

Pride and prejudice – letters to alice assignment

[Sociology](#)



Composers are connected in their desire to express their personal values within a changing world. The comparative study of Fay Weldon's non-fiction text *Letters to Alice* and Jane Austen's comedy of manners narrative *Pride and Prejudice* reveal connections between the authors. In their desire to express their personal values and beliefs through the vehicle of their fictional characters.

Exploration of connections such as the value of literature and the lives of women in different societies presented in the texts heighten our understanding of the composers' contexts and the values they wish to convey through their writing. The shared aspects of the form of both texts such as the use of letters and the fictitious framework of Weldon's *Letters To Alice* provides a connection through which the readers can appreciate the values Austin and Weldon seek to express.

Student's comedy of manners explores her patriarchal, provincial 19th century English world which is satirically commented on by Weldon as she expresses her own independent success, displaying the changing nature of society and the empowerment of women through her character Aunt Fay, a second wave feminist and a successful and Independent writer. Moreover the character of Aunt Fay highlights the stark contrast between the modern world in which marriage becomes a focus of love and happiness as opposed to the 19th century necessity for financial security which left women at the mercy of men. 'I am not romantic... Ask only a comfortable home... I am convinced that my chance of happiness is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state'. Charlotte's direct speech epitomizes the marriage of Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, a marriage of necessity for <https://assignbuster.com/pride-and-prejudice-letters-to-alice-assignment/>

pragmatic Charlotte who reflects the general feeling of nuns women and her desire for a financially secure, appropriate marriage, a trait which is condemned by Austin through Elizabethan disapproval and her branding of the marriage as 'unequal'.

Welder's narrative however appreciates Charlotte Lucas' financial situation, despite the fact Aunt Fay and niece Alice are in no way required to marry, reflecting that to marry was a great prize', the objectification of women and marriage through the noun 'prize' displays Welder's understanding of the financial weight and importance marriage carried to young women like Charlotte. Weldon also comments on Mrs.. Bonnet's understanding of the situation facing her daughters, 'Mrs..

Bennett, the only one with the slightest notion of the sheer desperation of the world', displaying to the reader that in fact Austin through Elizabeth presents an unconventional and unrealistic picture of a young woman's liberty with marriage through her insistence of finding love before marriage. In a comparative the study of an older valued text and a contemporary appropriation the connections established between the texts enhance our understanding of values 'OFF

Through Welder's 20th century appropriation of Student's epistolary structure Aunt Fay highlights the values of Literature within 19th century English society and our contemporary world. Fay Weldon connects to Pride and Prejudice through her exploration of Student's rural English societies attitudes and her values toward education and literature. In so doing, her commentary on Student's gentrified society and the value of literature takes

a 20th century perspective. ' My dear Alice, it was DOD to get your letter... Your doing a college course in English Literature... Specifically) and obliged to read Jane Austin... ND you find her boring. Welder's 1st person ironic narration in the form of letters highlights Lice's 20th century struggle to study the ' big L' and reveals the novels connection with Student's narrative. Weldon expresses her own opinion on literature through the imagery in the extended metaphor of the ' City of Invention', which allows her to highlight her value of the ' literary cannon'. This provides a vehicle through which Fay Weldon is able to express her own views on the value of good literature which she expresses as a medium wrought which readers can ' admire... Earn... Marvel and explore'. LINK TO QUESTION Moreover, Weldon fights that literature must and does remains integral through the use of the religious language in the rhyming couplet, ' only persists... All in all to thee' expressing the importance of literature through sacred language. Her insistence on the enlightenment literature can provide through its enduring success and enjoyment contrasts with her view of Lice's generation's fixation with film and television, which in her opinion ' can never enlighten'.

Welder's opinion of the values f good literature are also reflected through Dairy's condescending belief in a woman's ' improvement of her mind by extensive reading which makes her an accomplished woman and ready for marriage'. Here the direct speech of Dared displays the value of both literature and reading to regency period, gentrified society as well as the value this society placed on educated people, and women. Elizabeth Bonnet's behavior and enjoyment of reading is contrasted against the

superficial and hypocritical attitude of Miss Bentley whose 'attention was quite as much engaged in watching Mr..

Dairy's progress through his book as in reading her own', displaying Student's enduring respect for education and reading and as well as the value her society placed on the educated. Austin enhances this attitude through the contrast of characters actions in her social commentary by painting those with an appreciation of literature in a positive and appropriate light whilst making out those who do not to be superficial and debase.

Austin continues to convey her personal opinion of the institution of marriage through the study of various marriages in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* which gives n insight into the traits Austin valued in a successful marriage. Her portrayal of Lydia and Hacksaw's union as a match 'only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue', expresses her opinion on the fickle nature of a marriage with no intellectual or deeper connection. This view is mirrored in the unequal marriage of both Mr.. And Mrs.. Bennett and Charlotte Lucas to Mr.. Collins, whose unions were based neither on intellect or love.

Contrasting these unsuccessful marriages is the happy and lasting marriage of Mr.. And Mrs.. Gardner, and more expectable unless she esteemed her husband'. Whilst Austin breaks conventions by focusing on love in marriage she maintains the importance of appropriate and eligible unions displaying her value of her 19th century values and manners. Dependency of women on men and family members and the constraints they faced from the stifling conventions and unquestioned values of their society, epitomized by the

high modality, definite statements of Austin as the omniscient narrator. It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune just be in want of a wife'. This authorial intrusion and informative sarcasm mocks the very rituals and accepted values of this society which confined and limited Omen and presents Student's own attitudes toward these conventions. She shows her value of the educated and independent minded woman through Elizabeth Bennett and through herself as a single, successful female writer.

Aunt Fay defends this ' crusading zeal' of Austin by maintaining that her form of conveying her message through her novels has in fact become more meaningful in her belief that ' enlighten people and you enlighten society. She builds on these ideas of Student's novels Changing the values and ideas of people and therefore societies toward women by presenting the character of Aunt Fay as the successful independent woman without the burden of the necessity of marriage for financial security.

Aunt Fay suggests that Omen who are successful do not need to depend on men as they have done in the past, saying that ' Success kicks away the stool of masochism, on which female existence so often depends', this enhances our understanding of the changes in society that have led to the liberation of women and enhances our understanding of the personal values Weldon and Austin hold toward the role of women.

Through their novels and their own lives Fay Weldon and Jane Austin successfully express their own personal values and attitudes toward their societies. This desire to display their views and opinions connects the

authors and highlights some of the key connections in their writing. Our understanding of these beliefs is heightened by an understanding of their contexts and an appreciation of the changes in society and the world.