

Pride and prejudice critique essay

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How does Jane Austen introduce Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy to the reader in the opening scenes? Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813 is a novel that is acknowledged as a masterpiece. The opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* is famously ironic, "it is universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife", this sentence is completely against Jane Austen's characteristics; it states an opinion like it was fact; it's a stereotype and an exaggeration, and is ironic as Jane Austen was known to be a rationalist.

The novel itself was fashionable but not respected, as a woman wrote it. Jane Austen's main characters are Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, both of which are very similar and fail to realise this, they are proud, ironic and judgmental, a perfect match? Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are introduced to the reader in the first few chapters, their introduction and their opinions towards each other are very particular, in this essay I am analysing how Jane Austen introduces the reader to Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet in the opening scenes.

Elizabeth is one of five Bennet sisters unlike many main characters Elizabeth isn't the prettiest, but she is witty and intelligent: the result is that the reader doesn't expect Elizabeth to be the novel's heroine, as she doesn't possess the Disney fairytale qualities. Mr. Darcy is first portrayed through indirect speech as a handsome and rich gentleman who is destined to marry, that is until the reader meets Mr. Darcy, the reader is deceived into thinking Mr. Darcy is a pompous rich over-proud gentleman, as they mold prejudice opinions towards him.

The 18th century and today's era vary in similarity as women and men still marry and some women are deemed as housewives. Jane Austen's has radical ideas for both time elapses; as it is portrayed that women are normally in need of rescue from a handsome prince, but in Austen's novel Elizabeth Bennet isn't like that, in fact she is quite opposite, because of this Elizabeth is radical. Elizabeth Bennet isn't a typical heroine as she's in no need for rescue. Jane Austen is using this theme to show women in particular that there is no law to marry, and that women are equal to men.

Jane Austen increases her impact on the reader as Elizabeth wants to marry for love and with no other selfish gain, which was unprecedented in the 18th century; women were to marry for social status and economic reasons. When the reader is introduced to Mr. Wickham the reader is shocked by how affectionate Elizabeth is towards him shown through nerves and exaggeration about Mr. Darcy, " he is not at all liked in Hertfordshire. Everybody is disgusted with his pride. You will not find him more favorably spoken of by anyone", Elizabeth is normally composed and clear minded, but when she's talking to Mr.

Wickham she exaggerates and seems bemused, this shows the trap in how people fall into love. This is interesting because it shows that Elizabeth is definitely an 18th century woman; as she still wants a husband and will escalate the truth using indirect speech, but it is a bit suspicious because Elizabeth is ironic, and doesn't normally exaggerate, the reader wonders if Jane Austen is speaking or Elizabeth as she lived in life of a single woman, it shows that love is still important. Jane Austen uses various techniques to make *Pride and Prejudice's* plot exciting.

Jane Austen's style of writing is very unique; she put her emotions into her writing creating a real image and a believable plot, she uses irony in a very witty and funny way - " Mr. Darcy is all politeness" said Elizabeth, which is ironic as it is after Mr. Darcy has been rude about her. Jane Austen has a very precise and exact style when she writes, all the vocabulary she uses fit Pride and Prejudice perfectly as it contains a balance use of complex and simple sentence structures, with a range of sophisticated language.

She adds humour into the novel but it not unsophisticated. Jane Austen never (with one exception - Mr and Mrs Bennet) describes anyone in full detail, but she drips information about them, this allows the reader to form their own opinion about a character, Jane Austen uses this to pull to reader into a prejudice view. Jane Austen as a writer in the 18th century had to be careful about her plot, as women and men forbidden to be as intimate, she also had to be very intelligent to come up with a believable plot where Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, Jane and Mr.

Bingley could be together. Jane Austen managed this by having a prolonged stay at Netherfield while Jane Bennet was recovering from a small dose of a cold. Jane Austen also used Jane Bennet's and Mr. Bingley's relationship as a base to keep Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth together. The reader is undecided if the couples can form relationships because of the early prejudices. Jane Austen is unique and highly skilled because of the way she manipulates the reader through language. Jane Austen uses her language in a way that lulls the reader into one frame of mind about Mr.

Darcy. Elizabeth is plagued by prejudice and so is the reader, it's not until the reader is introduced to Mr. Darcy's housekeeper in chapter 43 that the

reader gets any trustworthy details about him, “ I have never had a cross word from him in my life, and I have known him ever since he was four years old”, this is a quite subtle hint of Jane Austen being radical, using a character from the working class which was very unusual in the 18th century, but Jane Austen only using the housekeeper for one chapter so it isn't completely radical.

The reader is shocked because they believed that Mr. Darcy was a rude and too proud, but suddenly his real character starts to unfold. Jane Austen manages to consume the reader with prejudice by using language in a certain way and using devices. One of the reasons why *Pride and Prejudice* became the high light of the 18th century is because of Austen's inventiveness of language and the details in the words she uses to string together sentences.

Jane Austen uses: pride, sarcasm, irony, indirect speech, exaggeration and contradiction, so she can lull the reader to believe what she writes. Chapter 3 paragraph 5 “ but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having 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 his tide of popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company and above being pleased; and not at all could his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having the most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and

being unworthy to be compared with his friend. ” This is an example of Jane Austen using indirect speech to describe someone; Jane Austen uses indirect speech very often with Mr.

Darcy this is because she has to lull the reader into believing every word said about him. This speech is an excellent example of antithesis, Mr. Darcy goes from “ handsome features” to “ most forbidding, disagreeable countenance”, she uses this technique regularly, but in this particular situation it leaves the reader wondering if Jane Austen actually cares about the way her characters look, there is a hidden moral behind this, Jane Austen is trying to get her readers to understand that it doesn’t matter about how someone looks, but what their personality is like.

Jane Austen chooses her genre chose very precisely as it benefits the novel. Jane Austen has used a significant genre choice because in novels there is normally an introductory paragraph about each character, but this normal technique wouldn’t work in the novel Pride and Prejudice because Jane Austen has to use indirect to describe Mr. Darcy. Jane Austen has to manipulate the reader to form a prejudice opinion towards him by using: indirect speech, exaggeration and contradiction.

Jane Austen also has an interesting genre choice because she doesn’t use the objective narrator to describe her character which also makes it hard to form any trustworthy opinions on any of the characters. Pride and Prejudice is a very twisted romance novel. The title of the novel was chosen was very precise care, as the whole novel is based on the two words ‘ Pride’ and ‘ prejudice’. First Impressions was the former name of Pride and Prejudice; this

is interesting because the novel is based on first impressions, which turn into prejudiced.

For example " his character was decided" (chapter 3, paragraph 6) this quote proves that the characters in the novel are too quick to judge Mr. Darcy; this also shows that a vast proportion of the characters in the novel are prejudiced - or just slightly, because they all base their views on Mr. Darcy from their first impressions. The novel was named Pride and Prejudice, the character who received the most prejudiced is Mr. Darcy Jane Austen is very clever with the way she introduces Mr. Darcy to the reader, Jane Austen never describes Mr. Darcy through the objective narrator, but through indirect speech.

The indirect speech comes from gossip which is not reliable; but the reader still forms a prejudiced opinion on Mr. Darcy which is unfair, the reader doesn't realise their being prejudiced. Jane Austen develops Mr. Darcy's characteristics very gradually, our opinions on Mr. Darcy are constantly changing as people's views on him change, for example Mrs. Bennet's first opinions on Mr. Darcy are that he is " tall" with " handsome features", this opinion is formed because of the amount of money Mr. Darcy earns annually (? 10, 000). Mrs. Bennet changes her views on Mr.

Darcy when he slights her daughter " she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by men", Mrs. Bennet now finds Mr. Darcy " unworthy to be compared to his friend". This makes it easy for Jane Austen to lull the reader into making a prejudice opinion on him. Mr. Darcy characteristics are quite strange. Mr. Darcy is very hypercritical for example <https://assignbuster.com/pride-and-prejudice-critique-essay/>

at the end of chapter 11 he says “ but pride – where there is real superiority of mind, pride will always be under good regulation” this is evidence of Mr.

Darcy being a hypocrite, as earlier in the novel Elizabeth was “ tolerable”, the reader knows that Elizabeth is proud and they wonder if Darcy likes this about Elizabeth. The reader finds Mr. Darcy a very believable character as he is serious and an aristocrat. The reader is surprised when Mr. Darcy says that he admires Elizabeth’s fine eyes and felt that “ he began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention”, the reader thinks that they have misjudged him or he is a hypocrite. In the chapters of the novel the reasons about Mr. Darcy behavior are acknowledged. As the novel un-folds the reader becomes more sympathetic towards Mr.

Darcy, when Lady Catherine de Bourgh says to Elizabeth Bennet “ young women of inferior birth, of no importance in the world” the reader wonders whether Mr. Darcy has a right to be arrogant, if this is how is brought up from childhood, as a only child, spoilt and taught to think that anyone in a lower class to him was inferior. The reader realises how Mr. Darcy has been raised and they begin to understand his personality better, especially towards Elizabeth. When Elizabeth is introduced to the reader she first says “ but you forget, mamma,” said Elizabeth “ that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs.

Long has promised to introduce us”. This is interesting because Elizabeth is the main character, who turns down two marriage proposals, from two rich men so it’s “ universally acknowledged” that they are looking for wives, the fact that Elizabeth’s first speech is to do with marrying a man is ironic. To the reader this seems like a normal thing to say as Elizabeth is trying to calm

Mrs. Bennet down, but really it's a secret introduction to the whole novel. Jane Austen is careful about the amount of information she lets the reader receive about each character.

Jane Austen restricts the amount of information the reader receives about Elizabeth, but from indirect speech and the objective narrator they can gather that Elizabeth (nickname- Lizzy) is a strong, confident woman who is not defined by a man, and who feels that there is more to life than raising a family and being possessed by a husband like a china doll. The reader can see an array of Jane Austen characteristics through Elizabeth especially her wittiness, sarcasm and irony, but Elizabeth is proud, and occasionally quick to judge and hypocritical.

The reader wonders how compatible Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Austen really are. The reader gets emotionally attached to Elizabeth as they know that Mrs. Bennet judges each of her daughters and constantly compares each of them. Mrs. Bennet also embarrasses Elizabeth many times in front of company which many women can relate to. From the moment Mr. Darcy slights Elizabeth the reader feels a connection with her, which is strengthened as Jane Austen makes it easy for the reader to compare themselves with Elizabeth. Elizabeth finds Mr.

Darcy arrogant and prejudiced from the opening scenes, but this only reflects Elizabeth's character towards Mr. Darcy in the later scenes- prejudiced, and unfair. Jane Austen characteristics can be seen in Elizabeth, the reader wonders if Jane Austen wants to be Elizabeth Bennet. Elizabeth is very much Jane Austen's heir but Jane Austen lets Elizabeth fall into a trap - which the reader does too, when Mr. Darcy first insults her at the ball (" she <https://assignbuster.com/pride-and-prejudice-critique-essay/>

is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me") she becomes so blinded by Mr.

Darcy's prejudice that she get consumed by her own, Elizabeth does realise her prejudice eventually but doesn't believe it " this must be false, this cannot be" (on Elizabeth receiving the letter from Mr. Darcy to herself, her first reaction) at this point the reader has realised that Elizabeth has fallen into the same trap as them - prejudiced. Jane Austen treasures her character Elizabeth; it is easy to see Jane Austen's morals in her. Elizabeth is a free and independent woman, which is expressed through her and other characters; (beginning of chapter 8) Mrs.

Hurst - " I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild" said Mrs. Hurst; this quote implies that she is independent and free. Mrs. Hurst says this in front of Mr. Darcy, for two reasons a) because Mr. Darcy is falling for Elizabeth Bennet, and b) Miss. Bingley (Mrs. Hurst's bestfriend) wants Mr. Darcy to marry her. Mrs. Hurst says this in hope that it will make Mr Darcy see how uncivilised Elizabeth is. When Jane Austen introduces Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy she lets the reader know their opinions of each other. The introductions between Elizabeth and Mr.

Darcy are most particular because their first impressions are that Elizabeth is only tolerable, and Mr. Darcy is too proud. When the audience is introduced to Mr. Darcy his impressions on Elizabeth are that " 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 young men", Elizabeth overhears this but by her reaction the reader can gather that Elizabeth is confident and doesn't care what people think about her (which is false as <https://assignbuster.com/pride-and-prejudice-critique-essay/>

later in the novel Elizabeth admits to being consumed by prejudice and pride).

It is quite obvious to the reader that Mr. Darcy doesn't particularly like Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy's attitude wrecks the ball and shows that he is not willing to look at anyone in a good light, or is he? This is what Jane Austen wants the reader to think; to be consumed by prejudice and not like him. The reader realises the mistakes they have made as Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy fall in love " I thought only of you" (Elizabeth) " dearest, loveliest Elizabeth" (Mr. Darcy).

Pride and Prejudice carries some quite heavy morals like who are real heroines, not fairy tale princesses but real people who actually achieve things, and that prejudices should always be faced. The class system is also very important in Pride and Prejudice when Lady Catherine de Bourgh insults Elizabeth Bennet " are the shades of Pemberley to be polluted" which is suggesting that Elizabeth being only upper middle class and bourgeoisie, would make it a disgrace if she was to marry into the Darcy's family name.

Pride and Prejudice is one of those unforgettable novels where the reader feels slightly tricked and guilty, but the reader is left with a message - that people should never judge before knowing the real person: and what matters in marriage is true love. Pride and Prejudice is inspiration to many authors because of the diverse range of skills and techniques she uses. I think that Pride and Prejudice is novel that pivots from pride to romance. Emma Bell
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