

Pride and prejudice marxist theory assignment

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Marxist theory of class and ideology suggests that society is driven by money and economy. All the social, historical changes that take place in a society are guided by changes in modes of production and class struggle. Marx also stated that the ruling class not only dominates the material sources of society, but also controls the intellectual modes of production. The ruling class circulates its ideas as the only rational, ideal, universal ideas, to maintain their hegemony. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was written much earlier, however even then class expectations restricted the English society.

The novel is a critique of society through social satire by the means of social caricatures embodied in Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine De Burgh. The plot of the text largely centers on the idea of class. Not only does the novel concern itself with the class of various characters, but also describes their mode of production and by what means each character gained their status. Lady Catherine De Burgh and Mr. Darcy are a member of the landed aristocracy, whereas Mr. Collins and Mr. Phillips belong to the bourgeoisie class. The Gardiners, Mr.

Bentley and The Lucas earned their status through a respectable line of trade. In the novel, Mrs. Bennett is the embodiment of Marx's ideology of class and economy. Her singular goal is to marry off her daughters to wealthy, high class men. That is the reason why Mr. Bingley's visit to Netherworld puts her in frenzy and she constantly pesters Mr. Bennett to invite him to dine with them. Similarly throughout the novel, all the characters are preoccupied with the income and class of each other. For instance, Charlotte Lucas accepts Mr.

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Collins proposal, because of his decent income and respectable status in the society. Likewise, the romantic desire Elizabeth begins to feel for Darcy is shown as being linked to his social power. Her regard for Darcy is initiated by her first visit to Pemberley where she realizes the actual extent of his social power. Also Mrs. Hurst marries "an indolent man, who lived only to eat, drink, and play at cards", because he was "a man of more fashion than fortune". Austen has also depicted Marxist idea of ruling class in the text.

Lady Catherine, who belongs to the aristocratic class, holds to the belief in a social hierarchy which determines one's fortune and destiny. She believes that her position entitles her to get her own way and she expects "gratitude" from Elizabeth because she invited her to her house and was "kind" enough to meet her, thus she is quite astonished, when Elizabeth contradicts her. Lady Catherine's snobbish, boastful and haughty mannerism, suitable for aristocracy make Collins act in a servile manner towards her, as she is of much higher rank than him and he is expected to act in such a way towards his superiors.

Later in the text, Lady Catherine is unable to deal with Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship, because she believed that Darcy's marriage to a woman of such lower rank will taint the purity of her formally aristocratic heritage. Clearly the idea of class disparity and the idea of socially "superior" and "inferior" classes are reflected. During the introduction of Mr. Darcy, he is represented as proud and aloof. His inordinate pride is based on his class consciousness.

Belonging to a socially “superior” class, Dared is expected to garner respect from his inferiors like the Bennett family, whilst Elizabeth must appropriately honor him, which she somewhat refuses to do. Elizabeth now becomes the one with Insolent by Lady Catherine, Miss Bentley and Mrs.. Hurst, due to her social status and predefined class notions. The idea of ruling class’s dominance over the society comes evident by Mr.. Dairy’s influence on Hickman concerning money in exchange for an agreement to marry Lydia.

Since the Bennett are brought up within an upper class society, the illusion of power is found within their characters. They have the freedom to do what they want and make their own decisions because they are not controlled by a higher power, except the Bentleys, Dared and Lady Catherine. Class, economy and social status is the main driving force of the novel which Austin had portrayed through various characters and incidents. Pride and Prejudice, hence, revolves around similar models of behavior and mindset that Marx idealized.