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“ Love isn’t love til you give it away” Everyone desires to be loved no matter if it is from one’s family, a friend, or a significant other. To be loved is to be accepted for all one’s flaws but still have a deep level of trust. In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, love is a common theme seen through the relationships that develop throughout the novel. However, each relationship that forms contrasts from the next due to different personalities, morals, and motives.

In this romantic yet humorous novel, the Bennet sisters and their friend search for love overcoming the pride and prejudice of the upper class English society. In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, love surges from the relationships of Darcy and Elizabeth, Bingley and Jane, Wickham and Lydia, and Mr. Collins and Charlotte, yet each relationship’s foundation is formed on different motives, proving that not all relationships are alike. The first relationship that emerges in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* that proves that all relationships are different is the realistic love affair of Darcy and Elizabeth because they have to fight for their love. Darcy and Elizabeth both share the characteristic of being anti-social.

Darcy can be described as the common handsome, well-bred gentlemen who possesses a great fortune (Bander 2). Elizabeth can be described as a bright, loyal, and beautiful woman who is unsure of what she desires in her life: “ She is a unique character, abiding by the social demands of the community, yet at the same time her sharp wit and humor make her the only woman that engages Darcy’s mind and heart” (Mudrick 19). Since the beginning of the novel, Darcy has always had an instant attraction to Elizabeth doing whatever he can do to reach her attention. However, Elizabeth is oblivious

and unaware of his admiration and has a “hatred” for him. Elizabeth does not reciprocate the same affection to Darcy until later in the novel when she has a conversion of heart (Bander 1). Her change of heart is inspired by reevaluation and self-examination of what she wants for her future.

Furthermore, Elizabeth’s love for Darcy is not provoked by erotic attraction, wealth, or power, but through vigilant contemplation and reflection (Bander 2). Moreover, Elizabeth lies awake one night trying to decide her true feelings for Darcy: “She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself” (Austen 178). However, Elizabeth’s feelings are clarified by the news of Lydia’s elopement. She is now able to see herself loving Darcy as a husband. Lydia’s disastrous and heedless mistake clearly highlights Darcy as the man that would be the most beneficial for Elizabeth’s future (Bander 6).

Darcy and Elizabeth’s love affair is founded through Elizabeth’s careful self-reflection and self-examination. The next love relation that surfaces in the novel creating an unrealistic view of love is the fairytale love of Bingley and Jane due to love at first sight. Jane can be depicted as a kind, gentle, and demure woman while Bingley can be depicted as a handsome, amiable, and humorous man. Both, Bingley and Jane, are easy going, which makes their relationship run smoothly (Mudrick 18). Bingley and Jane have the most unrealistic relationship: “Jane and Bingley provide us, then, with one of the book’s primary ironies: that love is simple, straightforward, and immediate only for simple people” (Mudrick 19).

In contrast to the reality of love, Jane and Bingley's romance creates an unrealistic view that love is simple and uncomplicated. Unlike Darcy and Elizabeth's complicated relationship, the relationship of Bingley and Jane seems almost too good to be true: "Would you believe it, Lizzy, he really loved me, and nothing but a persuasion of my being indifferent, would have prevented his coming down again!" (Austen 235). Furthermore, the love affair between Bingley and Jane is set on the foundation of compatibility and respect they show to one another. Since the beginning of the novel, Jane and Bingley are destined to be together through their instant erotic attraction to each other (Bander 1). Additionally, Darcy and Elizabeth have always heavily influenced the relationship of Bingley and Jane: "They have their adult guardians and counterparts —Jane in her sister, Bingley in his friend— to haul them in when the sea gets too rough" (Mudrick 19). Darcy and Elizabeth have always guided and counseled Bingley and Jane's relationship at challenging times.

The bond between Bingley and Jane correlates to their simple personalities due to their simple, compatible love. The relationship of Wickham and Lydia differs drastically from any other couple in the novel because it's provoked solely on sexual desire proving that sometimes love is only skin deep. The affair between Wickham and Lydia is a disaster to say the least. Lydia is obnoxious, shameless, and loud. Due to Lydia's history of being reckless, Mr. Bennet supposes that giving Lydia the cold shoulder will minimize their problems: "Lydia will never be easy until she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with so little

expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances” (Austen 156).

Mr. Bennet is insisting that sending Lydia off will better the Bennet name, nevertheless, his idea only made matters worse for his family. On the other hand, Wickham can be portrayed as a hypocrite who lacks morals and honesty (Veisz 2). Wickham and Lydia’s elopement is sparked by sexual desire: What happens to Lydia and Wickham shows the folly of allowing mere sexual attraction to govern one’s decision about a partner for life. Forced to marry Lydia, Wickham soon tires of her, and before long her affection for him has also died.

Moreover, since neither of them is capable of planning for the future, Lydia and Wickham live unsettled lives, frequently moving, constantly plagued by financial difficulties, surviving only through the aid of their prosperous relatives. (Reisman 3) Only by Darcy’s intervention is the Bennet family able to be saved from shame and infamy. Darcy bribes Wickham to marry Lydia to spare the family and Lydia from public condemnation (Lorenz 5). Without Darcy’s help, Lydia’s mistake could have cursed the futures of the Bennet family. The “love” scandal between Wickham and Lydia is instituted by sexual inclination showing that love is often replaced with lust.

The last romance that arises in the narrative is the relationship of Mr. Collins and Charlotte which shows that love can sometimes be a way out of one’s problems. Charlotte can be described as a bold, sensible, and practical woman (Mudrick 20). However, Charlotte is considered to be an “old maid” because she was in her late twenties and not attractive. Therefore, society

sees her as a worthless joke and a burden to her family because she is still financially dependent on them (Mudrick 20).

Mr. Collins can be described as pompous, foolish, and shortsighted. Both, Mr. Collins and Charlotte, become exclusive for the sole purpose of stability (Mudrick 20). Elizabeth, Charlotte's best friend, realizes that Charlotte and Mr. Collins do not match, but Charlotte has no other choice: She recognizes Mr.

Collins' total foolishness and Charlotte's intelligence, and would never have dreamed that any pressure could overcome so natural opposition. Complex and simple, aware and unaware, do not belong together —except that in marriages made by economics they often unite, however obvious the mismatching. The trick, as Charlotte decides upon accepting Mr. Collins' proposal, is to have as little as possible to do with personal accessory to her material well-being. (Mudrick 20) The relationship of Mr. Collins and Charlotte is motivated by wealth and power (Bander 1).

By acquiring a secure income and establishment, Charlotte will meet her desire for financial stability and security: “ I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast on entering the marriage state” (Austen 87). Charlotte explains that she does not need love to be happy but needs security and stability.

The motives behind the romance of Mr. Collins and Charlotte is rested on the desire of solidity and prosperity proving that love does not always mean

happiness, but gives one the way out. The theme of love in relationships in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is seen through Darcy and Elizabeth, Bingley and Jane, Wickham and Lydia, and Mr. Collins and Charlotte; nevertheless, each couple differs from the next due to their intentions because love has different purposes just like these relationships. In other words, Darcy and Elizabeth's realistic love affair forms from Elizabeth's prudent self-reflection and self-examination. Furthermore, Bingley and Jane's fairytale love is shaped from compatibility and respect.

Moreover, Wickham and Lydia's tortuous affair is stimulated through sexual desire. Lastly, Mr. Collins and Charlotte's romance is established on the longing for financial security and stability. These four romances show that relationships can be developed on several different motives and beliefs. The theme of love in *Pride and Prejudice* is still relevant today because no two relationships are alike.