

Compare and
contrast the two
proposals to Elizabeth
Bennet essay sample



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I think it is reasonable to say that Jane Austen is one of the most influential women writers of all time, her works being those of which can be returned to more than those of any other author, offering new insights at each encounter. *Pride and Prejudice* is one such illustration of this. Jane Austen first wrote the novel in 1779, then entitled *First Impressions*, but did not publish it. After reworking the novel it appeared in 1811 as *Pride and Prejudice* whilst she was living in Chawton, Hampshire, with her mother and sister. It is unfair to compare Jane Austen's works to modern day soap operas; however her writing in *Pride and Prejudice* has got similar characteristics to those of a juicy *Eastenders* story line and when it was written would've kept her audience keen in the same way. I believe that Jane Austen led a happy, if not slightly monotonous life and writing was a way to excite and entertain her, respectable women in Georgian Britain being neither expected nor allowed to work, writing was an easy way to venture into a stimulating world.

Pride and Prejudice certainly reflects the pressures that young ladies were put under to marry successfully, the novel shows what would've been a shamelessly accurate indication of what went on behind closed doors. Her audience were most probably other young women seeking respectable husbands, her novels would've been easy to identify and relate to as it was a women's job in life to secure a wealthy, well matched husband, securing the families status, estate and wealth. Both women today and when *Pride and Prejudice* was written are made to feel sympathy and admiration for Elizabeth Bennet in her determination to marry for love, not money and not status. Exasperating as it is to watch her refuse both Mr Collins and Mr Darcy

who could've provided her either a very comfortable wealth or the security of her family remaining on their estate; one does have compassion for the way she feels.

Neither Mr Darcy nor Mr Collins proposals are kind, despite being flattering, neither are worded temptingly and neither are anticipated. The Bennet's estate is entrusted to Mr Bennet's nearest male relation, the 'odious' Mr Collins and so when he announces his intention to visit Longbourne, the family are all mutually agreed to indulge the pompous heir to the estate so as to endear themselves to him. When Mr Collins arrives he is 'received with great politeness by the whole family.'

However, it is immediately evident that Mr Collins would be a terrible match for any of the Bennet girls, he would be nearest suited to Mary with his Christian views and awkward social manner.

When he expresses his pleasure and interest in Jane to Mrs Bennet she is evidently pleased with Mr Collins designs to marry one of her daughters, however she felt 'incumbent on her hint, to just mention that the eldest Ms Bennet was likely to be very soon engaged'. It was soon settled that Elizabeth was indeed 'an agreeable alternative'.

It is clear that Elizabeth is far too kind, witty, intelligent and passionate for life and romance that the match would never work; leaving the audience feeling angry that Mr Collins could be vain enough to believe himself worthy of Elizabeth's hand in marriage, not for a moment anticipating her refusal.

Mr Collins approaches the proposal when Kitty, Mrs Bennet and Elizabeth are in the dining room, Mrs Bennet and Mr Collins almost cornering her, guaranteeing Mrs Bennet to make sure Elizabeth has no choice but to listen, leaving Mr Collins with the easy task of explaining his reasons for wanting to marry in an ordered list.

It is more than obvious that Lizzie feels uncomfortable, although trying 'to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion' about being left alone with Mr Collins because she knows that she cannot possibly accept him.

This alone is reason enough to feel sorry for Lizzie, not wanting to jeopardize her family's estate and security but the thought of marrying such an insufferable man unthinkable.

He begins the proposal in his gauche fashion, assuring Lizzie that 'the marriage will add very greatly to (his) happiness'. It is clear that Mr Collins has no regard for the happiness of Elizabeth and believes that he has guaranteed her acceptance because of the duty she feels towards her family. We understand how difficult it must be for Lizzie to refuse Mr Collins for she doesn't want him to lose respect and fondness for her family, aware that this could affect how kind he would be to them when Mr Bennet passes away. It is a very difficult situation; Lizzie is forced to make the decision between her own life and happiness or her family's security and peace of mind.

Obviously, one would hope that in any marriage both partners are content and in love, enjoying each others company.

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HANDWRITTEN SECTION

After assuring Elizabeth that when the marriage is sanctioned by her parents she will have no choice but to accept she feels no other option to get as far away from Mr Collins as she can, hoping that her parents will do nothing of the sort. I have to say, I cannot blame her.

MR DARCY'S PROPOSAL

Her rage is so evident to Mr Darcy that he seems to recoil in resentment and surprise as she explains to him in no uncertain terms that she ' never desired (his) good opinion and (he) had certainly bestowed it most unwillingly', making it plain that she is not tempted by his offer. Darcy appears choked and the colour rises in his cheeks, clearly embarrassed and regretful. It is an indication of the time that the book was written that Mr Darcy has not had the time to get to know Elizabeth before making his proposal and is less aware of what she might find offensive. It is also a sign of the high esteem Mr Darcy holds himself in that he has not prepared himself for rejection.

Although Elizabeth clearly feels no pity for Mr Darcy, the reader cannot help but feel slightly sorry for him, even though he has insulted her, it does seem not to be intentional and he has laid his feelings on a plate to be left at Elizabeth's discretion. I sympathize with him insulting her after she rejected him as she unmistakably damaged his pride. However, he did bring it on himself and although I do feel dejected on his behalf I cannot blame Elizabeth for her actions.

Indignation follows anger as Mr Darcy starts questioning Elizabeth on her reasons for rejecting him, demanding to know 'And is 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.' Contrary to his words, he obviously holds her disdain and lack of civility in high regard, almost as highly as her reasons for rejecting him. She elucidates in a detailed account all his faults, beginning with Jane and how Mr Darcy ruined 'perhaps forever, the happiness of a most beloved sister', fuelled on by his lack of remorse she carries on to the subject of Mr Wickham, accusing him of condemning him to his 'current present state of poverty' and having 'deprived the best years of his life of that independence which was no less his due than his desert'. Even if it had not been for all the problems she believes he has caused for others, she assures him he could 'not have made the offer of (his) hand in any possible way that would've tempted (her) to accept it.'

If he had not been abashed before she pinpointed all his wrong doings and errors, he certainly was afterwards, regarding her with an expression 'of mingled incredulity and mortification.'

Both Mr Darcy and Elizabeth slander each other enormously; Elizabeth does it in a more spontaneously spiteful manner, deliberately to hurt Mr Darcy for damaging her pride. Conversely, Mr Darcy does not come to Elizabeth with the intention of insulting her and making her feel mediocre of him but with his blunt honesty cannot help but tell her his true, and unflattering, feelings about her downsides. Both of them are brutally candid and so although I feel sorry for both of them, I also feel that they gave as good as they got. Mr <https://assignbuster.com/compare-and-contrast-the-two-proposals-to-elizabeth-bennet-essay-sample/>

Darcy's insults were far less intentional than those of Elizabeth's, which almost makes him worse. If he had been kinder to Elizabeth then she would not have been so malicious toward him and his feelings would never have been hurt. The fact that he felt that he could not hide his motives for believing she was inferior does make me feel sympathy for Elizabeth, sometimes it is worse to be insulted when you know that somebody does not have the intention of insulting you.

Mr Darcy's only saving grace for his pitiable proposal is that, unlike Mr Collins, he does not beg Elizabeth to marry him, simply accepting her refusal and asking why. Whereas Mr Collins did not want to know why Elizabeth refused him, he attempted to talk her round, firstly trying to persuade her, later almost begging. Even if Mr Darcy only left with one thing, at least it was his dignity.