

Jane Austens pride and prejudice thesis example

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



English

Pride and Prejudice, the story of a family with five daughters was set up in the eighteenth century of English society. The novel revolves around the theme of societal norms in the late century. In the eighteenth century, men and women were instructed to follow the societal norms that defined the code of conduct of an individual and judged people according to their status and property. But there was a gender inequality in the society, as men could do anything they wished and can even break the norms but women were expected to follow the norms rigidly. In earlier days, the main focus of every household with daughters was to find an eligible suitor with name, fame and property for their daughter. Rather than imparting education and making career utmost importance, was given to the marriage of the daughter. Any woman above twenty- five was considered old and was seen with suspicion as if she had no moral values or good character that is why no legitimate suitor married her yet. Pride and Prejudice is a story of mannerisms. In the eighteenth century, a woman was trained to behave in a perfect manner outdoors, on dinners, parties, etc. In the society specially men are always judging them and in lieu of finding a perfect wife. Pride and Prejudice is set up in a society where marriage is based on wealth and fortune of the suitor rather than love, trust and compatibility between the partners. The ultimate goal of every girl in the novel is to settle down with a wealthy suitor but the story ends with a message that marriages should be based on love and compatibility rather than wealth and fortune of a man.

“ Mrs. Bennet a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous.

The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news." (226)

The story revolves around Bennet family. Mr. Bennet a loving father is a good- humoured man with witty rumour, and Mrs Bennet is an ambitious mother of her five unmarried daughters; Jane, Elizabeth, Marry, Kitty and Lydia. Mrs Bennet is defined as a mean woman with little information and bad temper. Her only aim in life is to get her daughters married to wealthy suitors. Mrs Bennet is often misjudged as a self- absorbed and cunning woman with little knowledge of the practical world, but in reality she is much more intelligent than other characters in the story and is well experienced to handle a difficult situation in life. In the eighteenth century, women were expected to behave in a certain manner, and any deviation in the mannerisms or their code of conduct is rebuked by the society. Mrs. Bennet, well aware of the social norms was a nervous woman always lecturing and teaching her daughters to behave properly so that they catch an eye of a rich suitor. She even let her daughters flirt with the military officials in order to get a rich soldier for her daughters. Even though, she is a strict mother but she always sticks to her daughter and cannot tolerate anything against her daughters. There are enumerable instances that prove her to be a caring and loving mother, when Mr. Bingley ended the relationship with her elder daughter, she was with her daughter and declared Mr. Bingley used her daughter for his pleasure and states that Jane is in depression and die of a broken heart, then he will realise what he had done.

The novel begins with the entry of Mr. Collins engagement with Bennet family and his interest in marrying Elizabeth. The central figure of the novel

is Elizabeth Bennet, second of the five daughters of Bennet family. She is often portrayed as stubborn, rebellious of the norms of the world, analytical and judgemental; she is a topic of criticism by her mother. Mrs. Bennet plans of getting her daughters married to wealthy suitors are washed away when she gets to know Elizabeth's plan to marry for love and compatibility immaterial of the class and status of a person. She finds Elizabeth stupid and impractical when she gets to know that Elizabeth has rejected the proposal of Mr. Collins, a wealthy cousin of Mr. Bennet, who can even save their property. Jane Austen's characters are diverse and complicated. Elizabeth has her own terms and conditions for marriage and despises those people who marry for financial security, and she is very disappointed with her best friend Charlotte, when she marries Mr. Collins for financial security. Elizabeth is vocal about her judgements and opinions and cannot tolerate anyone criticising her, and they are dealt with her sharp tongue and witty remarks. But an incident changes her life completely, when she meets Fitzwilliam Darcy at a social event and is critical of his mannerisms and big bloated ego. On the contrary, she is also served with insulting words against her family but she gulps the poison and chose to stay silent. She meets a soldier George Wickham at the party who is a spectator of the scene and is informed about the character of Darcy. Elizabeth gets convinced and is fumed when she learns that Darcy is the reason behind her sister Jane's heartbreak because of his expert advice Mr. Bingley ended the romantic relation with her sister. Deceitful Wickham is successful in gaining her trust and ignite hatred for Darcy in her mind. Elizabeth gets a shock when Darcy proposes her for marriage

Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, one of the male characters is a friend of Mr. Bingley is rich, classy and has an Aristocratic style. He is born and brought up in financially and culturally rich family and is well versed with the vast knowledge of Art and culture. He is described as, " Handsome, fine and tall, and he overall gives the air of being a noble gentleman" (Austen 7). Owner of Pemberley, he is intense, courageous and intellectual undoubtedly he is way above than the female protagonist, Elizabeth. But he too is flawed. He is prejudiced about Elizabeth and inaccessible, that makes him even more attractive and talked about subject in the story. He undergoes an emotional transformation when his proposal is rejected by Elizabeth that makes him shed his pride and understand a woman's point of view. He learns to treat a woman with respect and not as an object he can purchase with his power and wealth. Through Darcy's character, Jane has shed light on the ideology of men of that era and how the norms were different for men and women. In eighteenth century England, societal rules were stricter and based on a person's status, reputation and power. Darcy a man of principles is a symbol of an ideal man who breaks all the rules and taboos of society to be with Elizabeth. Jane also reflects the mentality of the people and biased towards men, where men can break a law or rebel against them but for woman rules were more rigid, and they were expected to abide by them no matter what. She throws light on gender biasness and inequality during Eighteenth century.

Eventually, Darcy is successful in changing pre-conceived notions of Elizabeth and tells her how wicked is Wickham. Turning point of the story is when Elizabeth and Darcy fall for each other, and a beautiful romantic

relationship begins. But under the nose of everyone Lydia, Mrs Bennet's flirtatious yet stupid daughter falls for deceitful Wickham. Wickham is described as a man who got every woman's attention." 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' (Austen, 49) But in contrast to his appearance, he is a man with no honour and principles rather he is prejudiced with Darcy's reputation and fortune. Vanity is mark of his character and wants to make easy money. He even had a fling with Darcy's sister and made her pregnant but when he got to know that he will not get any financial gain marrying his sister he ran away. He even lies to Elizabeth about Darcy and makes up a fake story about his pride and cruelty. Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship suffer the cruelty of society and undergoes a rough patch when Darcy's sister mock about her financial status and cunning nature of her mother who trades her daughter for money. A calamity strikes their family when Lydia elopes with Wickham without any intentions of getting married and just to explore the world. The family is under shock and Mrs. Bennet; an overdramatic lady creates a scene. Darcy comes to rescue and saves the pride of family by finding the eloped couple and coaxing Wickham to marry Lydia in exchange for money. Darcy is madly in love with Elizabeth and is proved by the fact that he can go to any extreme to be with her. Even if it costs sacrificing his pride and helping wicked Wickham he is even ready to do that to protect the name and reputation of Bennet family. Elizabeth, who was once apprehensive and critical about Darcy, regrets the way she thought about him while introspecting. She feels that she has lost a true love in her life, but

eventually Darcy's maturity and courage to break the norms of society brings them together and this time forever.

The title, "Pride and Prejudice" talks about itself. Every person in this world wants happiness and a comfortable life, but everyone's definition for happiness is not the same. Happiness is a personal choice for some it is financial security in case of Charlotte, for some it is reputation, name and fame in case of Mrs. Bennet, for Lydia it was exploring the world, for Elizabeth and Jane it was love. But in pursuit of happiness is it fine to break all the moral values and norms of society? Darcy and Elizabeth, the two rebels for them love was above anything even the rules of society and reputation. But Elizabeth was bonded with her family and could not do anything reckless that could defame her family and tarnish their honour and her sister's future. As a woman, she was expected to stay behind the bars and behave like a woman without raising her voice. Whereas Darcy a well educated man belonging to upper class of society broke all the barriers and fell for Elizabeth even if it led to rebuke from the family and society. He let go all his pride just to be with Elizabeth and ended his long term dispute with Wickham in order to protect the honour and dignity of Bennet family. Pride and Prejudice is a beautiful work of Jane Austen, who attempts to bring revolution in the society and struggles to give equal status to women in society. Pride is a quality when it is measured and used judiciously, but it also leads to distortion in relationships and prejudice when it turns into Ego. Jane has beautifully captured the theme and gave moral ending to the story where Elizabeth maintains her pride but loses her prejudice against Darcy and understands his true character. Darcy also maintains his pride but ends

his prejudice with Wickham for his love and acknowledges that his pride made him critical about Bennet family, and he misjudged them. A beautifully weaved story with a lesson that relationships and marriages should be based on love and commitment rather than status, wealth and power of a person.

Work Cited

Gran, Christina Ellingsen . " Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice." . THE UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, 1 Jan. 2013. Web. 4 July 2014. https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/37050/Gran_master.pdf?sequence=2

Tandon, Bharat . " Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice at 200: looking afresh at a classic." . The Guardian, 26 Jan. 2013. Web. 4 July 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jan/26/pride-prejudice-200th-anniversary>

Pride and Prejudice Thesis Statements and Important Quotes." . PAPER STARTER, n. d. Web. 4 July 2014. <http://www.paperstarter.com/prideprejudice.htm>

Literary Criticism of Pride and Prejudice." . N. p., n. d. Web. 5 July 2014. <http://www.prideandprejudice.com/literary.html>

" Pride and Prejudice- Literary Criticism." . Icosilune, n. d. Web. 4 July 2014. <http://www.icosilune.com/>