

Pride and prejudice on marriage

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Marriage in the Words of Jane Austen 06 December 2013 In the modern world, when two people decide to make a lifetime commitment to one another, they are agreeing to devote their own lives to one another for the rest of their time on Earth. It is an allegiance that is not to be taken lightly, and with the upmost consideration and assurance. Marriage in modern-day society is a union that is based on love, compassion, understanding, and a devotion to another person. In the Regency Period in England however, the concept of marriage was far more complicated and structured than it is now.

Men and women who were not yet married had very strict rules and regulations about how they should interact with one another, whether it be privately or publicly. Such rules included not conversing in private without the presence of a chaperone, having no intimate or physical contact - including hand shakes-, and only speaking of certain topics that were to be monitored by an elder. Marriages were often arranged and were based on wealth and property, as opposed to love. Very rarely did people marry out of passion and true feelings.

It was not common to truly fall in love with someone and marry for the ole purpose, presumably due to the fact that young women were in such a rush to find their future husbands. It was far more common to marry based on stability and economic background. In Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, both types of marriages are reflected between the couples in the story. There are several examples of bad marriages, good ones, and the exceptional marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth.

Though women were brought up to believe that marriage was about economic and social security, Elizabeth insists on getting married for love, and not for any other reason besides that. In the end she is able to find such love and marry Darcy. Jane Austen uses Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship to portray what a marriage should truly be based upon, and to teach people of the Regency Period to marry for love, as well as in an attempt to rid the idea of marrying based on social class and economic standing. The era in which Jane Austen lived was one in which social and economic ranking played a tremendous role in one's reputation and success.

In terms of marriage, young women were taught to look for a man of wealth and security. Men also chose their wives strategically, being that perhaps their ladies' fathers might offer them deals and treaties. It was sometimes an unfair arrangement in which a man and woman had to settle for one another based on material objects. Karen Newman, who wrote a critical essay on the novel in 1983 says, [Marriage] does after all refer to a real social institution that, in the nineteenth century particularly, robbed women of their human rights.

The most cursory look at the legal and cultural history of women makes it clear that these narrative events reflect the social and legal limitations that women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries faced and that in turn reflect the way a patriarchal society has manipulated biological roles for its own advantage. (693-710) In other words, the morals and standards of the time took away many rights that women had as human beings. They were

seen as property by their husbands and had very little choice in who they were to spend the rest of their lives with.

She states that the messages in the novel directly reflect the constricting regulations that were set forth during their time period, and how men were superior to women. Many marriages were not based on love or happiness, but merely on oney and social ranking. This type of marriage presents itself in Charlotte and Mr. Collins, who marry without any sense of love for one another. Mr. Collins has been harassed by Lady Catherine De Burgh about finding a wife, and he wishes to please her by asking for a women's hand in marriage sooner rather than later.

He believes that Charlotte's father is a reputable man, which was important during this time. He also knows that Charlotte will most likely have a reasonable dowry. On Charlotte's end, she decides to marry Mr. Collins based on security. She wants a comfortable ome and children, and is aware of her lack of looks and money; therefore she accepts Mr. Collins proposal right away. Elizabeth is astonished by Charlotte's decision to marry for money, but Charlotte has her reasons for doing so. She says to Elizabeth, When you have had time to think it 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, connection, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can oast on entering the marriage state. (Austen, chapter 22, page 17)

Charlotte has always believed that since people change so much during

marriage, that it makes no difference how they feel about each other before hand. She believes that she will be happy enough with Mr. Collins, knowing that she will now have stability and a family.

Whatever her thoughts may be, it still holds true that her marriage is one that is completely void of sentiment, passion or romance: it is simply a marriage of convenience. Charlotte and Mr. Collins's marriage is the epitome of what marriages were like during this period. It is marriages such as this one that Austen was fighting against, and attempting to prove wrong. She uses this relationship as a way to highlight the norm during this time, in order to have contrast to a great marriage based on love, which is later seen in that of Darcy and Elizabeth's marriage. There is also a clear distinction between Charlotte and Mr.