. Bingley for his love. Here, Austen, actually, advocates the opposite of what Gregory asserts about having to be implicit when revealing affection.

‘It may perhaps be pleasant,’ replied Charlotte, ‘to be able to impose on the public in such a case; but it is sometimes a disadvantage to be so very guarded. If a woman conceals her affection with the same skill from the object of it, she may lose the opportunity of fixing him; and it will then be but poor consolation to believe the world equally in the dark. There is so much of gratitude or vanity in almost every attachment, that is not safe to leave any to itself. We can all begin freely—a slight preference is natural enough; but there are very few of us who have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement. In nine cases out of ten, a woman had better shew more affection than she feels. Bingley likes your sister undoubtedly; but he may never do more than like her, if she does not help him on.’ (PP: 23-24)

Upon Charlotte’s cynical sentences about securing the man and falling in love freely after she fixes him, Waldron indicates that Charlotte thinks Jane had better make things clear to Bingley. Elizabeth, on the other hand, insists on a combination of romance and rationality. Jane must be sure of her feelings. (Waldron, 1999: 44)

Regarding the matter, Bromberg suggests that “Charlotte argues that Jane should take a more active role in showing her affection and encouraging Bingley’s interest if she wants him to marry her.” (Bromberg, 1993; 128)

Elizabeth acknowledges her opinion that Bingley should understand Jane’s affection for him:

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

‘[...] Jane should therefore make the most of every half hour in which she can command his attention. When she is secure of him, there will be leisure for falling in love as much as she chuses.’ (PP: 24)

Charlotte thinks a woman will have time to fall in love with a man after she secures him. Later in the novel, it will be clear that Charlotte has been right. Jane should have shown her love for Bingley as he will be easily made believe of her indifference toward himself by her friend and sister.

Two centuries later, Bridget tries to be aloof and not to show her love for Daniel. Her friend advises Bridget: “Tom said not to be naive and if I really love Daniel and

want to win his heart I have to ignore him and be as cold and distant to him as possible.” (BJD: 72)<sup>7</sup> She tries this strategy and sees that it works:

Took no notice of Daniel whatsoever all day at work and pretended to be busy[...] Message pending kept flashing but I just kept sighing and tossing my hair about as if I were a very glamorous, important person under a great deal of pressure. By the end of the day I realized [...] it was working. He kept staring at me and giving me meaningful glances. (BJD: 73)

Bridget states that “Can officially confirm that the way to a man’s heart these days is not through beauty, food, sex, or alluringness of character, but merely the ability to seem not very interested in him.” (BJD: 73)

Daniel invites Bridget who has been keeping up with her ice-queen theory to go to Prague with him next weekend and she accepts. But then he withdraws his offer. The theory seems to backfire:

‘[...] Did you just ask me to Prague to make sure you could still sleep with me if you wanted to as if we were on some sort of ladder? [...] Either go out with me and treat me nicely, or leave me alone. As I say, I’m not interested in fuckwittage.’

‘What about you, this week? First you completely ignore me like some Hitler Youth ice-maiden, [...]’ (BJD: 76)

In his conduct book, Gregory advises her daughters that they should choose their partners sensibly. “It may probably hurt your vanity to have husbands, for whom you have reason to blush and tremble every time they open their lips in company.” (Teachman, 1997: 62) These lines summarise the reason why Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins when he proposes to her.

Waldron states another conduct book of the time, Chesterfield’s *Letters to his Son*, in which the writer advises to his son to avoid people who are lower in rank to him, “But the company which of all others you should most carefully avoid, is that low company which, in every sense of the word, is low indeed – low in rank, low in parts, low in manners, and low in merit.” (Waldron, 1999: 53-54)

Waldron states that:

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<sup>7</sup> The quotations from Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* are given as BJD throughout this study. H. Fielding, *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Picador, London, 2001

This is a pretty accurate description of the company in which Darcy finds himself at the Meryton assembly, Jane and Elizabeth excepted. Perhaps for the first time, he is being made to realise that the system on which he has been educated (and which he later acknowledges to have been faulty) will not cover every contingency and requires a kind of playacting for which he is temperamentally ill adapted, and he takes refuge in what can only be described as surliness. (Waldron, 1999: 53-54)

When Darcy's friend, Bingley wants him to dance at the first assembly ball that they attend, Darcy says: 'I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room, whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.' (PP: 11)

Darcy is aware of the fact that he is in a lower company than his usual company which he is used to. Later, however, he admits that he has received a good education but he has applied what he has learned faultily: 'I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice though not in principle. As a child I was thought what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit.' (PP: 406)

Teachman looks at another conduct manual of the time which is Lady Sarah Pennington's *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Absent Daughters*. Pennington warns her daughters, who were taken away by her husband, about the dangers of unsuccessful marriages.

Pennington warns her daughters against men who are ill-natured and she wants them not to confuse good humour with good nature:

This quality of good nature is, of all others, the most difficult to be ascertained, on account of the general mistake of blending it with good humour, as if they were of themselves the same; whereas, in fact, no two principles of action are more essentially-and this may require some explanation. By good nature, I mean that true benevolence which partakes the felicity of mankind, which promotes the satisfaction of every individual within the reach of its ability, which relieves the distressed, comforts the afflicted; diffuses blessings, and communicates happiness, as far as its sphere of action can extend; [...] whilst good humour, is nothing more than cheerful, pleasing deportment, arising either from a natural gaiety of mind, or from an affectation of popularity [...] 'tis frequently mistaken for, and complimented with, the superior name of real good nature [...] (Teachman, 1997: 68)

Lady Pennington makes a distinction between a man who is ill-natured and one who is ill-humoured. Here, it might be stated that Jane Austen wrote the characters of Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham with Pennington's advice in her mind. Elizabeth judges Mr. Darcy as not having good-humour when she first sees him at a ball where Darcy knows nobody of the party and considers Mr. Wickham as good-humoured, unaware of his ill-nature until late in the novel (Teachman, 1997: 66).

When Elizabeth first meets Wickham, she is very much impressed by his appearance and manners. Wickham is good-humoured, but this should not be mistaken with being good-natured. The Bennet girls walk to Meryton and they meet a new officer there who is no one but Mr. Wickham:

This was exactly as it should be; for the young man wanted only regimentals to make him completely charming. His appearance was greatly in his favour; he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and very pleasing address. The introduction was followed up on his side by a happy readiness of conversation - a readiness at the same time perfectly correct and unassuming; and the whole party were still standing and talking together very agreeably[...] (PP: 80-81)

When Elizabeth and her sisters are invited to their aunt's that night, Elizabeth is deceived by this appearance of good-humour.

Mr. Wickham was the happy man towards whom almost every female eye was turned, and Elizabeth was the happy woman by whom he finally seated himself; and the agreeable manner in which he immediately fell into conversation, though it was only on its being a wet night, made her feel that the commonest, dullest, most threadbare topic might be rendered interesting by the skill of the speaker. (PP: 85)

When Elizabeth first meets Darcy, he is at a ball room full of strangers to him. When she meets him a few times later on, she is totally prejudiced against him because he declined being introduced to her and declared her as "tolerable". So Elizabeth has decided that he is ill-natured. However, Darcy has been ill-humoured not ill-natured. Elizabeth later understands the difference between these two aspects of human nature as well as the difference between Darcy and Wickham. After Elizabeth receives Darcy's letter explaining the charges that have been laid against him by Elizabeth, she realises she has been partial and wrong in her way of thinking:

‘Poor Wickham; there is such an expression of goodness in his countenance! such an openness and gentleness in his manner.’

‘There certainly was some great mismanagement in the education of those two young men. One has got all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it.’ (PP: 248-9)

Thus, Wickham’s appearance and good-humour are unreliable as Darcy’s appearance and ill-humour are. It is crucial not to fall for first impressions.

[...] to avoid the deception in this case is, to lay no stress on outward appearances, which are too often fallacious ... if a man is equally respected, esteemed, and beloved by his tenants, by his dependants and domestics [...] you may justly conclude, he has that true good-nature [...] (Teachman, 1997: 68-69)

When Elizabeth visits Mr. Darcy’s estate Pemberley, she is informed by his servant that he is the good-natured and she respects her opinion of him, as in her judgement, nothing else could be more important than a servant’s good opinion of her master:

There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle sensation towards the original, than she had never felt in the height of their acquaintance. The commendation bestowed on him by Mrs Reynolds was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people’s happiness were in his guardianship! – How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow! – How much of good or evil must be done by him! Every idea that had been brought forward by the housekeeper was favourable to his character, and as she stood before the canvas, on which he was represented, and fixed his eyes upon herself, she thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before; she remembered its warmth, and softened its impropriety of expression. (PP: 275)

As Elizabeth thinks about all this, she comes to respect Darcy.

Teachman concludes that Austen’s depiction of an ideal husband is parallel to Lady Pennington’s. Her view of an appropriate husband for a woman is very close to that of Lady Pennington, as Fitzwilliam Darcy corresponds closely to Pennington’s description of a model husband, and Elizabeth’s prejudices regarding him correspond to those Lady Pennington cautions her own daughters to avoid (Teachman, 1997: 80).

### 3.2. The Twentieth Century England

Without those forerunners, Jane Austen and the Brontes and George Eliot could no more have written than Shakespeare could have written without Marlowe, or Marlowe without Chaucer, or Chaucer without those forgotten poets who paved the ways and tamed the natural savagery of the tongue. (Woolf, 2008: 84-85)

Writers need their own predecessors to look up to. As Virginia Woolf states they would not exist without their predecessors. Reading and examining the works of their forerunners help them hold their own originality.

Jane Austen “left a legacy for the future to build upon.” (Weldon, 1997: 35), that is, Jane Austen has impressed and inspired other writers, who come after her. Her novels with depictions of English country life and satirical ideas on class and manners preserve their everlasting value. As her novels possess a timeless appeal, they have remained relevant for two centuries. Jane Austen smoothed the way for other women writers to write their own novels. Weldon’s sentence also suggests that she will go on influencing and inspiring many writers to come. Helen Fielding obviously built upon Austen’s legacy when she wrote *Bridget Jones’s Diary* in the late twentieth century.

Most critics agree that Helen Fielding has taken many aspects of her novel from *Pride and Prejudice*. “The most obvious of Fielding’s sources is well-known to be Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, from which Helen Fielding admittedly borrowed much of her plot and many of her characters.” (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 4)

The courtship plot of the nineteenth century is a prominent feature of *Pride and Prejudice*. This plot was borrowed by the majority of the twentieth century writers including Helen Fielding. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* is a novel of the late twentieth century and owes much of its courtship plot to Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth flirts with Wickham and then she finds true love and affection with Mr. Darcy. Bridget has a love affair first with Daniel and then with Mark Darcy.<sup>8</sup>

Ferris examines how Helen Fielding uses a similar courtship plot in *Pride and Prejudice*, and points out the most apparent resemblances between the two novels: “Fielding’s novel playfully and overtly reveals its roots in Austen’s texts. To cite only

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<sup>8</sup> More information on the topic is given in chapter IV, under the title *Courtship*.

the most obvious, Bridget's love interest is Mark Darcy, a transparent reference to Austen's Mr. Darcy, the love interest of Elizabeth Bennet.'" (Ferriss, 2006: 72)

Another resemblance of this courtship plot is that Bridget, just like Elizabeth Bennet, falls for the wrong man first. Elizabeth is attracted to Wickham before she finds true love. In Bridget's case, the wrong man is her boss Daniel Cleaver: "Mmmm. Daniel Cleaver, though. Love his wicked dissolute air, while being v. Successful and clever. He was being v. Funny today [...]" (BJD: 18-19)

In the nineteenth century being single was an issue. In order to understand the importance of marriage in a woman's life in the nineteenth century, one has to understand what otherwise meant for a single woman in that period. In that century, a single woman without fortune or connections would end up a spinster depending on a close relation. There were no professions open for women as there are today, the only choices were to be a governess or a companion of a lady.

As it was two centuries ago, being single is still an issue in the late twentieth century. There is still this pressure of society on single women. Bridget feels this pressure very closely, her being in her thirties and single is the subject of talk among her parents' friends and her parents as well.<sup>9</sup>

When a friend of her parents' asks her how her love life is going, Bridget writes, "Not being a natural liar, I ended up mumbling shamefacedly to Geoffrey, 'Fine' at which point he boomed, 'So you still haven't got a feller!' 'Yes. How does a woman manage to get to your age without being married?' roared Brian Enderby [...]" (BJD: 11)

Mabry acknowledges the novel to be the "story of a London 'singleton' attempting to make her way through a landscape fraught with feckless men [...]" (Mabry, 2006: 191)

Finding a suitable partner is still important today. In the Bennet sisters' case, it was all about finding the right mate for marriage, in Bridget's case, it is all about finding the right boyfriend.

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<sup>9</sup> More information on being single is given in chapter IV, under the title *Marriage*.

Teachman points out that though the particulars have changed, the search for a relationship goes on to maintain its importance:

The details have changed, but in many cases the issues themselves remain the same [...] finding and maintaining personal partnerships (whether in marriage or in less legally formalized situations) remains one of the dominant issues of our society today, and how educational opportunities and the ability to lead a fulfilling life as a single woman have increased dramatically since Austen's time. (Teachman, 1997: xiii)

Bridget makes a list about her new year's resolutions, and writes "I will not [...] Have crushes on men, but instead form relationships based on mature assessment of character." (BJD: 2) Thus, her aim to find the right man and relationship is clear from the start.

Wells states that "The story of a heroine finding her proper mate in the face of obstacles and misunderstandings can be found in [...] all of the novels of Jane Austen [...]" (Wells, 2006: 51)

When Elizabeth first sees Darcy at the assembly ball, she thinks he is the proudest man ever, his character is then decided. When Darcy first proposes to Elizabeth, she thinks he is the last man in the world whom she "could ever marry". However, after all the misunderstandings and prejudices, Darcy does everything for Elizabeth to understand his true character and she comes to understand it. Accordingly, when Bridget first meets Mark Darcy at a party which her mother throws for Christmas, she thinks he is the last man whom she could ever be with. Yet, she comes to realise in the course of the novel that she has been most mistaken and he is the one for her.

Furthermore *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary* have resemblances in respect to the characters in the novels. There are still Darcys and Elizabeths, though they have been transformed to comply with the ways of the times. Even though it has been two centuries since Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* first appeared, the characters of the novel still persist their relevance to our time.

The critic explores the timelessness of Austen's characters:

Because Austen focuses on human nature instead of on politics, her works transcend time and place. As readers of the late twentieth century, we are able to relate to the experiences of her characters, to put ourselves in their

places, and to try to determine what we or those we know would do in similar situations. Thus, her novels remain fresh, providing not only an enjoyable read but an opportunity to examine human nature in a different historical setting. (Teachman, 1997: xi)

Priestley analyses these timeless characters of *Pride and Prejudice*, “Consider carefully Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, Jane and Lydia, Darcy and Bingley and Wickham, Lady Catherine and Mr. Collins, and you will soon discover people not unlike them all around you [...]” (Priestley, 1997: 81)

Bridget is like Elizabeth in that she is not perfect. There are other girls in the novel who are acknowledged to be very beautiful by her. Mark Darcy’s friend Natasha is one of these girls. However, Bridget is attractive and different. Wells points out the resemblance of chick-lit heroines to Austen’s Elizabeth:

In being beautiful but not too beautiful, chick lit’s heroines are the direct descendants of Austen’s. Nearly every Austen novel features a very attractive heroine whose wit and good temper more than elevate her above her more glamorous but less likeable romantic rivals. Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, might have been outshone by the Bingley sisters’ flashy looks and dress, if those women were less catty and grasping. (Wells, 2006:59)

Mark Darcy tells Bridget that she is so different from the other girls that he knows, ‘Bridget, all the other girls I know are so lacquered over. I don’t know anyone else who would fasten a bunny tail to their pants or [...]’ (BJD: 237)

Elizabeth points out that Mr. Darcy has loved her because he thinks she is different from the other girls of his acquaintance.

‘You may as well call it impertinence at once. It was very little less. The fact is, that you were sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking and looking, and thinking for your approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike them. Had you not been really amiable you would have hated me for it; but in spite of the pains you took to disguise yourself, your feelings were always noble and just; and in your heart, you thoroughly despised the persons who so assiduously courted you. There - I have saved you the trouble of accounting for it; and really, all things considered, I begin to think it perfectly reasonable. To be sure, you knew no actual good of me - but nobody thinks of that when they fall in love.’ (PP: 418)

The plot is very much alike when the main characters meet for the first time. When Mark Darcy and Bridget first meet, he rejects taking her phone number.

[...] Una threw herself across the room like Will Carling and said, ‘Mark, you must take Bridget’s telephone number before you go, then you can get in touch when you’re in London.’

I couldn’t stop myself turning bright red. I could feel it climbing up my neck. Now Mark would think I’d put her up to it.

‘I’m sure Bridget’s life in London is quite full enough already, Mrs Alconbury,’ he said. Humph. It’s not that I wanted him to take my phone number or anything, but I didn’t want him to make it perfectly obvious to everyone that he didn’t want to. (BJD: 15-16)

Bridget says she does not care if he takes her phone number or not, yet Mark’s attitude forms her prejudice against him just as Elizabeth’s prejudice against Darcy is formed when he declares her to be “tolerable”, does not want to be introduced to her and to dance with her. Mr. Darcy rejects getting acquainted with Elizabeth when they first see each other at the ball in the assembly hall. His friend, Bingley comes and insists that he should dance:

‘Oh! she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say, very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you.’

‘Which do you mean? and turning around, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, ‘She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.’ (PP: 11-12)

Mark Darcy is so much like Mr. Darcy. His way of talking, manners, even what he says in certain occasions in the novel are quite similar to Mr. Darcy’s. As readers, we can feel the air of Mr. Darcy reflected in Mark Darcy, we can sense his romantic attitude toward Bridget as Mr. Darcy’s toward Elizabeth.

Mark is gentle and kind to Bridget whenever they meet:

‘I ...’ He paused, then started pacing around the patio, sighing and running his hand through his hair. ‘How’s the ... Have you read any good books lately?’ Unbelievable.

‘Mark,’ I said. ‘If you ask me once more if I’ve read any good books lately I’m going to eat my head. Why don’t you ask me something else?[...]’

‘I ...’ he began again.

[...]

‘Will you have dinner with me, Bridget? He said abruptly, and rather crossly  
[...] (BJD: 234-235)

Sir William Lucas wants to make Elizabeth dance with Darcy at another ball at Lucas’s, however, humiliated by Darcy’s remark about herself being tolerable when they have first met, she politely refuses:

‘Indeed, Sir, I have not the least intention of dancing. – I entreat you not to suppose that I moved this way in order to beg for a partner’

Mr Darcy with grave propriety requested to be allowed the honour of her hand; but in vain. Elizabeth was determined; nor did Sir William at all shake her purpose by his attempt at persuasion. (PP: 29)

Darcy is polite and kind but she does not notice this attitude toward herself.

Elizabeth is interested in Wickham until she sees his real face. Similarly, Bridget fancies Daniel until she learns that he cheats on her. Though Bridget’s affection is deeper, and though Daniel and she go out for a while, much of the plot about Daniel being the wrong man for the heroine and his deceiving her with his lies and manners is similar. Also Bridget turns to Daniel as she thinks she has been rejected by Mark Darcy as Elizabeth’s prejudice for Mr. Darcy strengthens her fancy for Wickham. Wickham is transformed into Daniel in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*.

Wickham speaks ill of Mr. Darcy to Elizabeth whenever he gets the chance of it. His actions and sentences are inconsistent but Elizabeth is unable to see this inconsistency quite yet. Wickham states that he is indebted to the late Mr. Darcy, however, sees no harm in discrediting his son. He claims that he cannot speak of him to anybody but Elizabeth, yet when Darcy and Bingley leave the town, he spreads all his lies about Darcy. Similarly, Daniel discredits Mark Darcy. ‘Have you been at the party? I didn’t see you.’ ‘I know you didn’t. I saw you, though. Talking to Mark Darcy.’ ‘How do you know Mark Darcy?’ I said, astonished. ‘Cambridge. Can’t stand the stupid nerd. Bloody old woman. How do you know him?’ (BJD: 103) Later in the novel we will learn that Mark does not deserve any of his remarks about him. In fact, everything will come to light later as in *Pride and Prejudice* does.

Finally, Bridget’s mother is the new version of Elizabeth’s mother. She is constantly pointing out that Bridget should be with someone rich. As Mrs. Bennet is

anxious to marry her daughters well, Mrs. Jones is anxious for Bridget to be with someone rich. “[...] but Mark Darcy ... Yuk. Every time my mother’s rung up for weeks it’s been, ‘Of course you remember the Darcys, darling [...]’ or, ‘Oh! Did I mention Malcolm and Elaine are bringing Mark with them to Una’s New Year’s Day Turkey Curry Buffet? [...] Divorced [...]’ ” (BJD: 12)

### 3.2.1. Chick-Lit

*Bridget Jones’s Diary* brought about a new genre of women’s literature called Chick-Lit. The novel is regarded to have played the leading role in the emergence of the genre.

Ferriss and Young claim that chick-lit emerged from the original source of Bridget Jones: “When we consider the origins of chick lit, a single urtext clearly presents itself: Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1996). The entire chick-lit phenomenon is invariably traced back to this single novel.” (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 4)

On the matter, Guenther argues “The success of Fielding’s work is said to have spawned the genre of ‘chick-lit’ in Both Britain and America [...]” (Guenther, 2006: 84)

Mabry observes that “The success of [...] *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, revealed a market for stories about-and for-young, single women grappling with modern life and relationships.” (Mabry, 2006: 193)

Ferris and Young denote the genre’s relationship to the earlier writings of women:

Considering the relationship between the two characters and the two texts allows us to focus simultaneously on chick lit’s literary ancestry and its contemporary nature. [...] *Bridget Jones*-and the genre of chick lit it spawned-proves to be indebted to women’s literature of the past-and, at the same time, completely independent of it. (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 5)

The genre, of which *Bridget Jones’s Diary* is considered to be the first representative, is viewed to be the descendant of Jane Austen’s novels. The critics view Kathryn Robinson’s opinions on the familiarity of chick lit and Jane Austen’s works, “Anyone familiar with Jane Austen’s oeuvre will immediately recognize in chick lit a

kindred wit, the same obsession with choosing a mate, and a shared attention to the dailiness of women's lives." (Ferriss and Young, 2006: 5)

Regarding this matter, Hale indicates that "Jane Austen's sparkling wit and brilliant romance plotting may be the point of inspiration for much of chick lit [...]" (Hale, 2006: 104)

In *Mothers of Chick Lit?*, Juliette Wells observes that:

Reviews of chick lit rarely invoke women writers of previous generations, with the exception of Jane Austen, thanks to her enduring prominence in our popular culture. Writers of chick lit, by contrast, frequently invite us to view their works as descendants of women's literary classics...Helen Fielding by modelling *Bridget Jones's Diary* on Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*... (Wells, 2006: 48)

Wells further focuses on the similarities of the novels of chick lit tradition to its predecessors:

The reactions chick lit provokes and the claims made for it by its authors do have identifiable roots in the history of women's writing, as do many of the genre's characteristic elements: the heroine's search for an ideal romantic partner; her maturation and growth in self-knowledge, often aided by friends and mentors; and her relationship to conventions of beauty. (Wells, 2006: 49)

At this point, Guenther argues that apart from similarities of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, a setting in the late twentieth century emphasises difference:

While Fielding's modernization of Austen's novel of Austen's novel does highlight similarities between the two worlds – such as women's reliance on private spaces of discourse, their ongoing attempts at self-refinement, and a perpetual interest in snagging a man – translating her predecessor's work into a contemporary setting highlights an important difference as well [...] Austen's characters are given one cultural directive, to marry, while Fielding's struggle with conflicting social messages that compel them simultaneously to find a man, be independent, build a career, start a family, have sex indiscriminately, and be chaste. (Guenther, 2006: 85-86)

At this point, my study departs from what Guenther argues. The aim of this study is to show that though the details are different, the main concerns of the two novels are quite similar. These main concerns include quest for a partner, courtship, marriage, reputation which Guenther asserts to be excluded from Austen's novels.

Many of the characteristics of chick-lit originate from the writings of women in earlier times. The main character's trying to find a suitable partner, her self-growth and help of her friends in dealing with problems in her relationships appear to have its sources in the history of women's writing.

Bridget, like Elizabeth, reaches her maturation and self-growth through the course of the novel, "Bridget Jones, for example, may write constantly about her desire for marriage and the right man, but the novel's emphasis on Bridget's growth as a person and her relationships with her friends outweigh the quest for romantic partnership." (Mabry, 2006: 200)

Elizabeth consults her sister, Jane and her close friend Charlotte Lucas when she wants to hear their ideas and advices on certain situations. When Elizabeth gets Darcy's letter, she is away from home, and she acknowledges to her sister how she has sought her guidance and longed to be with her:

'Lizzy, when you first read that letter, I am sure you could not treat the matter as you do now.'

'Indeed I could not. I was uncomfortable enough. I was very uncomfortable, I may say unhappy. And with no one to speak to, of what I felt, no Jane to comfort me and say that I had not been so very weak and vain and nonsensical as I knew I had! Oh! how I wanted you!' (PP: 249)

Similarly, Bridget consults her close friends, Sharon, Jude or Tom when things do not go right in her relationships and her friends are always there for her, "Just called Jude. I told her a bit about the tragedy with Daniel and she was horrified, immediately declared a state of emergency[...]" (BJD: 187)

Mabry strengthens my point by indicating that "[...] she and her 'singleton' friends are always available to offer each other support and (sometimes comically misguided) advice." (Mabry, 2006: 202)

Chick-lit novels do not concentrate on their female protagonist's developing relationship with the right man, but depict her engaging in other sexual relationships before settling down with the right man. Thus, sex becomes a way for the heroine to explore her own identity and express her own desire. (Mabry, 2006: 200)

Bridget goes out and engages in sexual relationship with Daniel before she understands his being the wrong man for her. Their relationship starts with computer messaging, “Blimey. Computer messaging somehow whipped itself up to fever pitch. At six o’clock I resolutely put my coat on and left, only to meet Daniel getting into my lift on the floor below. There we were, just him and me, caught in a massive electrical-charge field, pulled together irresistibly, like a pair of magnets.” (BJD: 58)

Daniel being the wrong man is the descendant of Wickham who Elizabeth initially fancies and Mark Darcy, being the right one is the descendant of Mr. Darcy who Elizabeth initially dislikes. Guerrero states that “The plot of Bridget’s story is a standard chick-lit plot, adhering to certain predictable formulas [...] Bridget is miserably single. Bridget is attracted to the ‘wrong’ man and appalled by the ‘right’ man.” (Guerrero, 2006: 93)

Chick-lit borrows a lot from and owes much to Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* at this point, however, not in a sexual sense as Austen knows it in her time. Moreover, Elizabeth fancies the wrong man, flirts with him but she is not in love with him. However, this flirt is there for Elizabeth to reach her maturation.

When Elizabeth has been together with Wickham in a gathering at the Philips’s, she thinks, “[...] his manners recommended him to everybody. Whatever he said, was said well; and whatever he did, done gracefully. Elizabeth went away with her head full of him. She could think of nothing but of Mr. Wickham, and of what he had told her, all the way home; [...]” (PP: 94)

Wells argues that the love plot that chick-lit novels adopt has a resemblance to *Pride and Prejudice* in that the heroine ends up loving the man who she is least interested in at the beginning,

Every chick-lit novel centers on a love plot [...] If single and unattached, like Helen Fielding’s Bridget Jones, and countless others she will attempt relationships, only one of which will ultimately prove worthwhile-often with the man who seemed least likely or attractive at first, a twist borrowed from Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. (Wells, 2006: 49)

Elizabeth explains how she has disliked Mr. Darcy at the beginning after his first marriage proposal, ‘From the very beginning, from the first moment I may almost say,

of my acquaintance with you, your manners impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others [...]’ (PP: 214)

When Bridget meets Mark Darcy for the first time, she clearly dislikes him, ‘‘The rich, divorced-by-cruel-wife Mark – quite tall – was standing with his back to the room.’’ (BJD: 13)

In chick-lit novels, the heroine’s self-growth is connected to her humiliation in front of the man that she will soon realise that she loves. According to Wells, this is a direct adaptation from the novels of Jane Austen:

In its interest in heroines’ emotional maturation and the role of humiliation in that process, chick lit owes a direct debt to Frances Burney and Jane Austen...Austen’s novels tell variations of the same story: a young woman is repeatedly misconstrued by, and/or embarrassed in front of, the man who turns out to love her. (Wells, 2006: 53)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth realises Wickham’s true worth soon after she reads Darcy’s letter. However, her true realisation comes when she reads Jane’s letter about Lydia’s elopement with him. This happens when she is visiting Pemberly when she has just began to notice her real power over Darcy as she notices he still cares for her. When she is embarrassed in front of Darcy, she loses all her power. Wells argues this humiliation is essential for Elizabeth’s realisation of Darcy’s merit. ‘‘[...] the heroine’s humiliation in the hero’s presence-and often at his instigation-is crucial both to her education in proper behavior and to her recognition of his worth [...] Elizabeth realizes that she has placed her trust in the wrong man.’’ (Wells, 2006: 53)

‘When my eyes were opened to his real character. - Oh! had I known what I ought, what I dared, to do! But I knew not - I was afraid of doing too much. Wretched, wretched, mistake!’

Darcy made no answer. He seemed scarcely to hear her, and was walking up and down the room in earnest meditation; his brow contracted, his air gloomy. Elizabeth soon observed, and instantly understood it. Her power was sinking [...] (PP: 304)

As in Elizabeth’s case Darcy warns her in his letter beforehand, Mark warns the heroine against the unreliability of the wrong man in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. ‘Just take care of yourself, that’s all, [...]’ (BJD: 172)

When Mark Darcy asks her out, they talk about her breaking up with Daniel, ‘I heard about Daniel. I’m sorry.’ ‘I suppose you did try to warn me,’ I muttered sulkily. ‘What have you got against him, anyway?’ ‘He slept with my wife,’ he said. ‘Two weeks after our wedding.’ (BJD: 236)

Chick-lit might be described as the genre that addresses the problems of being a modern woman humorously. It became popular toward the end of the twentieth century. The heroine’s relationships with her boyfriends, friends and family are the features of the genre. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chick\\_lit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chick_lit))

The chick-lit tradition depicts the self-growth of the heroine. In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Bridget’s self-maturation could be traced throughout the novel as in *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth’s self-growth is traceable. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* is in a diary form and therefore it is genuine, sincere and realistic. The self-maturation of a heroine is the subjects of both the “Novel of Manners” and the chick-lit tradition.

The genre of chick-lit, in general, and *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, in particular, raise questions asked by the novel of manners tradition, in a different historical setting that is the late twentieth century. *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, a novel of the late twentieth century, bears the features such as love, marriage, money, class which are the concerns of the novel of manners tradition and therefore *Pride and Prejudice*.

Regarding this matter, the critic denotes that “As a result, the genre raises issues of major concern to contemporary cultural and feminist studies: the issues of commodification and consumerism, of race and class, of appearance and success.” (Benstock, 2006: 253)

Harzewski claims that “Chick lit reinterprets the legacies of the novel of manners [...]” According to the critic, chick-lit is the new novel of manners as the title of her article *Tradition and Displacement in the New Novel of Manners* denotes. She asserts that “Chick lit presents a new novel of manners not as an exaggerated version of its codes but as a synthesis of diverse popular and literary forms.” The reinterpretations of the subjects of the novel of manners tradition appear in chick-lit: “continuity with Austenesque subjects, namely, courtship, coming of age, and erroneous judgements about male suitors rectified in an actual or imminent union.” (Harzewski, 2006: 41)

The combination of the features of the novel of manners presents itself as the transformed qualities in this new genre. The subjects of Austen's novels are evidently seen in *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4.1. “Novel of Manners” as a Literary Genre

“Novel of Manners” is a genre that became popular in Britain toward the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The genre analyses human behaviours and manners and these manners of the characters reveal aspects of their personalities. Its subjects are usually behaviours, manners, marriage, love, class, rank and money. Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the best examples of the genre. However, the novel cannot only be assessed as a novel of manners, it is also an ironic novel criticising the aspects of the society and its people. Even though it was written in a period when the romantic novels were abundant, it is a realist novel and it is a comedy as well. What seems to be a mere love story, in fact, deals with a lot of issues.

In the book, *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in the Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* Patricia Meyer Spacks focuses on the emergence of the “Novel of Manners” stating that “During the final decades of the eighteenth century, a new subgenre evolved as women writers in particular experimented with novels focused on social detail.” (Spacks, 2006: 160)

Barbara Brothers and Bege K. Bowers point out that it was only at the turn of the century that the term “Novel of Manners” acquired an importance. The value of the study of the “Novel of Manners” tradition has become issue in English literary history after feminist literary critics have called attention to the writing and reading of women’s lives (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 10).

Just as with many literary terms, the term the “Novel of Manners” is far from being unambiguous. The term yields itself to a variety of definitions.

The “Novel of Manners” is a literary genre that copes with aspects of behaviour, language, customs and values of a particular class of people in a specific historical context. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel\\_of\\_manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel_of_manners))

### 3.1.1. The Subject of the “Novel of Manners”

Beige K. Bowers and Barbara Brothers draw our attention to the “the lack of agreement as to whether the individual in relation to society or society alone is the subject of the novel of manners.’’ (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 2)

On this point Bowers and Brothers also suggest that they perceive the “Novel of Manners” as focusing on the individual in relation to society. It is not more about the one than about the other as it does not take as its subject merely the particular manners and customs of a specific social class at a certain given place and point in time. Instead, the “Novel of Manners” offers a perspective on the nature of the individual as shaped but not entirely determined by social forces as expressing itself in relation to, but not necessarily in accordance with the values of a society. The “Novel of Manners” examines both the psyche of the individual and the social world in which the individual lives (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 4). Therefore, they conclude that both the individual and the social world in which the individual lives are important for the genre.

Austen and the domestic novelists of the nineteenth century celebrate the ‘ultimate victory of personal needs and desires over social conventions.’ (Brothers, 1990: 158)

According to Marylea Meyersohn, Jane Austen would have liked the irony that she was writing something for which there is no precise definition. The “Novel of Manners” takes society as its research field and the development of individual character as its object. Surely it was the direction of woman’s soul that interested Jane Austen. She demonstrated how women could live in ‘inferior’ society which constitutes one of the chief topics of the “Novel of Manners” and found exactly the right literary techniques to indicate the relationship of the individual and society. (Meyersohn, 1990: 35)

Brothers considers Barbara Pym’s novels as illuminating the genre in question, and indicates that examining Pym’s novels within the tradition of the “Novel of Manners” sheds light on the novels of her predecessors. “For many critics and literary historians, the substance of these novels is merely their descriptive and accurate

recording of the details of everyday life, the novels raising no more serious issues than matters of social propriety.’’ (Brothers, 1990: 155)

Brothers further views Holman’s ideas on the “Novel of Manners” and concludes that:

Reading backwards and forwards through these novels, however, helps us to understand that the “Novel of Manners” not only paints the ‘social customs, manners, conventions, and habits of a definite social class at a particular time and place’ but also both exposes and espouses particular value systems and ideologies that underline the surface details of life. (Brothers, 1990: 155)

*Pride and Prejudice*, while depicting everyday life, also gives information about the values of the society and the class system. Conclusions might be drawn about the class system of the nineteenth century England, as Darcy, belonging to a higher rank and being a gentleman, is superior to Elizabeth according to the class system. The law of entails is an issue in the novel as Mr. Bennet’s property is entailed on the male line to Mr. Collins and not to his daughters, and this makes the mother and her daughters uneasy and anxious about their future financial security. Moreover, the novel reflects the changing social values as they enable the shifts in the social system as it can clearly be seen in the case of Bingley despite acquiring his fortune in trade, thanks to his noble connections, is declared to be a gentleman.

Barbara Brothers observes that the “Novel of Manners” is about love, and the form expressed the nineteenth century approaches to the individual in love and marriage. The “Novel of Manners” is domestic, like all the novels of manners of the century; its subject is “the relationship between men and women.’’ (Brothers, 1990: 155)

At this point, Brothers states

True, the relationship between men and women, not politics, is the subject of the “Novel of Manners”; nevertheless, by depicting heroes and heroines who marry for love and affection and not for economic or social reasons, the nineteenth century novel of manners served to promulgate the very values that led ever so slowly to the demise of the class system. (Brothers, 1990: 155)

This relationship between men and women and Marriage are the subjects of the “Novel of Manners” and therefore subjects of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones’s*

*Diary. Pride and Prejudice* was written in the period of the changing values of the late eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries as stated before. Women of the gentry were supposed to marry wealthy men as their financial future could be thus secured, however this idea was beginning to change slowly as love marriages were beginning to occur. Therefore, *Pride and Prejudice* depicts the changing values of the time as more women began to marry for love not only for financial security at the time, and this caused a change in the class system as it made it possible to rise in rank and fortune. Elizabeth has to secure her financial future but cannot accept Darcy's proposal as she does not love him. In fact, she refuses his hand in marriage the first time Darcy offers it, however the second time she encourages his proposal as she has come to realise his true personality and thus has begun to love him.

Harzewski considers Jane Austen as an acknowledged precedent of the "Novel of Manners" tradition; and claims that "much of the chick-lit genre revisits the 'class without money' conflict that pervades the "Novel of Manners" tradition." (Harzewski, 2006: 41)

In this respect, chick-lit tradition owes much to Jane Austen, Harzewski writes:

Chick lit reinterprets the legacies of the "Novel of Manners" and domestic fiction's marriage plot, chronicling the heroines' fortunes on the marriage market and assessing contemporary courtship behaviour, dress, and social motives. But chick lit's indebtedness to the "Novel of Manners" goes beyond such general thematic similarities. It is a critical commonplace that Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* co-opts Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*[...] (Harzewski, 2006: 41)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet is the daughter of a gentleman; however, on her mother's side she has lower connections. Though her father is a gentleman, his family house is entailed away from his daughters as he and his wife have not produced a male heir. Thus, Elizabeth is a member of the gentry without money to finance her future.

Harzewski further states the qualities which exist in the new tradition of the "Novel of Manners" "The naming device signals continuity with Austenesque subjects, namely, courtship, coming of age, and erroneous judgements about male suitors rectified in an actual or imminent union. Chick lit presents a new novel of manners not

as an exaggerated version of its codes but as a synthesis of diverse popular and literary forms.” (Harzewski, 2006: 41) The critic means that the new “Novel of Manners” also asks the same questions, answers to which were sought two centuries ago by Jane Austen.

Maureen T. Reddy explores Henry James’s ideas about the genre and finds out that “Implicit in this view is a definition of the novel of manners as a genre in which the social world and the individual character are equally important and mutually dependent [...]” (Reddy, 1990: 67)

Kincaid assumes, in spite of the common idea that the novels of manners are particularly domestic types, these novels to be political “that actual novels of manners tend to allow a pretty fierce criticism of the system upholding any given set of manners. No novels, then, are more relentlessly political and ideological than these presumably domestic and personal works.” (Kincaid, 1990: 88)

### **3.1.2. The Definition of the “Novel of Manners”**

Some critics question the ambiguity of the term the “Novel of Manners”. In the article *Men, Women, and Manners in Wives and Daughters*, Maureen T. Reddy mentioning a review of Felix Holt by Henry James, makes a definition of the “Novel of Manners”: “Implicit in this view is a definition of the novel of manners as a genre in which the social world and the individual character are equally important and mutually dependent [...]” (Reddy, 1990: 67) Reddy is specific in his definition and he denotes using the “Novel of Manners”, “to describe those fictional narratives that explore the shaping of individual character by social forces, the self expressing itself in some relation to the values of the society as embodied in its conventions, including but not limited to conversation, dress, and gesture.” (Reddy, 1990: 70)

In the article *Love, Marriage, and Manners in the novels of Barbara Pym*, when Barbara Brothers analyses Barbara Pym’s novels in accordance with the earlier novels of manners and how they achieve depicting the British society and record ‘minute social truths’ mentioning Henry James’s calling attention to it as constituting the art of the “Novel of Manners”. She reflects that “As in earlier novels of manners, however, the domestic reflects the values of the society in which the individual lives, values the

individual internalizes and through which he or she passes judgement upon the self as well as upon others.’’ (Brothers, 1990: 159)

### **3.1.3. The Idealization of Individual**

Brothers indicates that ‘‘Ironically, the novel of manners is identified with the English class system, but the ideology that informs these novels is the romantic belief in the power and potential of the individual that challenges birth and class as the determiners of worth and value.’’ (Brothers, 1990: 156-157) In this sense, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet ‘‘challenges birth and class’’ and wants to prove to Mr. Darcy and the society along with him, her own ‘‘worth and value.’’ She does not think herself as inferior to Mr. Darcy, she is aware of her ‘‘power and potential’’ as an individual and sees herself as an equal to Mr. Darcy who is considered as superior to Elizabeth by the society of the time and higher in rank according to the class system.

About what the ‘‘Novel of Manners’’ depicts, Spacks indicates that the action of the ‘‘Novel of Manners’’ ‘‘takes place in a social world, with the rules of decorum constructing its environment.’’ Furthermore the writer argues that the structure of romance incorporating data from the literal social world characterizes many novels of manners (Spacks, 2006: 168).

In novels of manners, ‘‘the domestic reflects the values of the society in which the individual lives, values the individual internalizes and through which he or she passes judgement upon the self as well as upon others.’’ (Brothers, 1990: 159)

### **3.1.4. The Plot of the ‘‘Novel of Manners’’**

In the article *George Eliot’s Middlemarch and the ‘‘Text’’ of the ‘‘Novel of Manners’’*, Bowers claims that there is no specific formula for a ‘‘Novel of Manners’’. However, if a definition of genre is reached through the study of Jane Austen’s works, a story is expected.

Early on (call it point A), the author introduces and elicits our sympathy for a young woman who is as yet inexperienced in and untainted by the artifice of society-at-large; in the course of the novel, the young woman ‘goes out’ into society and meets a variety of young men, most of whom pretend or profess to be ‘gentlemen,’ socially speaking, and one of whom really is or is capable of being, in the deeper, moral sense; the two central characters (the

young woman and the man who is different) overcome their individual 'pride and prejudice,' plus whatever social differences keep them apart; and finally (point Z), the two marry and take their place in the very society whose affected manners and general superficiality they have served to expose. (Bowers, 1990: 107)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, according to this formula of Bowers, Elizabeth Bennet is "the young woman" who gains our sympathy. She meets some gentlemen and only one of them is a real gentleman. In the novel, Wickham pretends to be a gentleman but is actually not, Darcy, however, is the real one "in the deeper, moral sense." Elizabeth and Darcy are the two central characters and their "social differences" seem not to part them. They overcome the obstacles which the social system and the classes that they already belong to provide for them and they get married at the end of the novel. Therefore, from this point of view *Pride and Prejudice* seems to suit this formula of the "Novel of Manners".

Novels of manners "record with 'fidelity [...] minute social truths' what Henry James called attention to as constituting the art of the novel of manners." (Brothers, 1990: 159)

### **3.1.5. Jane Austen as a Writer of "Novels of Manners"**

Jane Austen "is generally esteemed as one of the original and most brilliant novelists of manners. Her works present fully imagined human beings with the rich texture of emotional life: her characters come alive to a degree not entirely attempted before by her eighteenth-century predecessors in the novel. (Gross, 1990: 19)

Gross further suggests that "A word, a gesture, a look, a tone of voice, these significant small details of social intercourse are the clues to the deepest sources of feeling. With an informed and attentive eye to human behaviour, Austen exposed profound unconscious dynamics and their powerful influence upon conscious life." (Gross, 1990: 19)

In the introduction of the book *Reading and Writing Women's Lives*, Beige K. Bowers and Barbara Brothers argue that "Critics and literary historians agree on only two matters: Jane Austen wrote novels of manners, and such novels present something

of the “social customs, manners, conventions, and habits of a definite social class at a particular time and place.” (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 1)

After they analyse some handbooks to literature and James Tuttleton’s ideas on the subject they draw the conclusion that for a novel to be a “Novel of Manners” it must present in detail the ‘actualities of the social world’ in which the characters live, also the realistic depiction of character is equally essential. (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 3)

Furthermore, Bowers and Brothers analyse Millet’s ideas on the topic, and conclude that “In short, Millet claims that a “Novel of Manners” is circumscribed within the domestic and that it treats only questions of social propriety.” (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 2)

In the article *Jane Austen and Psychological Realism*, Gloria Sybil Gross draws a parallel between the “Novel of Manners” and the psychological novel: generating unique interest in exploring and utilizing the new psychological realism, the great nineteenth-century “Novel of Manners” attempted to make sense of everyday life by finding the hidden motivations, the interior chains of causality. (Gross, 1990: 31)

In the *Die Wahlverwandtschaften and the English “Novel of Manners”*, Brown point out the central problem in novels of this tradition and states that it is the problem of manners. “Good manners are a paramount concern in Jane Austen’s novels : tactless remarks are ignored, the subject is changed to prevent embarrassment, or eyes are glued to the floor at critical moments.” (Brown, 1976: 100)

Paul R. Crabtree defines the genre: “the novel of manners is conservative by implication, but the enduring values it points to are available not so much from religion or moral custom as from a kind of intuition that derives from the moment of personal association.” (Crabtree, 1980: 155)

In the article *Anthony Trollope and the Unmannerly Novel* by James R. Kincaid reveals that:

The “Novel of Manners”, insofar as there is such a thing, is a menacing genre. Because it has a great deal to protect, it is given to threatening gestures, sometimes in disguised form but often not. It offers rewards, of course, to those with good manners-and often even to those whose manners

are not so good; but it will not tolerate those who raise questions about the very basis for a particular system of manners. (Kincaid, 1990: 87)

The critic goes on defining the genre as ambiguous; the novels themselves are ideologically ambiguous, very unstable. These novels tend to make explicit what should be implicit (Kincaid, 1990: 90). Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, actions of characters convey ideas about the characters themselves, and they infer ideas from others' actions as well.

In introduction to *Gothic Manners and the Classic English Novel*, Joseph Wiesenfarth analyses the "Novel of Manners" stating that the problem of identity is dramatized in the genre (Wiesenfarth, 1998: 16). He mentions the rules of being a gentleman and the bourgeois dream "One invariable element common to novel of manners, [...] is that they all make some response to this deeply rooted urge to rise in rank or fortune as it work itself out in contemporary society." (Wiesenfarth, 1998: 19)

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, we can talk about 'private and public personas' of Mr. Darcy. The character is despised by the community in which Elizabeth Bennet lives because he is proud. This feature of his character which is determined by the society of Meryton and also true in his own eyes as he will acknowledge to Elizabeth later, depicts his public personality, however he has another personality that no one knows about which Elizabeth finds out when she visits Pemberly, and also when his aid to Lydia in her elopement with Mr. Wickham is known to her, we can call as his private personality. Elizabeth will call this personality of him as "his generous nature" when she talks to his father to persuade him about Darcy's character later in the novel when they are engaged.

Bowers and brothers summarise this point in the novel by stating that "Novels of manners are concerned with selfhood and morality within a cultural context and thus depict the inevitable conflict between private and public personas and between illusion (imagination and desire) and the actualities of the daily existence." (Bowers and brothers, 1990: 4)

Jane Austen radically challenged the conventions of marriage, sex, and family, she broke the belief about these relationships "and she did so in a manner thoroughly advanced for the times." (Gross, 1990: 20)

When Spacks analyses Burney's novel, she declares that "After Burney, one must wait for Austen to find the full-blown "Novel of Manners" again." (Spacks, 2006: 175)

Bowers and brothers analyse some works written by critics such as Fred Millet's *A History of English Literature* and state Millet's ideas on the point "Only Fanny Burney and Jane Austen, according to Millet, write true novels of manners." (Bowers and brothers, 1990: 2)

Marylea Meyersohn suggests that "Although no one really knows what the novel of manners is, it is universally acknowledged that its chief practitioner is Jane Austen." (Meyersohn, 1990: 35)

## CHAPTER V

### 5.1. Manners

Manners are prominent features of the “Novel of Manners” tradition of which Jane Austen is the sole representative. Manners of the nineteenth century England are significantly apparent in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Bowers and Brothers inquire Jane Austen as a writer of manners. The critics observe that Austen attends to the customs, manners, and habits of particular social groups and the ordinary details of everyday life. She does so to portray the self as understanding itself through social realities. (Bowers and Brothers, 1990: 14)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, manners of the time are portrayed with a great deal of detail. The characters are depicted as lively as real people. At this point, Hutton suggests in his 1869 review that:

Notwithstanding a certain reticence and self-control which seems to belong to their age, and with all their quaint dresses, and ceremonies, and manners, the ladies and gentlemen in *Pride and Prejudice* and its companion novels seem like living people out of our own acquaintance transported bodily into a bygone age, represented in the half-dozen books that contain Jane Austen’s works. (Southam, 2002: 164-165)

Some particular manners and decorum play important role in *Pride and Prejudice*. One of these forms of decorum is the introduction of people. A former introduction of the parties is essential to form an acquaintance at the time. That is why Mrs. Bennet is so anxious for Mr. Bennet to call on Mr. Bingley when the latter first arrives at Netherfield. Otherwise it will be improper for her and her daughters to talk to him without a former acquaintance. Mrs. Bennet, thinking such an acquaintance will be beneficial for her daughters, tells him ‘But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood.’ (PP: 4) Mr. Bennet objects to it only to give more anxiety to his wife as he “‘was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character.’” (PP: 4)

Characters’ manners mirror their personalities in *Pride and Prejudice*. Southam states Pollock’s views of an 1860 article; he investigates the characters of *Pride and*

*Prejudice* in accordance with their manners and behaviours. “The popular, good-looking, and gentlemanly Bingley, with his easy temper and manners, is one of those people whom everyone is always glad to meet.” Darcy, on the other hand, is reserved “[...] making enemies in general society because he will not take the trouble to make himself agreeable, he has a noble mind and a generous temper.” (Southam, 2005: 182-183)

As soon as Darcy, Bingley, his two sisters and Mr. Hurst first enter the assembly room, they take the attention of all the people at the ball:

[...] Mr Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mein; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having a ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend. (PP: 10)

As stated above, the character of Darcy is decided even when he is first seen and known by the people of the assembly. There is no doubt that Darcy is proud. It seems as if he disdains others. Darcy “had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure.” (PP: 18) A large party are assembled at Sir William Lucas’s that night and Darcy stands alone not talking to anybody, “Mr Darcy stood near them in silent indignation at such a mode of passing the evening, to the exclusion of all conversation, and was too much engrossed by his own thoughts [...]” (PP: 27)

The same pride is apparent in Mark Darcy’s attitude, at least for Bridget it is: “It struck me as pretty ridiculous to be called Mr Darcy and to stand on your own looking snooty at a party.” (BJD: 13)

However, these manners might be misleading especially when one’s prejudice against the other is at work. Elizabeth judges Mr. Darcy in a place where he is a stranger

and is not acquainted with anybody. He indicates that she should not decide about his character:

‘I do not get on at all. I hear such different accounts of you as puzzle me exceedingly.’

‘I can readily believe,’ answered he gravely, ‘that reports may vary greatly with respect to me; and I could wish, Miss Bennet, that you were not to sketch my character at the present moment, as there is reason to fear that the performance would reflect no credit on either.’ (PP: 105)

She has also been humiliated by his remark about herself as stated before. She decides that Darcy is proud. However, Darcy later acknowledges that he has difficulty in conversing to strangers:

‘I had not at that time the honour of knowing any lady in the assembly beyond my own party.’

‘True; and nobody can ever be introduced in a ball-room. Well, Colonel Fitzwilliam, what do I play next? My fingers wait your orders.’

‘Perhaps,’ said Darcy, ‘I should have judged better, had I sought an introduction, but I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers.’ (PP: 196)

Similarly when Mark asks Bridget for a date, he explains why he has acted weird and proud at the party that they have met: ‘Last Christmas,’ Mark went on hurriedly, ‘[...] when I met you...and I was wearing that ridiculous diamond-patterned jumper that Una had bought me for Christmas...’ (BJD: 236-237)

In *Good Manners Mirror Good Morals in Pride and Prejudice* Jane Nardin supports the point that a person’s outward behaviour might be misleading:

In *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen makes the basic assumption that a person’s outward manners mirror his moral character. [...] The characters in the novel continually try to evaluate one another’s manners and the moral worth to which they are a clue. Often these evaluations are wrong [...] If an attempt to judge character from manners backfires in *Pride and Prejudice*, it is invariably because the judging individual has misperceived the nature of the manners of the individual he is judging [...] (Nardin, 1997: 147-148)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy’s manners are interpreted as proud and disagreeable by the people at the ball in the assembly room who meet him for the first time:

Mr Darcy 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 in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. (PP: 11)

Nardin further argues on the same subject that Jane Austen is very careful, in *Pride and Prejudice*, to give her readers precise characterizations of the manners of most of her important characters very close to their first appearances in the novel. (Nardin, 1997: 149)

As we meet the characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, we get to know them by immediate information on an initial stage. Jane Austen goes straight to the point, readers see the characters in action, and there is no wall between the characters and readers. Characters' manners depict their personalities to the other characters in the novel as well as to the reader.

Improper manners are an issue in the novel. *Pride and Prejudice* depicts the improper manners of Elizabeth's connections at the ball at Netherfield, the most obvious of which are Mrs. Bennet's conversation to Lady Lucas. Mrs. Bennet praises Charles Bingley to her friend, states how lucky her family is as it will lead the way to other rich men for her younger daughters.

[...] deeply was she vexed to find that her mother was talking to that one person (Lady Lucas) freely, openly, and of nothing else but her expectation that Jane would be soon married to Mr Bingley. - It was an animating subject, and Mrs Bennet seemed incapable of fatigue while enumerating the advantages of the match. His being such a charming young man, and so rich, and living but three miles from them, were the first points of self-gratulation; and then it was such a comfort to think how fond the two sisters were of Jane, and to be certain that they must desire the connection as much as she could do. It was, moreover, such a promising thing for her younger daughters, as Jane's marrying so greatly must throw them in the way of other rich men [...]  
(PP: 110-111)

She talks about the expected marriage of Jane and Mr. Bingley with so much enthusiasm and vulgarity that Elizabeth is very ashamed of her mother's manners. Mr. Darcy sits very near and she is afraid of his hearing these outbursts which he is certain to consider as depictions of ill-manners. "In vain did Elizabeth endeavour to check the rapidity of her mother's words, or persuade her to describe her felicity in a less audible whisper;

for to her inexpressible vexation, she could perceive that the chief of it was overheard by Mr Darcy, who sat opposite to them. Her mother only scolded her for being nonsensical.” (PP: 111)

Elizabeth, in a sense, foreshadows the effects of her mother’s remarks: ‘For heaven’s sake, madam, speak lower. - What advantage can it be for you to offend Mr Darcy? - You will never recommend yourself to his friend by so doing.’ Nothing that she could say, however, had any influence. (PP: 111)

At the same ball, Mary plays the piano and sings without invitation, Elizabeth

had the mortification of seeing Mary, after very little entreaty, preparing to oblige the company. By many significant looks and silent entreaties, did she endeavour to prevent such a proof of complaisance, - but in vain; Mary would not understand them; such an opportunity of exhibiting was delightful to her, and she began her song [...] Mary’s powers were by no means fitted for such a display; her voice was weak, and her manner affected. - Elizabeth was in agonies. (PP: 112)

Elizabeth wishes her father to do something about it as Mary seems likely to sing all evening, Mr. Bennet says: ‘That will do extremely well, child. You have delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit.’ Elizabeth “sorry for her father’s speech, was afraid her anxiety had done no good.” (PP: 113)

Mr. Collins goes and talks to Mr. Darcy without a former introduction, Elizabeth warns him against the impropriety of such an action:

Elizabeth tried hard to dissuade him from such a scheme; assuring him that Mr Darcy would consider his addressing him without introduction as an impertinent freedom, rather than a compliment to his aunt; that it was not in the least necessary there should be any notice on either side, and that if it were, it must belong to Mr Darcy, the superior in consequence, to begin the acquaintance. (PP: 109)

But Elizabeth’s warnings have been in vain: “- It vexed her to see him expose himself to such a man. Mr Darcy was eyeing him with unrestrained wonder, and when at last Mr. Collins allowed him time to speak, replied with an air of distant civility.” (PP: 110)

Elizabeth has seen her family’s manners with regret. “To Elizabeth it appeared, that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as a much as they could

during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success [...]” (PP: 114)

Later in Darcy’s letter, we see that her family’s manners convince Darcy of the imprudence of Bingley and Jane’s marriage. Elizabeth faces her family’s improper manners once more. “The situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father. - Pardon me. - It pains me to offend you.” (PP: 219)

In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Bridget is similarly embarrassed by her mother’s manners in the same way Elizabeth is ashamed of her mother’s conversation when she has been afraid of its being heard by Mr. Darcy. In Mark Darcy’s parents’ ruby wedding party, her mother utters some words that Bridget is afraid of Mark’s hearing.

‘Showy,’ whispered Mum [...]

‘Exactly what I said,’ mouthed Una triumphantly. ‘Didn’t I say so, Colin? Showy.’

I glanced around nervously and jumped in fright. There, looking at us, not three feet away, was Mark Darcy. He must have heard everything. I opened my mouth to say something – I’m not quite sure what – to try to improve matters, but he walked away. (BJD: 229-230)

Additionally, Bridget is offended by the improper remarks of her parents’ friends. When she arrives unwillingly at the Turkey Curry Buffet, she is questioned by the host, ‘Come on, let’s get you a drink. How is your love-life anyway?’ This is not a performance of quite good manners. Bridget complains, “‘Oh, God. Why can’t married people understand that this is no longer a polite question to ask? We wouldn’t rush up to them and roar, ‘How’s your marriage going? Still having sex? Everyone knows that dating in your thirties is not the happy-go-lucky free-for-all it was when you were twenty-two [...]’” (BJD: 11)

In the nineteenth century England women had no opportunities as to show themselves other than playing their roles as the performers of manners. In *Austen’s Women in a Conservative Society*, David Monaghan observes the writer’s women characters as performers of manners: “[...] Outside the family the only role offered to the woman was that of arbiter of manners [...]” (Monaghan, 1997: 43) The critic goes

on explaining that “Because her novels are primarily concerned with young, single heroines rather than with married life, Jane Austen tends to place her main emphasis on the part played by women in preserving manners and morals.” (Monaghan, 1997: 46)

Darcy is accustomed to seeing the exaggerated manners of women of his acquaintance. That is why he is attracted to Elizabeth’s easy manners. “[...] in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness.” (PP: 26)

Jane, another leading woman character of the novel, is viewed by Elizabeth as having delightful manners, she learns from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Darcy has parted her from Bingley, ‘To Jane herself,’ she exclaimed, ‘there could be no possibility of objection. All loveliness and goodness as she is! Her understanding excellent, her mind improved, and her manners captivating [...]’ (PP: 208)

There are certain manners of Elizabeth which are at odds with the manners of other women characters of the novel. Her walk to Netherfield is certainly one of them. It is not equal to the role performed by women of the time.

Elizabeth walks to Netherfield alone to visit her sister, Jane who has caught a cold: “[...] Elizabeth continued her walk alone, crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over the stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity, and finding herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise.” (PP: 35-36)

On this, Monaghan indicates that “So far as she is concerned, Elizabeth Bennet behaves far more admirably when she ignores decorum and tramples across muddy fields to visit the sick Jane, [...] ‘’ (Monaghan, 1997: 45)

This behaviour of Elizabeth is wholly unconventional. When she arrives at Netherfield, she is criticised by the Bingley sisters. Her ignoring the conventions of decorum in this way is surprising to them:

She was shewn into the breakfast-parlour, where all but Jane were assembled, and where her appearance created a great deal of surprise. –That she should have walked three miles so early in the day, in such dirty weather, and by

herself, was almost incredible to Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley; and Elizabeth was convinced that they held her in contempt for it. (PP: 36)

Darcy is in between his attraction to her and his logic. Darcy “was divided between admiration of the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion, and doubt as to the occasion’s justifying her coming so far alone.” (PP: 36)

[...] Miss Bingley began abusing her as soon as she was out of the room. Her manners were pronounced to be very bad indeed, a mixture of pride and impertinence;; she had no conversation, no stile, no taste, no beauty. Mrs. Hurst thought the same, and added,

‘she has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker. I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild.’

‘She did indeed, Louisa. I could hardly keep my countenance. Very nonsensical to come at all! Why must she be scampering about the country, because her sister had a cold? Her hair so untidy, so blowsy!’

‘Yes, and her petticoat; I hope you saw her petticoat, six inches deep in mud, I am absolutely certain; and the gown which had been let down to hide it, not doing its office.’

‘Your picture may be very exact, Louisa,’ said Bingley; ‘but this was all lost upon me. I thought Miss Elizabeth looked remarkably well, when she came into the room this morning. Her dirty petticoat quite escaped my notice.’

‘You observed it, Mr Darcy, I am sure,’ said Miss Bingley; and I am inclined to think that you would not wish to see your sister make such an exhibition.’

‘Certainly not.’

‘To walk three miles, or four miles, or five miles, or whatever it is, above her ankles in dirt, and alone, quite alone! What could she mean by it? It seems to me to shew an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum.’

‘It shews an affection for her sister that is very pleasing,’ said Bingley.

‘I am afraid, Mr Darcy,’ observed Miss Bingley, in a half whisper, ‘that this adventure has rather affected your admiration of her fine eyes.’

‘Not at all,’ he replied; ‘they were brightened by the exercise.’ – A short pause followed his speech, and Mrs Hurst began again. (PP: 38-39)

This shows that Bingley sisters’ manners are conceited and vain. They speak of Jane about being their intimate friend, but they talk freely about her sister’s manners with arrogance. They are the ones who acknowledge fancying Jane’s friendship, and on the other hand, they see no harm in gossiping about her sister when she is not around.

Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst “hope to succeed with the nobility and place a good deal of stress on elegance and fashion in manners, but they reveal their lack of true gentility in their willingness to be rude [...]” (Nardin, 1997: 153)

Manners as the indicators of rank play an important part in *Pride and Prejudice*. Darcy thinks that rank and money determine one’s manners and behaviours in society. However, the novel shows us that this is not always the case. Darcy “believes, against a lot of evidence, that rank, or failing that, enough money to give access to the habits of rank, must ensure all the desirable social niceties of taste and manners.” (Waldron, 1999: 56) Mary Waldron indicates that “Vulgarity and its opposite – intelligence, taste, good manners – can exist independently of landed proprietorship and rank; he has found this out at Rosings [...]” (Waldron, 1999: 57) When Darcy is at Rosings visiting his aunt and spending time with Elizabeth, he encounters some ill-manners of his aunt’s. Her manners toward Elizabeth make him embarrassed indeed.

‘[...] I often tell young ladies, that no excellence in music is to be acquired, without constant practice. I have told Miss Bennet several times, that she will never play really well, unless she practises more; and though Mrs Collins has no instrument, she is very welcome, as I have often told her, to come to Rosings every day, and play on the piano forte in Mrs Jenkinson’s room. She would be in nobody’s way, you know, in that part of the house.’

Mr Darcy looked a little ashamed of his aunt’s ill breeding, and made no answer. (PP: 194-195)

Moreover, Darcy learns that good manners can exist independent of rank and class when he meets Elizabeth’s aunt and uncle. When Darcy gets introduced and starts to talk to Mr Gardiner,

Elizabeth could not but be pleased, could not but triumph. It was consoling, that he should know she had some relations for whom there was no need to blush. She listened most attentively to all that passed between them, and gloried in every expression, every sentence of her uncle, which marked his intelligence, his taste, or his good manners. (PP: 280)

Darcy’s acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner shows him that one does not need to belong to an upper-class to perform good manners.

Regarding this matter, Duckworth states that:

The plot works first to humble Darcy’s patrician pride and then to chasten Elizabeth’s antisocial prejudices. In the process a most satisfying structural

balance is achieved: if Elizabeth suffers at the beginning from her mother's vulgar behavior at Netherfield, Darcy is later embarrassed by his aunt's rudeness at Rosings. Ill manners are not peculiar to one social level. (Duckworth, 1998: 182)

Darcy is in danger of falling in love with Elizabeth. She interests him too much.

Mr. Darcy, who has, in his manners, the greatest reserve and hauteur, and a prodigious quantity of family pride, becomes, in spite of his determination to the contrary, captivated with the lively and sensible Elizabeth; who, thinking him the proudest of his species...and, finding his manners so very unbending, sets him down as a most disagreeable man. (Southam, 2005: 45)

Darcy is determined that he should be careful about his manners and feelings to Elizabeth as he feels himself in danger of liking her too much. Elizabeth returns to Longbourn after staying at Netherfield as Jane has been ill. "To Mr Darcy it was welcome intelligence – Elizabeth had been at Netherfield long enough. She attracted him more than he liked" (PP: 66)

As stated before, Darcy's manners have been proud and reserved. However, after he has been refused by Elizabeth, his manners have been improved. The reader sees the change in his manners at Pemberly because before that we have been unaware of his thoughts and actions. Later in the novel, Darcy will admit how Elizabeth's acknowledgements have tortured him. When Elizabeth, her uncle and aunt visit Pemberly, Darcy comes unexpectedly and to Elizabeth's surprise, treats them unexceptionally well. Darcy even invites Mr. Gardiner to fish in his lake:

The conversation soon turned upon fishing, and she heard Mr Darcy invite him, with the greatest civility, to fish there as often as he chose, while he continued in the neighbourhood, offering at the same time to supply him with fishing tackle, and pointing out those parts of the stream where there was usually most sport.' (PP: 280)

There is a shift in his manners that is obvious. Elizabeth is surprised but flattered. "[...] it gratified her exceedingly; the compliment must be all for herself. Her astonishment, however, was extreme [...]" (PP: 280)

Darcy seems most willing to please Elizabeth with his good manners, he asserts that his sister wants to meet her 'There is also one other person in the party,' he continued after a pause, 'who you allow me, or do I ask too much, to introduce my

sister to your acquaintance during your stay at Lambton?’ (PP: 281) Elizabeth cannot believe how Darcy’s manners have changed toward her. ‘‘The surprise of such an application was great indeed; it was too great for her to know in what manner she acceded to it. She immediately felt that whatever desire Miss Darcy might have of being acquainted with her, must be the work of her brother [...]’’ (PP: 281)

## 5.2. Class

Jane Austen’s novels give the reader ample information about the social class, rank and English gentry. She was the member of the English gentry as stated in this study before and she wrote about the lifestyle of this particular class.

In *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, her nephew James Edward Austen Leigh indicates that ‘‘[...] though her circle of society was small, yet she found in her neighbourhood persons of good taste and cultivated minds. Her acquaintance, in fact, constituted the very class from which she took her imaginary characters [...]’’ (Austen-Leigh, 2008: 19)

Regarding this matter, Maugham denotes that ‘‘Her family was connected with the clergy and the landed gentry, and her novels are concerned with no other class.’’ (Maugham, 1997: 126)

Certain class conventions and etiquette have been the subjects of the novels of manners: ‘‘[...] there is differentiation between the upstanding hero or heroine and the socially less acceptable characters. The different degrees of how the characters uphold the standard level of social etiquette is what usually dominates the plot of the novel.’’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel\\_of\\_manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel_of_manners))

As Austen’s novels are good examples of the genre, it is appropriate to examine *Pride and Prejudice* according to class conventions. ‘‘Issues of class, property, and gender pervade the novel, as does the conflict between the way things ‘are done’ (the status quo) and individualism.’’ (Teachman, 1997: xi)

Darcy undoubtedly belongs to nobility, he is a gentleman. He descends from a noble line of family. He is the sole owner of the Pemberly estate. When Elizabeth visits his estate, she thinks: ‘‘As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many

people's happiness were in his guardianship!—how much of pleasure or pain was it in his power to bestow!—how much of good or evil must be done by him!” (PP: 275)

As for Elizabeth, she is the daughter of a gentleman yet her mother descends from a less distinguished and lower rank. “Her father had been an attorney in Meryton, and had left her about four thousand pounds. She had a sister married to a Mr Phillips, who had been a clerk to their father, and succeeded him in the business, and a brother settled in London in a respectable line of trade.” (PP: 31)

However, the nineteenth century England experienced considerable changes in distinctions of rank and class. The century experienced changes in manners, class, rank and money. The critic observes that Austen experienced the changing values of the society closely due to her situation in life: “[...] Austen's class position placed her firmly in the middle of the crisis of values [...]” (Poovey, 1998: 67)

The luxuries and tastes which were once only attainable by the high-classes of the society were now available to the gentry as well. Austen-Leigh mentions these “changes of customs and habits” in his *Memoir*. “[...] and especially a century like the last, marked by an extraordinary advance in wealth, luxury, and refinement of taste, as well as the mechanical arts which embellish our houses, must produce a great change in their aspect.” (Austen-Leigh, 2008: 30)

The rank of a person was determined by birth and it was unchangeable before the changes that the beginning of the nineteenth century experienced. French Revolution swept the nation and people were craving for a change in the social structure. It was no longer an exception for people to determine their own rank. They earned money to get access to the lifestyle which was once particular to a certain class. Thus, they began to determine their own rank. The examples of this state in the novel are Sir William Lucas and the Bingleys.<sup>10</sup>

Before these changes, it was almost impossible for Elizabeth to marry Mr. Darcy as they were not considered equal by the society. Upon the enquiries of Lady Catherine de Bourgh on hearing the rumours of her nephew's engagement to a Bennet, Elizabeth states that they are equal:

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<sup>10</sup> The topic is analysed under the title *The Nineteenth Century England* in chapter III.

‘[...] My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the father’s, from respectable, honourable, and ancient—though untitled—families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their respective houses; and what is to divide them? The upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections, or fortune. Is this to be endured! But it must not, shall not be. If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up.’

‘In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman’s daughter; so far we are equal.’

‘True. You are a gentleman’s daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition.’

‘Whatever my connections may be,’ said Elizabeth, ‘if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to you.’ (PP: 391-392)

In his biography, *Jane Austen A Literary Life*, Jan Fergus points out that ‘Elizabeth’s powerful declaration of independence to Lady Catherine proclaims the rights of an individual to reject wrongful authority, and thus has political content [...]’ (Fergus, 1991: 82)

When Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst tease the low connections of the Bennet family, Bingley does not join them thinking differently. Darcy, on the other hand, thinks that Elizabeth and her sisters’ circumstances in life would lessen their chances in marriage.

‘I have an excessive regard for Jane Bennet, she is really a very sweet girl, and I wish with all my heart she were well settled. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it.’

‘I think I have heard you say, that their uncle is an attorney in Meryton.’

‘Yes; and they have another, who lives somewhere near Cheapside.’

‘That is capital,’ added her sister, and they both laughed heartily.

‘If they had uncles enough to fill all Cheapside,’ cried Bingley, ‘it would not make them one jot less agreeable.’

‘But it must very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world,’ replied Darcy. (PP: 40)

There are certain indicators of rank and class in the nineteenth century England. Having a large family library is one of them. A family library showed that the family had ancient and noble roots. Although Mr. Bingley is considered a gentleman, he does

not own a large family library as his fortune has been established after his father acquired his fortune in trade:

‘I am astonished,’ said Miss Bingley, ‘that my father should have left so small a collection of books. What a delightful library you have at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy!’

‘It ought to be good,’ he replied, ‘it has been the work of many generations.’

‘And then you have added so much to it yourself, you are always buying books.’

‘I cannot comprehend the neglect of a family library in such days as these.’  
 ‘Neglect! I am sure you neglect nothing that can add to the beauties of that noble place. Charles, when you build YOUR house, I wish it may be half as delightful as Pemberley.’ (PP: 41)

### 5.3. Money

Money, along with class and manners, plays an important role in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Alistair M. Duckworth suggests that Jane Austen “had an extensive and exact knowledge of incomes; she knew the value of livings and the law of entails[...]” (Duckworth, 1998: 171) In the novel, the issue with money is that the Bennet sisters will inherit too little when their father is dead because his estate is entailed away from the female line. The Longbourn estate will be inherited by a distant relation as Mr. Bennet does not have a male heir: “Mr Bennet’s property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters was entailed in default of heirs male, on a distant relation; and their mother’s fortune, though ample for her situation in life, could but ill supply the deficiency of his.” (PP: 31)

Bennet sisters will inherit very little money and therefore, their chances of marrying well lessen. When Lydia elopes with Wickham, Mr Bennet regrets not having saved money for the future of his family.

Mr. Bennet had very often wished before this period of his life that, instead of spending his whole income, he had laid by an annual sum for the better provision of his children, and of his wife, if she survived him. He now wished it more than ever. Had he done his duty in that respect, Lydia need not have been indebted to her uncle for whatever of honour or credit could now be purchased for her. The satisfaction of prevailing on one of the most

worthless young men in Great Britain to be her husband might then have rested in its proper place. (PP: 338)

Povey emphasises the inevitable result of such an entail if the Bennet sisters do not get married:

For the inevitable result of an entail in a household more blessed with daughters than frugality is, at best, a limited choice of suitors; at worst, the Bennets' shortage of money for dowries and their equivocal social position foretell spinsterhood, dependence on a generous relative, or, most ominous of all, work as a governess of a lady's companion. (Poovey, 1998: 90)

Poovey states that these gloomy thoughts do not affect Elizabeth. Elizabeth "with the arrogance born of youth, natural high spirits, and intellectual superiority, she believes herself too good for such a fate." (Poovey, 1998: 90)

However, this matter has immediate effect on the manners and thoughts of their mother as she is anxious about marring her daughters well. When Netherfield Park is rented by "a young man of large fortune", she has only one thing in her mind, one of her daughters' marrying the gentleman.

'Is he married or single?'

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

'How so? How can it affect them?'

'My dear Mr. Bennet,' replied his wife, 'how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.' (PP: 4)

Mrs. Bennet dislikes Darcy, yet upon hearing Elizabeth's engagement to him, all her dislike vanishes:

'Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! Who would have thought it! And is it really true? Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it—nothing at all. I am so pleased—so happy. Such a charming man!—so handsome! so tall!—Oh, my dear Lizzy! pray apologise for my having disliked him so much before. I hope he will overlook it. Dear, dear Lizzy. A house in town! Every thing that is charming! Three daughters married! Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord! What will become of me. I shall go distracted.' (PP: 416-417)

Two centuries later, Bridget's mother is concerned with the same matter. She wants her daughter to be together with Mark Darcy as he has a successful job and lots of

money. Every time she calls Bridget to insist on her meeting him, she emphasises his being rich. '[...] Malcolm and Elaine are coming and bringing Mark with them. Do you remember Mark, darling? He's one of those top-notch barristers. Masses of money. Divorced [...]' (BJD 9) Bridget is sick of these remarks of her mother says: "I don't know why she didn't just come out with it and say, 'Do shag Mark Darcy over the turkey curry, won't you? He's very rich.'" (BJD: 12)

Jane Austen took into account her society's mercenary and competitive character in her novel. "The financial and social registers are as precise here as ever." (Duckworth, 1998: 181)

Moreover, the society's interest in money is apparent when the people at the ball room first see Mr. Darcy. "[...] Mr Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mein; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, for his having ten thousand a year. (PP: 10)

In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the society's emphasis is still on single and rich men. Bridget writes: "[...] tried to read myself to sleep with new issue of *Tatler*, only to find Mark Bloody Darcy's face smouldering out from feature on London's fifty most eligible bachelors going on about how rich and marvellous he was." (BJD: 194)

However, Elizabeth is not affected by Darcy's being rich in the least. When Elizabeth acknowledges that she is engaged to Mr. Darcy, the enquiries of Jane follow:

'My dearest sister, now be serious. I want to talk very seriously. Let me know every thing that I am to know, without delay. Will you tell me how long you have loved him?'

'It has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley.'

Another entreaty that she would be serious, however, produced the desired effect; and she soon satisfied Jane by her solemn assurances of attachment. When convinced on that article, Miss Bennet had nothing further to wish. (PP: 411-412)

Elizabeth is not serious when she says Pemberley has affected her love for Darcy. The reader certainly knows that nothing but love can tempt Elizabeth to get married. On

this, Patrice Hannon states that “[...] she is truly not mercenary.” (Hannon, 2007: 113) Hannon explains that “So while Jane Austen certainly understood the value of money and knew what it had to do with happiness, she –and all her heroines–clearly held other things in much greater esteem.” (Hannon, 2007: 115)

#### 5.4. Courtship

Courtship, flirtation and love are some of the main themes of Jane Austen’s novels which are examples of the “Novel of Manners” tradition.

Though they seem to be quite similar, courtship and flirtation are not the same: “As Austen treats it, flirtation is often indistinguishable from courtship. In the beginning, the same behaviour attention, admiration, teasing, flattery, even professions of devotion–may be appropriate to both. But the two cannot be confused in the end, for courtship ‘means’ something–marriage–and flirtation nothing [...]” (Fergus, 1997: 63)

*Bridget Jones’s Diary* inherits the courtship plot and its romantic plot devices from Jane Austen’s novel. The courtship plot reveals itself even at the beginning of the novel. In Bridget’s New Year’s resolutions, she writes: ‘I will [...] “Form functional relationship with responsible adult.”’ (BJD: 3)

The heroine’s desire to be successful in relationships is a considerable issue in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. Bridget’s aim to have a boyfriend is obvious from the start. She desires to prove her self-worth without a boyfriend, yet, in order to get a boyfriend. “Sulk about having no boyfriend, but develop inner poise and authority and sense of self as woman of substance, complete without boyfriend, as best way to obtain boyfriend.” (BJD: 2)

There are sub-courtship and flirtation in *Pride and Prejudice* concerning the other Bennet sisters. In the novel, the youngest Bennet sisters Lydia and Kitty’s attitude toward the officers is indicated as mere flirtation. “While there was an officer in Meryton, they would flirt with him; and while Meryton was within a walk of Longbourn, they would be going there forever.” (PP: 235)

Later on, in the novel, when Lydia elopes with Wickham, Elizabeth states that “Since the ——shire were first quartered in Meryton, nothing but love, flirtation, and

officers, have been in her head. She has been doing everything in her power by thinking and talking on the subject, to give greater - what shall I call it? Susceptibility to her feelings; which are naturally lively enough.’ (PP: 311)

The critic argues that courtship has certain stages and these stages are observed by the public eye. ‘These stages-initial attraction, flirtation, infatuation and love develop within a social world and are subject to intense social scrutiny.’ (Fergus, 1997: 61)

Elizabeth consults her friend, Charlotte for the situation of her sister, Jane and Mr. Bingley who form another sub-courtship plot of the novel. Elizabeth tells her friend that Bingley must find out Jane’s love for him and her friend points out that ‘Perhaps he must, if he sees enough of her. But though Bingley and Jane meet tolerably often, it is never for many hours together; and as they always see each other in large mixed parties, it is impossible that every moment should be employed in conversing together [...]’ (PP: 23-24)

The public eye is apparent as the people in Meryton expect Mr. Bingley and Jane to marry. When Elizabeth and Darcy are dancing, William Lucas approaches and implies Bingley and Jane’s marriage:

‘[...] I must hope to have this pleasure often repeated, especially when a certain desirable event, my dear Miss Eliza (glancing at her sister and Bingley) shall take place. What congratulations will then flow in! I appeal to Mr Darcy: - but let me not interrupt you, Sir. You will not thank me for detaining you from the bewitching converse of that young lady, whose bright eyes are also upbraiding me.’ (PP: 104)

Not so much has changed in the area of courtship as regards the public eye in between nearly two centuries between the two novels. Bridget’s love life is under a constant investigation by her family’s friends:

‘Come along and meet Mark,’ Una Alconbury sing-songed before I’d even had time to get a drink down me. Being set up with a man against your will is one level of humiliation, but being literally dragged into it by Una Alconbury while caring for an acidic hangover, watched by an entire roomful of friends of your parents, is on another plane altogether. (BJD: 12-13)

Balls, gatherings and dinner parties were the places where the lovers can get together, flirt and dance. Austen-Leigh, in *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, states the importance of the balls for the century and for her aunt as well:

Many country towns had a monthly ball throughout the winter, in some of which the same apartment served for dancing and tea-room [...] There can be no doubt that Jane herself enjoyed dancing, for she attributes this taste to her favourite heroines; in most of her works, a ball or a private dance is mentioned, and made of importance. (Austen-Leigh, 2008: 32)

These occasions in *Pride and Prejudice* are highly important as they define the course of the relationships between the partners. They are also the means for news and socialization. The younger Bennet sisters have been looking forward to a ball that Lydia has requested from Mr. Bingley:

If there had not been a Netherfield ball to prepare for and talk of, the younger Miss Bennets would have been in a very pitiable state at this time, for from the day of the invitation, to the day of the ball, there was such a succession of rain as prevented their walking to Meryton once. No aunt, no officers, no news could be sought after [...] (PP: 98)

They have nothing else to do other than thinking of the forthcoming ball at Netherfield without the thought of which they would be desperate.

Moreover, balls are the occasions where girls have the opportunity to attract their partner. Elizabeth longs to see and attract Wickham at the Netherfield ball: “She had dressed with more than usual care, and prepared in the highest spirits for the conquest of all that remained unsubdued of his heart, trusting that it was not more than might be won in the course of the evening.” (PP: 100)

In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, balls are replaced by parties. Bridget attends dinner parties of her married friends and also to the parties which are organized on special occasions like wedding anniversaries and Christmas. Bridget’s obsession with party invitations peaks when she assumes there are no Christmas invitation cards for her. Bridget is desperately waiting for an invitation and she thinks none of her friends have invited her to a Christmas party. Then, she gets invigorated when she finds the cards: “[...] and there, nestling underneath like a Christmas miracle, was a little pile of cards, letters and invitations all addressed to me. Me. Me. Me.” (BJD: 291)

Bridget is invited to Mark Darcy's parents' ruby wedding party and she dresses up. "Jude came around [...] bringing with her fantastic black dress for me to borrow for party [...] Decided to accessorize fantastic dress with black tights with lycra and light shimmer [...] Pied a terre kitten-heel black suede shoes [...]" (BJD: 227)

At the ball at Netherfield, when Darcy and Elizabeth dance for the first time, she states that they have nothing to talk about on which he asks: 'What think you of books?' said he, smiling. 'Books - oh! no. I am sure we never read the same, or not with the same feelings.' 'I am sorry you think so; but if that be the case, there can at least be no want of subject. - We may compare our different opinions.' (PP: 103-104)

Similarly, at the party that Bridget and Mark meet for the first time, he asks almost the same question to Bridget: 'I. Um. Are you reading any, ah [...] Have you read any good books lately?' he said. Oh, for God's sake. I racked my brain frantically to think when I last read a proper book [...] (BJD: 14) Moreover, Bridget also thinks that they have nothing to talk about. When Mark asks her out, she says: 'I don't want to be asked out to dinner just because your mum wants you to. Anyway, what would we talk about? You'd just ask me if I've read any good books lately and I'd have to make up some pathetic lie [...]' (BJD: 236)

Furthermore, seaside places bore an importance for courtship in Austen's time. The younger Bennet sisters, Lydia and Kitty want to go to Brighton for summer where the regiment will stay. Mrs. Bennet encourages them to follow their wishes. 'If one could but go to Brighton!' observed Mrs. Bennet. 'Oh, yes! - if one could but go to Brighton! But papa is so disagreeable.' 'A little sea-bathing would set me up for ever.' (PP: 253)

Lydia is invited to go to Brighton for the summer: "But the gloom of Lydia's prospect was shortly cleared away; for she received an invitation from Mrs Forster, the wife of the Colonel of the regiment, to accompany her to Brighton." (PP: 254)

Lydia and Wickham's flirtation and courtship take place in a seaside place, for shortly after she goes to Brighton and elopes with him.

Similarly, when spring arrives, Bridget desires to go to a mini-break with Daniel as she thinks it will be a good idea for the development of their relationship. “Finding it impossible to concentrate on almost anything in the heat except fantasies about going on mini-breaks with Daniel.” (BJD: 141) Bridget thinks that Daniel feels entrapped. “It is such a bloody bore when the weather is so hot and one’s soi-disant boyfriend refuses to go anywhere nice with you. Feel he thinks I am trying to trap him into a mini-break; as if it were not a mini-break but marriage, [...]” (BJD: 144) Then they decide to go to a mini-break and book somewhere for the next weekend. This opens up another issue of the late twentieth century, an issue that is dealt with in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. Men have commitment problems. Bridget herself, as well as her friends, suffers from the same kind of men who are commitment-phobic and self-indulgent. ‘The whole bloody world got a commitment problem,’ growled Sharon [...]’ It’s the three minute culture [...] It’s typical of men to annex a global trend and turn it into a male device to reject women to make themselves feel clever and us feel stupid [...]’ (BJD: 188)

Jan Fergus mentions the importance of appearance in Austen’s novels: “[...] good looks and charm inevitably create favourable responses and biased judgement [...] This simplest and most instinctive sexual response is always taken for granted in Austen’s novels, not criticised or investigated.” (Fergus, 1997: 63)

Sexual attraction plays a significant role when the characters are attracted to each other. After Darcy announces Elizabeth as tolerable, there is a considerable change in his feelings:

[...] But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes[...]he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness [...] (PP: 25-26)

Waldron states that “The reader has yet another perception: Darcy is unable to control a powerful attraction to Elizabeth [...]” (Waldron, 1999: 54) The critic further points out that “We cannot escape from the certainty that the strongest element in his attraction to Elizabeth is physical [...]” (Waldron, 1999: 54)

At the Lucas's, Miss Bingley approaches Darcy with her usual air of despising the people of Meryton and assumes his ideas on the subject are the same. However, in this one of the most famous scenes of the novel, Darcy thinks of nothing but the beautiful eyes of Elizabeth:

‘Your conjecture is totally wrong, I assure you. My mind was more agreeably engaged. I have been meditating on the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow’

Miss Bingley immediately fixed her eyes on her his face, and desired he would tell her what lady had the credit of inspiring such reflections. Mr Darcy replied with great insipidity.

‘Miss Elizabeth Bennet.’

‘Miss Elizabeth Bennet!’ repeated Miss Bingley. ‘I am all astonishment [...]’  
(PP: 29-30)

Darcy's desire and love for Elizabeth is sensed throughout the novel making the reader excited about such disguised outbursts of feeling and love. The reader feels the sexual desire and passion in *Pride and Prejudice*. Fergus claims that what makes the novel so successful is this sense of sexuality between Elizabeth and Darcy. They are “such powerful and credible sexual antagonists that *Pride and Prejudice* works so well in many levels.” (Fergus, 1991: 86)

Regarding the matter, Poovey suggests that “Indeed, unaccountable, uncontrollable romantic love continues to play a role in *Pride and Prejudice*-in Darcy's desire for Elizabeth. This passion, which Austen notes but does not dwell on, is the subtextual force behind much of the action.” (Poovey, 1998: 93)

How did Jane Austen achieve to create two of the most admired and beloved creatures of all fiction? Darcy is noble, intelligent, handsome, close yet reserved, with such an air of gentleness and kindness. He has been the man of dreams all around the world for centuries regardless of time and place. His kindness, love and passion toward Elizabeth creates an air unattainable in any other work and it is this air that makes the most desired of all characters in all literature. His love for Elizabeth has been source of inspiration for many writers. This most charming of all heroes of literature has never lost his power through centuries. Mark is but one interpretation of him in the late twentieth century.

The critic indicates that “The narrative does not focus on the development or pressures of this passion; [...]” (Poovey, 1998: 94) Yet, readers feel this passion deeply, and it is this power of the text that so greatly achieves to enable us to feel Darcy’s passion. It is this power that makes us read the novel over and over again with the same enthusiasm and even with more excitement.

Fergus focuses on Austen’s interest in sexuality in her novels: “Austen’s interest lies in portraying not this sort of sensational sexuality, but rather the public sexuality of daily life-attraction, flirtation, infatuation, sexual antagonism and sexual love.” (Fergus, 1991: 85) The critic claims that “Austen is interested in dramatising sex in everyday social life [...] there is no escaping sexuality in her novels. It is always present, treated with a variety and freedom that most modern readers overlook and that the novels of most of her contemporaries were unable to achieve.” (Fergus, 1997: 61)

Even though Mark Darcy describes Bridget as “bizarre”, he is attracted to her for she is different than all the other girls who he knows. Bridget’s mother says:

‘Apparently he told Elaine he thought you were very attractive.’

‘Durr! Don’t lie,’ I muttered. Pleased though.

‘Well, I’m sure that’s what he meant, anyway, darling.’

‘What did he say?’ I hissed suddenly suspicious.

‘He said you were very[...]’

‘Mother[...]’

‘Well, the word he actually used, darling, was “bizarre”. But that’s lovely, isn’t it? – “bizarre”? Anyway, you can ask him all about it at the ruby wedding. (BJD: 208)

The main courtship plot in both novels is the heroine’s quest for the right man. Before she finds him, she flirts with the wrong man. The heroine finds true love after many ups and downs. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth flirts with Wickham and her prejudice against Mr. Darcy feeds her love for him. In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Bridget flirts and goes out with Daniel and her dislike toward Mark Darcy is apparent. Mark is the right man for Bridget from the start but the novel does not reveal it until the end in order to obey the conventions of the romantic plot and story. Only after so many

unfolding events, both heroines understand the true worth of their former lovers, and after many struggles they get together with the right men.

The critic, Anna Kiernan indicates that chick-lit integrates the literary and narrative conventions of Austen's novels, there is this dominance of love and romance and "these novels are concerned with finding Mr. Right." (Kiernan, 2006: 207)

Kiernan mentions a traditional romantic formula:

An attractive (but not beautiful) single woman[...]encounters some difficulty in her pursuit of love, often based on some misunderstanding between the two romantic leads, but is finally rewarded with love or marriage, or both. *Bridget Jones's Diary* is perhaps the best known of such romances in recent years, and its explicit debt to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* underpins the narrative. (Kiernan, 2006: 208)

When he and Bridget first meet in the novel, they are introduced to each other by well-meaning mothers and family friends, makes it obvious that he is the right partner for her according to romantic comedy conventions. (Mabry, 2006: 201)

One of Bridget's family's friends, Una introduces her to Mark Darcy:

'Mark!' said Una, as if she was one of Santa Claus's fairies. 'I've got someone nice for you to meet.'

He turned around, revealing that what had seemed from the back like a harmless navy sweater was actually a V-neck diamond-patterned in shades of yellow and blue – as favoured by the more elderly of the nation's sports reporters. As my friend Tom often remarks, it is amazing how much time and money can be saved in the world of dating by close attention to detail. (BJD: 13)

At this point, Mabry suggests that "Although it is clear from the beginning that Mark is the right man for Bridget (he's good-looking, brave, noble, and a wealthy barrister), other elements of the story are recounted in a way that threatens to overwhelm the romance for which we're supposed to be rooting." (Mabry, 2006: 201)

Elizabeth finds Wickham charming; she acknowledges him to be handsome and his manners to be pleasing. She is attracted to his appearance and manners and she flirts with him.

Bridget is attracted to Daniel in the same way but different from Elizabeth's cautious remarks and manners, she is more explicit on the subject. She defines him as:

“Gorgeous, messy, sexy, exciting, hilarious Daniel.” (BJD: 298) Bridget flirts with Daniel more openly at work. Daniel keeps sending messages to her:

Message Jones

You appear to have forgotten your skirt. As I think is made perfectly clear in your contract of employment, staff are expected to be fully dressed at all times.

Cleave

Hah! Undeniably flirtatious. (BJD: 23)

Bridget replies these messages and very soon sees the effects: “[...] Daniel walked past with Simon from Marketing and shot a very sexy look at my skirt with one eyebrow raised. Love the lovely computer messaging.” (BJD: 26)

At this point, Mabry states that “[...] much of the story’s emotional and comic weight is given to Bridget’s crush and subsequent relationship with the charming rouge Daniel Cleaver, rather than Mark Darcy, the story’s hero.” (Mabry, 2006: 200)

After lots of ups and downs, and a couple of strategies, Bridget and Daniel start to go out. They spend much of their time together in Bridget’s flat. “Then Daniel appeared up the stairs, smiling lovingly [...] ‘I bought you all one of these,’ he said, one eyebrow raised sexily, ‘to eat with your coffee. Don’t let me interrupt. I’ve done the shopping for the weekend.’” (BJD: 127) Bridget feels “[...] a bewildering mixture of smugness and pride over my perfect new boyfriend [...] (BJD: 128)

Toward the end of the novel, both heroines come to realise their love for the right men. After lots of misunderstandings and prejudices, Elizabeth recognises the true worth of Darcy. Her first recognition comes when she reads and rereads Darcy’s letter:

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. - Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think, without feeling she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd. ‘[...] Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly. - Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself.’ (PP: 229)

Her second recognition comes when she visits Pemberley. First she is astonished by the accounts of Darcy's servant and then by his changed manners toward herself and her uncle and aunt. She tries to make out her feelings for him:

As for Elizabeth, her thoughts were at Pemberley this evening more than the last; and the evening, though as it passed it seemed long, was not long enough to determine her feelings towards one in that mansion; and she lay awake two whole hours endeavouring to make them out. She certainly did not hate him. No; hatred had vanished long ago, and she had almost as long been ashamed of ever feeling a dislike against him, that could be so called. (PP: 290)

Elizabeth is very impressed by Darcy's manners toward herself and she is aware of her power over him:

She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on her the renewal of his addresses. (PP: 291)

Elizabeth's full recognition of Darcy's good-nature reveals itself after her humiliation about her sister's elopement with Wickham and her becoming aware of his ill-nature. This process occurs in front of the man who she has started to entertain hopes for "renewal of his addresses."<sup>11</sup>

According to Poovey, "Elizabeth's eventual love for Darcy is legitimate because it springs not from the vanity we ordinarily associate with romantic expectations but precisely from the mortification of pride. Yet because Elizabeth only belatedly realizes that she loves Darcy, her humbling does not entail a rejection of romantic love." (Poovey, 1998: 93)

Elizabeth starts to recognise her true feelings toward Darcy. He leaves the room after hearing the news of Lydia's elopement:

As he quitted the room, Elizabeth felt how improbable it was that they should ever see each other again on such terms of cordiality as had marked their several meetings in Derbyshire; and as she threw a retrospective glance over the whole of their acquaintance, so full of contradictions and varieties, sighed

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<sup>11</sup> More information on the heroine's embarrassment is given under the title *The Twentieth Century England* in chapter III.

at the perverseness of those feelings which would now have promoted its continuance, and would formerly have rejoiced in its termination. (PP: 305)

Ferris indicates the similarity of the situations that the heroines find themselves: “And, like Elizabeth, Bridget is initially turned off by Darcy’s smugness but gradually overcomes her prejudice against him, swallows her pride, and falls in love.” (Ferriss, 2006: 72)

Mark Darcy indicates that he is the right man for Bridget, when he does everything in his power for her. “Bridget obsesses, but finally gets over ‘wrong’ man and gains a new sense of self in the process. ‘Right’ man does something to demonstrate why he is ‘right’ man. Bridget falls in love with ‘right’ man and ends up as part of a couple, thus ending her quest, and, significantly, the story [...]” (Guerrero, 2006: 93)

Mark makes the arrangements necessary to rescue Bridget’s mother from the accusations of defrauding her friends with her boyfriend Julio.

Then the phone rang again. It was Mark, from Portugal. Just incredibly kind and brilliant of him. Apparently he has been talking to the police all week in between being top barrister and flew out to Albuferia yesterday. The police over there have found Mum, and Mark thinks she will get off because it will be pretty obvious she had no idea what Julio was up to. (BJD: 278)

However, Bridget is rather slow to make out her own feelings. Ferriss points out that Bridget is not aware of her feelings, and compares her to Elizabeth: “It is ironic, in fact, that Austen’s heroine seems far more secure in her feelings than Fielding’s. Once she does see herself and Darcy without prejudice, Elizabeth recognizes her desire for Darcy [...]” Elizabeth is better at comprehending her own feelings than Bridget: “One might expect that Bridget, the more worldly contemporary woman with previous romantic experiences and an arsenal of self-help books at her disposal, would have greater insight into her own feelings. To the contrary.” (Ferriss, 2006: 81)

Bridget watches BBC series of *Pride and Prejudice* on TV and states that Elizabeth and Darcy “[...] are my chosen representatives in the field of ... courtship.” (BJD: 246)

Jude just called and we spent twenty minutes growling, ‘Fawaw, that Mr Darcy.’ I love the way he talks, sort of as if he can’t be bothered. Ding-dong! Then we had a long discussion about the comparative merits of Mr Darcy and Mark Darcy, both agreeing that Mr Darcy was more attractive because he

was ruder but that being imaginary was a disadvantage that could not be overlooked. (BJD: 247)

Even though romantic love is a sub textual power in the novel, it brings about changes. Against all odds, Darcy achieves to get together with the woman he loves and esteems, by forming a logical background for his love and actions. Poovey observes that “Romantic love remains the unexamined and unaccountable source of power in [...] It not only overcomes all obstacles; it brings about a perfect society at the end of the novel.” (Poovey, 1998: 94)

By using the devices of the romantic plot, Helen Fielding transforms *Pride and Prejudice* to a late twentieth setting. Mabry states that “[...] the fact that the stories could be so easily translated to a contemporary setting perhaps says a lot about how little women’s circumstances have changed in two hundred years.” (Mabry, 2006: 205)

### **5.5. Marriage**

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” (PP: 3)

Austen is universally accepted as the connoisseur of human relations, marriage relations being the most important of them. The novel’s exposition is not very different from the typical Victorian novel, in that the first line is very suggestive.

*Pride and Prejudice* reveals that the novel is going to be about marriage in its very first sentence. The first statement of the novel is stunning in that it gives us the hints as to the main concerns of the novel. It is so broad that not only marriage but also money, class, love, and ideals of the society are hidden in it as subjects of the novel.

In this respect, Teachman suggests that the subject of *Pride and Prejudice* is obvious from its first sentence, “From the first line, the reader can have no doubt that marriage will be a central concern of *Pride and Prejudice*.” (Teachman, 1997: 5)

Therefore, marriage, which is a dominant focus of the lives of women in Austen’s time, is the central issue of *Pride and Prejudice*. It “is, in one sense, a novel about how important it was for women of Austen’s time to marry-and to marry well. (Teachman, 1997: xi-xii)

The opening statement of *Pride and Prejudice* also suggests a woman in want of a husband. That is, a male's want of a wife coincides with a woman's want of a husband. Wiltshire views that just as it was taken for granted that a young man in possession of fortune would seek a wife, Darcy assumes that a young lady in want of a fortune would accept a husband with one. (Wiltshire, 2001: 105) Thus, women's desires underlie the first statement of the novel as well.

Marriage is still the focus of the lives of single women in the late twentieth century as well. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, in the surface, Bridget's concern is to have a boyfriend, but it is obvious that she cannot stand being single any longer. When Bridget goes over to her parents' house for New Year, she exclaims, "First day of New Year has been day of horror. Cannot quite believe I am once again starting the year in a single bed in my parents' house. It is too humiliating at my age." (BJD: 10)

According to the critic, Bridget stands for an independent, mobile and post-feminist woman however; she is also obsessed with men and marriage. "For her, the acquisition of a husband seems to represent success." (Kiernan, 2006: 207)

Bridget tries some strategies to get together with Daniel. Though she asserts that she does not care about him, she is aware that it is a strategy to be noticed by him, "I shall be poised and cool and remember that I am a woman of substance and do not need men in order to be complete, especially not him. Am not going to message him or indeed take any notice of him whatsoever." (BJD: 43)

It is obvious that Bridget wants to form a serious relationship. She declares this desire by writing about it in her diary and also shows this in her actions. After she has had a date with Daniel, they go to his apartment: "As he started to undo the zip he whispered, 'This is just a bit of fun, OK? I don't think we should start getting involved.' 'That is such a crap,' I slurred. 'How dare you be so fraudulently flirtatious, cowardly and dysfunctional? I am not interested in emotional fuckwittage. Goodbye.'" (BJD: 33)

In order to comprehend the significance of marriage for the female characters of *Pride and Prejudice*, it is necessary to recognise what the opposite means. As stated earlier in this study, in the beginning of nineteenth century, women did not have any roles apart from being wives and mothers. Professions and opportunities were close to

them. If Bennet sisters did not marry, they would face a life of humiliation as being spinsters. They would be dependent on a close relation, possibly an uncle or an aunt, or they would work as governesses. As the Bennet sisters would inherit very little money from their father, they would be facing the undesired reality experienced by the single women of the time.

On this, Brown indicates that “Like all her sisters, Elizabeth has only humiliating dependence on relations before her if she does not marry. No professions to speak of are open to her, and laws on every side are designed to restrict her independence.” (Brown, 1993: 64)

Being a single woman is still unwanted for a woman in the late twentieth century as it was two centuries ago for Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters. Late twenties are the last chance for them to get married. Bridget is in her thirties and still single:

When you are partnerless in your thirties, the mild bore of not being in a relationship – no sex, not having anyone to hang out with on Sundays, going home from parties on your own all the time – gets infused with the paranoid notion that the reason you are not in a relationship is your age, you have had your last ever relationship and sexual experience ever, and it is all your fault for being too wild or wilful to settle down in the first bloom of youth. (BJD: 143-144)

Bridget is a singleton and she feels the pressures which the society imposes on her. When Bridget and Mark meet for the first time, she gives a long speech about New Year’s resolutions. After it is over, Mark goes away only to leave her thinking about the pressure of the society directed at her: ‘Maybe you should get something to eat,’ he said, then suddenly bolted off towards the buffet, leaving me standing on my own by the bookshelf while everybody stared at me, thinking, ‘So that’s why Bridget isn’t married. She repulses men.’ (BJD: 15)

Bridget is invited to “Smug Married dinner party at Magda and Jeremy’s”. She hates going to this kind of parties as she says: “Such occasions always reduce my ego to size of a snail [...]” (BJD: 39) This sentence is for good reason because she is constantly under pressure being questioned by her friends on being single:

‘Yes, why aren’t you married yet, Bridget?’ sneered Woney [...]

*Because I don't want to end up like you, you fat, boring, Sloany milch cow,* was what I should have said, or, *Because if I had to cook Cosmo's dinner then get into the same bed as him just once, let alone every night, I'd tear off my own head and eat it, [...]* But, I didn't because, ironically enough, I didn't want to hurt her feelings. (BJD: 40)

She is constantly being questioned if she has got a boyfriend or not. She is bored with all those questions that her married friends and also her family's friends ask her all the time.

'So,' bellowed Cosmo, pouring me a drink. 'How is your love-life?'

'Oh, no. Why do they do this? Why? Maybe the smug Marrieds only mix with other Smug Marrieds and don't know how to relate to individuals any more. Maybe they really do want to patronize us and make us feel like failed human beings [...]' (BJD: 40)

When Daniel accepts to come with her to a family party, Bridget acknowledges: "It will be so lovely for once not to have to drive up on my own, arrive on my own and face all that barrage of inquisition about why I haven't got a boyfriend." (BJD: 165)

Though he promises, he declares that he will not be able to go to the party with her. Bridget states that "Everyone knows when you are going out with someone they are supposed to support you at hideous family occasions [...]. Now all the Alconbury's friends will spend the entire time asking me if I've got a boyfriend yet and no one will believe me. (BJD: 168)

Weldon states marriage has constantly been the stuff of life:

So to marry was a great prize. It was a woman's aim. No wonder Jane Austen's heroines were so absorbed by the matter. It's the stuff of our women's magazines but it was the stuff of their life, their very existence. No wonder Mrs Bennet, driven half mad by the anxiety for her five unmarried daughters, knowing they would be unprovided for when her husband died[...]  
(Weldon, 1997: 37)

Mrs. Bennet desires to marry her daughters off advantageously as they will be dependent upon other family members otherwise. Mrs. Bennet is restlessly speaking of the possible marriages of her daughters and here she talks to Mrs. Gardiner who has paid a visit to Longbourn with her husband, Mr. Gardiner.

'I do not blame Jane,' she continued, 'for Jane would have got Mr Bingley if she could. But Lizzy! Oh, sister! It is very hard to think that she might have been Mr Collins's wife by this time, had it not been for her own perverseness.'

He made her an offer in this very room, and she refused him. The consequence of it is, that Lady Lucas will have a daughter married before I have, and that the Longbourn estate is just as much entailed as ever. (PP: 159)

Mrs. Bennet comprehends the significance of marriage for her daughters. “we watch her throughout the novel as she schemes and plans, faces disappointments, and celebrates successes.” (Teachman, 1997: 5)

Priestly points out that “So soon as we begin reading *Pride and Prejudice*, we know that Mrs. Bennet, a rather foolish, amiable woman, is too eager and anxious to marry off her daughters [...]” (Priestley, 1997: 81) The unmarried women of the gentry faced economic difficulties and in this respect Mrs. Bennet’s anxieties are not in vain. She says: ‘If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield,’ said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, ‘and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for.’ (PP: 9) This is how Mrs. Bennet expresses her major concern.

Almost two centuries later, Bridget’s mother’s concern is more or less the same; she wants to see her daughter with a decent man, hopefully married of course. Bridget’s mother insists her to come to their family friends’ Una and Geoffrey Alconbury’s New Year’s Day Turkey Curry Buffet. Bridget tries to make excuses for she does not have the least desire to go there. “Then next time, as if out of the blue, ‘Do you remember Mark Darcy, darling? Malcolm and Elaine’s son? He is one of these super-duper top-notch lawyers. Divorced.’ ” (BJD: 12) Her mother aims at introducing Bridget to Mark Darcy who is divorced, and has a successful career with lots of money.

As Mrs. Bennet, Bridget’s mother’s concern is to see her daughter with a wealthy young man.

‘Malcolm and Elaine are having the ruby wedding in London now, on the twenty-third, so you will be able to come and keep Mark company.’

‘I don’t want to keep Mark company,’ I said through clenched teeth.

‘Oh, but he’s very clever. Been to Cambridge. Apparently he made a fortune in America [...]’ (BJD: 211)

Ferris states that “Like Elizabeth, Bridget is embarrassed by her mother’s shameless attempts to marry her off [...]” (Ferriss, 2006: 72) Bridget protests her

mother's attempts to arrange a date for her; 'Mum, I've told you. I don't need to be fixed up with' (BJD: 9)

As Mrs. Bennet considers an advantageous, business like marriage for Elizabeth, she does not take into consideration that Elizabeth will not consent to such a scheme. Elizabeth's idea of marriage is definite from the start; she wants to marry for love and affection. "Only the deepest love will induce her to matrimony."<sup>12</sup> The reader learns her attitude toward marriage when she responds to Charlotte's cynical views on marriage. Charlotte advises that Jane should "secure" Bingley and Elizabeth says:

'Your plan is a good one,' replied Elizabeth, 'where nothing is in question but the desire of being well married; and if I were determined to get a rich husband, and or any husband, I dare say I should adopt it. But these are not Jane's feelings; she is not acting by design. As yet, she cannot even be certain of the degree of her own regard, nor of its reasonableness. She has known him only a fortnight. She danced four dances with him at Meryton; she saw him one morning at his own house, and has since dined in company with him four times. This is not quite enough to make her understand his character.'  
(PP: 24-25)

Charlotte's cynical views about securing the man she likes before she is not even aware of her own affections for him appear to Elizabeth as ridiculous as Elizabeth cannot think of a marriage without affection. Elizabeth thinks that before Jane is sure of her own feelings and his character, it is not sensible for her to get married. On this Bromberg declares that "Elizabeth rejects Charlotte's goal oriented strategizing, arguing that Jane and Bingley need more time to understand each other's characters and see if they are really suited to each other." (Bromberg, 1993; 128)

On her friend's objecting such a scheme, Charlotte asserts:

'Well,' said Charlotte, 'I wish Jane success with all my heart; and if she were married to him to-morrow, I should think she had as good a chance of happiness, as if she were to be studying his character for a twelvemonth. Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation; and it is better to know as little as possible of the defect of the person with whom you are to pass your life.'

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<sup>12</sup> From BBC mini series, *Pride and Prejudice*.

‘You make me laugh, Charlotte; but it is not sound. You know it is not sound, and that you would never act in this way yourself.’ (PP: 25)

Later in the novel, however, we see that Charlotte will exactly act by her design when she gets married to Mr. Collins. Lascelles states the fact that there is this “distinction between Charlotte Lucas’s cynicism and Elizabeth Bennet’s ironical affectation of it with regard to marriage.” (Lascelles, 1995: 118)

Elizabeth’s feelings and views regarding marriage are based on love. She cannot accept Mr. Collins’s proposal as he is a kind of man that she cannot consider being with. His character is apparent in his letter even before he arrives in Longbourn. When he comes there, he proves to be an insensible man, he constantly praises his Ladyship, Lady Catherine de Bourgh and her estate Rosings Park, his “humble” abode and himself. His aim is to marry one of the Bennet sisters as he will inherit the Longbourn estate when their father is dead.

Having now a good house and very sufficient income, he intended to marry; and in seeking reconciliation with the Longbourn family he had a wife in view, as he meant to chuse one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends – of atonement – for inheriting their father’s estate; and he thought an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part. (PP: 78)

He exposes his plan about marrying Jane to Mrs. Bennet, who tells him that Jane is expected to be engaged soon. “Mr Collins had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth – and it was soon done[...]Elizabeth, equally next to Jane in birth and beauty, succeeded her of course.” (PP: 79)

Then soon Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth and acknowledges his “design” in doing so. He explains that the first reason is to set an example as he is a clergyman, the second one is his happiness, the third one is it is his Ladyship’s advice. He says that he chooses a wife in Longbourn as he will inherit their father’s estate. Though Elizabeth rejects him, he continues his advances. Elizabeth declares: “I am perfectly serious in my refusal. - You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so.” (PP: 120)

Elizabeth’s marrying to Mr. Collins will secure her life as he will inherit the Bennet estate, however, she does not give the slightest consideration to marrying him.

As her sentences as to her refusals have not been enough for her cousin, she further says that: ‘I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart.’ (PP: 122)

Elizabeth’s declining Mr. Collins’s offer of marriage reveals her idea of marriage. Marrying for financial security is the last thing in her mind. When analysing Elizabeth’s answer to Mr. Collins’s proposal, the critic suggests that “His decision to choose a wife from among his cousin’s daughters might have been sound business, but sound business was not what Elizabeth wanted or expected from a marriage proposal.” (Teachman, 1997: 7)

Weldon suggests that “[In reading *Pride and Prejudice*] we believe with her that Elizabeth should marry for love [...]” (Weldon, 1997: 35)

Next, Mr. Collins proposes to Charlotte Lucas who encourages him in his advances and is accepted:

In as short a time as Mr Collins’s long speeches would allow, everything was settled between them to the satisfaction of both; and as they entered the house, he earnestly entreated her to name the day that was to make him the happiest of men; and though such a solicitation must be waived for the present, the lady felt no inclination to trifle with his happiness. The stupidity with which he was favoured by nature, must guard his courtship from any charm that could make a woman wish for its continuance; and Miss Lucas, who accepted him solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment, cared not how soon that establishment were gained. (PP: 137)

Charlotte has neither charms nor fortune to recommend her. According to Bromberg, Charlotte “represents the limited options afforded a nineteenth century woman who possesses intelligence and ambition but who lacks beauty, money, or high social status.” She is twenty seven, an age that is late for marrying at the time. She “is nearly an old maid, who lacks the beauty and wealth that would have attracted suitors.” (Bromberg, 1993; 129) The novel indicates that “[...] Mr Collins’s present circumstances made it a most eligible match for their daughter, to whom they could give little fortune; and his prospects of future wealth were exceedingly fair.” (PP: 137)

Weldon denotes that Charlotte “was extremely lucky to find happiness with Mr Collins, whom she married so as not, in a phrase dating from that time, to be left on ‘the shelf’. She believed it was better not to marry at all, than to marry without love.” (Weldon, 1997: 35)

Charlotte’s aim has been to secure her financial future by marrying,

She had gained her point, and had time to consider of it. Her reflections were in general satisfactory. Mr Collins to be sure was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband. - Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it. (PP: 137-138)

Regarding this, Bromberg states that “Charlotte’s marriage to Mr. Collins illuminates one of the novel’s central arguments about the dangers to self, and to family and community, of marriages based solely on economic and social considerations rather than on mutual understanding, respect, and love. ” (Bromberg, 1993; 130)

Charlotte’s marrying Elizabeth reminds us what she has earlier said to her concerning marriage. Regarding this, MacDonagh denotes that “Charlotte had lived up to her creed” as she has behaved like she has preached before. “Certainly, Elizabeth Bennet did not believe that Charlotte was wholly serious, still less that she would ever act on such an outrageous principle. But Charlotte did precisely what she advocated.” (MacDonagh, 1991: 34)

When Charlotte gives the news of her engagement to Mr. Collins, Elizabeth is astonished: “...her astonishment was consequently so great as to overcome at first the bounds of decorum, and she could not help crying out, ‘Engaged to Mr Collins! my dear Charlotte, - impossible!’” (PP: 140)

Charlotte explains:

‘I see what you are feeling,’ replied Charlotte, - ‘you must be surprised, very much surprised, - so lately as Mr Collins was wishing to marry you. But when you have had time to think it all over, I hope you will be satisfied with

what I have done. I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr Collins's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast on entering the marriage state.' (PP: 140)

Poovey indicates that "[...] when Charlotte Lucas rejects romance, she does so for its opposite, the matter-of-fact assessment that a 'comfortable home' is more substantial than romantic fantasies." (Poovey, 1998: 90)

Elizabeth has now seen that Charlotte has acted by her design. According to Elizabeth, her motive is mercenary. "She had always felt that Charlotte's opinion of matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it to possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage." (PP: 141)

According to Bromberg "*Pride and Prejudice* furnishes a critique of the prevailing socioeconomic basis of marriage and its inscription in the sentimental novel while ultimately advocating a reformed version of marriage through the central courtship plot." (Bromberg, 1993: 126)

When Elizabeth talks to Jane about Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins, Jane states that:

'[...] You do not make allowance enough for difference of situation and temper. Consider Mr Collins's respectability, and Charlotte's prudent, steady character. Remember that she is one of a large family; that as to fortune, it is a most eligible match; and be ready to believe, for everybody's sake, that she may feel something like regard and esteem for our cousin.' (PP: 153)

Elizabeth, however, advocates what she believes in and says:

'To oblige you, I would try to believe almost anything, but no one else could be benefited by such a belief as this; for were I persuaded that Charlotte had any regard for him, I should only think worse of her understanding, than I now do of her heart. My dear Jane, Mr Collins is a conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man; you know he is, as well as I do; and you must feel, as well as I do, that the woman who marries him, cannot have a proper way of thinking. You shall not defend her, though it is Charlotte Lucas. You shall not, for the sake of one individual, change the meaning of principle and integrity, nor endeavour to persuade yourself or me, that selfishness is prudence, and insensibility of danger, security for happiness.' (PP: 153-154)

According to the critic: “Elizabeth Bennet’s strength of character, self-honesty and acute intelligence make her a worthy and believable protagonist of the marriage of affection and respect.” (MacDonagh, 1991: 42)

MacDonagh asserts that there were other aspects of marriage to take into consideration:

There were many initial considerations: sufficiency of money, parity of rank, the sort of family to be joined, the location of the new home, and seriousness of principle and religion. Beyond these, of course, personal attraction mattered. A girl’s worst fate was a loveless marriage, which might well lead on to future misery or even vice [...] Reason and prudence should be counsellors, not kings. (MacDonagh, 1991: 72)

*Pride and Prejudice* advocates that “[...] both head and heart should possess a power of veto when it came to marriage; that two were not however of equal potency—the head might sometimes be overridden, the heart, never [...]” (MacDonagh, 1991: 42)

Patrice Hannon mentions Jane Austen’s engagement with Harris Bigg-Wither and that she broke it the next day although Harris was a wealthy and good-looking young man. “Jane evidently told Harris that she had mistake and could not marry him after all. It seems she simply did not love him.” Elizabeth faces the same decision. She rejects Mr. Collins and she will also reject Mr. Darcy the first time he proposes. Jane Austen fully understands that a woman without independent means must marry to secure her future even when she isn’t in love as we can see in the case of Charlotte Lucas, “and while she can show some sympathy for those who make that sad choice, when it came down to it, neither Austen herself nor any of her heroines would marry a man that she didn’t love. For Austen-but not her heroines-that meant never marrying at all.” (Hannon, 2007: 65-66)

MacDonagh, as well, analyses Jane Austen’s engagement to Harris Bigg-Wither and the reasons why she accepted his marriage proposal in the first place and why she withdrew from her decision the next morning. In accepting the proposal, the writer explores Jane Austen’s resemblances to her character Charlotte Lucas and states “[...] it was essentially security and provision that she sought.” But of course, he states that Jane Austen “did not set out to trap a husband after the manner of Charlotte Lucas [...]” Within twenty-four hours, Jane Austen broke off the engagement. She “realized that she

was playing with others' lives and felicity as well as her own [...]” In this respect, Elizabeth's principles reflect Jane Austen's. The writer concludes that “But essentially she was choosing, in the end, the system of marriages of integrity or love instead of marriages of prudence and material and social advancement.” (MacDonagh, 1991: 40-41)

Teachman explores views of marriage at the time:

It was a time of serious consideration of what marriage meant and how it was to be lived. The traditional view of marriage as a joining of families (and family fortunes) through the physical joining of two people continued to have much support. Viewing marriage as a business venture between families, therefore, continued to be widely accepted. At the same time, however, the political and social climate was encouraging the view of the individual as an individual. As a result, the preferences of individuals became more important than in the past, and marriage, while still a contract started to gain acceptance as an affective relationship—one in which the feelings and emotions of the individuals involved were given more consideration than previously. The idea of marrying for love took hold of many in society at this time. (Teachman, 1997: 53-54)

*Pride and Prejudice* reflect these changing of values concerning marriage very well in its story and its characters' opinions. Elizabeth Bennet and Charlotte Lucas represent two opposite sides of these changing values.

In the nineteenth Century England, marriage was viewed as a financial entity and Jane Austen's novels reflect this powerful aspect of marriage as the central concern of her characters and her society. As it was a period of changing values and opinions about marriage, Jane Austen shows us revolutionary ideas besides the traditional ones expressing these cultural shifts of the society. Bowers and brothers explore William Forsyth's idea that “husband hunting” is continuously exposed in Jane Austen's novels. About this Bowers and brothers points out to the fact that “to be sure, it was a personal and economic necessity that a husband be found.” (Bowers and brothers, 1990: 9)

Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins may be considered as the general exercise, “Yet although romantic marriage is clearly the ideal in *Pride and Prejudice*, pragmatic marriage is presented as common practice, if not in fact the commonest.” (MacDonagh, 1991: 35)

Elizabeth, in fact, sees marriages that she does not approve of. Her father has married her mother as he has caught up with her beauty but then has regretted it seeing her inappropriate manners and silliness. Charlotte marries only to secure herself financially. However, Elizabeth has an ideal for marriage and that is marrying for love.

Bridget also wants to be together with someone for love, but she is aware of the fact that people around her are not happy. ‘Why is entire world geared to make people not involved in romance feel stupid when everyone knows romance does not work anyway. Look at Royal family. Look at Mum and Dad.’ (BJD: 49)

Later when Elizabeth visits her friend in her new home, she sees that Charlotte tries to avoid her husband as much as possible:

When Mr Collins said anything of which his wife might reasonably be ashamed, which certainly was not unseldom, she involuntarily turned her eye on Charlotte. Once or twice she could discern a faint blush; but in general Charlotte wisely did not hear[...] To work in this garden was one of his most respectable pleasures; and Elizabeth admired the command of countenance with which Charlotte talked of the healthfulness of the exercise, and owned she encouraged it as much as possible. (PP: 177)

Regarding this, the critic denotes that “But while she gives Charlotte credit for her neat accommodations, she does not alter her view that marriage simply out of desire for an ‘establishment’ is an unprincipled act.” (Duckworth, 1998: 166)

In the nineteenth century England, the values concerning women and marriage were slightly beginning to change. Virginia Woolf observes the changing values of the time as relation to marriage: “It was no longer the exception for women of the middle and upper classes to choose their own husbands.” (Woolf, 1979: 45)

Brown analyses the ideas of the social historian Lawrence Stone and asserts that he “calls this change the rise of ‘affective individualism,’ suggesting by the term an intrinsic relation between the democratization of society and the inner life. Austen shows her awareness and perhaps endorsement of this shift in culture by having Elizabeth Bennet declare her right to be happy [...]” (Brown, 1993: 60-61) Observing Stone’s theory of social history, Brown suggests: “only in a highly individualist society does happiness arise as an ideal; those who see themselves as living for themselves become interested in happiness.” (Brown, 1993: 61)

Therefore, Elizabeth's idea of romance is established at the beginning of the novel. She condemns marriage for financial reasons and believes in marrying for love. Her idea of marriage is radical for the time and it reflects the changing values concerning marriage and women. Elizabeth is in a situation which makes it hard not to think about finances as discussed before in this chapter.

Although the circumstances are quite different, Bridget would rather marry for love as well. She has got a job to live on and spends her money as she likes. She does not need a man to secure her future, and the idea of marriage for financial considerations never occurs to her. She dreams of marrying to Daniel as she thinks she loves him: "Head is full of fantasies about living in flats with him and running along beaches together with tiny offspring in manner of Calvin Klein advert, being trendy Smug Married instead of sheepish singleton." (BJD: 131)

Elizabeth is not interested in wealth and financial security. This has been obvious when she has rejected Mr. Collins. This is once more certain when she declines the first marriage proposal of Mr. Darcy. It does not matter for her how rich he is.

The first sentence of Mr. Darcy's proposal tells a lot. His sentence means that he has considered the prudence of the match over and over again, that they are not suitable for each other, however, that he has surrendered to his feelings: 'In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.' (PP: 210)

Elizabeth is astonished at such an outburst of affection. She has not expected it in the least. Darcy's proposal is far from tempting her to accept it, he mentions her inferiority, and the family objections of such a match:

Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement, and the avowal of all that he felt, and had long felt for her, immediately followed. He spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority—of its being a degradation—of the family obstacles which had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit. (PP: 210)

Waldron indicates that when Darcy first proposes to Elizabeth, “he can only see himself as generously stooping to Elizabeth’s level and fondly imagines her grateful for his condescension.” (Waldron, 1999: 54)

Elizabeth is flattered. She is angry at his way of declaring his love and she is prejudiced: “In spite of her deeply-rooted dislike, she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man’s affection, and though her intentions did not vary for an instant, she was at first sorry for the pain he was to receive; till, roused to resentment by his subsequent language, she lost all compassion in anger.” (PP: 210)

Elizabeth cannot quite believe that Darcy, who seems perfect with all his connections, upbringing, rank and money, shows affection for her.

Bridget goes almost through the same thought process and thinks Mark Darcy to be too excellent. “Maybe Mark Darcy is too perfect, clean and finished off at the edges for me, with his capability, intelligence, lack of smoking, freedom from alcoholism, and his chauffeur-driven cars.” (BJD: 286)

Elizabeth can easily see that Mr. Darcy is rather sure that she will accept him: “He concluded with representing to her the strength of that attachment which, in spite of all his endeavours, he had found impossible to conquer; and with expressing his hope that it would now be rewarded by her acceptance of his hand. As he said this, she could easily see that he had no doubt of a favourable answer.” (PP: 210)

However, Elizabeth does not accept his proposal:

‘In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It is natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot—I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to any one. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I hope will be of short duration.’ (PP: 210-211)

Darcy is yet unable to see the inconvenient manner of his proposal and claims an explanation: ‘And this is all the reply which I am to have the honour of expecting! I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little endeavour at civility, I am thus rejected. But it is of small importance.’ (PP: 211)

Elizabeth's answer is hard-headed as she is aware of the insult that his proposal causes:

'I might as well enquire,' replied she, 'why with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? Was not this some excuse for incivility, if I was uncivil? But I have other provocations. You know I have. Had not my feelings decided against you, had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?' (PP: 211-212)

She has been prejudiced against him more than ever as that day she has learned, from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Darcy has been the strongest force in separating her sister from Bingley and thus has been the reason for Jane's sufferings. When Elizabeth asks Darcy if he can deny his interference in their relationship, he replies:

'I have no wish of denying that I did every thing in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself.'

Elizabeth disdained the appearance of noticing this civil reflection, but its meaning did not escape, nor was it likely to conciliate her. (PP: 212-213)

Then, Elizabeth lays another charge concerning Mr. Wickham and him. She states that her opinion of him has been decided after what she has heard from Wickham on which Darcy says: 'You take an eager interest in that gentleman's concerns,' said Darcy in a less tranquil tone, and with a heightened colour. 'Who that knows what his misfortunes have been, can help feeling an interest in him?' 'His misfortunes!' repeated Darcy contemptuously; 'yes, his misfortunes have been great indeed.' (PP: 213) She further accuses him of depriving Wickham of his profession and therefore being the cause of his poverty.

Darcy defines Elizabeth's situation in life below his own and attributes her rejection to his open declaration of this inferiority:

'And this,' cried Darcy, as he walked with quick steps across the room, 'is your opinion of me! This is the estimation in which you hold me! I thank you for explaining it so fully. My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed! But perhaps,' added he, stopping in his walk, and turning towards

her, 'these offenses might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I with greater policy concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by reason, by reflection, by every thing. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed of the feelings I related. They were natural and just. Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?' (PP: 213-214)

It is clear that Darcy sees himself superior to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, on the other hand, is far from regarding herself as inferior to him or anybody. On this, the critic suggests that "She, of course, sees it quite differently, for her sense of self worth at first prevents her from understanding his conflicts, or sympathising with them if she did." (Waldron, 1999: 54)

Elizabeth states that his manner in declaring his love for her has not affected her decision. She expresses that he has not declared his desire to marry her in a "gentlemanlike manner". 'You are mistaken, Mr Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner.' (PP: 213-214)

After the proposal scene, Darcy's letter plays a crucial role. Elizabeth comes to a new recognition of Darcy's character and sees him in a different light as she reads and rereads his letter. All the charges against him concerning Mr. Wickham are now resolved. She thinks about the times she has spent with Wickham and understands that his manners have been pretentious. His conversing with her about Darcy, seeing no harm in gossiping about him and doing this in the very first night of their acquaintance make her see the truth. Readers also go through this process with Elizabeth remembering the scenes of the earlier chapters. Darcy's letter helps Elizabeth to grow "out of her initial enchantment with Wickham and into a respectful affection for Darcy, which would (we may safely assume) deepen as married love." (MacDonagh, 1991: 73)

Mr. Darcy has before mentioned that Wickham cannot be trusted, yet Elizabeth has ignored it. Darcy says: 'Mr. Wickham is blessed with such happy manners as may ensure his making friends - whether he may be equally capable of retaining them, is less

certain.’ (PP: 103) Elizabeth, who has given no credit to his sentence back then, later learns that he has been right.

Before Bridget learns that Daniel is cheating on her, she senses it in a way listening to her intuition: “I just started having paranoid fantasy for no reason about Daniel having an affair with someone else and thinking up dignified but cutting remarks to make him sorry. Now why should that be? Have I sensed with a woman’s intuition that he is having an affair?” (BJD: 143)

In her family’s friends’ party, Una states that Bridget is going out with Daniel and Mark tries to warn Bridget:

‘What’s his name, Bridget? Daniel, is it? Pam says he’s one of these sooper-doooper young publishers.’

‘Daniel Cleaver?’ said Mark Darcy.

‘Yes, it is, actually,’ I said, jutting my chin out.

‘Is he a friend of yours, Mark?’ said Una.

‘Absolutely not,’ Mark said, abruptly.

‘Ooooh. I hope he’s good enough for our little Bridget,’ Una pressed on, winking at me as if this was all hilarious fun instead of hideous.

‘I think, I could say again, with total confidence, absolutely not,’ said Mark. (BJD: 171)

In fact, Bridget is not wrong in all her sensations and neither is Mark Darcy in his claims. That night, Bridget goes to Daniel’s and sees that he is together with someone else. “At rooftop encounter I didn’t say a single word to Daniel: just put my nose in the air, slithered past him, marched down to the street into car and drove away.” (BJD: 182)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, when considering Mr. Darcy’s interference in the affair of her sister and Bingley, she is first furious and does not want to yield to the idea that her family has been the main cause of their separation.

According to Waldron:

[...] going over to his side; she is flattered; her fury gradually turns against herself rather than him, and she is hopeless about ‘the unhappy defects of her

family', which no one knows better than she. Gradually she begins to forgive him. By the end of her musings, Jane's disappointment has become not the fault of Darcy, but of her family, compounded with Jane's adherence to the principle that a girl should not 'betray a preference' prematurely. (Waldron, 1999: 56)

Seeing the manners of her family as the reason behind Jane's misery makes her realise the honour of Darcy's proposal. After she gets his letter, they do not see each other until Elizabeth visits Pemberly when she is on a tour with her uncle and aunt. Waldron mentions that meanwhile we know nothing about the thought process of Darcy. When the two meet in Darcy's estate: "There is a pause in the narrative as we contemplate the elements in the drama – the backdrop of Pemberly, with all its implications of status and grandeur, and the dramatis personae: Darcy himself, Elizabeth, and the deplorable relations in the background. Elizabeth expects Darcy to flee, but he does not." (Waldron, 1999: 56-57)

Darcy's estate, Pemberly is crucial for Elizabeth's understanding his character along with her own feelings toward him. Poovey describes Pemberly as "[...] the vast estate whose permanence, prominence, and unique and uniquely satisfying fusion of individual taste and utility, of nature and art, symbolize Jane Austen's ideal." (Poovey, 1998: 94) Elizabeth sees the greatness of the place and for the first time thinks what she has formerly denied herself to think. "Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste [...] and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" (PP: 269) When Elizabeth sees how wonderful Darcy's estate is, she also comes to realise his responsibilities as the owner and the landlord of such an estate. On this Brown denotes that "Elizabeth is right when she recognizes that to join Darcy's family and become mistress of Pemberly would indeed 'be something.' Family and marriage occupied a far more public and central position in the social government and economic arrangements of English society [...]" (Brown, 1993: 59) When they are inside, she thinks to herself: 'And of this place,' thought she, 'I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been familiarly acquainted!' (PP: 270)

Bridget is impressed by Mark Darcy's house when she goes there to his parents' ruby wedding party. "Had shock on arrival at the part as Mark Darcy's house was not a

thin white terraced house on Portland Road or similar as had anticipated, but huge, detached wedding cake-style mansion on the other side of Holland Park Avenue...surrounded by greenery.” (BJD: 227)

Elizabeth does not expect to meet him on his estate as she has made sure that he is away from his home before she goes to visit it. However, he has returned a day early and they are astonished to see each other at Pemberly. “They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance, that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of both were overspread with the deepest blush.” (PP: 275-276) Then we learn that he is being very civil in his behaviour toward Elizabeth and she “knew not what answer she returned to his civil inquiries after her family. Amazed at the alteration of his manner since they last parted, every sentence that he uttered was increasing her embarrassment [...]” (PP: 276)

According to Waldron, Darcy “[...] has so modified his behaviour to her that she can hardly believe how much she had disliked him before [...]” (Waldron, 1999: 58) Darcy’s altered manners toward herself and her family play an important part in her reconsideration of her feelings for him. Elizabeth is curious about his feelings for herself, and it is sensed that, deep inside, she still wants to be in his heart.

Her thoughts were all fixed on that one spot of Pemberley House, whichever it might be, where Mr Darcy then was. She longed to know what at the moment was passing in his mind; in what manner he thought of her, and whether, in defiance of everything, she was still dear to him. Perhaps he had been civil, only because he felt himself at ease; yet there had been that in his voice, which was not like ease. Whether he had felt more of pain or of pleasure in seeing her, she could not tell, but he certainly had not seen her with composure. (PP: 277-278)

Then to their astonishment, Darcy returns to show them around, and he wants to be introduced to Elizabeth’s relatives.<sup>13</sup> When Elizabeth and Darcy walk by themselves, he acknowledges that Mr. Bingley is joining them tomorrow and that her sister desires to meet her: “She immediately felt that whatever desire Miss Darcy might have of being acquainted with her, must be the work of her brother, and without looking farther, it was satisfactory; it was gratifying to know that his resentment had not made him think really ill of her.” (PP: 281)

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<sup>13</sup> His civility is dealt with under the title *Manners* in chapter V.

Darcy wants to please Elizabeth in every possible way and she is well aware of this change in him:

When she saw him thus seeking the acquaintance, and courting the good opinion of people, with whom any intercourse a few months ago would have been a disgrace; when she saw him thus civil, not only to herself, but to the very relations whom he had openly disdained, and recollected their last lively scene in Hunsford Parsonage, the difference, the change was so great, and struck so forcibly on her mind, that she could hardly restrain her astonishment from being visible. Never, even in the company of his dear friends at Netherfield, or his dignified relations at Rosings, had she seen him so desirous to please, so free from self-consequence, or unbending reserve as now, [...] (PP: 288)

As to the quiet observers, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, "It was evident that she was much better acquainted with Mr Darcy than they had before any idea of; it was evident that he was very much in love with her. They saw much to interest, but nothing to justify enquiry." (PP: 289-290)

Darcy's renewed manners toward Elizabeth and her family, his introducing her to his sister have been the key points in Elizabeth's recognition of her own feelings. She respects and esteems Darcy more than ever. She is almost sure that he still loves her and she has power over him.

[...] above respect and esteem, there was a motive within her of goodwill which could not be overlooked. It was gratitude. - gratitude, not merely for having once loved her, but for loving her still well enough, to forgive all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him, and all the unjust accusations accompanying her rejection. He who, she had been persuaded, would avoid her as his greatest enemy, seemed, on this accidental meeting, most eager to preserve the acquaintance, and without any indelicate display of regard, or any peculiarity of manner, where their two selves only were concerned, was soliciting the good opinion of her friends, and bent on making her known to his sister. Such a change in a man of so much pride, excited not only astonishment but gratitude - for to love, ardent love, it must be attributed; and as such its impression on her was of a sort to be encouraged, as by no means unpleasing, though it could not be exactly defined. She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses. (PP: 291)

In Mark's parents' party, he impresses Bridget with his manners. She is dancing with a young boy when he appears,

‘I’ll take over, now, Simon,’ said a voice.

It was Mark Darcy[...]

‘May I?’ said Mark, holding out his hand to me.

‘No,’ I said, furious.

‘What’s the matter?’

‘Um,’ I said, failing for an excuse for being so angry. ‘That was a horrible thing to do to a young whippersnapper, ... humiliating him like that at a sensitive age.’ Then noticing his baffled expression, I gabbled on. ‘Though I do appreciate your asking me to your party. Marvellous. Thank you very much. Fantastic party.’

‘Yes. I think you’ve said that,’ he said, blinking fast. The truth is, he looked rather agitated and hurt. (BJD: 234)

He finally asks her out. I stopped and stared at him. “ ‘Has my mum put you up to this?’ I said, suspiciously.” (BJD: 235) Bridget has not yet overcome her prejudices against him.

They decide to go on a date. Bridget gets ready for the date yet he does not show up. She believes that he has stood her up. ‘Where in the name of arse were you last night?’ I said. ‘I might ask the same question of you,’ he said, icily. (BJD: 241)

There has been a misunderstanding. ‘So where were you last night?’ asked Mark Darcy. ‘Waiting for bloody you,’ I said between clenched teeth. ‘What, at half past eight? When I rang on your doorbell twelve times?’ ‘Yes, I was...’ I said, feeling the first twinges of realization, ‘drying my hair.’...‘Maybe you should get a quieter hairdryer [...]’ (BJD: 242)

At that time, Bridget misses the interview that she has been waiting for, and Mark says: ‘Actually, nobody got any interviews with her,’ said Mark Darcy. ‘Didn’t they?’ I said, looking up at him desperately. ‘But how do you know?’ ‘Because I was defending her, and I told her not to give any,’ he said casually [...] Anyway. Come on,’ he said laughing. ‘Get your cameraman ready, I’ll see what I can do for you.’ (BJD: 242)

When Elizabeth is sure of her success over Darcy, Jane’s letter containing the news of Lydia’s elopement arrives. Jane writes that Lydia “was gone off to Scotland

with one of his officers; to own the truth, with Wickham!” (PP: 299) In her second letter, Jane writes on: “Imprudent as the marriage between Mr Wickham and our poor Lydia would be, we are now anxious to be assured it has taken place, for there is but too much reason to fear they are not gone to Scotland.” (PP: 300) Jane wants her to return to Longbourn and when Elizabeth is so lost with anxiety, Darcy arrives. On seeing her in this state, he gets worried. Elizabeth “[...] looking so miserably ill, that it was impossible for Darcy to leave her, or to refrain from saying, in a tone of gentleness and commiseration, ‘Let me call your maid. Is there nothing you could take, to give you present relief? - A glass of wine; - shall I get you one? - You are very ill.’” (PP: 303)

Then she relates the bad news to him,

Darcy was fixed in astonishment. ‘When I consider,’ she added, in a yet more agitated voice, ‘that I might have prevented it! - I who knew what he was. Had I but explained some part of it only - some part of what I learnt, to my own family! Had his character been known, this could not have happened. But it is all, all too late now.’

‘I am grieved, indeed,’ cried Darcy; ‘grieved - shocked. But is it certain, absolutely certain?’ (PP: 303)

Like Elizabeth, Bridget also gets the news of her mother’s illegal dealings just as she has been fancying the kind and gentle attentions of Mark Darcy. She has invited him and her friends to dinner that night and Mark with his kind manners have impressed her. Then Bridget’s father calls and lets her know that her ‘[...] mother and Julio are wanted by the police’ Bridget’s mother has been to Portugal with her boyfriend Julio, ‘I’m afraid they – possibly, and I pray, without your mother’s knowledge – have defrauded a large number of people, including myself, and some of our very closest friends, out of a great deal of money [...]’ (BJD: 272)

Elizabeth is startled and she is exactly aware of the meaning of her sister’s elopement. She is quite certain that her own and her family’s reputation is ruined by her action. She is humiliated. She thinks her power over him is over now.

Darcy made no answer. He seemed scarcely to hear her, and was walking up and down the room in earnest meditation, his brow contracted, his air gloomy. Elizabeth soon observed, and instantly understood it. Her power was sinking; everything must sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace. She could neither wonder nor condemn,

but the belief of his self-conquest brought nothing to her consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress. It was, on the contrary, exactly calculated to make her understand her own wishes; and never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain. (PP: 304)

As Elizabeth realises her feelings for Darcy, Bridget dreams of being with, even getting married to Mark Darcy when it seems the least probable. “Find self, in spite of self, trying out own name imagining Sharon and Jude in years to come, boring their daughters rigid by going ‘You know Bridget and Mark, darling, who live in the big house in Holland Park and go on lots of holidays to the Caribbean [...]’” (BJD: 276) Bridget is gradually beginning to recognise her feelings for Mark.

At such a state as this, Elizabeth does not blame Darcy for leaving her, nobody in the nineteenth century England would blame him for running away from her. Mr. Collins’s letter after Lydia’s elopement reflects this mode of thinking very well.

‘[...] you are grievously to be pitied, in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs Collins, but likewise by Lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair. They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter, will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others, for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family?’ (PP: 325)

Lydia has no money or fortune to tempt Wickham to marry her, as it is, Elizabeth thinks that he has no intention of getting married to her.

[...] she was all surprise - all astonishment that Wickham should marry a girl, whom it was impossible he could marry for money; and how Lydia could ever have attached him, had appeared incomprehensible. But now it was all too natural. For such an attachment as this, she might have sufficient charms; and though she did not suppose Lydia to be deliberately engaging in an elopement, without the intention of marriage, she had no difficulty in believing that neither her virtue nor her understanding would preserve her from falling an easy prey. (PP: 306)

In her letter Jane states that Wickham’s friend, Denny thinks Wickham does not intend to marry Lydia. Furthermore, Elizabeth, knowing his character, is convinced that “Wickham will never marry a woman without some money. He cannot afford it. And what claims has Lydia; what attraction has she beyond youth, health, and good humour that could make him, for her sake, forego every chance of benefiting himself by marrying well.” (PP: 310)

When their uncle, Mr. Gardiner finds Lydia and Wickham in London, he writes: 'I have seen them both. They are not married, nor can I find there was any intention of being so; but if you are willing to perform the engagements which I have ventured to make on your side, I hope it will not be long before they are.' (PP: 331) He states that Lydia's share of her inheritance should be given in order for them to get married upon which Elizabeth and her father think that Mr. Gardiner has paid all his debts as it is impossible for him to marry her for so little. Mr. Bennet says: 'Yes, yes, they must marry. There is nothing else to be done. But there are two things that I want very much to know: - one is, how much money your uncle has laid down, to bring it about; and the other, how am I ever to pay him.' (PP: 333)

The novel creates suspense as to the interference of Mr. Darcy in the marriage of Lydia and Wickham. Elizabeth has not known anything about what Darcy has done to make their marriage take place.

The same suspense goes on in Bridget Jones's Dairy as well. "Had thought only silver lining in cloud of mother's criminality was that it might bring me and Mark Darcy closer together but have not heard a peep from him since he left the Alconburys.'" (BJD: 276) Mark goes to Portugal to search for Julio and her mother and tries to save her from the situation that she is in. Bridget later learns all these:

It turns out Mark has spent quite lot of time in Portugal over the last month, in manner of heartwarming private detective. He told me he tracked Julio down to Funchaland found out quite a bit about where the funds were, but couldn't cajole, or threaten, Julio into returning anything. 'Think he might now, though,' he said, grinning. He's really v. sweet, as well as being rocky smart. (BJD: 305)

Mark Darcy tries to do everything for Bridget just like Mr. Darcy does for Elizabeth. Mark manages to get Julio arrested and therefore, saves Bridget's reputation.

Mrs. Bennet is pleased to see one of her daughters married and she does not care about the circumstances of this marriage. "No sentiment of shame gave a damp to her triumph. The marriage of a daughter, which had been the first object of her wishes, since Jane was sixteen, was now on the point of accomplishment, [...]" (PP: 340)

Elizabeth does not have the slightest idea that Darcy is the one who makes Lydia and Wickham's marriage take place. She regrets making Lydia's elopement known to Darcy now that they are getting married. She thinks that being related to Wickham is the last thing that Darcy would wish for.

Had Lydia's marriage been concluded on the most honourable terms, it was not to be supposed that Mr Darcy would connect himself with a family, where to every other objection would now be added, an alliance and relationship of the nearest kind with a man whom he so justly scorned. From such a connection she could not wonder that he would shrink. The wish of procuring her regard, which she had assured herself of his feeling in Derbyshire, could not in rational expectation survive such a blow as this. (PP: 341)

It is made clear that Elizabeth is now eager to accept Mr. Darcy's proposal, she recognises her feelings for him:

She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what. She became jealous of his esteem, when she could no longer hope to be benefited by it. She wanted to hear of him, when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him; when it was no longer likely they should meet. What a triumph for him, as she often thought, could he know that the proposals which she had proudly spurned only four months ago, would now have been most gladly and gratefully received! He was as generous, she doubted not, as the most generous of his sex. But while he was mortal, there must be a triumph. She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was an union that must have been to the advantage of both; by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved, and from his judgement, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (PP: 341-342)

Then Lydia and Wickham visit Longbourn after they get married. "They seemed each of them to have the happiest memories in the world. Nothing of the past was recollected with pain [...]" (pp: 346) Lydia talks about her sisters' going to Brighton and finding husbands for them, upon which Elizabeth says: 'I thank you for my share of the favour,' said Elizabeth; 'but I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands.' (PP: 348)

To the astonishment of Elizabeth, Lydia talks about Mr. Darcy's being present in their wedding. 'Oh, yes! - he was to come there with Wickham, you know. But gracious

me! I quite forgot! I ought not to have said a word about it. I promised them so faithfully! What will Wickham say? It was to be such a secret!’ (PP: 350)

Elizabeth wonders the reason of his presence in her sister’s wedding:

Mr. Darcy had been at her sister’s wedding. It was exactly a scene, and exactly among people, where he had apparently least to do, and least temptation to go. Conjectures as to the meaning of it, rapid and wild, hurried into her brain; but she was satisfied with none. Those that best pleased her, as placing his conduct in the noblest light, seemed most improbable. She could not bear such suspense; and hastily seizing a sheet of paper, wrote a short letter to her aunt, to request an explanation of what Lydia had dropt, if it were compatible with the secrecy which had been intended. (PP: 350)

In a letter, Mrs. Gardiner, on her niece’s request, explains all that have happened:

He came to tell Mr Gardiner that he had found out where your sister and Mr Wickham were, and that he had seen and talked with them both, Wickham repeatedly, Lydia once. From what I can collect, he left Derbyshire only one day after ourselves, and came to town with the resolution of hunting for them. The motive professed, was his conviction of its being owing to himself that Wickham’s worthlessness had not been so well known, as to make it impossible for any young woman of character, to love or confide in him. [...] He called it, therefore, his duty to step forward, and endeavour to remedy an evil, which had been brought on by himself. (PP: 352-353)

Just as Darcy, Mark Darcy also blames himself for not doing anything for Julio though he has suspected him before:

‘I blame myself,’ he said, running his hands through his hair. ‘I should have made myself more clear at the Tarts and Vicars party. I knew there was something dodgy about Julio.’

He started to pace around the room firing questions like a top barrister.

‘What’s being done to find her?’ ‘What are the sums involved?’ ‘How did the matter come to light?’ [...] ‘Where is your father now?’ ‘Would you like to go to him?’ ‘Will you allow me to take you?’ It was pretty damn sexy, I can tell you. (BJD: 274)

Darcy finds out that Wickham has had no intention of marrying Lydia. “[...] a marriage, which, in his very first conversation with Wickham, he easily learnt, had never been his design.” (PP: 354) Darcy tries every possible way for making him marry her and pays all his debts. ‘You know pretty well, I suppose, what has been done for the young people. His debts are to be paid, amounting, I believe, to considerably more than

a thousand pounds, another thousand in addition to her own settled upon her, and his commission purchased.’ (PP: 355-356)

Elizabeth’s uncle and aunt believe that another motive, other than Darcy states, lies beneath his dealings with Lydia and Wickham. At the end of her letter, she makes her wishes known to her niece by writing:

‘Will you be very angry with me, my dear Lizzy, if I take this opportunity of saying (what I was never bold enough to say before) how much I like him. His behaviour to us has, in every respect, been as pleasing as when we were in Derbyshire. His understanding and opinions all please me; he wants nothing but a little more liveliness, and that, if he marry prudently, his wife may teach him. I thought him very sly; - he hardly ever mentioned your name. But slyness seems the fashion. Pray forgive me, if I have been very presuming, or at least do not punish me so far as to exclude me from P. I shall never be quite happy till I have been all round the park.’ (PP: 357)

Until this time, Elizabeth has had no idea of Darcy’s help to bring about Lydia and Wickham’s marriage. “The contents of this letter threw Elizabeth into a flutter of spirits, in which it was difficult to determine whether pleasure or pain bore the greatest share.” (PP: 357)

Ferris denotes that “When she learns that Darcy has bribed Wickham to marry Lydia, she realizes his motives lie in his love for her [...]” (Ferriss, 2006: 81) “Her heart did whisper, that he had done it for her. But it was a hope shortly checked by other considerations, and she soon felt that even her vanity was insufficient, when required to depend on his affection for her, for a woman who had already refused him [...]” (PP: 358) Darcy later admits to Elizabeth that she is the only person to thank to him as all has been done for her.

However, Elizabeth believes that Darcy will escape such a connection to Wickham. “Brother in law of Wickham! Every kind of pride must revolt from the connection.” (PP: 358)

Mr. Bingley arrives at the neighbourhood, and with good reason. He has now gained her most-beloved friend’s consent to marry Jane. That this consent has been given by Darcy will be made clear later in the novel, when Elizabeth and he dwell on the issue. She asserts that “ ‘That is to say, you had given your permission. I guessed as

much.’ And though he exclaimed at the term, she found that it had been pretty much the case.” (PP: 408) Darcy mentions his admitting to Bingley that he has concealed Jane’s being in London. “ ‘[...] I told him, moreover, that I believed myself mistaken in supposing, as I had done, that your sister was indifferent to him; and as I could easily perceive that his attachment to her was unabated, I felt no doubt of their happiness together.’ Elizabeth could not help smiling at his easy manner of directing his friend.” (PP: 408)

Bingley and Darcy visit Longbourn. Elizabeth feels that Darcy’s desire for her has not ceased:

Her astonishment at his coming - at his coming to Netherfield, to Longbourn, and voluntarily seeking her again, was almost equal to what she had known on first witnessing his altered behaviour in Derbyshire. The colour which had been driven from her face, returned for half a minute with an additional glow, and a smile of delight added lustre to her eyes, as she thought for that space of time, that his affection and wishes must still be unshaken. But she would not be secure. ‘Let me first see how he behaves,’ said she; ‘it will then be early enough for expectation.’ (PP: 367)

Darcy and Bingley are invited to dinner at Longbourn and Elizabeth is anxious to see and talk to Darcy:

Darcy had walked away to another part of the room. She followed him with her eyes, envied everyone to whom he spoke, had scarcely patience enough to help anybody to coffee; and then was enraged against herself for being so silly! ‘A man who has once been refused! How could I ever be foolish enough to expect a renewal of his love? Is there one among the sex, who would not protest against such a weakness as a second proposal to the same woman? There is no indignity so abhorrent to their feelings!’ (PP: 374-375)

Darcy visits Longbourn when he has the opportunity however, he is indifferent to Jane. Elizabeth gets impatient:

Anxious and uneasy, the period which passed in the drawing-room, before the gentlemen came, was wearisome and dull to a degree that almost made her uncivil. She looked forward to their entrance as the point on which all her chance of pleasure for the evening must depend. ‘If he does not come to me, then,’ said she, ‘I shall give him up for ever.’ (PP. 374)

Bingley and Jane are now engaged. ‘I am certainly the most fortunate creature that ever existed!’ cried Jane. ‘Oh! Lizzy, why am I thus singled from my family, and

blessed above them all! If I could but see you as happy! If there were but such another man for you!' (PP: 385)

Darcy has done all in his power to make Elizabeth glad. He has first arranged the marriage of her sister, Lydia and now he has made the way for Bingley and Jane's marriage. Elizabeth now longs for the renewal of his marriage proposal. However, Darcy needs encouragement. Even though he has done everything for Elizabeth, he is not yet certain of her feelings for him. This encouragement comes when Elizabeth resists all the desires of Lady Catherine.

Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth after she hears the rumours of his nephew's engagement to her and wants her to deny it.

'[...] A report of a most alarming nature, reached me two days ago. I was told, that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that you, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr Darcy. Though I know it must be a scandalous falsehood; though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.'

'If you believed it impossible to be true,' said Elizabeth, colouring with astonishment and disdain, 'I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?'

'At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted.' (PP: 388-389)

Lady Catherine then mentions that Darcy and her daughter's marriage have been planned by herself and his mother. This has no influence on Elizabeth as she says:

'Yes, and I had heard it before. But what is that to me? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it, by knowing that his mother and aunt wished him to marry Miss de Bourgh. You both did as much as you could, in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?'

'Because honour, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest; for do not expect to be noticed by his family or friends, if you wilfully act against the inclinations of all. You will be censured, slighted,

and despised, by everyone connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never even be mentioned by any of us.'

'These are heavy misfortunes,' replied Elizabeth. 'But the wife of Mr Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to repine.' (PP: 390-391)

On the constant insistence of Lady Catherine, Elizabeth states that she is not engaged to her nephew. Lady Catherine further asks: 'And will you promise me, never to enter into such an engagement?' 'I will make no promise of the kind.' (PP: 392) Lady Catherine is now convinced that she can not affect Elizabeth.

'You are then resolved to have him?'

'I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.'

'It is well. You refuse, then, to oblige me. You refuse to obey the claims of duty, honour, and gratitude. You are determined to ruin him in the opinion of all his friends, and make him the contempt of the world.'

'Neither duty, nor honour, nor gratitude,' replied Elizabeth, 'have any possible claim on me, in the present instance. No principle of either would be violated by my marriage with Mr Darcy. And with regard to the resentment of his family, or the indignation of the world, if the former were excited by his marrying me, it would not give me one moment's concern - and the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn.' (PP: 393-394)

Lady Catherine's sentences bear significance as to the class conventions of the time as well. It is very clear that she sees Elizabeth as inferior to her nephew and of course his connections including herself. Shortly after Lady Catherine's visit, Bingley arrives at Longbourn with Darcy. When Darcy and Elizabeth go walking, she has the chance to thank him for his kindness to Lydia. '[...] I can no longer help thanking you for your unexampled kindness to my poor sister. Ever since I have known it, I have been most anxious to acknowledge to you how gratefully I feel it. Were it known to the rest of my family, I should not have merely my own gratitude to express.' (PP: 402-403)

Darcy makes obvious that he has done everything for Elizabeth:

‘[...] Let me thank you again and again, in the name of all my family, for that generous compassion which induced you to take so much trouble, and bear so many mortifications, for the sake of discovering them.’

‘If you will thank me,’ he replied, ‘let it be for yourself alone. That the wish of giving happiness to you, might add force to the other inducements which led me on, I shall not attempt to deny. But your family owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I believe, I thought only of you.’ (PP: 403)

Mr. Darcy does everything in his power to get together with Elizabeth. He corrects his proud manners toward Elizabeth and overcomes his prejudices against her connections. He persuades Wickham to marry Lydia by giving him money and paying his debts. He brings about the marriage of Bingley and Jane by giving his consent to his friend as stated before. All this is done for gaining Elizabeth’s love as when she tries to thank him, he says she is the only reason why he has done all this.

Similarly when Mark rescues Bridget’s mother by finding Julio and getting him arrested, he says the reason for all his actions is obvious. ‘But, it was so kind of you, taking time off work and everything. Why did you bother doing all this?’ ‘Bridget,’ he said. ‘Isn’t it rather obvious?’ Oh, my God. (BJD: 306)

Mooneyham suggests that Elizabeth encourages Darcy by thanking him for his great help to Lydia’s marriage to Wickham and also Elizabeth’s previous conversation with Lady Catherine, her not yielding to her remarks about the improbability of the engagement of Darcy and herself create an atmosphere thus fitted for his renewed addresses. “Darcy must dare to propose again, must reopen the subject of the previous spring.” (Mooneyham, 1997: 139)

Darcy proposes again: “After a short pause, her companion added, ‘You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever.’” (PP: 403)

Elizabeth “gave him to understand that her sentiments had undergone so material a change, since the period to which he alluded, as to make her receive with gratitude and pleasure his present assurances.” (PP: 403)

Darcy is in love and thus very pleased to get a favourable answer from the woman he loves:

The happiness which this reply produced, was such as he had probably never felt before; and he expressed himself on the occasion as sensibly and as warmly as a man violently in love can be supposed to do. Had Elizabeth been able to encounter his eye, she might have seen how well the expression of heartfelt delight, diffused over his face, became him; but, though she could not look, she could listen, and he told her of feelings, which, in proving of what importance she was to him, made his affection every moment more valuable. (PP: 403-404)

After their failed first date, and the events concerning Bridget's mother have ruined their evening together, Mark is impatient to be together with Bridget. He gets to the Christmas party to ask Bridget out. "Mrs Jones," said Mark firmly. 'I am taking Bridget away to celebrate what is left of the Baby Jesus's birthday.' I took a deep breath and grasped Mark Darcy's proffered hand." (BJD: 305)

Elizabeth learns that the visit of Lady Catherine has produced an opposite effect than she has predicted. Darcy states: 'It taught me to hope,' said he, 'as I had scarcely ever allowed myself to hope before. I knew enough of your disposition to be certain, that, had you been absolutely, irrevocably decided against me, you would have acknowledged it to Lady Catherine, frankly and openly.' (PP: 404)

Darcy states that he has undergone an alteration since his first proposal to her. He has realised that he has proposed to her in a manner that cannot be accepted: 'What did you say of me, that I did not deserve? For, though your accusations were ill-founded, formed on mistaken premises, my behaviour to you at the time, had merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable. I cannot think of it without abhorrence.' (PP: 404)

Elizabeth is aware that they have both changed since that time. They go on analysing what they have said and thought back then:

'The conduct of neither, if strictly examined, will be irreproachable; but since then, we have both, I hope, improved in civility.'

'I cannot be so easily reconciled to myself. The recollection of what I then said, of my conduct, my manners, my expressions during the whole of it, is now, and has been many months, inexpressibly painful to me. Your reproof,

so well applied, I shall never forget: 'had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner.' Those were your words. You know not, you can scarcely conceive, how they have tortured me; - though it was some time, I confess, before I was reasonable enough to allow their justice.'

'I was certainly very far from expecting them to make so strong an impression. I had not the smallest idea of their being ever felt in such a way.'  
(PP: 405)

Darcy has been influenced by Elizabeth's sentences:

'I can easily believe it. You thought me then devoid of every proper feeling, I am sure you did. The turn of your countenance I shall never forget, as you said that I could not have addressed you in any possible way that would induce you to accept me.'

'Oh! do not repeat what I then said. These recollections will not do at all. I assure you that I have long been most heartily ashamed of it.' (PP: 405)

Then Darcy asks Elizabeth if his letter has produced any positive attitude toward himself: "Darcy mentioned his letter. 'Did it,' said he, 'did it soon make you think better of me? Did you, on reading it, give any credit to its contents?' She explained what its effect on her had been, and how gradually all her former prejudices had been removed." (PP: 405) Elizabeth further indicates that they are both so different from they have been then.

Darcy also admits how he has changed and how Elizabeth's words have enabled him to beat his prejudices and pride:

'[...] I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately an only son, (for many years an only child) I was spoilt by my parents, who, though good themselves, (my father particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable,) allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own. Such I was, from eight to eight and twenty; and such I might still have been but for you, dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased.' (PP: 406-407)

At night Elizabeth tells her sister, Jane that Darcy and she are engaged. However, Jane is astonished greatly.

‘[...] He still loves me, and we are engaged.’

Jane looked at her doubtingly. ‘Oh, Lizzy! it cannot be. I know how much you dislike him.’

‘You know nothing of the matter. That is all to be forgot. Perhaps I did not always love him so well as I do now. But in such cases as these, a good memory is unpardonable. This is the last time I shall ever remember it myself.’

Miss Bennet still looked all amazement. Elizabeth again, and more seriously assured her of its truth. (PP: 411)

Jane asks her sister if she can be happy with him, to which Elizabeth answers: ‘There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already, that we are to be the happiest couple in the world [...]’ (PP: 411)

The critic rightly claims that “It is true however that Jane Austen’s heroines were, in general, totally committed in heart before being engaged by hand.” (MacDonagh, 1991: 73)

After Darcy lets Elizabeth’s father know of their engagement, she has to make her father believe in her love for him. As Elizabeth is Mr. Bennet’s dearest, he will not let her marry a man she does not love or esteem. She reveals her feelings to her father by saying: ‘I do, I do like him,’ she replied, with tears in her eyes, ‘I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable. You do not know what he really is; then pray do not pain me by speaking of him in such terms.’ (PP: 414)

Elizabeth wants to learn thoughts and feelings of Darcy.

Elizabeth’s spirits soon rising to playfulness again, she wanted Mr Darcy to account for his having ever fallen in love with her. ‘How could you begin?’ said she. ‘I can comprehend your going on charmingly, when you had once made a beginning; but what could set you off in the first place?’

‘I cannot fix on the hour, or the spot, or the look, or the words, which laid the foundation. It is too long ago. I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun.’ (PP: 418)

Similarly, Bridget wants to learn how Mark Darcy has loved her. “[...]he told me all this stuff about how he loved me[...].” (BJD: 306) Just like Elizabeth she asks him questions to account for his love:

‘Why didn’t you ring me up before Christmas, then?’ I said suspiciously. ‘I left you two messages.’

‘I didn’t want to talk to you till I’d finished the job. And I didn’t think you liked me much.’

‘What?’

‘Well, you know. You stood me up because you were drying your hair? And the first time I met you I was wearing that stupid jumper and bumblebee socks from my aunt and behaved like a complete clod. I thought you thought I was the most frightful stiff.’

‘Well, I did, a bit,’ I said. ‘But [...]’ (BJD: 306)

Mark Darcy has wanted to be sure of Bridget’s feelings for him. Mr. Darcy has not proposed once more until he has believed that Elizabeth has feelings for him. It is apparent that Elizabeth and Darcy both have been shy but he expresses that he has been determined to propose again:

‘You might have talked to me more when you came to dinner.’

‘A man who had felt less, might.’

‘[...] I wonder when you would have spoken, if I had not asked you! My resolution of thanking you for your kindness to Lydia had certainly great effect. Too much, I am afraid; for what becomes of the moral, if our comfort springs from a breach of promise, for I ought not to have mentioned the subject? This will never do.’

‘You need not distress yourself. The moral will be perfectly fair. Lady Catherine’s unjustifiable endeavours to separate us were the means of removing all my doubts. I am not indebted for my present happiness to your eager desire of expressing your gratitude. I was not in a humour to wait for any opening of your’s. My aunt’s intelligence had given me hope, and I was determined at once to know every thing.’ (PP: 419-420)

Here, the reader can once more see that the judgement of the individual overcomes the judgement of the society. Brothers views love and marriage in accordance with “the rightness of individual judgement and choice.” Brothers analyses that the individual might be viewed as separated from the society and might act on the

basis of romantic love and therefore “Love and marriage, not class and marriage, were to go together [...]” (Brothers, 1990: 156-157)

The reader can see into Elizabeth and Darcy’s marriage. Jane and Bingley move very close to them: “Jane and Elizabeth, in addition to every other source of happiness, were within thirty miles of each other.” (PP: 424) Elizabeth and Darcy’s society has formed an example for Kitty who is now away from Lydia’s extravagant manners. Elizabeth often sends Lydia money as she knows very well that they exceed their income. Elizabeth and Jane try to pay their debts every time they move from one place to another. Lydia has asked her sister to assist her husband to acquire a position in court, yet, to these desires Elizabeth’s answer put an end. The novel indicates that “Though Darcy could never receive him at Pemberley, yet, for Elizabeth’s sake, he assisted him further in his profession. Lydia was occasionally a visitor there [...]” (PP: 426)

As for Georgiana and Elizabeth, they get on very well with each other as Darcy has desired:

Pemberley was now Georgiana’s home; and the attachment of the sisters was exactly what Darcy had hoped to see. They were able to love each other, even as well as they intended. Georgiana had the highest opinion in the world of Elizabeth; though at first she often listened with an astonishment bordering on alarm, at her lively, sportive, manner of talking to her brother. He, who had always inspired in herself a respect which almost overcame her affection, she now saw the object of open pleasantry. Her mind received knowledge which had never before fallen in her way. By Elizabeth’s instructions she began to comprehend that a woman may take liberties with her husband, which a brother will not always allow in a sister more than ten years younger than himself. (PP: 427)

About the end of the novel, the critic indicates that, “The last pages of *Pride and Prejudice* describe family connections radiating throughout society, closing the gap between geographical locations, social classes, and temperamental differences.” (Poovey, 1998: 94)

Elizabeth and Darcy’s marriage is social as well as individual. As landlords to their estate, their responsibility to the people who live on their estate, their attention to and concern for their sister’s Kitty and Georgiana are some of their social missions. Fergus indicates that “[...] the marriages that Austen arranges for her heroes and

heroines represent society as it ought to become: more unconventional, more equal.’’ (Fergus, 1991: 88)

Bromberg states that “Austen optimistically envisions Elizabeth and Darcy’s marriage as a relationship fostering personal moral growth, self discovery, and the mutual benefit of individuals, families, and the wider community.’’ (Bromberg, 1993; 126) Regarding the matter, Poovey denotes that “Darcy and Elizabeth, then, learn complementary lessons: he recognizes that individual feelings outweigh conventional social distinctions; she realizes the nature of society’s power. Their marriage purports to unite individual gratification with social responsibility [...]” (Poovey, 1998: 94)

For Jane Austen, “[...]the proper marriage is one in which the two parties operate on a basis of mutual respect.’’(Monaghan, 1997: 44) Elizabeth’s liveliness and Darcy’s knowledge of the world come together to provide a perfect union:

We see enough into their married life to know that they have achieved that liberty, for Darcy is now willing to be laughed at. The unspoken corollary of Darcy’s new acceptance of Elizabeth’s sportiveness is that she is not able to use her wit responsibly. Removed to the ‘comfort and elegance of their family party at Pemberly’, Elizabeth and Darcy now speak in related and compatible idioms: wit tempered by wisdom and wisdom tempered by wit. (Mooneyham, 1997: 139)

Duckworth explains that “Only in the marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth do we have a vital union that gives assurance that the gap between debased ‘sense’ and morality can be crossed [...] We need not deny that their marriage fulfills the fantasy of sexual compatibility across social and economic divisions’’ (Duckworth, 1998: 183)

In novels of manners and domestic novels of the nineteenth-century, marriage “‘supplied the happy ending-the promise of a life of mutual love and fulfilment-[...]’’ (Brothers, 1990: 151) *Pride and Prejudice*, with its unconventional happy ending which combines romantic love and the needs of the society, bears this feature of the genre.

Brown suggests that “The novel ends, then, on a note of affirmation of the power of marriage as an agent of constructive social change.’’ (Brown, 1993; 62) The happy ending tells us that “the love matches Elizabeth believed in *do* come about, despite all the odds against them.’’ (Poovey, 1998: 97)

## CONCLUSION

The present study has analysed Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the two novels of English literature written in the same country yet at different times. The different centuries in which the novels were written are significant in that they define the essence of the works as regards to language, culture, manners and various other characteristics of the society. Moreover, the century in which a writer lives is significant in that it gives the writer its values and ideas. The voice of the time and society defines the voice of the writer with its views, conventions and manners. Therefore, a close understanding of the centuries in which these works were written has been necessary.

The characteristics of the nineteenth century England which are class conventions and money, propriety and manners, marriage and courtship are also the features of the "Novel of Manners" tradition. *Pride and Prejudice*, a novel of the nineteenth century England and a representative of the genre of the "Novel of Manners", bears these characteristics.

These features of the "Novel of Manners" also have been reflected in the twentieth century England, however, reformed and renewed. Chick-lit tradition of the twentieth century is significant for these characteristics such as marriage, love, class, money and manners which have been once applied by the "Novel of Manners". *Bridget Jones's Diary*, a novel of the twentieth century, is representative of these features. In this respect, it might be said that chick-lit tradition owes much to the "Novel of Manners" and is transformed form of the genre.

Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice* has continued to preserve its charm and enchantment throughout centuries and been the source of inspiration for many writers including Helen Fielding who wrote *Bridget Jones's Dairy* having been inspired by Austen's novel. Jane Austen still goes on to influence writers of our time. There is this charm of Jane Austen, to be sure, that will inspire many more writers to come. *Pride and Prejudice* is read over and over, yet still with more pleasure and comprehension every time. It is really hard to say something on a writer on whom it has been said so much already. However, it would be a great loss not to attribute a chapter

to Jane Austen's art and *Pride and Prejudice*. However, it seems as if one cannot do justice to the mastery and art of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The aim of this study has been to compare the two novels according to the "Novel of Manners". Therefore, it has explored both novels in their connections with the features and characteristics of the genre, some of which are manners and propriety, class, money, courtship and marriage. Throughout this study, these features have been analysed taking into consideration their connections to and reflections on the novels.

The exploration of the features of the "Novel of Manners" on the novels requires a beforehand knowledge about the definition, characteristics and the emergence of the genre. Therefore, this study contains a general analysis of the genre in question. Even though there is no unambiguous definition for the "Novel of Manners", the area of its study is society with its conventions and values and the individual who is experiencing a self-growth. *Pride and Prejudice* deals with the society as well as Elizabeth's self-maturation and *Bridget Jones's Diary* applies the content of the genre to its more modern surroundings of the twentieth century and depicts Bridget's self-growth. *Pride and Prejudice* focuses on Elizabeth Bennet's family life and people surrounding her. The same goes for Bridget in *Bridget Jones's Diary*. What makes the "Novel of Manners" different from the other genres is that it deals with the concerns of the society that are manners, marriage, love, class and money along with the character's self-growth. Also, it must be pointed out that this genre deals with a particular class. In our case, it is mainly the lifestyle of the gentry that Jane Austen depicts. Another important feature of the genre in question is its limited range.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen deals with the issues that the "Novel of Manners" is concerned with, by depicting the characters on a stage where they converse and perform. The writer interferes rarely and the readers get what they should by themselves. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the diary form is applied by Helen Fielding. It makes the novel confessional and realistic and enables the readers to trace Bridget's growth.

Class conventions, rank and money as being the features the "Novel of Manners" tradition have been analysed and the similarities concerning the novels have

been revealed. It has been observed that class plays an important role in the novels, especially in *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel shows how people of the time could change their social status by earning enough money to have access to the lifestyle of the upper-gentry. People who changed their class lacked manners as they did not belong to that particular class by birth. The cultural shift in the class system required the people who changed their social rank, to learn manners and behaviours. That means manners gained importance. These people should have had the right manners and behaviours to create a new image. Conduct manuals became popular to teach people how to behave. Influenced by some of these books, *Pride and Prejudice* is a critique of the manners and the social pretences of the society. Class and rank determine manners.

Manners are particular codes of behaviour of the people of a society. As this is the case, a close observation of the manners has been attained concerning both novels. Elizabeth as well as Bridget does not conform to manners breaking the conventional rules accepted by society. She publicly expresses her disagreement with Lady Catherine against whom no one dares to oppose because of her stature in society. The same goes for Bridget Jones who is also different from her contemporaries in that she does not yield to her mother and her friends' requests to settle down.

Courtship, flirtation, love and marriage have been the topics of the "Novel of Manners" as stated before. These characteristics have been explored throughout the study so as to show the similarities between the novels. Elizabeth wants to marry for love and so does her descendant Bridget. The emphasis of the society on marriage is the case in both novels. The society of Elizabeth demands that a woman should marry to secure her financial future. However, she wants to marry for love and affection which is revolutionary for the time. Bridget's society is also pressuring her as she is single. Her focus is not marriage perhaps but Bridget still wants to have a serious relationship with a man who will love and value her as a woman.

The present thesis has showed that even though there are two centuries between the novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, human psychology and manners have scarcely altered. After comparing two novels belonging to different centuries, it is observed that women's psychology has not changed much. Women's

psychology changes so slowly as the position of women is changing slowly, women's condition is much better but it still leaves much to desire.

The thesis might contribute to students' knowledge in comparative literature including the most influential woman writer of all times, Jane Austen and a twentieth-century woman writer Helen Fielding. The comparative study of Jane Austen's novel with a contemporary Turkish novel is also desirable.

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