

# Pride and prejudice thesis paper assignment

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Jane Austin uses marriage almost as a way of entrapment for women during this period as they either marry or they live a life of poverty and disgrace their family name. " Jane Austin was born December 16th, 1775 to Reverend George Austin and Cassandra Austin. She was the seventh of eight children and the youngest of the two girls that they had. She was closest to her brother Henry and sister Cassandra out of all of her siblings. At the age of eight In 1783, Jane and Cassandra were sent to boarding school for their formal educations which consisted of music, dancing, and foreign language which was usually French.

Mr.. Austin having quite the extensive collection of literature in his home library allowed Jane and Cassandra to access the library when they wanted to help with their reading and writing endeavors. In December of 1795, Jane was spending a lot of time with the nephew of a nearby neighbor named Tom Leprosy and the two fell in love. The family of Leprosy reviewed any forthcoming engagement as highly impractical as Tom was being supported externally by family members whilst he was in school and planning for his own practice.

Jane herself, and her family for that matter, had no more to offer In the palling, and Tom was sent away and every and Tom's family did every effort to make sure that the two never saw each other again. Pride and Prejudice was published in January of 1813, it was such a success that a second edition of the printing was quickly ordered by October of 1813. In May of 1817, Henry and Cassandra escorted Jane to Winchester to seek medical treatment for her illness which there was no cure for at the time. In July 18th, 1817,

Jane Austin died in Winchester and with her, she took the conclusions of her unfinished works.

With his connections, Henry worked to have his sister buried at the Winchester Cathedral. " (Warren). The Bonnet's were a middle class family in the time as Mr.. Bennett was a landed aristocrat and gentleman farmer, while Mrs.. Bennett was the daughter of a local lawyer. Mr.. And Mrs.. Bennett had five daughters, which meant that they could not leave their estate to any of their children as In those times property was only transferable to the men of the households, so the properties and money could only be transferred to their children via marriage, or through their husbands if they got married. In those times "... Woman who did not marry could generally only look forward to living with her elites as a ' dependent', so that marriage is pretty much the only way of getting out from under the parental roof - unless, of course, her family could not support her, in 1 OFF ' dependent' governess or teacher, or hired " lady's companion. " pride and Prejudice - Notes on Education, Marriage, Status of Women, etc. ). So if a woman did not get married and could not live with any of her relatives then she would be forced to live with someone else and work as a maid or a teacher/tutor for the family that employed her.

This was the fear of Mr.. Bennett for his daughters cause they none of them were married and he only wanted his daughters to be happy. When it came to social events back in the Regency Era, balls were the grandest of the events. Men and women alike would get dressed up, men in their most formal wear and women in their best dresses. During these balls, men were expected to introduce themselves to the women they wanted to dance with.

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If the woman felt the same way about the man then they would dance and if not the woman would reject the invitation to dance and wait for the next man to invite her to dance.

Not to many Omen back in those days turned down invitations to dance though because they saw it as a chance to meet a potential husband and they never knew if they would get another chance to dance with that person. When it came time for the couples to dance there was a lot of expectations on the couple. " It was extremely important for a gentleman to dance well, for such a talent reflected upon his character and abilities. A gentleman could not ask a lady to dance if they had not been introduced.

A ball was considered a social experience, thus a couple could dance a maximum of two sets which lasted twenty to thirty minutes per dance. A gentleman, whether single or married, was expected to approach the ladies who wished to dance. Depending on the dance formation and steps, a gentleman was allowed to touch lady and hold her hand. Couples had many opportunities to converse or catch their breaths when they waited for others to finish working their way down a dance progression. " (Sandbar). The men in this time also looked down on women who were not on their social level. When Mr..

Dared was speaking to Mr.. Bentley about Elizabeth early in the book he said, " she is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humor t 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 Ninth me. " (Austin Chapter 3). Another example of how

men viewed women would be how Mr. Darcy talked about the imagination of women to Miss Bentley, "A lady's imagination is very rapid; it jumps from admiration to love, from love to matrimony, in a moment." (Austin Chapter 6).

These examples show that men looked at women in lower regard than themselves. Mr. Darcy in the second quote looks at a woman's mind as wandering, daydreaming, and not being able to decide for themselves what is best for them. He thinks that as soon as a woman likes a man they automatically want to get married within a matter of moments in their head. Mr. Darcy describes Elizabeth as "the most beautiful creature I ever beheld" (Austin Chapter 3), so as we go back to the first quote he would have no reason to shun Elizabeth because of her looks, it would be because she didn't fit the mold that Mr.

Darcy had for women. Many people during this time choose marriage for its social benefits and image of respectability. Men during this time would travel weeks at a time with the intention to marry. Women viewed marriage as a key to happiness, comfort, social standing, and financial stability. In the beginning of the book Mr. Collins was visiting the Bennett family for a couple of weeks with the intention of taking one of the daughters hand in marriage because his patroness Lady Catherine had advised the young Anglican Clergyman to do so. Mr. Collins viewed marriage as a transaction rather than marrying for love.

He wanted to skip the romance part of the courtship as an effort to speed up the process. He was expecting to marry Jane the oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett who was twenty-two years old at the time but she was

ineligible. He then proposed to Elizabeth the second oldest daughter at twenty years old who rejected his marriage proposal. Finally, he chooses Charlotte Lucas who is twenty- seven years old and Elizabethan friend who accepts his proposal and explained to Elizabeth, “ I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home, and considering Mr..

Collins’ character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast n entering the marriage state. ” (Austin Chapter 22). Both men and women looked at marriage proposals as a form of a transaction. Men look at marriage as a transaction because for them they can gain land and money by marrying the right woman. Women also have their way of viewing marriage as a transaction because for them they will be looking at it from a comfort point of view. They will look at a marriage proposal and ask themselves “ what kind of life will I have if I marry this man? . Now there is a flip side of this as regards to Omen, “ Elizabeth is forewarned both by Mr.. Collins and Mrs.. Bennett that a sensible Oman never shuns the one marriage proposal, she may receive in her lifetime. ” (Calking). If a woman turns down a marriage proposal then there is no guarantee that she will get another one, so back in those times most women would take the first proposal they got to try and ensure that they did not end up unmarried and working as a old maid or tutor for a family that would take them in. When it came to duties of the men and women, women were expected to take care of the homes.

They were expected to take care of the children, cook, clean, they were tot allowed to work or earn money as that was the primary responsibility of the men of the household. Men were to go to work doing whatever they chose to

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do for a living back then and then come home and relax and spend time with the family. If a situation came about when a man and a woman wanted to get a divorce there were a couple of different methods that were used depending on which social class you were in. If you were part of the lower social classes then one method that was used was "wife-selling". Wife-selling was more of a ritual used among the non-genteel classes who could not possibly obtain a full parliamentary divorce, allowing remarriage. During this ritual the wife would be sold to the highest bidder usually at a market, even though the marriage wouldn't be recognized by the Church or the State authorities it was a way for two individuals who couldn't afford a legal divorce from parliament since it cost a lot of money to get a divorce back in those days and parliament only heard a few cases a year due to the cost of divorce. " (Ester).

For the people in the higher social classes that wanted to go separate ways there were annulments and a legal separation of the two individuals and all obligations of the husband towards the wife were removed and the obligations of the wife to the husband were removed. " Annulments could only be granted in three circumstances, any of which could leave either the man, the woman, or both as social pariahs. Also, any children of an annulled marriage become bastards who cannot inherit or be declared legitimate at the whim of the peer and likewise outcasts of society.

The three circumstances for annulment were Fraud, Incompetence, and Impotence. Fraud usually dealt with identity and promises in the marriage contract that were unable to be kept. As it pertained to identity marriages could be annulled for use of fictitious names. Incompetence dealt with if a  
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person was underage or insane. Contracts were null and void if either party had not reached their twenty-first birthday and did not have their father or guardian's consent. Those who were proven legally insane were locked away for life and lost control of all possessions.

Few families brought an annulment suit claiming insanity as it would taint the entire family. The final circumstance was Impotence. This was hard to prove and if proven left the man as an outcast. To prove impotence, the man must share his wife's bed exclusively for three years, then prove she remains virgin. He must also be proven to be unable to reach an erection with anyone. " (Ester). " There were three steps in the Divorce Procedure, the first step was a criminal conversation or Crimson Trial.

The offense of criminal conversation was a euphemism for adultery and since a wife was considered property of her husband it was tried as form of trespass or property damage. The wife could neither tend nor testify as she was not considered a principal in these cases since a wife had no legal identity separate from her husband. After obtaining the Crimson conviction the husband then charged his wife with adultery and requested a legal separation to sever all responsibility for his former wife.