Pride and Prejudice Study Guide

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

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Introduction

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* had a long and varied life before it finally saw publication on January 28, 1813 Austen began the book, originally titled *First Impressions,* In 1796 Her father submitted it to a London publisher the following year, but the manuscript was rejected. Austen continued to work on the book, and scholars report that the story remained a favorite with the close circle of friends, relations, and acquaintances she took into her confidence. She probably continued working on *First Impressions* after her family relocated to Bath in 1801 and did not stop revising and rewriting until after the deaths of both her father and a close friend in 1805. After this point Austen seems to have given up writing for almost five years. She had resumed work on the book by 1811, scholars report, and the final product appeared anonymously in London bookstalls early in 1813.

The critical history of *Pride and Prejudice* was just as varied as the evolution of the novel itself. At the time the novel was published in the early nineteenth century, most respected critical opinion was strongly biased against novels and novelists. Although only three contemporary reviews of *Pride and Prejudice* are known to exist, they are all remarkably complimentary. Anonymous articles in the *British Critic* and the *Critical Review* praised the author's characterization and her portrayal of domestic life. Additional early commentary exists in the diaries and letters of such prominent contemporary readers as Mary Russell Mitford and Henry Crabb Robinson, both of whom admired the work's characters, realism, and freedom from the trappings of Gothic fiction. After this period, however, criticism of *Pride and Prejudice,* and of Austen's works as a whole, largely disappeared. With the exception of two posthumous appreciations of Austen's work as a whole by Sir Walter Scott and Archbishop Richard Whateley, very little Austen criticism appeared until 1870.

In 1870, James Edward Austen-Leigh, son of Jane Austen's brother James, published A *Memoir of Jane Austen, by Her Nephew.* This biography was the first major study of Austen as a person and as an artist, and it marked the beginning of a new era in Austen criticism. Although most critics no longer accept its conclusion that Austen was an "amateur genius" whose works were largely unconscious productions of her fertile imagination, it nonetheless performed a valuable service by bringing Austen and her works back into critical attention. Modem critical opinion of Austen began with the publication in 1939 of Mary Lascelles's *Jane Austen and Her Art,* which escaped from the Victorian portrait of Austen put forth by Austen-Leigh.

Author Biography

Born in England on December 16, 1775, Jane Austen is widely admired for her novels about manners in eighteenth-century England. Austen's life is imbedded in the same social world as her characters—that of the "landed gentry" in England's countryside. Her father, George Austen, was a country clergyman in Steventon, Hampshire, who had advanced himself through ambition and intelligence. Her mother, Cassandra Leigh, was of much higher birth; one of her ancestors had been Lord Mayor of London under Queen Elizabeth I. "The Austen children,", writes Laura Dabundo in the *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography,* "grew up in a close-knit family, low on financial resources but strong on education and religious principles." Two of her brothers, James and Henry, found Careers in the Church of England, while two others, Francis and Charles, entered the Royal Navy and both eventually achieved the rank of admiral. Her brother Edward was adopted by a distant relative, the wealthy but childless Thomas Knight.

Because money was in such short supply, Austen and her older sister Cassandra "had little formal schooling," Dabundo continues. "The significant scholastic experiences that nurtured one of England's leading writers took place in the rectory at Steventon." Jane improved her own mind and prepared herself for a career as an author by reading widely the works of William Shakespeare, John Milton, Henry Fielding, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Richardson, and many others. By 1787, she had already begun to compose her own stories, dramas, and short novels, and in 1795 she began the first drafts of "Elinor and Marianne," which would later become *Sense and Sensibility.* However, Austen would be thirty-five years old before she ever saw her first book in print. *"Pride and Prejudice,"* writes Dabundo, "had its origins in an epistolary novel, 'First Impressions,' written between October 1796 and August 1797 and offered to a publisher by Mr. Austen in November." Eventually, *Pride and Prejudice* would be published anonymously in London on January 28, 1813.

Reverend George Austen retired from his rectory in December of 1800, and in May of 1801 he moved his family to the Regency resort town of Bath in the west of England. They remained there until Reverend Austen's sudden death in January of 1805. His death left his wife and daughters without a means of support, and they were forced to rely on the charity of the Austen sons. From 1806 to 1809 the two Cassandras and Jane lived with Frank Austen in Southampton. In the summer of 1809 they settled into Chawton, a country house in Hampshire on the estate of Edward Austen—the brother adopted by wealthy Thomas Knight. There Jane resumed writing and began to revise her earlier manuscripts in hopes of publishing them. On January 28, 1813, *Pride and Prejudice* was published anonymously in London.

The relative success of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* led Austen to continue to write. *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* were published during her lifetime, but *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* only appeared after her death. Sometime around the end of 1815 or the beginning of 1816, she began suffering from back pain, fatigue, and nausea. "It has been speculated," declares Dabundo, "that Jane Austen had Addison' s

disease, destruction of the adrenal glands by tuberculosis or by tumor... but It is also possible that she had cancer or tuberculosis unrelated to Addison's disease." She had been working up to the time of her death on a final novel, *Sanditon,* but it remained unfinished on the day she died, July 18, 1817. "She was booed in Winchester Cathedral," Dabundo concludes. "Obituaries identified her for the first time as 'Authoress of Emma, Mansfield Park, Pride and Prejudice, and Sense and Sensibility'".

Plot Summary

At Meryton

Perhaps the most famous opening lines from any nineteenth-century novel are the opening lines to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice:* "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

These words are spoken by Mrs Bennet to Mr. Bennet on the news that a gentleman of fortune has just moved to Netherfield Park, a nearby estate. The Bennets begin this story with a peculiar problem: they have five unmarried daughters and no sons. Their estate is entailed, or restricted in inheritance, to Mr. Collins, a family cousin. Upon Mr. Bennet's death Mr. Collins will inherit the family lands, which will leave the Bennet daughters without a home or money. It becomes vital, therefore, that at least one of the daughters marries well in order to support and house their sisters (and mother if she is still alive) should they not be able to marry.

Shortly after arriving alone, Bingley brings to Netherfield his two sisters, Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst; his brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst; and his friend, Mr. Darcy, who also happens to be wealthy and unmarried. Not wanting to miss a favorable introduction to their new neighbors, Mrs. Bennet pleads with Mr. Bennet to call on Bingley so that she can begin introducing her daughters to him. Initially Mr. Bennet refuses to play any part in matching anyone of his daughters with Bingley. He tells his wife that if is she is so intent on meeting the newcomers at Netherfield, she must visit Bingley herself. However, prudent manners forbade to woman call on a strange man, making Mrs. Bennet powerless to begin the process which she hopes will lead to a marriage between one of her daughters and Bingley. Following the pronouncement that Mr. Bennet refuses to call on Bingley, Mrs. Bennet despairs that her daughters will never be able to meet wIth the eligible bachelor. Yet Mr. Bennet does call on Bingley, beginning the family's acquaintance with him. He takes ironic pleasure in surprising Mrs. Bennet with the news after letting her believe that he would not call on him.

The Bennet girls meet the Netherfield party for the first time at a small ball. Bingley proves to be personable and polite to the local folk, making him instantly well-liked. Darcy, while handsome and noble looking, appears proud and indifferent to participating in the activities of the evening or even socializing with the other guests.

The eldest daughter, Jane, is instantly drawn to Bingley, and he seems equally attracted to her. Jane is portrayed as gentle, unselfish, and very mannerly. Elizabeth is also well mannered, but possess a very sharp wit and refuses to be intimidated by anyone. Inclined to be protective of Jane and her family, she nonetheless recognizes the faults of her parents and other sisters. At the assembly, because of a shortage of men who dance, Elizabeth is left sitting. She overhears Bingley encouraging to Darcy to dance, suggesting that he ask Elizabeth. Darcy curtly replies that "she is tolerable; but not

handsome enough to tempt *me;* and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men." Elizabeth, though insulted, refuses to give Darcy's comment any weight, instead telling the story to all her friends and ridiculing his pretentious behavior.

Jane and Bingley's relationship continues to deepen during family visits, balls, and dinners. His sisters pretend to like Jane, but are appalled by her mother's vulgarities, her younger sisters' wild, loose manners, and their lower economic position among the landed gentry. They find great amusement in making fun of the Bennets behind Jane's back. A particular point of hilarity stems from the way Kitty and Lydia chase after the young military officers stationed locally.

Jane rides on horseback through a rainstorm in acceptance of an invitation from the Bingley Sisters. She consequently catches cold and must stay at Netherfield until she is well, much to Mrs Bennet's delight. Thinking her sister might need attending, Elizabeth goes to stay with Jane until she is well. Darcy soon begins to demonstrate an interest in Elizabeth, making Miss Bingley jealous, as she has hopes of marrying him herself. In fact, Miss Bingley has a right to worry, as Darcy notes to himself that "were it not for the inferiority of [Elizabeth's] connections, he should be in some danger."

Soon Jane is well and returns home. Another visitor arrives in the person of Mr Collins. He is a clergyman and will be the inheritor of the Bennet estate upon Mr. Bennet's death. Thinking himself generous, he decides to try to marry one of the Bennet daughters, so that any unmarried daughter will still be able to live at the family estate. His patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Darcy's aunt, has urged him to marry. He obeys her, as usual, with servile haste. He becomes interested at first in Jane, but when Mrs. Bennet indicates that Jane is taken, he fastens on to Elizabeth. She refuses him, believing that a marriage without love is not a worthwhile endeavor. Mrs Bennet breaks down in hysterics, though Elizabeth's father approves her decIsion. Within a day, Mr. Collins proposes to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend, who accepts him.

During Mr. Collins' visit, Lydia and Kitty meet an officer newly stationed in Meryton. Wickham becomes a favorite among the ladies, including Elizabeth. He claims to have grown up with Darcy, saying he is the son of the late Mr. Darcy's steward. He says that the younger Darcy has cheated him of his inheritance, forcing him into military service Already inclined to believe the worst of Darcy, Elizabeth now believes she has proof of his poor character, never once questioning the truthfulness of Wickham's story.

The Bingleys hold a ball where all of the Bennet family's manners, with the exception of those of Jane and Elizabeth, are exposed as lacking, much to Elizabeth's mortification. Soon the Bingley party packs up and leaves Netherfield to live in London during the winter. A letter comes from Miss Bingley to Jane Implying that Bingley might become engaged to Darcy's sister. Jane, while refusing to express her loss to anyone but Elizabeth, is devastated. When Elizabeth learns of Bingley's near engagement, she quickly realizes that Bingley's sister does not think Jane is a good marriage partner and has persuaded her brother that Jane is not really interested in him. Unlike Jane, who

faults no one but herself for Bingley's departure, Elizabeth is furious with Miss Bingley, and perhaps Darcy, for interfering WIth her sister's happiness.

Travelling

Thinking that a change in scenery would Improve Jane's condition, Mrs. Bennet's sister-in-law, Mrs. Gardiner, suggests that she spend part of the winter in London. While there, Jane is snubbed by Bingley's sisters and never even sees Bingley. Meanwhile, Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr. Collins in Kent, accompanied by Charlotte's sister and father. She sees Jane on the way and is sure that Darcy is keeping Bingley from visiting Jane.

In Kent, Lady Catherine honors the visitors, as Mr. Collins repeatedly informs them, with regular invitations. Elizabeth finds the woman to be haughty and ill-mannered, constantly thrusting her opinions on the others and fully expecting that they be followed without question. Elizabeth responds coolly to the other woman's prying. Darcy soon arrives in Kent, visiting regularly at the parsonage, sparring verbally with Elizabeth Unexpectedly, he proposes marriage to her, explaining that he loves her in spite of her low family connections. Rather than being Impressed and honored that such a highborn man should be interested in her, Elizabeth is insulted and refuses. She accuses him of being ungentlemanly, of destroying her sister's happiness, and finally of treating Mr. Wickham in a miserable manner. He storms away, but the next day presents her a letter answering her charges.

In the letter he states that he did keep Bingley from Jane, referring to the improprieties of her family and his Sincere belief that Jane had no feelings for Bingley. He goes on to explain how Wickham squandered all the money the late Mr. Darcy left him and how he even attempted to elope with Georgiana, Darcy's sister, for a chance at her fortune. Elizabeth acknowledges the truth of his explanation, reproaching herself for believing Wickham without once questioning the truth of his story

Slowly, her prejudice against Darcy begins to weaken without seeing him again, she returns home

In spite of Elizabeth's protests, Lydia goes with one of the officer's wives to Brighton, where the regiment is now stationed. Jane returns home from London, and Elizabeth leaves to travel with the Gardiners on a tour through the country which will take them to Derbyshire, the region where Mrs. Gardiner was born and where Darcy lives. They go to Pemberly, Darcy's home, believing that he is away and Elizabeth need not fear running into him. But he comes home earlier than expected. In spite of their mutual embarrassment, he treats Elizabeth and the Gardiners with courtesy, asking if he may introduce his sister to her. Surprised. Elizabeth agrees.

While in Derbyshire, Elizabeth enjoys her time with Darcy, Georgiana, Bingley, and Bingley's sisters. She becomes very fond of Darcy and almost believes that he may ask for her hand once more. A letter from Jane quickly dashes Elizabeth's hopes. Lydia has

eloped with Wickham. Wracked with guilt that she might have prevented this disaster if she had made known what Wickham had done to Darcy's sister, Elizabeth rushes home. It is soon discovered that the runaways are not married, but hiding in London. Wickham lets it be known that he can be bribed to marry Lydia, so Mr. Gardiner arranges a quick wedding. With no other option, Mr. Bennet must consent, though he worries how he will repay Mr. Gardiner, who is surely pr0viding the considerable bribe to Wickham. Once they are wed, Lydia and Wickham return to the welcoming arms of Mrs. Bennet, who refuses to be embarrassed by Lydia's lack of propriety.

All is Well

Lydia, heedlessly breaking her promise to Darcy, tells Elizabeth that Darcy attended theIr wedding. Elizabeth then convinces Mrs. Gardiner to give her the details. It turns out that Mr. Darcy arranged the wedding, paid off Wickham, purchased Wickham a commission in the army, and supplemented Lydia's small dowry

Soon after, Bingley and Darcy return to Netherfield. They call on the Bennets and soon Bingley proposes to Jane, who happily accepts. Elizabeth, having developed feelings for Darcy, scrutinizes him, hoping that he still has feelings for her. But he soon leaves Netherfield

An unexpected visit from Lady Catherine soon occurs. She has heard a wild rumor that Darcy and Elizabeth are soon to be engaged, and she wishes for Elizabeth to refute the rumor and promise never to become engaged to Darcy. It seems that she has hopes her sickly daughter will marry him. Unintimidated, Elizabeth refuses. Lady Catherine leaves in a rage, later repeating the conversation to Darcy,unwittingly giving him hope that Elizabeth is in love with him. He knows Elizabeth well enough to understand that had she "been absolutely, irrevocably decided against [him], [she] would have acknowledged It.. frankly and openly." He returns to Longbourne and proposes once again. Without hesitation, she accepts.

Volume 1: Chapter 1

Volume 1: Chapter 1 Summary

Based on the inevitable conclusion that a single man must necessarily be in the pursuit of a wife, when Netherfield Park is rented to an eligible young bachelor of large fortune, Mrs. Bennet, who has five eligible young daughters, applies to her husband to go immediately to Netherfield to make a formal introduction of the family. When Mr. Bennet denies that he has any inclination to do so, Mrs. Bennet, as per her usual reaction to stress, disappointment, or emotion of any kind, begins to complain of her nerves.

Volume 1: Chapter 1 Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces us to two key themes in the novel. Mr. Bennet is "so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice," that in twenty-three years of marriage Mrs. Bennet has still not learned to decipher his humor through his sarcasm, his love through his nonchalance. We learn that of his five daughters, Lizzie is his favorite, and that he makes no secret of the fact. Mrs. Bennet is a nervous woman of small intellect, whose main goal in life is to see her daughters marry well. Indeed, marrying well is the main theme of the entire novel, and the one that will occupy the hearts and minds of all of the main characters, both male and female. The subtext will seek to define exactly what "marrying well" should and did mean at that moment in history.

Volume 1: Chapter 2

Volume 1: Chapter 2 Summary

In keeping with his general perverse penchant for torturing his wife, Mr. Bennet does not tell her that he intends to visit Mr. Bingley, the new tenant of Netherfield Park, and she does not know of his visit until after he has made it. When he does reveal to them that he has made Mr. Bingley's acquaintance, it is done casually, in mockery of the eagerness of his wife and daughters. The evening after his morning visit, he comments to his second daughter, Elizabeth, that he hopes Mr. Bingley will appreciate the hat she is trimming. Resentfully, Mrs. Bennet replies that they have no way of knowing what Mr. Bingley liked. Elizabeth reminds her mother that they will meet him at the next assemblies, although Mrs. Bennet stubbornly refuses that anything good will come of it, as she had hoped to be the one to be able to introduce Mr. Bingley around to her friends at the assemblies, and now it seems it would be the other way around. Mr. Bennet sighs that if she will not introduce Mr. Bingley to her friend Mrs. Long, he would have to do it himself. Mrs. Bennet scolds her husband severely for speaking such nonsense, and declares herself sick of hearing about Mr. Bingley, to which Mr. Bennet in turn scolds her for not having told him that she was sick of Mr. Bingley before went to the trouble of paying him a visit.

Volume 1: Chapter 2 Analysis

In chapter 2, we are introduced to some of the characteristics of Elizabeth, Mary and Lydia. Elizabeth, Mr. Bennet's evident favorite and the second oldest daughter, seems to be the only daughter thus far with much intelligence. Mary seems to wish fervently to be intellectual, and spends her time reading, thinking and making extracts, but when called upon to say something sensible, she can think of nothing to say. Lydia seems preliminarily to be arrogant, outspoken and self-indulgent.

Volume 1: Chapter 3

Volume 1: Chapter 3 Summary

Nothing can draw a satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley out of their father, but the description given by their neighbor, Lady Lucas is favorable, including young, handsome, agreeable, and to top it all off, Mr. Bingley intended to attend the next assembly with a large group of friends from London. Mrs. Bennet is ecstatic, even more so when Mr. Bingley returns Mr. Bennet's visit a few days later. Mr. Bingley has come hoping to catch a glimpse of the lovely Bennet sisters, as he has heard much around town about their beauty and various other attributes. Alas, he sees only Mr. Bennet, although the girls catch sight of him from a top window as he departs. Mrs. Bennet sends an invitation following Mr. Bingley's visit, and already has the meal courses planned when a response comes with the upsetting news that Mr. Bingley would be leaving the following day. She is most upset, but comforted by the fact that he has gone to London to bring a large party of friends up for the assemblies.

Every one of his guests is, at first glance, delightful. Bingley himself lives up to the rumors that have been circulating of his good looks and easy manners. His sisters are all well bred, and his brother in law a gentleman. However, it is his friend Mr. Darcy who creates the biggest sensation upon his arrival. He is dark and handsome, and with an annual income of ten thousand pounds a year. The consensus among the single ladies is that Mr. Darcy is a much finer catch than Mr. Bingley is, until his poor manners make him fall out of favor rapidly with his throng of new admirers. He dances only two dances the entire evening, and while Mr. Bingley works the room with ease, chatting and dancing with almost everyone in attendance, Mr. Darcy makes a fast enemy of the Bennets, when Elizabeth overhears a conversation between he and Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bingley is urging him to dance, and when he suggests Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy replies curtly, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men."

Elizabeth, with her typical buoyant humor, feels momentarily stung, but tells and retells the story to her friends and family, her lively, playful disposition delighting in such a ridiculous and morose man.

Elizabeth's sister Jane fares far better than her sister does throughout the evening. She dances twice with Mr. Bingley, and earns the admiration of his sisters. Jane is gratified by the attention she receives from him, in her own quiet way, but Elizabeth feels her excitement.

Volume 1: Chapter 3 Analysis

In chapter 3, we are acquainted with a key character in the novel, Mr. Darcy. He is at first admired by everyone for his good looks and handsome income, but is soon

dismissed as being excessively proud, even to the point of bad mannered. It is Mr. Darcy's pride, as it meets and does battle with Elizabeth Bennet's pride, that is a main theme of the novel, and the reason for its prominent position in the book's title.

Volume 1: Chapter 4

Volume 1: Chapter 4 Summary

The following day, Lizzie and Jane discuss the evening's events. Jane is obviously very much taken by Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth approves of Jane's choice, but being the more reasonable sibling, she is not as prone to unnecessary flattery as Jane is, and senses immediately that while Mr. Bingley is a perfect gentleman in every sense of the word, his sisters are not equal to him in manners and good breeding.

Volume 1: Chapter 4 Analysis

It is in chapter 4 that we begin to learn about Jane Bennet, the eldest daughter. She is the sister that Elizabeth is closest to, and sensible, sensitive, and kind. She also has the potential to be slightly naïve, tending to ignore the bad in people and believe everyone to be as good and kind as she herself. The conversation Jane has with Elizabeth about the Miss. Bingleys, and their differences of opinion on the subject foreshadow events in the future that prove Elizabeth correct in her original assessment of the Bingley sisters.

In this chapter, we also learn about Mr. Bingley's financial circumstances. His father had made his fortune in trade, and had intended to purchase an estate with his savings. Dying before managing to make the purchase, Mr. Bingley junior was left a small fortune of 100,000 pounds, and his sisters are anxious that he should use it to purchase an estate.

Volume 1: Chapter 5

Volume 1: Chapter 5 Summary

The Miss. Lucases and the Miss. Bennets get together the day after the ball to talk about the outcomes of the evening's events. Mrs. Bennet brags none too subtly about Mr. Bingley's obvious affection for Jane, and Mr. Darcy's harsh comments about Elizabeth are spoken about. They come to the conclusion that Mr. Darcy is "ate up with pride," although Miss. Lucas sensibly counters that he has good reason to be proud, being handsome, from a good family, wealthy, and intelligent.

Volume 1: Chapter 5 Analysis

Once again, Mr. Darcy's pride is a subject of heated debate, although Elizabeth brings her own pride into this conversation, replying to Miss. Lucas's comment by stating that she "could easily forgive *his* pride, if he had not mortified *mine*." Here we begin to learn that Mr. Darcy is not the only character in the novel with excessive pride, that Elizabeth also is proud, although we do not yet know to what extent, nor how it relates to Mr. Darcy's pride.

Volume 1: Chapter 6

Volume 1: Chapter 6 Summary

The Miss. Bennets soon wait on the ladies of Netherfield, and the visit is soon returned. Although the Miss. Bingleys have made it clear that Mrs. Bennet and the younger Miss. Bennets are completely intolerable to them, they have made it known that they welcome a friendship with the two older daughters. However, Elizabeth is not blinded to their obvious snobbishness by their allusion to a developing friendship between them. She understands that the gesture comes directly from Mr. Bingley's regard for Jane, and that the Bingley ladies have little or no real inclination towards friendship for Jane, and for herself even less so. She is comforted by the fact that Jane is by nature guarded and discreet in showing excessive feelings for potential suitors, and that any efforts made by the Bingley sisters are in fact tributes to Mr. Bingley's regard for Jane.

Elizabeth is so concerned for the well-being of her sister, that she is unaware of becoming increasingly an object of interest in the eyes of Mr. Darcy. Whereas at first glance he had dismissed her, upon further reflection he begins to discern how her intelligence, wit and sensibility could be read upon her face, more than compensating for the fact that she was not the beauty Jane was, although a handsome girl in her own right. He begins to listen to her conversations when they are at events together, and one night, at a gathering at the Lucas' house, Elizabeth perceives he is listening to her. In her usual direct manner, she confronts him, and when Sir William Lucas interrupts their conversation, asking Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy if they will dance together, she flatly refuses and moves on to another part of the room. Mr. Darcy is further intrigued, and when Miss. Bingley approaches him later in the evening, he mentions his high regard of Elizabeth to her. She is astonished, and snidely begins to criticize Elizabeth and her family.

Volume 1: Chapter 6 Analysis

When Elizabeth mentions the fact that Jane is guarded in her emotions to Charlotte Lucas, who is a close friend of hers, Charlotte advises her that this is not a wise decision on Jane's part, conscious or unconscious. She admonishes that if Mr. Bingley is ever to find the courage to take their budding relationship to the next step, he must see some encouragement from Jane, and more than simply the same amiability she shows to everyone. Elizabeth counters that Jane herself is not even certain of her feelings for Bingley, having known him less than a fortnight, to which Charlotte replies, "when she is secure of him, there will be leisure for falling in love as much as she chooses." This sentiment is indicative of the time in which the novel takes place, when all any woman can hope for is to marry well, meaning into a family of good reputation and large fortune. It is beyond Charlotte's comprehension that feelings should come into the equation at all, and this foreshadows the situation that Charlotte will find herself in later in the novel.

Volume 1: Chapter 7

Volume 1: Chapter 7 Summary

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bennet has been left great fortunes by their ancestors. Mr. Bennet's property consisted of an estate of two thousand pounds a year, and would only be inherited by male heirs, so the estate would not be passed down to Mr. Bennet's offspring as it would have had their been a son in the family. Mrs. Bennet has a small income from her father, who had been an attorney, and a sister married to a Mr. Philips living in the nearby village of Longbourn. She also has a brother who has a trade business in London.

The two youngest daughters, Catherine and Lydia, often walk into Meryton in the morning to visit with their aunt and the milliner's shop in the town. At present, their excursions to Meryton furnish more gossip than usual, as there is a military regiment stationed there for the whole winter.

One day a letter arrives from Miss. Bingley, imploring Jane to spend the evening at Netherfield; the men are to dine with the officers in Meryton, and the women are in need of company. Jane asks permission to take the carriage, but Mrs. Bennet advises her to go on horseback. She reasons that it is likely to rain, and that if she is traveling by horseback she will be forced to spend the night in the event of inclement weather. It does indeed rain, and Jane arrives at Netherfield drenched and unwell. The following morning a letter arrives for Elizabeth from Jane, declaring that she is unwell. Miss Bingley has persuaded her to stay in bed at Netherfield until she is fit to travel. Elizabeth resolves to go to her, and sets out on foot. When she arrives, Jane is no better, but delighted that Elizabeth has come to visit her. It is decided that Elizabeth will spend the night at Netherfield.

Volume 1: Chapter 7 Analysis

The characters of Catherine and Lydia are not given much development in the novel thus far, the reason being that they are silly, arrogant girls, who, even for their young age are proclaimed by their own father to be "the silliest girls in the country," and "uncommonly foolish." Catherine is the older of the two, but Lydia is the instigator, and it is Lydia who will be the most affected by her own silliness in the course of the novel. It cannot be doubted where the two girls get their foolishness from; Mrs. Bennet herself seems to be uncommonly air headed and impetuous. Her rash decision to send Jane to Netherfield on horseback when it is sure to rain is just one example of this.

Volume 1: Chapter 8

Volume 1: Chapter 8 Summary

Dinner at Netherfield is for Elizabeth an insufferable experience that night. While she is grateful for Mr. Bingley's obvious concern for her sister, Miss. Bingley and Mrs. Hurst (Mr. Bingley's married sister) have no concern whatsoever for Jane when she is not immediately in front of them. As soon as she has finished eating, Elizabeth excuses herself to return to Jane's bedside. The minute she has left the room Miss. Bingley begins abusing her, finding her manners to be bad, a mixture of "pride and impertinence," and lacking in "conversation, style, taste and beauty." Both Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy speak in Elizabeth's defense, but Miss. Bingley is not to be silenced, and although Mrs. Hurst speaks of Jane fondly, it is not without constant reference to her poor connections.

Volume 1: Chapter 8 Analysis

After dinner, we learn that Elizabeth has been correct in her assessment of the Bingley women, that their kindness to Jane and Elizabeth is little more than an act meant to appease their brother in the short term, and they do not really care for either Jane or Elizabeth. We also learn that Miss. Bingley has high regard for Mr. Darcy, and tries hard to make herself agreeable to him, to little avail.

Volume 1: Chapter 9

Volume 1: Chapter 9 Summary

By morning Jane is slightly better; however, Elizabeth chooses to send word to her mother to come herself to pass judgment as to whether or not Jane is fit to travel. Mrs. Bennet arrives with Catherine and Lydia soon after breakfast. After spending a short while with Jane, Mrs. Bennet pronounces her far too ill to be removed, and she and her three daughters go down to have tea with Mr. and Miss. Bingley. Elizabeth is embarrassed every time her mother opens her mouth, and is happy to see them leave. Miss. Bingley is also happy to see them leave, having been left with an abundance of new material to criticize, and she commences to do so the moment Mrs. Bennet has left and Elizabeth has returned upstairs to her sister.

Volume 1: Chapter 9 Analysis

It is obvious that Miss. Bingley does not think Jane a good match for her brother. England at that moment in history was a society very much divided by class, and marriages were arranged based almost solely on this system. Despite Mr. Bingley's obvious regard for Jane, others think it imprudent of him even to indulge in her company, as she is obviously a poor match for him, according to his sisters and Mr. Darcy.

Volume 1: Chapter 10

Volume 1: Chapter 10 Summary

The next evening the drawing room is quieter than the previous one had been. Everyone is at his or her own task, Elizabeth at needlepoint, Mr. Bingley and Mr. Hurst at a game, Mr. Darcy writing a letter, and Miss. Bingley watching him write, trying hard to draw his attention away from his letter with incessant and trivial chatter. While working at her needlepoint, Elizabeth amuses herself by listening to Miss. Bingley trying to flatter Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Darcy trying equally hard to ignore her. As the evening progresses, there arises a lively discussion between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, which is silenced only by Mr. Bingley's plea that he dislikes arguments immensely.

Volume 1: Chapter 10 Analysis

During the course of the evening, Elizabeth begins to notice Mr. Darcy's eyes almost constantly on her. She cannot understand why, but dislikes him enough not to give it much thought. He invites her to dance with him, and she once again refuses, but is so witty in her refusal that he realizes he is quite bewitched by her. The author clarifies this statement with the following, "He really believed that were it not for the inferiority of her connections he should be in some danger." In other words, while he recognizes himself to be more bewitched with her than he has ever been with any other woman, he does not even entertain the possibility of an alliance because of her low social standing.

Volume 1: Chapter 11

Volume 1: Chapter 11 Summary

The following evening Jane has recovered enough to join the group in the drawing room after dinner. Mr. Bingley is overjoyed to see her, and spends the entire evening with her. Miss. Bingley soon tires of trying to attract Mr. Darcy's attention, and begins to walk around the room. She invites Elizabeth to join her, at which point Mr. Darcy puts down his book to watch them. Miss. Bingley tries to engage in conversation with him, but it is once again Elizabeth that succeeds in engaging him in a lively debate.

Volume 1: Chapter 11 Analysis

In the Netherfield drawing room on these long evenings while Jane is recovering, we begin to see the irony of the relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. An ignorant comment of Mr. Darcy's has succeeded in making Elizabeth certain of Mr. Darcy's flaw of excessive pride, but it is her own wounded pride that brought her to this conclusion. Now that Mr. Darcy has seen her attributes and has dropped his proud countenance around her, she is still too proud to acknowledge how similar and compatible they are, although it becomes increasingly evident to the reader.

Volume 1: Chapter 12

Volume 1: Chapter 12 Summary

By the following day Jane has recovered sufficiently to return home, but such concerns for her safety are voiced by Mr. Bingley and by Mrs. Bennet, who had hoped they'd stay at least another three days, that they are convinced to stay another day. Thus, the following day they take their leave of Netherfield, and while both sisters are happy to be heading home, nobody is happier than Miss. Bingley, who is by now aware and jealous of Mr. Darcy's obvious regard for Elizabeth.

Volume 1: Chapter 12 Analysis

Mr. Darcy is also happy that they are going. He also has noticed himself paying Elizabeth too much attention, and has been unable to stop himself from doing so. Thus, the only remedy is that she leave Netherfield.

Volume 1: Chapter 13

Volume 1: Chapter 13 Summary

The next morning at breakfast Mr. Bennet informs his wife and daughters that they are to receive a visitor for dinner that very night. It is his cousin, Mr. Collins, who stands to inherit Longbourn upon Mr. Bennet's death because there are no male heirs. Mrs. Bennet is shaken by the prospect of having such an unwelcome visitor in the house, but his letter is so humble and peaceable that they have no choice but to accept the fact that he will come, and stay with them a fortnight. The girls find their cousin to be overly formal to the point of ridiculous, but he is so courteous and admiring that Mrs. Bennet is soon won over by him.

Volume 1: Chapter 13 Analysis

Mr. Collins, if he is not explicit in his reasons for coming, at least makes no effort to disguise them. He gushes over the beauty of each of his cousins, and assures them that he comes "prepared to admire them." This foreshadows the fact that the olive branch Mr. Collins has said he is prepared to offer them is by way of a marriage to one of his cousins, thus resolving his single state and the issue of the inheritance of the estate.

Volume 1: Chapter 14

Volume 1: Chapter 14 Summary

After dinner, Mr. Collins begins to talk about himself and his situation in life. He is a clergyman, recently positioned as rector at the parish of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, an important person of extreme wealth and property. Mr. Collins speaks almost obsessively of Lady Catherine, and of her daughter Miss. De Bourgh.

Volume 1: Chapter 14 Analysis

Mr. Bennet is happy to have a new source of amusement in his oddball of a cousin, and Mrs. Bennet is happy to have someone to admire her daughters and her housekeeping. Other than this, Mr. Collins has little to recommend him. He is exceedingly prim, and while he does not lack in formal education, he is obviously not intelligent nor well mannered.

Volume 1: Chapter 15

Volume 1: Chapter 15 Summary

The morning following Mr. Collins' arrival at Longbourn, he gets Mrs. Bennet alone and inquires as to the "availability" of Jane, who is his first choice for a wife. Mrs. Bennet informs him that while she is in general agreement of his idea of finding a bride at Longbourn, Jane is "likely to be very soon engaged." Within moments, his choice of wife changes from Jane to Elizabeth, and so it was agreed, between Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins, that Elizabeth would be a very suitable match for Mr. Collins. Once this is decided, the girls and Mr. Collins decide to walk into Meryton for the day. There they meet Mr. Denny, an acquaintance of Lydia's, and a newcomer to the regiment, a Mr. Wickham, whose gentlemanly countenance is immediately noted by all the ladies of the group. They are standing in the street, engaged in pleasant conversation, when Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley ride up on horseback. The usual pleasantries are exchanged, and introductions are made, although Elizabeth's keen eye discerns that no introductions are necessary, as Mr. Darcy is obviously acquainted with Mr. Wickham. Both men are strongly affected by the sight of each other, and Mr. Darcy turns to leave immediately, Mr. Bingley following his lead soon after. Elizabeth's curiosity is piqued. They move on to their aunt's house, who invites them all to dinner the following evening, and promises to extend the invitation to the mysterious Mr. Wickham.

Volume 1: Chapter 15 Analysis

A third player enters into the queer, doomed relationship between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham is a handsome and mysterious stranger; the only thing known about him thus far is that he and Mr. Darcy have some history together, and that their relationship until now has not been a friendly one.

Volume 1: Chapter 16

Volume 1: Chapter 16 Summary

Elizabeth's curiosity as to the nature of the relationship between Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy is soon relieved. Mr. Wickham singles her out immediately as a favorite of all the ladies in attendance the following evening at the Philips', and before long, a mention of Netherfield is made. In due course, the conversation comes around to Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Wickham mentions that he has been involved with the Darcy family since his infancy. He addresses the coolness with which the two men greeted each other the previous day, and Elizabeth seizes an opportunity to make her strong dislike of Mr. Darcy known. Mr. Wickham further reveals that although Mr. Darcy senior was one of the best men he would ever know, his son, Mr. Darcy junior, has been a disappointment to the old man. He switches to another topic, and then brings the conversation once again to the subject of Mr. Darcy senior, recounting how Mr. Darcy senior had been Mr. Wickham's godfather, and had provided for him handsomely in his will. Mr. Darcy junior however, had seen to it that his will was not carried out, leaving Mr. Wickham penniless. This outrageous story adds fuel to Elizabeth's dislike for Mr. Darcy, and she recalls every injustice that, in the month she has known him, she can bring forth. Mr. Wickham skillfully says nothing against Mr. Darcy, in fact restrains himself, allowing Elizabeth to bring forth the story and add to it with a commentary of her own.

The whist game breaks up, and thanks to Mr. Collins, the subject turns once again to the subject of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Mr. Wickham mentions that Lady Catherine and Lady Anne Darcy were sisters, making Lady Catherine Mr. Darcy's aunt. He adds that there are plans for Miss. De Bourgh and Mr. Darcy to be married, uniting and strengthening the two massive fortunes. Elizabeth smiles at the thought of Miss. Bingley's efforts to attract Mr. Darcy thwarted.

Volume 1: Chapter 16 Analysis

We have long been well acquainted with both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's pride in the novel. We are now to become acquainted with Elizabeth's prejudice. It is her very pride that is partially to blame for making her so susceptible to the prejudice that Mr. Wickham talks her into having against Mr. Darcy. Mr. Wickham is also handsome, well mannered and amiable. He has a trustworthy face, and so Elizabeth gobbles up the lies he feeds her like candy, in part because she is attracted to Wickham, and partly because her pride is still wounded by Mr. Darcy's confusing and erratic treatment of her.

Volume 1: Chapter 17

Volume 1: Chapter 17 Summary

When Elizabeth recounts her evening to Jane the following morning, Jane is extremely disturbed that Mr. Bingley could possibly have such a close friendship with someone like the picture of Mr. Darcy that Wickham has painted. She sums up in typical Jane fashion that both parties had been deceived, and that the whole problem had occurred through a misunderstanding of sorts. Their conversation is interrupted by the announcement of Mr. Bingley and his sisters, come to personally deliver an invitation to the family to the Netherfield ball the following week.

Soon after they leave, Elizabeth finds herself in conversation with Mr. Collins, who with excessive formality, asks for the honor of dancing the first two dances with her. Having counted on dancing the first dances with Mr. Wickham, Elizabeth is disappointed but cannot refuse her cousin's offer. She then becomes aware of his increasing interest in her, and that he often singles her out for compliments. She realizes that he intends to propose to her, and is horrified by the thought. The only thing that can possibly make the rest of the week bearable is the promise of the Netherfield ball the following week, and the possibility of seeing Mr. Wickham.

Volume 1: Chapter 17 Analysis

Mr. Collins' advances could not have been more poorly timed. Elizabeth would have refused him on any occasion, but with her mind and heart suddenly occupied by the fair Mr. Wickham, she has little time for her ridiculous, pompous cousin. The thought that he will ask her to marry him hits her suddenly, but in typical Elizabeth fashion, she knows she can do nothing about it until the proposal is made, and thus chooses to ignore it until she can refuse him. There seemed to never be a decision on Elizabeth's part to refuse his proposal, it was simply a given from the moment she was struck by the thought that he might propose.

Volume 1: Chapter 18

Volume 1: Chapter 18 Summary

Elizabeth's hopes are dashed when she arrives at the ball to find that Mr. Wickham is not in attendance. Lamenting Mr. Collins' hopelessness as a dance partner, Elizabeth is just sitting down to vent her sorrows to Charlotte Lucas when Mr. Darcy surprises her by asking her to dance. She is so startled by the request that she accepts before she realizes what she has done. They begin to dance, and before long, Mr. Darcy, noticing her excessive coolness, brings up Mr. Wickham. He remarks coolly that while Mr. Wickham is blessed with the ability to make friends easily, he does not have the same luck keeping them. Elizabeth replies archly that he had certainly had the misfortune to lose Mr. Darcy's friendship. Mr. Darcy understands that Mr. Wickham has told Elizabeth many things about him, and they part company after the set of dances in silence, each engrossed in their own thoughts. Soon after they part, Miss. Bingley appears before Elizabeth. She assures her that Mr. Darcy is innocent of whatever Mr. Wickham has accused him of, and when Elizabeth leaps to Mr. Wickham's defense, Miss. Bingley leaves with a snide smiling, telling Elizabeth to consider herself warned.

Dinner follows, and Elizabeth is once again ashamed by her mother, who speaks indiscreetly of the possibility of a wedding between Jane and Mr. Bingley. She is further ashamed by Mary's singing, and by Mr. Collins' oddities. In short, it seems as though her whole family had, that night, conspired to make a poor impression to the outside world, and Elizabeth is happy when the night ends.

Volume 1: Chapter 18 Analysis

The shame that Elizabeth feels at her family's rough manners is indicative of the era. It is a time when one is judged vastly more on one's class and one's family name and status than on one's self. Part of Elizabeth's affection for Mr. Wickham is the knowledge that he is attainable to her, well within her family's range, while Mr. Darcy is not. This shames her, as she knows herself to be good enough for Mr. Darcy as an individual, despite the fact that her family continually pulls her down both with their status and with their actions.

Volume 1: Chapter 19

Volume 1: Chapter 19 Summary

The following day Elizabeth's life is thrown into further upheaval by a proposal from Mr. Collins. It is formal and comic, as is to be expected from him. He lists in detail the reasons for their match being an advantageous one for all concerned. She stops him as he begins to be carried away with plans for their marital bliss. She thanks him for his proposal, but courteously declines. He retorts that he recognizes her refusal as the obvious next phase in their courtship, and believes that she is simply playing hard to get. She assures him she is not, but he is unable to grasp the fact that she is truly refusing him. She gives up in frustration, and goes to her father to apply to him for protection against Mr. Collins.

Volume 1: Chapter 19 Analysis

As is often the case in marriages during this era, Mr. Collins is unable to grasp the fact that emotion could possibly have any bearing on Elizabeth's decision not to marry him. He has thought out in detail every possible advantage of their alliance, and there are many. The only detail he has not thought out is that they are in no way compatible to each other, and would most likely make each other miserable if married. This marital state of agony is perfectly exemplified in Mr. and Mrs. Bennet themselves. Most likely perfectly suited in class, status and financial situation, they were married, despite the fact that they were perfectly unsuited in terms of personality, and have spend twenty years miserable in each other's company.

Volume 1: Chapter 20

Volume 1: Chapter 20 Summary

Soon after Elizabeth quits the room, Mrs. Bennet returns to hear the outcome of the conversation. She is vexed to hear that Mr. Collins has been refused, and applies to her husband to talk some sense into Lizzie. He calls Elizabeth down. With a straight face, he tells her that her mother has threatened never to speak to her again if she does not marry Mr. Collins, and he swears that he himself will never speak to her if she does. Elizabeth suppresses a smile, and Mrs. Bennet flies into a rage.

In the midst of this confusion, Charlotte Lucas comes over. She is present, thus, when Mrs. Bennet tells Mr. Collins that nothing can be done to change Elizabeth's mind on the situation. He silences her dramatically, withdraws his offer and wishes that nothing further be said of the matter.

Volume 1: Chapter 20 Analysis

That Charlotte Lucas comes over when she does is excellent timing on her part, and foreshadows and enables what will happen in the following chapter between Mr. Collins and Charlotte.

Volume 1: Chapter 21

Volume 1: Chapter 21 Summary

The following morning sees both Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins as angry and hurt as the previous day. Elizabeth hopes that the rejection will shorten his visit; alas, he is determined to stay until Saturday as planned. After breakfast, the girls walk to Meryton to see if Mr. Wickham has returned. He has, and although he apologizes to the entire party, he says to Elizabeth when they are alone together, that at last he thought it wise to avoid social encounters between himself and Mr. Darcy. She approves of his prudence. The very same day a note arrives from Miss. Bingley. Jane reads it, and tries to hide her disappointment, but to Elizabeth it is obvious. She allows Elizabeth to read the letter, which contains the shocking news that the entire Netherfield party has left for London, and have no plans to return any time soon.

Volume 1: Chapter 21 Analysis

When the girls analyze the contents of Jane's letter, they come to vastly different conclusions, conclusions that reflect their individual characters. Jane believes exactly what is written on the page, that Caroline Bingley, her dear friend, is writing to tell her that her brother has decided to leave Netherfield, not to return all winter. Elizabeth reads past these lies, seeing that Caroline is writing what Caroline wishes, which is for her brother to be out of the grasp of Jane, of whom he is obviously fond, but is too poor to marry.

Volume 1: Chapter 22

Volume 1: Chapter 22 Summary

The following day, the Lucases and the Bennets dine together. During the entire day, Charlotte Lucas is so kind as to listen patiently to Mr. Collins. Elizabeth thanks her friends, and Charlotte assures her that she does not mind. Her intentions however, are different from Elizabeth suspects. Charlotte Lucas hopes to procure an offer of marriage from Mr. Collins. Her plan meets with obvious success, for the next morning, Mr. Collins goes to her house and proposes to her. She accepts gratefully, knowing that her plain appearance and average family status makes the possibility of her dying an old maid a real one. Thus, while she does not care for Mr. Collins, she is satisfied to have a husband. When Elizabeth hears the news from Charlotte, she is shocked. Charlotte prevails on her to understand that she is not romantic, and that while Mr. Collins is not her ideal partner, he is better than no partner at all. There appears a huge rift between the two friends, one that will not disappear for much time.

Volume 1: Chapter 22 Analysis

The rift that appears between the two friends is due not to Elizabeth's wounded pride at being forgotten by her suitor so rapidly, but precisely the lack of pride that Charlotte, her good friend, must exhibit to not only have accepted Mr. Collins' proposal, but to have encouraged it. This is a display of excessive pride on Elizabeth's part, and where she should have been happy for her friend, she allows the announcement of Charlotte's engagement to anger her and ruin her friendship with Charlotte.

Volume 1: Chapter 23

Volume 1: Chapter 23 Summary

When Sir William Lucas comes bearing the news of Charlotte's engagement, Lydia exclaims boisterously, "Good Lord! Sir William, how can you tell such a story? Do not you know that Mr. Collins wants to marry Lizzy?" Mrs. Bennet refuses to believe him until Elizabeth comes forward to confirm the story. Mrs. Bennet is mute until Sir William leaves, at which point she explodes in a fit of rage against Charlotte, Lizzie, the Lucases, Mr. Collins and anyone else on whom she can vent her anger. Jane wishes them happiness, and the younger girls delight in having gossip to pass around Meryton.

Mrs. Bennet is further disturbed by the news about Mr. Bingley and his party moving to London, and is constantly irritable and ill. Elizabeth and Jane avoid the subject of Mr. Bingley altogether, although Jane is obviously waiting eagerly for a response to her letter to Miss. Bingley.

Mr. Collins sends a letter of thanks to the Bennets, and mentions that he will be returning in two weeks for the wedding.

Volume 1: Chapter 23 Analysis

Although the excitement in the novel seems at this point to be happening to everyone but Jane, the reader must not forget her suffering. With high hopes of being proposed to one day, the following day her hopes are brutally dashed with the news that her beloved Mr. Bingley has simply left, with not even a farewell to give closure to the matter. Jane bears the situation well, a situation that is compounded by the indelicacy of her mother constantly mentioning how ill used Jane has been by Mr. Bingley.

Volume 2: Chapter 1

Volume 2: Chapter 1 Summary

When Jane receives a response from Miss. Bingley, they are not happy tidings. The group has definitely decided to spend the winter in London. Elizabeth and Jane spend long hours pondering the events, and while Jane blames herself for reading more into Bingley's affection than she ought to have done, Elizabeth believes that it is the family and friends that are to blame for whisking Bingley away, convincing him that Jane did not feel the same for him as he did for her. Elizabeth feels that they have done this so that Mr. Bingley will marry Miss. Darcy, a more prudent match financially, and while Jane concedes that Mr. Bingley's family and friends may want him to marry Miss. Darcy; she thinks that it may have also to do with his own preferences as well.

The family is generally thrown into a state of gloom by the recent turn of events. Mr. Wickham is instrumental in dispelling the gloom, and they see him often.

Volume 2: Chapter 1 Analysis

Elizabeth adds to her long list of qualities she finds admirable in Mr. Wickham "general unreserve." By this, she means that the whole town now knows of Mr. Darcy's alleged injustice to him. This is purposeful irony on the part of the author, as the general unreservedness that Elizabeth so admires, once the true story is know, can be more accurately described as a propensity to spread lies and smear campaigns against an enemy who has to much pride to defend himself against the accusations.

Volume 2: Chapter 2

Volume 2: Chapter 2 Summary

The gloom at Longbourn is further dispelled by the arrival of Mrs. Bennet's brother and sister in law, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. Mr. Gardiner is much more intelligent than his sister is, and his wife is a favorite with the two older Bennet girls. While speaking to Elizabeth one evening about Jane's difficulty with Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Gardiner offers to take Jane back to London with them when they go. She conjectures that a change of scenery may be precisely what Jane needs to forget the entire affair. Elizabeth agrees wholeheartedly, as does Jane when approached with the proposition.

Mrs. Gardiner meets Wickham during the course of her stay, and is not as taken with him as her niece obviously is. She likes him for just one reason: that he had grown up in the same area of Derbyshire that she herself had spent considerable time in, so they have many acquaintances in common.

Volume 2: Chapter 2 Analysis

Mrs. Gardiner has no reason in particular to dislike Mr. Wickham, and the fact that she does dislike him, and expresses this dislike to Elizabeth, foreshadows that Wickham will turn out to be a different person than the one he appears to be to Elizabeth and those who know him in a superficial way only.

Volume 2: Chapter 3

Volume 2: Chapter 3 Summary

At the first opportunity, Mrs. Gardiner decides to have a serious conversation with Elizabeth about Mr. Wickham. She strongly advises her niece against falling in love with him, or encouraging him to fall in love with her. Elizabeth obstinately replies that "since we see everyday that where there is affection, young people are seldom withheld by immediate want of fortune from entering into engagements with each other, how can I promise to be wiser than so many of my fellow creatures if I am tempted, or how am I even to know that it would be wisdom to resist?" She does however, promise her aunt to do what she thinks is wisest, and Mrs. Gardiner is comforted slightly by her words.

Mr. Collins returns for the wedding, although he does not stay with the Bennets, but with the Lucases this time. The wedding is a simple affair, but afterwards Charlotte takes Elizabeth aside, and asks her fervently to come and visit her at her new home in Hunsford. Elizabeth agrees, although already she does not look forward to the visit. They continue to correspond when Charlotte leaves with Mr. Collins, although their communication is still strained.

Meanwhile, Jane is in London, with no news of Miss. Bingley. She has written Miss. Bingley a note, with no response, so she goes to visit her at Grosvenor Street. Miss Bingley is on her way out, so they visit only for a short while. It is weeks later before Miss. Bingley returns the visit, and when she does so, she is obviously not happy about her obligation to return Jane's visit. Jane finally realizes that Miss. Bingley is not the great friend she had once thought she was.

Elizabeth finds herself to have been deceived as well. Mr. Wickham has found a new source of affection. Elizabeth finds that she is not affected by his change of heart in the slightest. She tells her aunt that she is certain she was never in love in the first place, as she does not feel the slightest animosity either to him or to the girl he has begun chasing, whose only value is that she has recently acquired ten thousand pounds from the death of a distant relation.

Volume 2: Chapter 3 Analysis

We begin to see Mr. Wickham in a different light. If he has been unfaithful in his feelings towards Elizabeth, is it not also possible that he has been unfaithful in his renderings of the events that transpired at Pemberley with Mr. Darcy? These are the questions we are meant to ask ourselves as readers.

Volume 2: Chapter 4

Volume 2: Chapter 4 Summary

On her way to visit Charlotte and Mr. Collins, Elizabeth stops in London for a night to visit Jane and her aunt and uncle. She spends the day happily visiting with Jane, and in the evening ahs the opportunity to chat with her aunt alone. She is displeased to hear than Jane has struggled against depression since being in London. She also tells her aunt about Mr. Wickham's new love. Mrs. Gardiner is quite disgusted by his mercenary affections.

Mrs. Gardiner also invites Elizabeth to accompany her and Mr. Gardiner on a trip they intend to take the following summer. Elizabeth is overjoyed; she suddenly has something to look forward to, and is delighted at the prospect of seeing the Lakes District in the north.

Volume 2: Chapter 4 Analysis

When Elizabeth tells Mrs. Gardiner of Mr. Wickham's abrupt change of heart, his obviously mercenary interests in his new object of affection appall her. This is of course ironic, which Elizabeth doesn't hesitate to point out to her aunt, because the last time the two ladies spoke of Mr. Wickham, it was Mrs. Gardiner cautioning Elizabeth not to fall in love with Mr. Wickham because he was not wealthy enough. The double standard here is plainly obvious, and recognized even by Mrs. Gardiner, although recognizing it does not make her change her beliefs. Austen's subtext here is that while it is inappropriate for Elizabeth to fall in love with a man that is not sufficiently financially secure, it is also not appropriate for Mr. Wickham to chase after a woman just because she has recently inherited money.

Volume 2: Chapter 5

Volume 2: Chapter 5 Summary

The following day the party, consisting of Sir Lucas, his daughter Maria, and Elizabeth, arrive at Hunsford. Mr. Collins and Charlotte are waiting at the garden gate for them, and as Elizabeth greets her friend, she is happier than ever with her decision to visit. Mr. Collins is as ridiculous as she remembers him being, and each time he says something inappropriate Elizabeth glances at Charlotte to see how she responds to it. Once or twice, she sees Charlotte blush slightly, but in general, she seems to choose not to notice her husband's awkward manners.

Later in the day, while Elizabeth is in her room preparing to take a walk, the house flies into a flurry of activity. Maria, Charlotte's sister, rushes upstairs and tells Elizabeth to look out the window. Elizabeth does so, and upon seeing two women outside in a carriage speaking to Mr. Collins and Charlotte, exclaims, "And is this all? I expected at least that the pigs were got into the garden, and here is nothing but Lady Catherine and her daughter." Maria is shocked at her error, explaining that it is not Lady Catherine, but Mrs. Jenkins, the woman that lives at Rosings, and Miss De Bourgh, Lady Catherine's daughter.

Charlotte returns to the house with the exciting news that they have all been invited to dine at Rosings the following evening.

Volume 2: Chapter 5 Analysis

When Elizabeth sees Miss. De Bourgh, her first comment is, "I like her appearance. She looks sickly and cross. Yes, she will make him a very proper wife." She is speaking, of course, about Mr. Darcy. We understand here for the first time that Elizabeth, although she does not yet know it, is jealous. Mr. Darcy, she is now pleased to discover, may marry someone other than her, but he will certainly not be happy with this person.

Volume 2: Chapter 6

Volume 2: Chapter 6 Summary

The group's impending dinner at Rosings is the only topic of conversation for the next twenty-four hours. Mr. Collins is busy instructing them how to dress, how to behave, and what to expect, and Maria and Sir Lucas are nervous at the prospect of being introduced to such an important personage. Elizabeth is better able to keep her composure, and after a formal introduction is made, studies the women objectively. Lady Catherine is large and haughty, and Elizabeth thinks to herself that she is exactly how Mr. Wickham had described her. Miss. De Bourgh is even smaller and sicklier looking than she appeared the first time Elizabeth had seen her.

Dinner is exquisite, but for Elizabeth the company is hard to bear. Mr. Collins compliments Lady Catherine on everything, and Sir William and Maria are too scared to say a word, except for the occasional echoing of whatever foolish thing Mr. Collins has just said. Lady Catherine is the main speaker however, and asks intrusively into every aspect of Mrs. Collins' domestic affairs. She also peppers Elizabeth with questions, who, while insulted by some of them, answers with composure.

Volume 2: Chapter 6 Analysis

Austen does not paint a kind picture of Lady Catherine. Part of this has to do with Mr. Collins' excessive build-up of her as some type of demi-goddess, but part of it is that Lady Catherine, for all her wealth and social status, lacks basic good breeding and manners. This comes into sharp contrast with Elizabeth, who, for all her lack of formal education, which Lady Catherine so rudely comments on, is completely composed and well-mannered at all times.

Volume 2: Chapter 7

Volume 2: Chapter 7 Summary

Elizabeth passes her first fortnight at Hunsford quietly but pleasantly, with little to do other than long talks with Charlotte, long walks and dinner twice a week at Rosings. Soon however, a visit from none other than Mr. Darcy is announced. He arrives with his cousin, a Colonel Fitzwilliam, and the very same day that they arrive, they come to the Collins' house to visit. Charlotte attributes this visit to Elizabeth, although Elizabeth modestly denies it. Colonel Fitzwilliam is a lively conversationalist, but Mr. Darcy, after the preliminary greeting, sits in silence for some time. He ventures to ask Elizabeth after the health of her family, and Elizabeth replies that her elder sister has been in London, inquiring whether he had seen her. She knows that he has not, but is eager to see his reaction. His face loses composure for an instant before he says that he has not. Soon afterwards, the two gentlemen depart.

Volume 2: Chapter 7 Analysis

When Elizabeth hears that Mr. Darcy will be visiting Rosings, she cannot deny to herself that she is looking forward to his visit. For Mr. Darcy's part, he has scarcely been at Rosings a few hours before he comes to pay Elizabeth a visit. He is his usual reserved self, but is cordial to her, and Elizabeth once again does not know what to make of his baffling attitude towards her.

Volume 2: Chapter 8

Volume 2: Chapter 8 Summary

For nearly a week, the Hunsford party is not invited to Rosings, and although Colonel Fitzwilliam calls on them a few times during the week, Mr. Darcy keeps his distance. They are then invited to Rosings for dinner after church one day, and thanks to the presence of the two gentlemen, the evening passes much more agreeably for Elizabeth than it has done on previous visits. Colonel Fitzwilliam takes a fancy to Elizabeth, and they chat amiably, under the watchful eye of Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth is asked to take up the piano, and she plays well, delighting her listeners and engaging all the while in easy banter with both gentlemen. She flirts easily with Mr. Darcy, with Colonel Fitzwilliam acting as the playful intermediary between the two.

Volume 2: Chapter 8 Analysis

It is clear that Colonel Fitzwilliam admires Elizabeth, and that she enjoys his company. However, her conversations with him, on lighthearted subjects such as books, music and travel, are of a very different nature to the taut, teasing, intelligent dialog that passes between herself and Mr. Darcy whenever they speak. It is obvious that they challenge each other, and that there is tension between them. Elizabeth considers this tension to be a simple mutual dislike, but Mr. Darcy has realized it to be something much more.

Volume 2: Chapter 9

Volume 2: Chapter 9 Summary

The following day Charlotte and Maria go into town and Elizabeth is left writing a letter. She is startled to hear a knock at the door, and even more startled to see Mr. Darcy alone. He apologizes, qualifying his visit by saying that he had thought the whole party at home. However, he stays until Charlotte and Maria return, and Charlotte predicts that he is in love with Elizabeth. Elizabeth denies that it could be true, recounting the frequent silences and awkwardness of their conversation. Nonetheless, both Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy continue to pass by the parsonage with frequency. Colonel Fitzwilliam obviously takes pleasure in their company, most especially Elizabeth's, but it is more difficult to understand why Mr. Darcy comes, as he is often silent for long periods. Mrs. Collins is baffled by his visits, but suspects that they may have something to do with his feelings for Elizabeth, despite her vehement denials.

Volume 2: Chapter 9 Analysis

The tension in the relationship, or lack thereof, between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, is growing to an almost unbearable crescendo. We do not know why Mr. Darcy is so silent around her, but we do know, as are the other characters in the novel beginning to suspect, that what Mr. Darcy felt for her at Netherfield is still felt very strongly. The only thing that keeps Elizabeth from seeing this reality is her prejudice against him because of Mr. Wickham's lies, and her injured pride at his erratic behavior towards her, beginning the very first time they met.

Volume 2: Chapter 10

Volume 2: Chapter 10 Summary

Elizabeth begins to meet Mr. Darcy on her long rambles through Rosings Park. She wonders at the improbability of their meeting, and to avoid it happening, she takes care to inform him before she goes. Unbelievably, it continues to happen. She finds that he begins to ask her increasingly personal questions, and she wonders what it could all mean. One day when she is out walking, she meets not Mr. Darcy, but Colonel Fitzwilliam.

They begin an easy banter, which includes him mentioning in an offhand way that being the second son of the family, he does not have the luxury to marry whom he chooses, but must consider money. Elizabeth wonders fleetingly if he is saying this for her benefit, and loses her composure for a moment, but quickly regains it. She finds out that Colonel Fitzwilliam is also a guardian of Miss. Darcy.

The conversation then takes an odd turn when Elizabeth mentions Mr. Bingley, sarcastically commenting what good care Mr. Darcy takes of his friend. Mr. Fitzwilliam agrees warmly with her, and begins to recount a story of Mr. Darcy saving his friend Mr. Bingley from entering into an imprudent marriage with a woman of little means who he cared deeply for. Elizabeth knows immediately of whom he is speaking, and while she keeps her composure, she is internally in a rage. After taking her leave of Colonel Fitzwilliam, she retires to her room, where her indignation brings on a severe headache, and she decides to stay home rather than join the Collins in their excursion to Rosings that evening.

Volume 2: Chapter 10 Analysis

The theme of marrying for love versus marrying for money comes up once again in chapter 10. The first time is Colonel Fitzwilliam's' offhand comment about the second son's burden of being required to marry carefully, claiming, "there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money." Elizabeth actually assigns a figure to this comment, asking wryly what the going rate was for a bride for someone like him, guessing around fifty thousand pounds.

The second time is when Elizabeth's suspicions of Mr. Darcy's blatant interference between her sister and Mr. Bingley are confirmed by Colonel Fitzwilliam's story. If she did not feel kindly towards Mr. Darcy before, she now has another reason to feel real animosity towards him.

Volume 2: Chapter 11

Volume 2: Chapter 11 Summary

She is not long in her room before she is summoned by a knock at the door. She is once again shocked to see Mr. Darcy before her. He inquires briefly about her health, and then begins to pace the room. He is obviously in a state of agitation, and Elizabeth sits quietly, waiting for him to speak. He begins thus, "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." From there pours forth a tirade of love, although he does not hesitate to tell her that he has struggled against his love, loving her *despite* her inferior family, their low class and relatively poor financial situation. She is offended at his words, and not only refuses him but also accuses him of being the sole cause of Jane's misery. He does not deny it, and after hearing her out, leaves in shame and indignation. Elizabeth is overcome with emotion as he departs, and cries for a full half an hour. She then retires to her room, unable to face the Collins that evening.

Volume 2: Chapter 11 Analysis

Despite its miserable outcome, the reader cannot help but feel relieved that the months of tension between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth has finally culminated in each one venting their very different feelings of each other. Elizabeth accuses him of being haughty, proud and uncaring of the feelings of others, and Mr. Darcy in turn accuses her of allowing her pride to get in the way of her feelings. "These offences might have been overlooked," says he, referring to his role in Mr. Bingley's rejection of Jane, "had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I with greater policy concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by reason, by reflection, by everything." She responds by heartily assuring him that nothing would have induced her to overlook his offences and accept his hand.

The irony here is that they are perfectly evenly matched on both issues of pride and prejudice. Her prejudice towards him comes from what Mr. Wickham has told her and his from her inferior family. Her pride comes from his prejudice against her inferior family, and his comes from her believing what Mr. Wickham has unjustly accused him of. They are at an impasse.

Volume 2: Chapter 12

Volume 2: Chapter 12 Summary

Elizabeth wakes the next morning in a state of apprehension. To clear her thoughts, she decides to take a walk. To her great surprise, Mr. Darcy is waiting for her in the park. He hands her a letter, and with few words of explanation, turns on his heels and walks away.

The letter begins by promising that it does not contain a renewal of the previous evening's sentiments. It then goes on to address the two accusations that Elizabeth made the night before. The first accusation, that of coming between Jane and Mr. Bingley, he acknowledges having some part in, although because of Jane's mild manner and kindness to all around her, claims to have been unaware that she returned Mr. Bingley's strong feelings. He also admits to keeping the information of Jane's presence in London from Mr. Bingley. Concerning the other, weightier accusation, he concedes that Mr. Wickham had been a favorite of his father's, and that his father in his will, had stipulated a legacy of one thousand pounds, as well as the funding of Mr. Wickham's education to become a clergyman. Soon after Mr. Darcy died, Mr. Wickham decided not to study to be a clergyman, but to study law instead. He wrote to Mr. Darcy to ask if the sum bequeathed to him could be added to, as law was a more expensive course of study. Mr. Darcy dispensed funding in the amount of three thousand pounds, and thought his relationship with Mr. Wickham over. Mr. Wickham did not study law, and spent the following three years in "idleness and dissipation." When his three thousand pounds had run out, he called once again on Mr. Darcy, who did not feel it his duty to continue to fund a life of idleness, and refused. Soon after that, Mr. Wickham made contact with Georgiana, Mr. Darcy's sister, and with his charm and good looks, made her fall in love with him and agree to an elopement. Luckily, writes Mr. Darcy, he found out before it was too late, but his certainty that Mr. Wickham was after not only Georgiana's legacy, but also to avenge himself to her brother is absolute.

Volume 2: Chapter 12 Analysis

It is rare in a novel that so much is revealed in a span of so few words. Throughout the entire reading of the letter, not a word is said about Elizabeth's reaction to it, but the reader can imagine how she is feeling. His words are too credible not to be believed, and his assurance of corroboration by Colonel Fitzwilliam makes him impossible to doubt. Although Elizabeth may feel a flash of pride when Mr. Darcy once again criticizes her family, she realizes that he is not wrong, and that she herself has been mortified on many occasions by her family's behavior. With Mr. Wickham, she most likely feels nothing more than the sting of humiliation at being so gullible, believing his story over Mr. Darcy's immediately, without truly knowing either man.

Volume 2: Chapter 13

Volume 2: Chapter 13 Summary

During her first reading of the letter, Elizabeth is inclined to disbelieve every word of it. However, after a second and third reading, after analyzing each sentence carefully, she begins to see, certainly in the latter half regarding Mr. Wickham, that there is the possibility of truth. After the fourth and fifth reading, she realizes that she has been "blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd." "How despicably have I acted," she cries out to herself. "I, who have prided myself on my discernment?-I, who have valued myself on my abilities? Who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity in useless or blamable distrust…Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly."

Volume 2: Chapter 13 Analysis

Suddenly, Elizabeth begins to see holes in Mr. Wickham's persona. It begins with the very fact that he told her everything she knew about the situation the very first evening they met, and she is struck with the impropriety of telling such personal matters to a complete stranger. She then recalls that although Mr. Wickham boasted to her that he was not afraid to meet Mr. Darcy, he did not attend the ball the following week. She recalls his fast affection for Miss. King now as being "hatefully mercenary."

Volume 2: Chapter 14

Volume 2: Chapter 14 Summary

The following day the gentlemen leave Rosings. Lady Catherine is feeling so dull, that she invites them all for dinner that very evening, but complains most of the night of the gentlemen's absence. They are invited to dinner at Rosings often in the last few weeks of Elizabeth's stay, but Elizabeth can think of nothing more than her own folly.

Volume 2: Chapter 14 Analysis

Elizabeth is finally able to come to terms with the truth in Mr. Darcy's words about her family. Even her father must share some of the blame, she feels, for not disciplining his younger daughters the way he should. Elizabeth now realizes that it is not her family's financial status that is appalling to Mr. Darcy, but their lack of manners. She also realizes with a moment of pride that he recognizes that having avoided that fate herself against all odds is a tribute to her strength of character.

Volume 2: Chapter 15

Volume 2: Chapter 15 Summary

They depart from Hunsford amid all the pomp and civility that Mr. Collins can muster. Elizabeth is sad to leave her friend in such bad company, but understands that Mrs. Collins went into the marriage with her eyes open, and sympathy is not necessary. Elizabeth spends a pleasant four days in London with her aunt, uncle and Jane, and then they are on their way back to Longbourn.

Volume 2: Chapter 15 Analysis

Elizabeth is having difficulty deciding how much of the past few weeks to share with Jane, and how much must be kept a secret, in the interest of sensitivity to Mr. Darcy's confidence. For the first time, she cannot tell her sister everything, for fear that the truth may hurt Jane.

Volume 2: Chapter 16

Volume 2: Chapter 16 Summary

When they arrive at the appointed inn where Mr. Bennet's carriage was to be waiting for them, they are surprised to see Lydia and Catherine waiting at the inn to surprise them. Lydia fills them in on all the gossip, including the fact that Mr. Wickham had lost interest in Miss. King, and that the whole regiment was being moved to Brighton. Lydia tells her two sisters that she is trying to persuade their father into spending a summer holiday at Brighton. They finally arrive home, and Mr. Bennet comments to Elizabeth more than once how happy he is that she has come back.

Volume 2: Chapter 16 Analysis

Chapter 16 serves as an accurate description of Lydia's character. Her dialog is small-minded, foolish and trivial, and is obviously the instigator, while Catherine merely follows everything she does. It is important to understand Lydia's character, as she is soon to be thrown to the forefront of the novel's plot.

Volume 2: Chapter 17

Volume 2: Chapter 17 Summary

Unable to wait any longer, the next morning Elizabeth tells Jane of Mr. Darcy's proposal to her. She decides to tell her everything but the part concerning herself and Mr. Bingley, and Jane is horrified by how bad Mr. Wickham is.

Volume 2: Chapter 17 Analysis

Elizabeth is relieved at least of one secret she has kept so long. The other, however, must be kept even longer, perhaps forever, and the more she sees of Jane the more she realizes how unhappy Jane is, and how strong her feelings for Mr. Bingley really were. Their mother is no help, and tactlessly expresses her comfort in the thought that she is "sure Jane will die of a broken heart, and then he will be sorry for what he's done."

Volume 2: Chapter 18

Volume 2: Chapter 18 Summary

The following week is a gloomy one at Longbourn, for not only does the regiment leave at the end of it, but also Mr. Bennet is not allowing them to go to Brighton for a holiday. Suddenly, Lydia's prayers are answered when Mrs. Forster, the wife of a colonel in the regiment, and a good friend of Lydia's, invites Lydia to go to Brighton with them. Lydia is ecstatic, and Catherine miserable at not being invited as well. Elizabeth is horrified, and appeals to her father not to allow Lydia to go. Her father does not hear her complaints; his mind is made up to let her go.

Volume 2: Chapter 18 Analysis

On the last night that the regiment is stationed in Meryton, Elizabeth sees Mr. Wickham, and brings up Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy's presence at Rosings during her stay there. His alarm at her mention of Colonel Fitzwilliam makes his guilt seem more evident, and it is sealed by his obvious alarm when Elizabeth alludes to the fact that she understands Mr. Darcy's character much more than she had before, as well as his actions with respect to Mr. Wickham.

Volume 2: Chapter 19

Volume 2: Chapter 19 Summary

Following Lydia's departure gloom once again settles over Longbourn. Elizabeth tries to be cheerful, but she is still so mortified over her behavior towards Mr. Darcy, that she is not very convincing. The only thing she has to look forward to is her trip with her aunt and uncle to the north. When this is postponed and shortened to a three-week stay in Derbyshire, she is sorely disappointed. With the mention of Derbyshire comes a surge of confusing feelings, however, for it is in Derbyshire that Mr. Darcy lives. To add to which, Mrs. Gardiner announces soon after their departure that she is most eager to tour the grounds at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's estate. As hard as Elizabeth tries to dissuade her aunt of the idea, she cannot, and is resigned that she would have to see Pemberley, and run the risk of seeing Mr. Darcy as well.

She is relieved when she speaks to someone in the town who informs her that the inhabitants of Pemberley are not currently residing there.

Volume 2: Chapter 19 Analysis

The apprehension that she feels at the thought of visiting Pemberley is a clue of Elizabeth's growing feelings for Mr. Darcy. Now that she has come to understand the reasons for both her accusations against him, she feels what she has lost by refusing his hand. So strong are her feelings are shame, that she is aghast at the thought of showing up at his doorstep, so to speak, as she and the Gardiners are touring the property.

Volume 3: Chapter 1

Volume 3: Chapter 1 Summary

As the threesome reaches Pemberley, Elizabeth's trepidations about meeting its master grow, lest her source have been mistaken in her assertion that Mr. Darcy was not at Pemberley. She is soon engrossed in admiring the scenery of the massive estate, however, and in thoughts of wonder that she could have been the mistress of such a grand place. The house is as spectacular as the grounds, although in no way ostentatious, and Elizabeth is delighted in Mr. Darcy's good taste. As they tour the house, the housekeeper verifies that he is not expected until tomorrow, and goes on to give such a favorable account of Mr. Darcy's character, that Elizabeth wonders if she can be speaking about the same man.

As they leave the house to tour the grounds, they see none other than Mr. Darcy himself coming towards them. Both his and Elizabeth's embarrassment is very great, but he is so polite to her that her embarrassment gives way to wonder at his changed character. After a few moments of awkward chatter, Mr. Darcy excuses himself and they continue their tour of the grounds.

On their way back, however, Mr. Darcy once again meets them. He is once again extremely polite to her, and even asks to be introduced to her family. He walks back to the house with them, and is even so courteous to offer his stream to Mr. Gardiner for fishing purposes, as Mr. Gardiner is an avid fisherman. At the end of their walk, as he and Elizabeth wait for the Gardiners to catch up to them, Mr. Darcy tells Elizabeth that his sister would be arriving at Pemberley the following day, and that she wished to meet Elizabeth. Elizabeth cannot imagine what the nature of his comment is, but hides her flustered thoughts and agrees.

Volume 3: Chapter 1 Analysis

Elizabeth has never been as humiliated as she is when she unexpectedly sees Mr. Darcy at Pemberley. She is at once confused by new and unexpected feelings towards him, and ashamed that he might think she has come to Pemberley on purpose, to see him and try to get him to renew his offer to her.

She is also bewildered by his newfound civility towards herself and her family. She cannot understand how his manner could have changed so much in such a short amount of time, and does not understand what could be the cause or the meaning of it. Least of all can she understand why Mr. Darcy's sister would be anxious to meet her.

Volume 3: Chapter 2

Volume 3: Chapter 2 Summary

Elizabeth had agreed that Mr. Darcy would bring his sister Georgiana to visit her in town the day after her arrival. However, the very day of Georgiana's arrival, Elizabeth returns to the inn to find that Mr. Darcy and Georgiana are just arriving to visit her. She relates to her aunt and uncle the guests that they would shortly be receiving, and they are amazed. They suddenly are struck with the notion of what such attention could mean; that Mr. Darcy was in love with their niece.

Elizabeth is exceedingly nervous as they enter, but after a few moments realizes that Georgiana is equally if not more nervous at the meeting, and that far from being proud and haughty, as many people had described her, she appears to Elizabeth to be merely shy. After a few moments, Mr. Bingley joins them, and he is just as unaffected and cordial as he had ever been. Elizabeth also notes with pleasure that while there is obvious affection between Mr. Bingley and Georgiana, it is not of the romantic kind, as Miss. Bingley had often hinted at.

When they leave, the Gardiners are certain that Mr. Darcy is in love with Elizabeth, but are delicate enough not to pester her with questions. They do casually ask their Derbyshire acquaintances about Mr. Darcy, and find that their answers agree with the sentiments of the Pemberley housekeeper.

Elizabeth lays awake all night trying to analyze her feelings for him.

Elizabeth and her aunt decide that since Georgiana had been so courteous as to wait on them the very day of her arrival that they would do the same, and pay her a visit the next morning.

Volume 3: Chapter 2 Analysis

As it turns out, the haughty, proud, accomplished Georgiana Darcy is merely mortal after all. Elizabeth sees through her reserve to the shy young girl who is eager to please and does not want to say the wrong thing, so says nothing at all. Elizabeth's expectations of Georgiana compared to the reality is a parallel of what Elizabeth thought she knew of Mr. Darcy compared to the man she is just now beginning to truly understand; a reserved exterior hiding a warm and compassionate personality.

Volume 3: Chapter 3

Volume 3: Chapter 3 Summary

Georgiana and the woman she lives with in London receive them cordially, but Mrs. Hurst and Miss. Bingley treat them quite coolly. Elizabeth is now certain that Miss. Bingley's evident dislike of her stems from jealousy, and is conscious not to let herself be affected by Miss. Bingley's poor manners. Soon after their arrival Mr. Darcy, who has been fishing with Mr. Gardiner, enters. He is once again polite with her, and the morning is spent pleasantly, with the exception of Miss. Bingley's snide comments. Mr. Darcy sees that Elizabeth bears these comments so well, that they have the opposite of their desired effect, to lower Elizabeth in his esteem.

As soon as they leave, Miss. Bingley begins to badmouth her, but neither Mr. Darcy nor Georgiana will indulge in even acknowledging her sentiments.

Volume 3: Chapter 3 Analysis

Now that Georgiana is no longer Jane's "competition," Elizabeth likes her even more, and when they visit the second day, both women make an effort to get to know each other, despite the awkwardness that they both obviously feel. Miss. Bingley makes no such effort to be friendly. She is obviously jealous of Mr. Darcy's regard for Elizabeth, and is even angry that Elizabeth is back on the scene. However, Elizabeth pays no attention to the frequent attempts to throw her off guard, and Mr. Darcy and Georgiana stand up for Elizabeth when she has gone.

Volume 3: Chapter 4

Volume 3: Chapter 4 Summary

The following day two letters arrive from Jane. Elizabeth is eager to open them, as one was sent to the wrong place and was postmarked for four days earlier. However, as she reads the letter, her expression turns from excitement to horror. Jane relates that Lydia has just been discovered missing from Brighton, and it is suspected that she has eloped with Mr. Wickham. The following letter confirms that they have indeed run away together, but they now have reason to suspect that Wickham has no intention of marrying Lydia, and despite Jane's normally optimistic spirit, she has begun to fear the worst.

Elizabeth finishes the letter, and as she is rushing out to find her aunt and uncle, Mr. Darcy walks through the door. She allows him to calm her slightly, and he sends a servant to find the Gardiners so that she can sit and rest. She tells him what has happened in tears, crying not only for Lydia's plight, but for her own as well, knowing that Mr. Darcy cannot possibly love her now that he his discovered this latest shameful piece of news about her family.

He is, however, completely compassionate, and promises not to tell anyone. The Gardiners return, and within an hour, they are all in a carriage on their way to Longbourn.

Volume 3: Chapter 4 Analysis

This shocking piece of news is not only horrible in and of itself, but also because Elizabeth understands the repercussions for herself, and the irony of the situation. Just as she is beginning to have feelings for Mr. Darcy, all is lost, thanks to Lydia's immoral behavior. In this era, a woman that has eloped with a man who is considered an imprudent match is frowned upon, but it is nothing compared to a woman who runs off with a man and does *not* marry him. This is the ultimate shame, and makes her immediately ineligible for marriage in the future.

Volume 3: Chapter 5

Volume 3: Chapter 5 Summary

When they arrive at Longbourn, the house is still in a state of upheaval. Mr. Bennet has gone to London to see what can be done, and Mrs. Bennet is bedridden. Jane is pale and tired from looking after the house during the crisis. The more Elizabeth hears about the event, the less certain she is that Mr. Wickham has any intention of marrying Lydia, although from a letter Lydia dashed off to Mrs. Forester before leaving, she left with him with the expectation of being married. Even Jane is beginning to doubt that a marriage will take place.

Volume 3: Chapter 5 Analysis

Even in her state of nervous anxiety, Mrs. Bennet's first words to her brother, Mr. Gardiner, express concern over Lydia's wedding clothes, and she tells Mr. Gardiner that if he finds Lydia, that he should relate to her the message that she should not choose her wedding gown without consulting Mrs. Bennet first. Lydia too, in her note to Mrs. Forester, mentions her undying love for Mr. Wickham only in passing, while frivolously instructing Mrs. Forester to give her regards to her other male acquaintances at Brighton, and asking her to pass a message along to the servant to mend one of her dresses before packing it and sending it to Longbourn. It is a reflection of the true idiotic nature of these two women, and to Jane and Elizabeth it is unbelievable.

Volume 3: Chapter 6

Volume 3: Chapter 6 Summary

There is nothing to do but wait for news from Mr. Bennet or Mr. Gardiner. Each morning they await the arrival of the post anxiously, but nothing comes except a letter from Mr. Collins, which has all the pomp of his former self but none of the civility. He remarks that Lydia had better be dead than in her current situation, and advises the family to throw off their "unworthy child from your affection forever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence." He also expresses his relief that Elizabeth had turned him down the year before, for if she had not he too would be mixed up in the sordid affair.

Meanwhile, they find out more terrible things about Mr. Wickham. He has debts all over Meryton and Brighton, his gaming debts in Brighton alone amounting to over one thousand pounds.

Mr. Bennet returns from London, as Mr. Gardiner has assured him he will do everything in his power to find Lydia. Elizabeth tries to console him, but he wishes to bear the brunt of his own mistake, and congratulates Elizabeth on being so right when she advised him to make Lydia stay home from Brighton.

Volume 3: Chapter 6 Analysis

Despite the rashness of Mr. Collins' suggestion that Lydia would be better off dead than living with a man out of wedlock, it is probably not far from the generally accepted ideas of the time. However, by having the words come from the mouth of one of the novel's least favorite characters, Jane Austen passes a scathing judgment on the overbearing morality of the era, and Austen makes Mr. Collins a symbol for everything that she feels is wrong with the system of morals of that time.

Volume 3: Chapter 7

Volume 3: Chapter 7 Summary

Finally, there arrives an express from Mr. Gardiner. It states that he has found out the whereabouts of Lydia and Wickham, and that although they are not married, Wickham has been persuaded to marry Lydia in the event that she is paid one hundred pounds per annum, and her share of five thousand pounds when Mr. Bennet is deceased. He mentions that Wickham had found the means to repay his debts in Brighton, and the girls and Mr. Bennet are mortified that it has likely been Mr. Gardiner's money that has repaid his debts in an effort to coerce him to marry Lydia.

However, at least she is to be married, and the girls go directly to their mother to tell her the news. Mrs. Bennet is ecstatic, and is instantly out of bed, and making plans to order fabric for Lydia's dress, and getting dressed to share the news with her neighbors.

Volume 3: Chapter 7 Analysis

We are now faced with pride of a different kind, the pride that prevents the more sensible Bennets from being happy with the situation, since it is obviously their uncle who has taken it upon himself to pay off Wickham's debts. They are all extremely ashamed to call upon their uncle in this way. However, considering the alternative, they are grateful for small mercies, and not so proud to refuse what they suppose to be kindness on the partner of Mr. Gardiner.

Volume 3: Chapter 8

Volume 3: Chapter 8 Summary

Mrs. Bennet's high spirits are suddenly quelled by her husband's assurance that not only would he not spend one penny on wedding clothes for Lydia, but that from that day forth, Lydia would never again be received at Longbourn. The argument that ensues is long and tedious, but Mr. Bennet does not budge an inch on either account.

Soon another letter from Mr. Gardiner arrives, reassuring them all that everything is taken care of, and that Wickham has resigned from his regiment, and accepted a posting far in the north.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth is feeling more and more desolate about her romance with Mr. Darcy that was now never to be, due to her sister's miserable recklessness. She is also upset with herself for confiding in Mr. Darcy in the first place, as the fiasco now seemed to be ending, and she thinks regretfully that if she would have had more presence of mind he might have never been the wiser.

Volume 3: Chapter 8 Analysis

Now that she believes their ever being together impossibility, Elizabeth can think more clearly on how perfectly suited she and Mr. Darcy would have been for reach other. "His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was a union that must have been to the advantage of both-by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved; and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance." She compares this vision of "connubial felicity" that she would never have, to the misery that her sister and Wickham would certainly have, and feels nothing but sadness for her own plight and shame of her family.

Volume 3: Chapter 9

Volume 3: Chapter 9 Summary

Lydia's wedding day arrives, and by evening, the married couple is at Longbourn. Neither Lydia nor Wickham have been humbled by their experience in the slightest, and Lydia seems to be even worse, bragging about her new husband to her sisters, and telling them all how they should all go to Brighton if they wanted to get husbands.

One day during their two week stay at Longbourn, Lydia corners Elizabeth and tortures her with details of her wedding day. In the course of the conversation, Lydia accidentally lets slip that Mr. Darcy was present at the wedding, at once chiding herself for not keeping his presence a secret, as Darcy had instructed her to. Suddenly, Elizabeth is burning with curiosity, and hastily writes her aunt to see what possible motivation Mr. Darcy could have had for being at Lydia's wedding.

Volume 3: Chapter 9 Analysis

Both Elizabeth and Jane are repulsed by the carefree way that Lydia talks of her shameful wedding, and her ungrateful feelings towards her aunt and uncle. Then suddenly, with the mention of Mr. Darcy's name in conjunction with Lydia's marriage, Elizabeth suddenly has hope of the possibility of him still caring for her.

Volume 3: Chapter 10

Volume 3: Chapter 10 Summary

Elizabeth does not have to wait long for a response from her aunt. She begins by chiding Elizabeth for being so ignorant of Mr. Darcy's affections for her, when it is so evident to everyone else. She then recounts that the very same day Mr. Gardiner came to London, they received a visit from Mr. Darcy. He had come to tell them that he'd discovered the whereabouts of Lydia and Wickham, and that, feeling himself partly to blame for not exposing Wickham's scandalous nature to the general public, he wished to help remedy the situation. Mrs. Gardiner also hints that perhaps this was not his *only* motive for wanting to help the Bennet family. At any rate, Mr. Darcy insisted on arranging everything, and after some negotiating with Wickham, repaid his debts, procured his discharge from his regiment, and attended the wedding. Mrs. Gardiner ends the letter by admiring Darcy's kind heart and fine manners, and hints to Elizabeth that she hopes Elizabeth will give Mrs. Gardiner free reign to roam Pemberley when she is its mistress.

Volume 3: Chapter 10 Analysis

This startling news gives Elizabeth even more reason to believe that Mr. Darcy still felt something for her, despite her family's disgrace. She does not allow herself to feel certain of the fact, but her aunt's words make her realize that it is a possibility.

Elizabeth has a conversation with Wickham in this chapter, directly after reading Mrs. Gardiner's letter, which brings into stark relief how things have changed since she first met him. He once again tries to convince her of his innocence and Mr. Darcy's guilt in his impoverished state, and Elizabeth, although she is now revolted by his lies and his very presence, with all her usual strength of character decides to make a truce between them.

Volume 3: Chapter 11

Volume 3: Chapter 11 Summary

A few days after Lydia and Wickham leave for the north, word comes to Longbourn that Mr. Bingley would be returning to Netherfield for several weeks for the hunting season. As the day of his arrival approaches, Mrs. Bennet prepares to send him an invitation to dinner. It is not necessary, however, because soon after his arrival he and Mr. Darcy come to wait on the Bennets at Longbourn.

Elizabeth does not know what to make of Mr. Darcy's presence, and less still of his subdued manner. She believes that her family disgusts him, but then does not know why he should have called on her at all.

Volume 3: Chapter 11 Analysis

It is obvious that after seeing Jane, Mr. Bingley once again begins to admire her as he had before he left. Elizabeth is gratified to see this, but her mother's manners towards him are so ostentatious, that she cringes with embarrassment that Mr. Darcy should once again see her family's coarseness. Her hopes of his affection begin to die once again.

Volume 3: Chapter 12

Volume 3: Chapter 12 Summary

They do not see the gentlemen until Tuesday, when they are invited to dine at Longbourn. Elizabeth spends a good portion of the time apart from Darcy analyzing his behavior towards her. She does not understand why he is once again quiet and cold around her. On Tuesday at dinner Elizabeth's spirits are buoyed by the fact that Mr. Bingley and Jane are quickly picking up where they left off, and Bingley is obviously as enchanted with Jane as he ever was, although Jane swears to Elizabeth that she thinks of him as nothing more than a friend. At dinner Elizabeth and Darcy are seated on opposite ends of the table, and do not have a chance to talk all evening.

Volume 3: Chapter 12 Analysis

Although Jane is too humble to presume anything, it is made clear to the reader that Mr. Bingley will soon propose to her. Mr. Darcy has obviously given his blessing, and will do no more to hinder an alliance between the happy young couple.

It is less clear however, what will happen between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, and his cool behavior towards Elizabeth is inexplicable.

Volume 3: Chapter 13

Volume 3: Chapter 13 Summary

A few days later, Mr. Bingley returns to wait on them, with the obvious intention of seeing Jane. It is then that Mrs. Bennet begins her campaign to get them alone together. She is thwarted that day, but Bingley returns the following day to go shooting with Mr. Bennet. He stays for supper, and Mrs. Bennet is successful in getting everyone out of the drawing room so that Jane and Mr. Bingley are alone together. This is apparently all he was waiting for, as the next moment, Elizabeth walks into the room accidentally and Jane gives her the good news that they are engaged.

Volume 3: Chapter 13 Analysis

Elizabeth is of course thrilled at her sister's announcement. She understands that they will make an excellent pair in every way, and even their father obviously likes Mr. Bingley very much, and tells Jane of his regard. The reader is still left wondering what will happen with Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, and the tension that Austen created earlier in the novel is once again building to a crescendo.

Volume 3: Chapter 14

Volume 3: Chapter 14 Summary

About a week after Jane's engagement to Mr. Bingley, Elizabeth receives a visitor. Lady Catherine De Bourgh arrives, unannounced, with the express purpose of speaking to Elizabeth. After exchanging a few words with Mrs. Bennet for no longer than absolutely necessary, Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth to take a walk with her. Elizabeth agrees hastily, and they set out. Lady Catherine wastes no time in confronting her with a rumor she has heard that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are to be married, and insists that Elizabeth put this rumor to a rest before her. She is so rude that Elizabeth does not give her the satisfaction of an answer, one way or the other. Lady Catherine is appalled at her insolence, and tells her that Mr. Darcy has been engaged to Miss. De Bourgh from his infancy. Finally, she admits to Lady Catherine that she is not engaged to Mr. Darcy, but makes no such promise that it could never take place. Lady Catherine, unaccustomed to being spoken to in such a manner, leaves in a huff.

Volume 3: Chapter 14 Analysis

We are obviously getting closer to the height of the crescendo that has been building the last few chapters. It is unknown how Lady Catherine grew to believe Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy to be engaged, and Elizabeth is left once again in curious speculation of his feelings towards her.

Once again, Austen is commenting on the ruling class of the time. Lady Catherine, despite her wealth and power, has no evidence of any manners at all, and Elizabeth, for all her embarrassing family relations, has more natural grace and tact than many of the wealthier characters in the novel put together.

Volume 3: Chapter 15

Volume 3: Chapter 15 Summary

Elizabeth can think of nothing other than where Lady Catherine could have gotten the information that she and Mr. Darcy were engaged. She feels certain that it must have something to do with mistaken information regarding Jane and Mr. Bingley's recent engagement, but is not sure.

The next morning, Elizabeth's father summons her into his office. He has just received a letter from Mr. Collins relaying his congratulations about Elizabeth's impending engagement to Mr. Darcy!

Volume 3: Chapter 15 Analysis

Not realizing that Elizabeth is somewhat cognizant of the identity of the mysterious person referred to in the letter, his father merely laughs it off as a joke, remarking at the hilarity of Mr. Collins choosing someone who Lizzy obviously dislikes so greatly, and who is obviously so ambivalent towards her. Elizabeth knows not what to say in response to this, and goes along with her father's humor.

Volume 3: Chapter 16

Volume 3: Chapter 16 Summary

A few days after Lady Catherine's visit and Mr. Collins' mysterious letter, Mr. Darcy returns, and he calls on Longbourn with Mr. Bingley. The four young people decide to go on a walk, and Elizabeth, summoning all her courage, thanks Mr. Darcy profusely for his connection in assisting her sister out of her predicament in London. Mr. Darcy is surprised that she knows about it, and tries humbly to silence her thanks. She will not be silenced, and he finally accepts her grateful sentiments, admitting that he had done it for Elizabeth's peace of mind. Elizabeth is embarrassed into silence at his kindness, and in this silence, Mr. Darcy speaks. "You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever." She lets him know that her feelings have very much changed since April, and this opens for him a floodgate of his admiration and love for her. They walk for hours, talking at length about each of their encounters, each of them assuming a fair share of guilt in their many misunderstandings and misconceptions.

Volume 3: Chapter 16 Analysis

The true culmination of the courtship that has been long in coming has finally happened. In the few hours that Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are together, they reach a greater understanding, and greater level of happiness, than either one had formerly thought possible. Once they began to talk, the dam burst open, and all questions and doubts that they had each been harboring for so long came pouring out. They arrive back at the house drained but happy.

Volume 3: Chapter 17

Volume 3: Chapter 17 Summary

That evening they say nothing of their engagement to anybody, but that night Elizabeth opens her heart to Jane. Jane is incredulous, and at first does not believe her, knowing how much she has disliked Mr. Darcy in the past. She is finally able convince Jane of the seriousness of their attachment, and half the night is spent talking about everything that had previously been held back by Elizabeth. The following morning Mr. Darcy returns with Mr. Bingley, and Mrs. Bennet pressures Elizabeth to go out with him, so that he should not bother Mr. Bingley while he is with Jane. Elizabeth is amused and vexed by her mother's rudeness at the same time.

While they walk, they decide that Mr. Darcy should speak to her father that very evening. He goes into Mr. Bennet's study, and comes out after a while, smiling. He sends Elizabeth in to speak to her father. Mr. Bennet questions her judgment, as she has always seemed to dislike him so much, but is soon convinced that her affections for him are real. Finally, she tells him of what role Mr. Darcy played in Lydia's scandal, and his future son-in-law truly wins him over.

She then tells her mother, who, as expected, immediately begins to talk of his wealth and of the fine life Elizabeth will have, and her riches. Her opinion of Mr. Darcy is changed in an instant, and Elizabeth is suddenly the favored daughter.

Volume 3: Chapter 17 Analysis

The irony of the situation is great. After many hours of speculation, they realize that it is through Lady Catherine that the two lovers were united. Immediately following her conversation with Elizabeth, Lady Catherine went to Mr. Darcy and related everything that she had said. It was this and this alone that gave Mr. Darcy the courage to continue to wait on her at Longbourn, as her refusal to give Lady Catherine a straight answer had given Darcy the hope that Elizabeth's feelings may have changed since they had last spoken.

Volume 3: Chapter 18

Volume 3: Chapter 18 Summary

Letters must be written to announce the happy news. Mr. Darcy writes to his aunt, Lady Catherine, and Elizabeth, rather than sit and admire the evenness of his handwriting, as she had seen Miss. Bingley do so long ago, writes to her own aunt. Mr. Bennet has the satisfaction of writing to Mr. Collins to tell him that his benefactress, Lady Catherine, would soon be receiving most upsetting news.

She *is* most upset, so upset in fact that the Collins come to Longbourn for a vacation to escape the storm. Thus, Elizabeth has the pleasure of telling Charlotte her good news herself, and Mr. Darcy is patient and understanding with Mr. Collins' overbearing manners.

Volume 3: Chapter 18 Analysis

The two lovers' social statuses have finally been overcome. Each has had equally awkward family relations to deal with, in Lady Catherine and in Elizabeth's mother, who are equally ill mannered and obsessed with wealth, although in different ways.

Volume 3: Chapter 19

Volume 3: Chapter 19 Summary

Thus, the two eldest Bennet sisters are happily married. Much to her father's sorrow, Elizabeth moves directly to Pemberley, although he visits her there often. Jane and Mr. Bingley stay at Netherfield just one year, then purchase an estate only thirty miles from Pemberley.

Mary, without being constantly compared to her beautiful sisters, becomes slightly less peculiar, and Catherine spends much time with her elder sisters and without Lydia's influence, her character improves greatly. Lydia and Wickham are constantly spending more money than they have, and Elizabeth sends her sister money often.

Georgiana makes Pemberley her permanent home, and a firm friendship is established between her and Elizabeth. Lady Catherine finally overcomes her wrath and begins to visit them at Pemberley, and the Gardiners, whom become dear to Mr. Darcy as well as Elizabeth, visit them often as well.

Volume 3: Chapter 19 Analysis

Finally, both pride and prejudice have been overcome, allowing the two obstinate characters of the novel come together. In this happy love story, Austen means to critique the shallow definition of a "suitable marriage", one in which love or even compatibility plays no part, and makes the statement that wealth certainly does not necessarily equate to manners, intelligence, or class.

Characters

Catherine Bennet

Catherine "Kitty" Bennet is virtually a non-entity in the Bennet family. Although she is the fourth sIster, younger than Mary but older than Lydia, Austen reveals that she is "weak-spirited, irritable, and completely under Lydia's guidance ... igno rant, idle, and vain." However, the end of the novel is a bit encouraging for Kitty. Jane and Elizabeth make sure that she visits both of them frequently, and they introduce her to more intelligent and entreating society. Austen notes that this change in environment has an excellent effect on Kitty.

Eliza Bennet

See Elizabeth Bennet

Elizabeth Bennet

"Elizabeth Bennet," writes Elizabeth Jenkins in her critical biography *Jane Austen: A Biography,* "has perhaps received more admiration than any other heroine in English literature." Elizabeth is the soul of *Pride and Prejudice,* who reveals in her own person the very title qualities that she spots so easily in her sisters and their suitors Elizabeth has her father, Mr. Bennet's, quick wit and ironic sense of humor Unlike her older sister Jane, she resists accepting all people uncritically She is quick to recognize most people's principal characteristics—for instance, she recognizes the stupidities of many members of her family and quickly characterizes Lady Catherine de Bourgh as a control addict and her sister's suitor Charles Bingley as a simple and good-hearted young man. But she is also, concludes Jenkins, "completely human. Glorious as she is, and beloved of her creator, she is kept thoroughly in her place. She was captivated by [George] Wickham, in which she showed herself no whit superior to the rest of female Meryton." When Elizabeth begins to accept her own impressions uncritically, she makes her worst mistakes

Because Elizabeth is so keen an observer of other people, she recognizes her mother's silliness and vows not to be caught in the same trap as her father. This refusal, however, is itself a trap By trusting entirely to her own observations (pride) and her own initial assessments of people (prejudice), Elizabeth threatens her future happiness with Fitzwilliam Darcy. "Above all," concludes Jenkins, "there is her prejudice against Darcy, and though their first encounter was markedly unfortunate, she built on it every dislike it could be made to bear; her eager condemnation of !urn and her no less eager remorse when she found that she had been mistaken, are equally lovable."

Jane Bennet

Jane Bennet is Elizabeth's older sister, the most beautiful and amiable of the Bennet sisters. Her father considers her too willing to please and believes that she lacks the character to deal with life's difficulties He tells Jane, "You are ... so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income." Jane eventually marries the equally amiable

Kitty Bennet

See Catherine Bennet

Lizzie Bennet

See Elizabeth Bennet

Lydia Bennet

Lydia is the youngest of the Bennet daughters and perhaps the silliest. Austen describes her as "a stout, well-grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance; a favorite with her mother, whose affection had brought her into public at an early age." Rather than spend any of her day receiving any sort of education, Lydia instead devotes all of her energies to collecting gossip about their neighbors, freely spending money about the town, and flirting with young men. Although all the Bennet girls are initially attracted to George Wickham, it is the headstrong Lydia who elopes with him and who is eventually married to him. Lydia's impudent actions put her sisters' marriage prospects in Jeopardy, but she shows no signs of remorse; unlike Elizabeth and Darcy, she does not learn from her mistakes

Mary Bennet

Mary Bennet is the third Bennet daughter, younger than Elizabeth and Jane and older than

Catherine and Lydia Rather than prancing around town flirting WIth young men, Mary considers herself an intellectual and would rather enjoy the company of a book. But Austen reveals that she overestimates her own talents and intelligence, saying that Mary "had neither genius nor taste; and though vanity had given her application, it had given her likewise a pedantic air and conceited manner, which would have injured a higher degree of excellence than she had reached."

Mr. Bennet

Austen describes Mr. Bennet, the father of the five Bennet girls (Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine, and Lydia), as "so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic, humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand ills character." He is mildly well-off. Austen reports that he has an income of two thousand pounds sterling a year, enough for his family to live comfortably—but socially he ranks toward the bottom of the scale of the landed gentry. This is one of the reasons that

people like Fitzwilliam Darcy and Lady Catherine de Bourgh regard the family with some disdain.

Mr. Bennet is one of the primary means by which the author expresses her ironic wit. He shares this quality with Elizabeth, his favorite daughter

However, unlike Elizabeth's, Mr. Bennet's wit is usually expressed in sarcastic asides directed at hIs wife. Unlike his daughter, Mr. Bennet does not question or examine his own life, and his situation never improves. In addition, he allows his younger daughters to behave as carelessly and improperly as his wife. His inattention to his own family results in his daughter Lydia eloping with the despicable George Wickham.

Mr and Mrs. Bennet are not well matched. Her silliness does not mix well with his sarcastic wit. Mr Bennet recognizes this, and it is one of the reasons he instills in his daughter Elizabeth the Importance of matching temperaments with her husband.

Mrs. Bennet

Mrs. Bennet, Austen reports, is "a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news" Mrs. Bennet is primarily concerned with the outer aspects of her society: the importance of marrying well in society without regard to the suitability of the personalities in the match Neither does Mrs. Bennet have any regard for respecting proper manners and behavior. She is continually embarrassing Elizabeth and Jane with her inappropriate comments and schemes to marry off her daughters. Additionally, Elizabeth finds her mother's influence on the younger Bennet daughters particularly disturbing. Mrs. Bennet allows the younger girls to devote all their time searching for eligible young bachelors, neglecting any form of education. It is perhaps because of Mrs. Bennet's attitudes that her youngest daughter, Lydia, elopes with the despicable George Wickham.

Caroline Bingley

Caroline Bingley is the sister of Charles Bingley. She and her sIster are very proud of her family's wealth—conveniently forgetting, Austen notes, "that their brother's fortune

and their own had been acquired by trade." They are willing to go to great lengths to prevent his marriage into the poorer Bennet family. It is Caroline who reveals to Jane Bennet her plans to have Charles marry Fitzwilliam Darcy's sister Georgiana.

Charles Bingley

Charles Bingley is a friend of Fitzwilliam Darcy and the new occupant of the Netherfield estate, which neighbors the Bennet's home, Longbourn. It is through Bingley that Elizabeth first meets Darcy and is unimpressed by Darcy's manners. Bingley, whom Austen describes as "good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance and easy, unaffected manners," is very attracted to Jane Bennet. This affection distresses his sisters, including Caroline Bingley, and Darcy himself. They all believe that the Bennet family is too far down the social ladder to deserve such attention from him. Ironically, Charles himself has received his fortune by his family's interest in trade, considerably less respectable than Darcy's wealth inherited by birthright. Charles' sisters and Darcy deliberately give Elizabeth Bennet the impression that Bingley is to marry Darcy's sister, Georgiana, after he leaves for London. Eventually, however, Bingley returns to Netherfield and marries Jane.

Charlotte Collins

See Charlotte Lucas

Mr. William Collins

Mr. William Collins is Mr. Bennet's nephew and a clergyman. Because Mr Bennet has no sons, Collins is in line to inherit Mr. Bennet's estate. Austen describes him as "not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society." Mr. Bennet enjoys Collins's visit to his home because he appreciates Collins's naive stupidity, but Elizabeth resents his attentions and rejects his marriage proposal She is very distressed when her friend Charlotte Lucas decides to marry Mr Collins out of interest in his estate rather than his personality.

Fitzwilliam Darcy

Fitzwilliam Darcy, like Elizabeth Bennet, combines in his character the prime characteristics of *Pride and Prejudice:* his aristocratic demeanor (pride) and his belief in the natural superiority of the wealthy landed gentry (prejudice). Darcy sometimes unconsciously assumes that a lack of money or social status are characteristics that disqualify people from marrying or loving each other. Elizabeth quickly discovers this aspect of his character, and it is her flat rejection of his first proposal of marriage that sparks his eventual change of heart. He recognizes the essential arrogance of his upbringing and repents of it; he tells Elizabeth, "By you I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my

pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased." In return for the privilege of become Elizabeth's husband, he is willing to put up WIth her three silly sisters, her equally silly mother, and even the scoundrel George Wickham as a brother-in-law.

Some critics maintain that this change of heart was nothing more than the uncovering of Darcy's innate characteristics. "Darcy's essential character is independent of circumstances," states Elizabeth Jenkins in her critical biography *Jane Austen: A Biography.* "He had the awkwardness and stiffness of a man who mixes little with society and only on his own terms, but it was also the awkwardness and stiffness that is found WIth Darcy's physical type, immediately recognizable among the reserved and inarticulate English of to-day." Tills analysis suggests that Darcy's character is more like that of his sister, Georgiana Darcy, a painfully shy girl. Georgiana Darcy's shyness and awkwardness and Fitzwilliam Darcy's arrogance and harshness come from the same roots. It is, however, Darcy's ability to examine his own life and recognize his flaws and his courage in approaching Elizabeth Bennet again, after she had already rejected him once, that leads to their eventual marriage and life together.

Georgiana Darcy

Georgiana Darcy is Fitzwilliam Darcy's younger sister. She is extremely shy and uncomfortable in company. Austen describes her as "tall... and, though little more than sixteen, her figure was formed, and her appearance womanly and graceful. She was less handsome than her brother, but there was sense and good humour in her face, and her manners were perfectly unassuming and gentle." Elizabeth Bennet expects that she will dislike Georgiana—just as much as she initially dislikes her brother, but she turns out to be favorably impressed. Her impressions of Georgiana are among the first intimations Elizabeth has that her conclusions about Darcy may be wrong.

Miss Anne de Bourgh

Anne de Bourgh is the only daughter of Lady Catherine de Bourgh and the late Sir Lewis de Bourgh. Her mother plans to marry the sickly Anne to her cousin, Fitzwilliam Darcy

Lady Catherine de Bourgh

Lady Catherine de Bourgh is Fitzwilliam Darcy's aunt. A proud, unforgiving woman, she is

a control addict who likes to tell everyone what to do. She is scheming to have her nephew marry her own daughter, Anne de Bourgh, whom Austen describes as "sickly and cross." Elizabeth quickly realIzes that Lady Catherine is a petty tyrant, but she seizes upon tills revelation as an excuse to conclude that Fitzwilliam Darcy is himself equally flawed

Lady Catherine makes a final attempt to create a breach between Darcy and Elizabeth in the final chapters of the book, but her attempt backfires and only serves to help bring them together.

Colonel Fitzwilliam

Colonel Fitzwilliam is Darcy's cousin. He is the younger son of an earl and, although "not handsome," explains Austen, "in person and address [he was] most truly the gentleman." He develops a fondness for Elizabeth Bennet, but realistically admits that as a younger son he must marry for wealth, not love.

Mr. Edward Gardiner

Mr. Gardiner is Mrs. Bennet's brother, whom Austen describes as "a sensible, gentlemanlike man, greatly superior to his sister as well by nature as education." He and his wife take Elizabeth Bennet on a tour of Derbyshire, including a side trip to Darcy's estate at Pemberley. He also tries to help Mr. Bennet locate Wickham and Lydia after they elope. Mr. Gardner and his wife are among the few relatives Elizabeth can be assured wIll not embarrass her.

Mrs. M. Gardiner

Mrs. Gardiner, Edward Gardiner's wife and Elizabeth Bennet's aunt, is according to Austen "an amiable, intelligent, elegant woman, and a great favourite with all her Longboum nieces." She accompanies Elizabeth on a tour of Fitzwilliam Darcy's estate at Pemberley.

Mr. Hurst

Mr. Hurst is the husband of Mr. Charles Bingley's sister Louisa. He is lazy, says Austen, an "indolent man who lived only to eat, drink, and play at cards, who when he found [Elizabeth to] prefer a plain dish to a ragout, had nothing to say to her."

Mrs. Louisa Hurst

Louisa Hurst is the wife of Mr Hurst and the sIster of Mr Charles Bingley and Caroline Bingley. She plots with her sister to remove their brother's affection from Jane Bennet and transfer it to someone more suitable.

Charlotte Lucas

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth Bennet's best friend. She distresses Elizabeth by deciding to marry Wickham Collins, Mr. Bennet's nephew, out of interest in his estate. Up until this point Elizabeth had respected Charlotte's sensibility, but her decision to marry Mr. Collins lost her much of Elizabeth's respect.

Lady Lucas

Lady Lucas is the wife of Sir William Lucas and mother of Elizabeth Bennet's friend Charlotte Lucas. Austen describes her as "a very good kind of woman, not too clever to be a valuable neighbor to Mrs. Bennet."

Sir William Lucas

A close neighbor of the Bennets, he earned most of his income through trade. His daughter, Charlotte, marries Mr. Collins, Mr. Bennet's heir.

Mr. Philips

Mrs. Bennet's brother-in-law, Mr. Philips is an attorney. He hosts the party at which Wickham tells Elizabeth about Darcy's withholding a promised legacy. Already having a negative first impression of Darcy, Elizabeth unquestioningly accepts Wickham's story as evidence that Darcy is a miserable person. When she discovers that it is actually Wickham who wronged Darcy, Elizabeth feels terrible for allowing her pride to interfere with an objective judgement of Darcy

Mrs. Philips

Mrs. Bennet's sister, Mrs. Philips, is described by Austen as a silly, vulgar woman.

George Wickham

Lieutenant George Wickham is an unscrupulous man who schemes to win money by marrying a wealthy heiress. He is physically quite attractive; Austen says of him that "he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and a very pleasing address." His father was once the steward of Darcy's estates, and WIckham plays on the relationship by trying to elope with Georgiana Darcy, Fitzwilliam Darcy's sister. Darcy gave Wickham a cash payment after Wickham turned down a comfortable church position the late Mr. Darcy provided for him. After Wickham elopes with Lydia Bennet, Darcy tracks him down, bribes him into marrying Lydia, and buys him an officer's rank in the army. Wickham is presented in the novel as a man totally without principle.

Themes

Pride

The two major themes of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are summed up in the title. The first aspect can be traced in the actions and statements of all of the work's major and many of its minor characters. Pride is the character flaw that causes Elizabeth Bennet to dislike Fitzwilliam Darcy upon theIr first meeting. She perceives in him a cold aloofness that she attributes to ills own inflated opinion of himself Yet Elizabeth herself also suffers from the same flaw; her pride in her own ability to analyze character is such that she refuses to reevaluate Darcy in the face of evidence in his favor.

In some characters, Austen depicts pride overtly. Lady Charlotte de Bourgh is motivated by pride in her family's status to try to break up a potential match between Elizabeth and Darcy. Mrs. Louisa Hurst and Caroline Bingley try to achIeve the same effect with the relationship between their brother Charles Bingley and Jane Bennet. In each case, however, Austen depIcts the pride of these minor characters as ridiculous: "Austen treats pride," writes Robert B. Heilman in *"Epluribus unum:* Parts and Whole in *Pride and Prejudice,"* "as if it were wholly unproblematic, a failing no less clear-cut than prejudice."

In the case of Elizabeth and Darcy, however, Austen treats pride less directly. On his first appearance in the novel, Darcy appears "above his company and above being pleased," reports Heilman, the "proudest, most disagreeable man in the world." The people who record these observations, the critic continues, "believe that they are seeing sense of superiority, snobbishness, excessive self approval." However, they do not take into consideration that some of the other behavior that Darcy exhibits, such as "reserve, an apparent unresponsiveness to overtures, a holding back from conventional intercourse, pleasantries, and small talk," may actually stem from a quiet personality. So what appears to be pride may be simple shyness or awkwardness. When Elizabeth and others consider Darcy full of pride, they are also condemning him, says Heilman, for not obeying the rules of the "neighborhood social ways." For Darcy and Elizabeth, at least, pride can be more than a simple negative quality.

In fact, pride serves several different functions in the novel In addition to the misplaced pride of the minor characters, there are characters who ne abeth herself come to a realization of the necessity not to reject pride, but to control It.

Prejudice and Tolerance

The subject of prejudice is linked to pride in the title of *Pride and Prejudice.* It is also more directly linked to Elizabeth Bennet's character From the beginning, states Marvin Mudrick in "Irony as Discrimination: *Pride and Prejudice,"* "Elizabeth sets herself up as an ironic spectator, able and prepared to judge and classify, already making the first

large division of the world into two sorts of people: the simple ones, those who give themselves away out of shallowness (as Bingley fears) or perhaps openness (as Elizabeth Implies) or an excess of affection (as Mr. Collins will demonstrate); and the intricate ones, those who cannot be judged and classified so easily, who are 'the most amusing' to the ironic spectator because they offer the most formidable challenge to his powers of detection and analysis." Elizabeth is prepared to divide the entire world into one of these two categories—an extreme example of prejudice in the "pre-judging" sense of the term It is most evident in her judgment of Darcy, so sure is she of her powers of observation that she refuses to reevaluate Darcy even when the weight of evidence begins to turn in favor of him.

It is not until Darcy overcomes his own prejudice against those of lower social station—by treating Elizabeth and the Gardiners graciously and considerately at Netherfield—that Elizabeth's opinion of him begins to change. "Not only do Elizabeth and Darcy... have the most serious problem of surmounting barriers of misconception and adverse feeling," Heilman declares, "but they are the most sensitive—both in susceptibility to injured feelings and in capacity for getting to the center of things—to matters of prejudice and pride" The ending "is a remarkable tracing of Elizabeth's coming around to a completely changed point of view," the critic concludes. "To Jane she acknowledges that she has cultivated her 'prejudices' and has been

'weak and vain and nonsensical.'" With this realization Elizabeth begins the process of change that will eventually bring herself and Darcy together.

Change and Transformation

The major characters of the novel suffer from a combination of the two title characteristics of *Pride and Prejudice.* What separates Elizabeth and Darcy from the sIlly minor characters, such as Wickham, Lydia, Mr. Collins, and Lady Catherine, and even from the good minor characters such as Mr. Bennet, Jane, and Charles Bingley, is their ability and willingness to learn and grow, to overcome theIr Initial shortcomings They mature and come to a better understanding of each other by the novel's end through a slow and painful growth process.

Darcy begins his process of transformation wIth Elizabeth's rejection of his suit. He makes his proposal to her clumsily, stressing his own wealth and position (and minimizing hers) and stating that he has tried to suppress his feelings because of the low position of her family. When Elizabeth indignantly rejects his hand, accusing him of arrogance and selfishness, Darcy begins a process of reevaluation of his behavior. When he next appears in the story—at the beginning of Volume 3—he is much friendlier and more attentive to Elizabeth. She begins to feel an attraction to him that is not fully realized until the Wickham-Lydia elopement is fully resolved Darcy completes his transformation by swallowing his pride and proposing to Elizabeth again, in spite of the fact that her acceptance will make the silly Bennet girls his sisters-in-law and the detestable Wickham his brother-in-law.

Elizabeth's process of transformation begins later and takes longer. She realizes her own prejudices toward Darcy in Chapter 12 of Volume 2, when he gives her the letter in which he reveals the truth about Wickham and his role in the breakup of the Bingley-Jane relationship. She does not complete the change, however, until the end of Volume 3, when Lady Catherine de Bourgh demands assurances from her that she will not accept a proposal from him. Elizabeth refuses, and by doing so gives Darcy his first hint that his feelings for her are at last reciprocated "By a slow revision of preconceptions,", concludes Hellman, " ... Elizabeth and Darcy 'earn' the better insight and rapport that insight makes possible."

Style

Romanticism

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* was written during the middle of the Romantic period in western literature, but it is itself rather uncharacteristic of other fictional works of the period. Unlike the great Romantic novels and poems of the period, which usually praised youthful passions, Austen's work minimizes them. Compared to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's classic *sturm und drang* novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), in which the young hero is unsuccessful at love and, unable to make his inner visions conform to the reality of the outer world, finally commits suicide, Austen's works are models of restraint. Instead of the wild forces of nature, Austen concentrates on family life in small English towns. Instead of rampant emotionalism, Austen emphasizes a balance between reason and emotion. Instead of suicide and unrequited love, Austen offers elopement and marriage. Although the author does consider some of the same themes as her Romantic contemporaries—the importance of the individual, for instance—Austen's society is altogether more controlled and settled than the world presented in Romantic fiction

Irony

Irony, or the contrast between the expected and the actual, is the chief literary device Austen uses to comment on the small, enclosed world of the English gentry in *Pride and Prejudice* Her Irony takes different forms for different characters. Perhaps the most ironic character in the entire book is Mr. Bennet, father of the five Bennet sisters. Mr. Bennet is married to a silly woman he cannot respect, who centers her life on marrying her daughters off to wealthy, well-bred men He expresses his discontent in the marriage by criticizing his wife's stream of comments. Many of these are sarcastic and hurtful, and contribute to the misunderstandings between the couple that leave them incapable of dealing with the disastrous elopement of their youngest daughter Lydia with the detestable George Wickham Mr. Bennet's conscious use of irony is for him a game—it serves no useful purpose.

For the author, in the persona of Mr. Bennet's daughter Elizabeth, however, irony is both a toy and a defensive weapon in the war against stupidity. The author uses Elizabeth to skewer self-important characters such as Mr. Collins and Mrs. Bennet. Yet Elizabeth is also blind to her own character faults, and her very blindness is another example of Austen's use of irony. In her misunderstandings with Darcy, she (who is blind to her own pride in her ability to read character) accuses him of excessive pride, while he (who is prejudiced against people WIth less money than he has) accuses her of prejudice. The on-again, off-again love between Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley is also an example of Austen's use of irony to underline messages about love and marriage. "Jane and Bingley provide us, then, with one of the book's primary ironies,"' Writes Marvin Mudrick in "Irony as Discrimination: *Pride and PreJudice".* "that love is simple, straightforward,

and Immediate only for very simple people." 'in *Pride and Prejudice."* concludes Mudrick, "Jane Austen's irony has developed into an instrument of discrimination between the people who are simple reproductions of the social type and the people with individuality and will, between the unaware and the aware."

Other examples of Austen's use of irony abound in the novel. "Many pages of *Pride and Prejudice* can be read as sheer poetry of wit, as [Alexander] Pope without couplets," writes Reuben A. Brower in "Light and Bright and Sparkling: irony and Fiction in *Pride and Prejudice."* "The triumph of the novel—whatever its limitations may be—lies in combining such poetry of wit," the critic concludes, "with the dramatic structure of fiction."

Historical Context

Jane Austen's England

Jane Austin's major novels, including *Pride and Prejudice,* were all composed within a short period of about twenty years. Those twenty years (1795-1815) also mark a period in history when England was at the height of its power. England stood as the bulwark against French revolutionary extremism and against Napoleonic imperialism. The

dates Austen was writing almost exactly coincide with the great English military victories over Napoleon and the French: the Battle of the Nile, in which Admiral Nelson crippled the French Mediterranean fleet, and the battle of Waterloo, in which Lord Wellington and his German allies defeated Napoleon decisively and sent him into exile. However, so secure in their righteousness were the English middle and upper classes—the "landed gentry" featured in Austen's works—that these historical events impact *Pride and Prejudice* very little.

The French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars

The period from 1789 to 1799 marks the time of the French Revolution, while the period from 1799 to 1815 marks the ascendancy of Napoleon—periods of almost constant social change and upheaval. In England, the same periods were times of conservative reaction, in which society changed very little. The British government, led by Prime Minister William Pitt, maintained a strict control over any ideas or opinions that seemed to support the revolution in France. Pitt's government suspended the right of *habeas corpus,* giving themselves the power to imprison people for an indefinite time without trial. It also passed laws against public criticism of government policies, and sup pressed working-class trade unions At the same time, the Industrial Revolution permanently changed the British economy. It provided the money Pitt's government needed to oppose Napoleon. At the same time, it also created a large wealthy class and an even larger middle class. These are the people that Jane Austen depicts in *Pride and Prejudice,* the "landed gentry" who have earned their property, not by inheriting It from their aristocratic ancestors, but by purchasing it with their new wealth. They have few of the manners and graces of the aristocracy and, like the Collinses in *Pride and Prejudice,* are primarily concerned with their own futures in their own little worlds.

Unlike other Romantic-era writers, such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Austen's works are very lIttle impacted by the French Revolution and revolutionary rhetoric. Members of Austen's own famIly served in the war against Bonaparte and the French; two of her brothers became admirals in the Royal Navy. The only hint of war and military behavior in *Pride and Prejudice,* however, lies in the continued presence of the British soldiers in Meryton, near the Bennet estate at Longbourn. The soldiers include George Wickham, who later elopes WIth Lydia Bennet, disgracing the family. In the world of *Pride and Prejudice,* the soldiers are present only

to give the younger Bennet daughters men in uniforms to chase after Their world is limited to theIr own home, those of theIr friends and neighbors, a few major resort towns, and, far off, the city of London. There is no hint of the revolutionary affairs going on just across the English Channel in France.

English Regency Society

On the other hand, contemporary English society is a preoccupation of *Pride and Prejudice.* At the time the novel was published, King George III had been struck down by the periodic madness (now suspected to be caused by the metabolic disease porphyria) that plagued his final years. The powers he was no longer capable of using were placed in the hands of his son the Prince Regent, later George IV. The Prince Regent was widely known as a man of dissolute morals, and his example was followed by many of society's leading figures. Young men regularly went to universities not to learn, but to see and be seen, to drink, gamble, race horses, and spend money. Perhaps the greatest example of this type in *Pride and Prejudice* is the unprincipled George Wickham, who seduces sixteen-year-old Lydia Bennet. Lydia for her part also participates willingly in Regency culture; her thoughts are not for her family's disgrace, but about the handsomeness of her husband and the jealousy of her sisters.

Most "respectable" middle- and upper-class figures, such as Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, strongly disapproved of the immorality of Regency culture. But they did participate in the fashions of the time, influenced by French styles (even though France was at war with England). During the period of the Directory and the Consulate in France (from 1794-1804), styles were influenced by the costumes of the Roman Republic. The elaborate hairstyles and dresses that had characterized the French aristocracy before the Revolution were discarded for simpler costumes Women, including Elizabeth Bennet, would have worn a simple dress that resembled a modem nightgown. Loose and flowing, it was secured by a rib

bon tied Just below the breasts. Darcy for his part would have worn a civilian costume of tight breeches, a ruffled shirt with a carefully folded neckcloth, and a high-collared jacket. Even though these costumes were in part a reaction to the excesses of early eighteenth-century dress, they became themselves quite elaborate as the century progressed, sparked by the Prince Regent himself and his friend, the impeccable dresser Beau Brummel. Brummel's mystique, known as "dandyism," expressed in clothing the same idleness and effortless

command of a situation that characterizes many of Austen's heroes and heroines.

Critical Overview

In the early nineteenth century, when Jane Austen published her first two novels *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice,* Writes B. C. Southam in his introduction to *Jane Austen. The Critical Heritage,* "fiction reviewing had no ... dig nity, and in the light of prevailing standards the two novels were remarkably well-received The reviewers were in no doubt about the superiority of these works. Although their notices are extremely limited in scope they remark on points which any modem critic would want to make." These points, in the case of *Pride and Prejudice,* include the spirited characterizations of Elizabeth Bennet and her family, Fitzwilliam Darcy, and the other major personalities of the novel. Those people that criticized the novel, however, complained that the author of the book (who was unknown at the time—Austen published her works anonymously and her authorship did not become widely known until after her death) depicted socially and morally unrefined people, that the book was simply entertaining without being uplifting, and that the realism of her book threatened their concept of literature as an idealized higher reality.

Most of the known contemporary opinions of *Pride and Prejudice* come from private journals and diaries, where important figures of the time recorded their opinions of the book as they were reading it. In January of 1813, the month of the publication of Austen's novel, however, two reviews were published anonymously in the *British Critic* and the *Critical Review.* Both reviewers praised the novel's readability, but most of the reviews are dedicated to appreciations of Austen's characterization. *Pride and Prejudice* "is very far superior to almost all the publications of the kind which have lately come before us," wrote the *British Critic* reviewer. "It has a very unexceptionable tendency, the story is well told, the characters remarkably well drawn and supported, and written wIth great spirit as well as vigour." "It is unnecessary to add,"_ the reviewer concluded, "that we have perused these volumes with much satisfaction and amusement, and entertain very little doubt that their successful circulation will induce the author to similar exertions." The *Critical Review* contributor began his appreciation with the words, "Instead of the whole interest of the tale hanging upon one or two characters, as is generally the case in novels, the fair author of the present introduces us, at once, to a whole family, every individual of which excites the interest, and very agreeably divides the attention of the reader." "Nor is there one character which appears flat," the contributor concluded, "or obtrudes itself upon the notice of the reader with troublesome Impertinence. There is not one person in the drama with whom we could readily dispense,— they have all their proper places; and fill their several stations, WIth great credit to themselves, and much satisfaction to the reader."

Those contemporaries of Austen who criticized *Pride and Prejudice* did so, says Southam, out of a feeling that the novel offended their sense of the rightness of the world "While few readers could deny that they enjoyed reading the nove1sfor the vitality of the characters, the wit, the accuracy and realism of her picture of society—praise comes grudgingly, fenced round with qualifications," he states. Commentators, including Lady Darcy and Miss Mitford, complained that the characters, particularly the Bennets, are unrefined and socially mannerless. "These notions of decorum persisted throughout

the nineteenth century, and created a particular unease in the reader," Southam concludes, "the sense on one hand that he was undoubtedly enjoying Jane Austen, but equally a sense that he must temper his admiration, recalling that novels so very worldly and realistic could never be great art."

Because of this common reaction to her fiction, criticism of Austen's works, including *Pride and Prejudice,* as a whole was delayed until after her death "In 1819," writes Laura Dabundo in the *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography,* "Henry Crabb Robinson wrote the first of several diary entries in praise of her novels," Another contemporary reviewer, the novelist Sir Walter Scott, "recognized Austen's greatness, but his remarks also help to perpetuate the notion that her range was limited." It was the publication of James Edward Austen-Leigh's A *Memoir of Jane Austen, by Her Nephew* in 1870 that sparked a revival of Austen Criticism. However, Its depIction of Austen as a "spinster aunt" whose *works* were Written primarily for her own amusement created a distorted picture of the author, "Later in the century," Dabundo explains, "George Henry Lewes argued for the unqualified excellence of her writing, comparing her accomplishment to that of Shakespeare, but nonetheless he saw her fiction as cool and unfevered." It was not until after the publication of Mary Lascelles's *Jane Austen and Her Art* in 1939 that twentieth century critics began to overturn the Victorian concept of Austen as an amateur artist uncommitted to creating great literature.

Austen criticism has exploded since 1939. Scholars turn to *Pride and Prejudice* for its portraits of late eighteenth-century society, for the technical expertise of its composition, and for its capacity to find and maintain interest in the everyday lives of small-town English society. "Increasingly, in studies like those of Dorothy Van Ghent, Reuben Brower, Marvin Mudrick, and Howard Babb," declares Donald J. Gray in his preface to *Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice, An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Reviews and Essays in Criticism,* "[twentieth-century critics] study the development of characters and themes, the structure of episodes and sentences, even her very choice of words, in order to explain how novels about three or four families in a country village are also novels about the important business of making a fruitful life in a society and of a character which do not always encourage the best of even the few possibilities they permit." Austen's novels, Dabundo concludes, "deal with passionate but realistic people whose world was changing and being challenged, people who conducted their lives in the context of their immediate friends and family and a national culture that nourished and sustained them."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Francis, a doctoral candidate at Ball State University, relates the historical background surrounding both Jane Austen and her novel Pride and Prejudice. *She includes a Critique of Austen's treatment of both male and female characters.*

Pride and Prejudice published in 1813, is Jane Austen's second, and probably best known novel, though it was originally published anonymously. Austen began *Pride and Prejudice* in 1796 under the title *First Impressions.* Her family found the novel entertaining and continued to reread it for at least two years. By 1799, she'd begun working on *Eleanor and Marianne,* which was later published as *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811. She again began revision work on *First Impressions,* though she was forced to retitle it as the name had already been used by another novelist. *Pride and Prejudice* finds its popular appeal in its control of language, wit, clever dialogue, and charming representations of human foible portrayed in characters such as Mr. Collins, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and Mrs. Bennet. It is a far more mature and better written novel than *Sense and Sensibility.*

Known as a novel of manners, it, like *Emma* (1816), another popular Austen novel often used in the classroom, portrays the life of gentility in a small, rural society. Austen dramatizes the delicate and precanous nature of a society based on an ecology of manners In such a society, the well-being of everyone hinges on people maintaining their proper places and behaving according to a strict code of manners. For the Bennet girls, their chances of marriage fall precipitously with every show of impropriety.

From the beginning, it is important to understand the very real danger that faces the Bennet girls if they do not marry. Upon Mr. Bennet's death, the girls' cousin, Mr. Collins, will inherit Longbourn. That means that the family will have no source of support and no place to live. A marriage of one of the girls to a wealthy man would provide a solution, but there is another problem, even for Jane and Elizabeth who do not suffer from ill-bred, vulgar behavior as their sisters do. Each girl possesses a negligible dowry to entice a prospective husband. Any man who chooses to marry a poor girl must do so for love or to acquire a good wife. Clearly Kitty, Mary, and Lydia will not make good wives. They have not been brought up to behave properly. Indeed, with the example of the loud, tactless Mrs. Bennet, it is a wonder that Elizabeth and Jane have managed to grow up so well.

Mrs. Bennet cannot be the only one blamed for the poor behavior of her daughters. Mr. Bennet keeps himself aloof from his *wife's* quirks, using them only as fodder for his dry wit. When Mrs. Bennet sends Jane on horseback to Netherfield, plotting that Jane should catch cold, Mr. Bennet, though making disparaging comments, does not attempt to stop her. He is as ineffective a parent as she is, taking no responsibility for the improprieties of the girls, until Lydia's elopement. At this point he realizes he has been derelict as a parent and attempts to change. This is part of Austen's goal to teach the necessity of proper behavior, of taking responsibility for one's actions. Thus is it important that both Darcy and Elizabeth admit to their pride and prejudice and the

mistakes that they have made. In doing so, they seek to leam from their mistakes, but also they recognize the danger of such rash opinionated behavior, such as that of Darcy' s childhood friend, Wickham. Mr. Wickham was nearly the ruin of both of them and their families.

However, in spite of Wickham's and Lydia's complete break with propriety, and the danger that she places the rest of her family in, she neither leams from her mistakes, nor suffers particularly from them. In a world where so much depends on people fulfilling their positions, behaving properly, punishment is a luxury that society cannot afford. For if Lydia were punished, perhaps ostracized, the rest of the family, and through them friends and the

rest of the community, would suffer. The taint of scandal and gossip serve to make women ineligible to marry. In this small community, no one could afford to associate with the Bennets. At the same time, maintaining that sort of ostracism would cause schism and the ecology of the community would be forever crippled, if not destroyed completely. Therefore, Lydia must be forgiven and her improprieties overlooked. This is only possible because she has returned to the fold, once again conforming within the bounds of acceptable behavior. Once she and Wickham have married, they have sufficiently rectified their situation and no longer pose a danger to the society.

Austen does remain cautious about marriage without some sort of attachment, or marriage between people of comparable characters. Charlotte marries Mr. Collins, suffering for the rest of her life with an obsequious fool and under the thumb of Lady de Bourgh. In exchange for security, she has given up her individuality and freedom. And while Austen does suggest that individuality must be contained within the codes and mores of society, it should not be repressed all together. Individualism has the power to add zest and charm to life, as long as it does not subvert the community. This sort of conforming individualism is best exemplified in Elizabeth. 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.

Feminists have criticized Austen's portrayal of women in *Pride and Prejudice* as being too passive. None of the women ever take active control of their lives. They instead must Walt until men act. Jane must wait for Bingley, and when he leaves Netherfield, she cannot contact him or ask for any explanation. Similarly, when Lydia disappears with Wickham, none of the Bennet women—who incidentally will be more fundamentally affected by the events than anyone else—are allowed to do anything to retrieve Lydia. Instead they must wait at home for news. This enforced passivity reinforces the traditional view of women as helpless and delicate. Men must take care of women since they are incapable of managing for themselves. However, it should be noted that Austen gives most of the dialogue to the women throughout the novel.

Another thing that many readers notice about Austen's novels, is that in spite of the fact that she writes during the political turmoil of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the growing Industrial Revolution, and the escalating political and social upheaval in England, except for the officers stationed in Meryton, there is no evidence of any of

this strife in her novels. Austen herself notes that she knows little of the world at large and instead chooses to Write about what she does know. However, it is clear that she does not know how to write male characters well. As mentioned above, much of the dialog in the novel is given to women. Some critics have suggested that Austen herself was not familiar enough with men to write believable male characters. When Elizabeth accepts Darcy's proposal, Austen only vaguely suggests his reaction: "he expressed himself on the occasion as sensibly and as warmly as a man violently in love can be supposed to do."

Austen's writings had great influence on a number of writers throughout the century. Glimpses of Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Collins can be found in Dickens Elizabeth's sharp wit can be found in Thackeray, Eden, and Trollope. Her exploration of manners and the constrictions of women were taken up by later women writers such as George Eliot, Sarah Grand and Elizabeth Gaskell. She helped to legitimize the novel as an art fonn At the same time, she set an example for other women writers, showing them that even without the expansive education given to men, women could still make valuable contributions.

Source: Diana Francis, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1997.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Kneedler explains how Pride and Prejudice *breaks conventIOns in its portrayals of relationships between the sexes.*

Students, like many critics, question the point of the last volume (the final 19 chapters) of *Pride and Prejudice* because they already know who will "get" whom. Many feminist scholars portray Austen's happy unions as either sexist, sellouts, or parodies. But Critics' declared dissatisfaction WIth marriage as a narrative resolution is never reconciled with unexamined prejudices against single women. A number of critics themselves reiterate the tired news that Austen was a "spinster," a term that Austen's books never once invoke and that hardly defends singleness as a liberating option The twin assumptions that neither single nor married women can be powerful, useful, or happy leads to a deadlier myth. the curiously perverse axiom that suicide is woman's only "life-affirming" choice. In fact, the art—particularly Kate Chopin's *The Awakening—and* the authors—Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath—in vogue during the last few decades have often been seen as glorifying death as the only way out for women in an inexorably unjust culture. By implication, simply surviving, let alone coping, becomes synonymous with compromising. The last third of *Pride and Prejudice,* however, implies an alternative: far from smothering under a shroud of "the marriage plot," Elizabeth Bennet works out a new institution of love based on a new conception of self.

After the crisis of Elizabeth's initial embarrassment at Mr. Darcy's unexpected arrival at Pemberley, including her "amaze[ment] at the alteration in his manner," Elizabeth and her aunt and uncle the Gardiners "were again surprised, and Elizabeth's astonishment was quite equal to what it had been at first, by the sight of Mr. Darcy approaching them." Elizabeth's second surprise is that "he really intended to meet them." The encounter here between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy encapsulates the recurring action of this fInal volume; Elizabeth continually assumes that Mr. Darcy will "strike into some other path," but whenever the "turning" that obscures him fades away, he always turns up, "and at no great distance"—in fact, "immediately before" her. Every time that "her thoughts were all fixed on that one spot... whichever it might be, where Mr. Darcy then was," she fInds that he is on an errand expressly to see or to help her

In the woods of Pemberley, Elizabeth is far from imagining that Mr. Darcy is on such a quest. In fact, she begins an alternating pattern of distancing herself from him—fancying that her friendly praise' "might be mischievously construed"—yet nevertheless bewildering herself with his mystery: "Why is he so altered? ... It cannot be for *me,* it cannot be for *my* sake." Always the stunning answer is that her "reproofs at Hunsford

[did] work such a change as this," because "it is [not] impossible that he should still love" her. Mr. Darcy himself later explains why he does not "avoid her as his greatest enemy," by distinguishing between hatred and anger: he could never hate her, and even his anger "soon began to take a proper direction"—at himself. Through an affecting contrast, Austen honors this man's exceptionally receptive resilience. Elizabeth's response to the events at Hunsford had been an inability to "feel the slightest inclination

ever to see him again"; Mr. Darcy, however, not only wishes to continue as Elizabeth's friend but hopes that his sister, Georgiana, may come to know her as well.

The trope of Elizabeth's shock will be picked up when she is home at Longbourn, looking out the window to see Mr. Darcy riding up to the house with Mr. Bingley. The narrator explains, "Her astonishment at his coming. was almost equal to what she had known on first witnessing his altered behaviour in Derbyshire." Elizabeth's surprise is great because she has felt that the disgrace of Lydia's elopement would destroy Mr. Darcy's affection. But we also learn that although Mr. Darcy continues to astound, the shock is lessening and is now only "almost equal" to what she had felt before The stupefaction Elizabeth experiences here, like that created by Mr. Darcy's behavior at Pemberley, reflects the conventional belief that men cannot be loyal and deeply attached lovers. Mr. Darcy's arrival at Longbourn enlarges Elizabeth's expectations of men's capacIty to love. One measure is that when he returns yet again, after Lady Catherine de Bourgh has stormed through Longbourn vowing to separate her from Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth now only "half expect[s]" him not to come.

Back in Lambton, Elizabeth had begun to rely on Mr. Darcy's affection, or on her own "power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses." But that confidence is shattered by the news of Lydia Bennet's elopement. For readers swept by a growing excitement at Elizabeth's discovery of Fitzwilliam Darcy's "impossible" power "still [to] love me," the turning point at the lodgings is a careful frustration of our hopes, a transformation of exhilaration to anguish. Elizabeth mistakenly, and conventionally, reads Mr. Darcy's "earnest meditation" about how to find Mr. Wickham as a sign that "her power was sinking." The inadequacy of Elizabeth's equation of love with "power" is suggested by a sudden shift in tone. From the pathos of "she could neither wonder nor condemn," the narrator unexpectedly swells into sentimental cliches: "but the belief of his self-conquest brought nothing consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress." "Of course not," respond students, who readily see that women's self-sacrifice is silly. Elizabeth realizes only "now, when all love must be vain," that she "could have loved him"; yet she, at least as much as Mr. Darcy, must let go of such traditional, and false, visions of sexual relations.

At issue are assumptions about the selfishness and instability of men's love. When Elizabeth discovers that Mr Darcy had been at Lydia's wedding, "conjectures as to the meaning of It, rapid and wild, hurried into her brain," but they "seemed most improbable." However, what she considers her most farfetched fancies will be "proved beyond their greatest extent to be true." Elizabeth's inability to conceive that Mr. Darcy could cherish a concern for her as "ardent" as hers for Jane culminates when we learn that while her new respect for Mr. Darcy is fervent, it still does not do him justice. "Elizabeth was now most heartily sorry" that she had not concealed the elopement from "all those who were not immediately on the spot." By designating Mr. Darcy as just another bystander, Elizabeth would, in her yearning for secrecy, negate her unreflecting confidence—her disclosure of how fully she has accepted his revelations about Mr. Wickham—and deprive herself of Mr. Darcy's del i cately underspoken comfort But Elizabeth's regrets are hilariously inappropriate because the joyful truth is that Lydia's

problems never would have been solved had Elizabeth not confided in Mr Darcy. Only he knew how to find Mr. Wickham.

Elizabeth's doubts about the poss1bility of allegiance from Fitzwilliam Darcy are hardly a private matter Neither Austen's culture nor our own has traditionally demanded much of men as lovers. William Collins's spleen when Elizabeth refuses h1m reflects the customary churlishness of the disappointed suitor. Mr Darcy's own first movement toward Elizabeth embodies the sex1st V1ew that he is a good catch who has only to choose and be accepted, that no matter how he has insulted any woman, she will be happy either to dance with or marry him whenever he can force himself to ask

The novel does not support such conventional views. Most students have been ra1sed on the interwoven notions of women's craving for men and men's indifference to women, a trope m1snamed "the battle of the sexes" and a heritage that *Pride and Prejudice* explicitly invokes in its opening torture scenes in which Mr. Bennet baits Mrs. Bennet. Readers continue to adore Mr. Bennet's b1tter humor on a first reading and only later learn to reevaluate that continual breach of conjugal oblig ation and decorum which ... was so highly repre hensible." *Pride and Prejudice* offers a V1S10n of love in which women and men may care about each other with a passionate tenderness at least equal to that felt by strongly united sisters: the other person's well-being is simply and immed1ately crucial

Mr. Darcy's concern for Elizabeth is so great, so sublimely disinterested, that, whether or not she loves h1m, he wants to make her happy and never claim the credit.

At stake is how we recognize romance. What are the signs in others that we respond to as allure, and what are the alterations in ourselves that we identify as passion? What *Pride and Prejudice* offers to Elizabeth Bennet through Fitzw1lliam Darcy is a sexual1ty that casts away usual power relations with their traditional alternatives of confrontation and capitulation, when men sweep women off their feet but both sides nurse an underlying narcissism as their truly dominant passion. The traditional proposal Mr Darcy made at Hunsford betrays a masturbatory fixation with his own desires and sacrifices, however, his avowal of love in the lanes near Longbourn portrays a generous focus on Elizabeth Bennet, foretelling a relation of listening reciprocity. Mr Darcy's reform is convincing because it is based on a goodness and generosity that Elizabeth had never credited him with, and it is moving because it is unimaginable according to cultural ideas of men's capacity and feelings. The sexual politics of the relation between Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy locates erotic pleasure in kindnesses that any person can show another. To women Austen offers a vision in which nothing about men's honest devotion is too good to be true—a prophecy that women need not settle for less. In a final volume made up almost exclusively of characters' astonishment at how others' actions surpass or betray their expectations, the delicately crocheted chain of Elizabeth's surprises carefully builds excitement over reunions that we are asked to celebrate because they change our Ideas about what love, even marriage, can mean.

Yet as Elizabeth discovers Mr. Darcy's affection, she must explore her own—in a process that protects the integrity and disinterestedness of her attachment "She

respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare." Her effort to "make [her feelings] out,"_ as she "lay awake two whole hours" is a comic reversal of an earlier moment when, with "something like regret,"' she had toyed with envy about the position as "mistress of Pemberley,"' Now, as Elizabeth investigates her new tenderness for Mr. Darcy, we can delight in how she stretches out the process of committing herself. Respect, esteem, gratitude, and an interest in his welfare all add up to love. Such feelings are the origin of love based on knowledge, and, *Pride and Prejudice* shows, nothing else is love

But Elizabeth's discerning standards for heterosexual affection display a revolution of self as well as of eros. Even at the height of her suspense about Mr Darcy, Elizabeth asserts the worth of her own hfe, gloriously declaring to herself, "[I]f he is satisfied with only regretting me, when he might have obtained my affections and hand, I shall soon cease to regret him at all." Such faith that if need be she can outlive her affection for Fitzwilliam Darcy is based on the new Idea that he will be unworthy If he cannot continue to love. The value for her own future, separate from her connection to a man, and her resolve to judge his rather than her own worth by his performance intensify our suspense over the test: Can Mr. Darcy justify her affection? The fulfillment of that quest comes in a love scene that readers have long depreciated as an

anticlimax... .

Pride and Prejudice is a pivotal moment in our feminist heritage, an achievement whose power has

in many senses been lost, as we have so often lost women's history and work. This novel offers an iconoclastic representation of women and men. Austen is a creative political thinker in her own nght, but her politics must be located through attention to the relationships among her characters, between those characters and their narrator, and between narrator and reader, before we try to place her in extra-textual heritages or contexts. Rather than look for politics by turning away from the text to events outside the novel, we need at last to accept that the book's explicit concerns are themselves political. *Pride and Prejudice* does more than teach us about the debates of Austen's day; it can guide us among the many urgent issues of identity and gender with which we continue to struggle. In an age when we have learned to see the battle of the sexes as one aspect of the abuse that women have been taught to label as "love," the answer is not to throw out romance altogether. *Pride and Prejudice's* moving prophecy is that we may also make Elizabeth Bennet's demand that Fitzwilliam Darcy become worthy of her love.

Source: Susan Kneedler, "The New Romance in *Pride and Prejudice,"* In *Approaches to Teaching Austen's* Pride and PrejudIce, *edited by Marcia McClintock Folsom, Modem Language Association of America,* 1993, *pp.* 152-66

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Brown discusses how Austen offers a powerful commentary on the changes— in society, gender attitudes, and class structure In *early nineteenth century England.*

As for the historical content of the [Austen]

novels, students may not see it because they think

of social history as "history with the politics left out," as G. M. Trevelyan once described it, rather than what it is: the essential foundation that gives shape to everything else. For the cultural historian Raymond Williams, for example, Austen's novels provide an accurate record of that moment in English history in which high bourgeois society most evidently interlocked with an agrarian capitalism. "An openly acquisitive society,"_ writes Williams [in *The Country and the City,* 1975], "which is concerned also with the transmission of wealth, is trying to Judge itself at once by an inherited code and by the morality of improvement." What is at stake here is not personal relations but personal *conduct.* "a testing and discovery of the standards which govern human behaviour in certain real situations" Those situations arise from the unsettled world Austen portrays, with its continual changes of fortune and social mobility that were affecting the landed families of her time. Thus, although Darcy is a landowner established for "many generations,"' his friend Bingley has no estate and has Inherited £100,000 from his father, who made money in trade; and although Mr. Bennet has an estate, he has named the daughter of an attorney who has a brother in trade, and his estate will not pass to his own children, and so on.

Readers may glimpse the "openly acquisitive society" in the heroine's fIrst sight of Pemberley, Darcy's beautiful estate. Deeply impressed, even awe-struck, by ItS elegance and grandeur, Elizabeth cannot but admit to herself that "to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" Later Elizabeth satirizes her own response when her sister asks her to explain when she fIrst fell in love with Darcy: "It has been coming on so gradually," Elizabeth replies, "that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my firSt seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley." Elizabeth's wit distances her from herself, from the woman wIth the conventional response to Pemberley, just as the narrator's Irony distances the reader from conventional

responses. But before entering into a discussion of Austen's narrative irony, we may as well ask the conventional question, In what sense *would* being mistress of Pemberley "be something"?

In Austen's day England was still to a large extent an "aristocracy," or hierarchy based on property and patronage in which people took their places in a pyramid-like structure extending down from a minority of the rich and powerful at the top to ever wider and larger layers of lesser wealth to the great mass of the poor and powerless at the bottom. Together, the aristocracy and gentry owned more than two-thirds of all the land in

England In this largely agrarian society, government was conceived of as the authority of the locality, the government of parish, county, and town, whose officials were members of the gentry appointed by the Crown. In the course of the century, this system of local government was replaced by a modern bureaucracy of trained and elected administrators, but at the time Austen was writing, the gentry were the real governors of the countryside Not until the commercial and political revolutions, accumulating full force ill the eighteenth century, disrupted the solidarity of families founded on landed wealth did these ancient families, and the women who belonged to them, lose much of the power they had so long exercised. Only then did the state pass to the control of parliaments composed of men and elected by men.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh and her nephew Darcy are members of one such ancient family, and they are highly conscious of the power they possess. Both control the lives and incomes of scores of people on their estates, many of whom had no voting power until the Reform Bill of 1832. Even after that, until the secret ballot was passed in 1872, landlords could have a decisive effect on votes, since they were taken orally. Traditionally, the steward of an estate such as Darcy's would round up the tenants who could vote, take them to the polling place, and remain there while they called out their preference. A man such as Darcy, were he to run for a seat in the House of Commons, could then be sure of this built-in constituency of tenants. Wickham's chronic resentment, Austen implies, is a function of his having grown up as the son of the elder Darcy's steward, daily observing so many

more advantages accrue to Darcy than to himself.

Although women in the gentry had less authority than men, a matter I take up later, some had considerable power The tradition of primogeniture established that, under the law, property was passed to the eldest son; and English matrimonial law stipulated that, through marriage, the husband became the owner of all his wife's property. But there were ways in which the gentry could and did protect its women. Mr. Bennet cannot alter the entail requiring that his estate go to the nearest male relation, but he can settle money on his daughters that, if proper legal measures are taken, will remain their own after marriage Because Lady Catherine's estate is not entailed from the female line, she enjoys most of the advantages of her nephew. She is patroness of the living of Mr. Collins, for example, and he is only one of many people who are dependent on her and therefore must pay court to her

Elizabeth is right when she recognizes that to join Darcy's family and become mistress of Pemberley would indeed "be something" Family and marriage occupied a far more public and central position in the social government and economic arrangements of English society than they would later. In the novels of Austen, marriage is then accurately seen as an institution that both determines and is determined by history ...

[Social historian Lawrence] Stone's theory of social history suggests that only in a highly individualist society does happiness arise as an Ideal: those who see themselves as living for themselves become interested in happiness. But If they view themselves as living for something beyond the self—say, the community—happiness loses its central

place in human concern. That Austen reveals in almost every novel how difficult it is to negotiate a compromise between the drive for happiness and the necessity of a life of service all communities require of its citizens (most commonly in their role as parents) is not surprising. The question of happiness lies at the heart of the English tradition of liberal rationalism, particularly as it expressed itself in the works of Austen's contemporary Jeremy Bentham and later in the formulations of John Stuart Mill. One of Mill's major efforts was to reconcile a Benthamite faith in making happiness the supreme goal of human life WIth hIs communitarian belief in service, probably acquired through the classical education he received from his father (as Austen did from hers) In order to do so, Mill eventually insists on the existence of a private domain, set apart and separate from the demands of law and custom. This abstraction, the private domain, which we have difficulty imagining as an abstraction so much do we take Mill's ideas for granted, is the basis of the argument of *On Liberty* (1859) So little did Mill himself take It for granted, however, that a large section of *On Liberty* is devoted to establishing and defining its existence. Another example is that, until the secret ballot was passed, parliamentarians expressed their astonishment over the proposal on the grounds that no honorable person would have any reason to cast a vote in secret; the private domain was imagined only with difficulty.

These same ambiguities concerning the private self and its relation to custom and community make themselves felt in *Pride and Prejudice.* Austen tempers her affirmation of individual happiness as an ideal by means of a deep aesthetic vigilance over its possible excesses The hero of the novel, for example, is as different in substance and temperament from the heroine as could be; he embodies the traditional self, one whose Identity is based on a sense of his own position in the social hierarchy rather than on an evaluation of his inner worth. This is what Darcy means when he says to Elizabeth, after they have been united, that he was a good man in theory but not in practice. He accepted his own merit as given; until Elizabeth forces him to, he has no Impulse to look critically inward A traditional self with a strong sense of duty (as distinct from conscience), Darcy has before him a traditional that is to say, arranged-marriage when the novel opens Of course, contact with Elizabeth changes Darcy, but that Elizabeth ends by marrying so traditional a personality is perhaps the largest check on the modern drive for happiness (most intelligently represented by Elizabeth) in the novel.

Not all the self-seekers in the novel are as intelligent and virtuous as Elizabeth, however, which brings us to another way Austen tempers her affirmation of the pursuit of happiness. The novel continually juxtaposes to Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage the completely selfish marriage, such as the unions between Lydia and Wickham and between Charlotte and Mr Collins, who live only for themselves and their own advancement. In contrast, Darcy and Elizabeth are envisioned at the conclusion of the novel as surrogate parents, moral guardians, and educators to Georgiana and Kitty, and as host and hostess at their ancient estate to members of the rising class of merchants, the Gardiners. The novel ends, then, on a note of affirmation of the power of marriage as an agent of constructive social change.

Feminist critics who have condemned Austen for not opening up any new vistas for the female spirit, for merely reaffirming the traditional option of marriage, may as well say to

a starving person, "Man cannot live by bread alone.", Like all her sisters, Elizabeth has only humiliating dependence on relations before her if she does not marry. No professions to speak of are open to her, and laws on every side are designed to restrict her independence within the privilege of the gentry class, wives had far less control over their lives than husbands did, and daughters had virtually none. Charlotte Lucas marries Mr. Collins because she does not wish to remain a daughter all her life; that marriage to Mr. Collins is seen as liberating by comparison with "spinsterhood" tells us all we need to know of the depth of Austen's Irony on the subject of women.

What is remarkable about Austen's perspective on this subject is that she does not lapse into sentimental wish fulfillment but renders the crass, survivalist posture required of women with unfailing honesty and irony. The "honesty" and "irony" are interchangeable because of the fundamental contradiction in the gentry woman's situation: that she enjoyed tremendous privileges and relative comfort as a member of that class but that her ability to act independently within it was severely restricted. Elizabeth's refusal to marry Mr. Collins, for example, is not ponderously portrayed as an act of courage; It would take little courage to refuse so ridiculous a person as Mr. Collins. But given the situation of women and her own particular economic circumstances, to refuse him without giving way even for a moment to anxiety concerning the future shows an exceptional spirit. Elizabeth's sangfroid is again apparent when she refuses the far more imposing Darcy; she cannot be frightened by circumstance or intimidated by power. Popular women novelists writing at the same time as Austen often show heroines engaged in far more obvious acts of heroism and have been praised over Austen by feminists for portraying more adventurous women; in one such novel the heroine travels down the Amazon River. But Austen did not have to show Elizabeth traveling down the mighty river; she walks three miles in the mud to visit an ailing sister, and the society around her (including the hero) behaves as If she had. That Elizabeth remains unfazed by their exaggerated response to this most commonplace act—Darcy's admiration no more turns her head than Miss Bingley's visible contempt ruffles her—is not the least of her virtues. It is in Austen's ironic critique of her society, with its vulgar idolatry of the "lady" combined with its brute legal and economic restriction of her independence, together With her passionate endorsement of women who live within it and still manage to retain their self-possession *(dignity* is too lofty a word) that her feminism lies....

That Elizabeth Bennet is so easy to like makes *Pride and Prejudice* the less ironic novel But Elizabeth's marriage to Darcy, as we have seen, is not without contradiction and irony. After they are united, Elizabeth "remembered that [Darcy] had yet to learn to be laught at.'" Perhaps a juxtaposition of the two novels suggests more than anything else that no discussion of the social-historical context in which the heroines move can proceed without consideration of Austen's irony The moral discrimination that forms the basis of that irony is so insistent, writes Raymond Williams, "that it can be taken as an independent value... which is in the end separable from its social basis." After making this profound observation, Williams goes on to attach that value to the democratic social agenda. "she provided the emphasis which had only to be taken outside the park walls, into a different social experience, to become not a moral but a social criticism," such as one finds in the Victorian moralists. But we will leave it to the historical ideologists to

determine the political direction Austen's emphasis would take later Whatever one concludes, one cannot help but feel that Austen wrote more for later generations than for her own. This perception is apparent not only in her steady refusal to court the public attention she could so easily have gained but in the way the novels seem to feel themselves forward into time, articulating our own historical distance from her world by means

of theIr Irony. Historians have long been in the habit of claiming, as A. J. P. Taylor has written, that, among novelists, history began with Walter Scott, the historical novelist and contemporary of Jane Austen. But if history is a form of self-consciousness, perhaps history began with Jane Austen as well.

Source: JulIa PrewItt Brown, "The 'social hIstory' of *Pride and Prejudice,"*_ In *Approaches to Teaching Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice',* edited by MarcIa McClintock Folsom, Modem Language Association of America, 1993, pp. 57-66.

Adaptations

The most famous film version of *Pride and Prejudice* is the black and white Metro-Goldwyn Meyer production released in 1940. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard, the film featured Greer Garson as Elizabeth Bennet and Laurence OIIvier as Fitzwilliam Darcy and won the Academy Award for best art direction because of its lavish sets. It is currently available as a videocassette from MGM/UA Home Entertainment.

In 1985, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and director Cyril Coke adapted *Pride and Prejudice* for television as a mini-series. It starred Elizabeth Garvie and David Rantoul as Elizabeth and Darcy and was later released on video by CBS/Fox Video.

In 1995, another BBC television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was released, starring Jennifer Ewe as Elizabeth Bennet and Colin Firth as Fitzwilliam Darcy. In the United States it aired on Arts & Entertainment Television (A&E) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and is available from A & E Home Video and PBS Home Video.

Other adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* include the sound recordings *Pride and Prejudice,* narrated by FIo Gibson, Recorded Books, 1980 (an unabridged version of the novel); *Pride and Prejudice,* abridged by Frances Welch, read by Celia Johnson, ALS Audio Language Studies, 1981 (a "read-along" transcript); *Pride and Prejudice,* read by Jane Lapotaire, Durkin Hayes, 1992; *Pride and Prejudice: Selections,* narrated by Sheila Allen, Francia DiMase, and Roger Rees, Time Warner Audiobooks, 1994; and *Pride and Prejudice,* abridged by Elizabeth Bradbury, BDD Audio, 1994 (a BBC Radio production).

Topics for Further Study

Research the changes in the English social structure during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Show how attitudes in *Pride and Prejudice* toward the newly wealthy middle classes, who earned their money through trade and manufacturing, differed from those toward the landed gentry who inherited their generations-old wealth.

Much of *Pride and Prejudice* centers on the question of marriage or other unions examine the attitudes of the different characters in the novel towards the institution of marriage and compare them to modern attitudes.

In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft published her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* which offered the then revolutionary Idea that women were the intellectual equal of men and should be educated as such. What subjects did women study during the late eighteenth and early eighteenth century? Although Austen never credited Wollstonecraft as inspiration, many of Austen's characters have qualities encouraged by Wollstonecraft. Examine Wollstonecraft's ideas and find examples of how Elizabeth fulfills many of Wollstonecraft' s demands for women.

Compare and Contrast

1810s: Europe is submerged in warfare throughout most of the decade by the struggle against the ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte to unite the continent under French rule. Two of Austen's brothers, Frank and Charles, entered the British Navy and fought in the Napoleonic Wars.

Today: For the first time since the Napoleonic Wars, Europe considers a single multinational government in the European Union.

1810s: In the early nineteenth century, a woman's education differed greatly from that of a man. While boys attended boarding schools and studied Latin, mathematics, and science, girls were schooled at home by governesses, focusing on the fine arts, writing, reading, and sewing.

Today: Over one hundred twenty-five million women graduated from high school in 1994 alone, while around eight hundred thousand females were enrolled in colleges and universities. Not limited to a specific gender, most American high schools and universities are open to both sexes, and course offerings are not exclusive to men or women.

1810s: Because of a lack of professions for women to enter and become self-supporting, few women could afford to remain single in early 1800s. Most women elected to marry rather than depend on other family members for financial support.

Today: Many women in America have increasingly decided to remain single. By 1994, only fifty-nine percent of women in America were married. In addition, almost sixty percent of American women over the age of sixteen were employed in the labor force, either part-time or full-time.

What Do I Read Next?

Sense and Sensibility (1811), Jane Austen's fIrst published novel, looks at the contrast between reason and emotion in the persons of two of the three Dashwood sisters Elinor and Marianne.

Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), in which meek, poor Fanny Price wins through simple virtue both the love and hand of country heir Edmund Bertram.

Emma (1816), in which Austen's well-to-do heroine plays matchmaker for a lower-class friend-until she realizes that she is herself In love with the man her friend has chosen.

Northanger Abbey and *Persuasion* (1818), Austen's posthumously-published novels, that are respectively a sly parody of the overly romantic Gothic novel and her examination of the transformation of the world by means of the Royal Navy.

Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels (1814) Scott was a contemporary and an admirer of Austen's work, and the *Waverley* novels-like Austen's, published anonymously-make an Interesting contrast with her fiction. *Waverley* is set during the 1745 Jacobite rebellion In Scotland and is very Romantic in theme.

The English: A Social History, 1066-1945 (1987), by popular historian Christopher Hibbert, makes plain the evolution of the society that Austen portrays in her novels.

Further Study

Julla Prewltt Brown, *Jane Austen's Novels' Social Change and Literary Form,* Harvard University Press, 1979.

Brown discusses how Austen uses contrasts between characters, themes, and narrative devices to give structure to her novel.

Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of 1deas,* Oxford University Press, 1975, reprinted with new introduction, 1987.

Butler argues that despite the tendency of many readers and critics, Austen's novels are not "progressive" novels, but rather novels that reinforce a conservative, orthodox thinking in tune with her era.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, Yale University Press,* 1979.

Gilbert and Gubar explore the struggles nineteenth century women Writers endured while publishing their works and how society reacted to the Ideas and perspectives of women authors.

J David Grey, managing editor, A Walton Litz and Brian Southam, consulting editors, *The Jane Austen Companion,* Macmillan, 1986.

The Jane Austen Companion was published under the auspices of the Jane Austen Society and includes much scholarly information, including a chronology of Austen's life and works, her family tree, Critical appraisals of her novel, and a *Dictionary of Jane Austen's Life and Works,* a concordance of Important people and events in her fiction and her world.

Karl Kroeber, *"Pride and Prejudice:* Fiction's Lasting Novelty," in *Jane Austen Bicentenary Essays,* edited by John Halperin, Cambridge University Press, 1975.

In this essay Kroeber looks at the phenomenon of Austen's continuing popularity despite the ways In which she goes against prevailing modem literary tastes.

Robert Liddell, "Pride and Prejudice," in his *The Novels of Jane Austen,* Longmans, 1963, pp. 34-55

In his collection, Liddell studies various aspects of *Pride and Prejudice,* including its history, social background, and irony.

Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer' Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen,* University of Chicago Press, 1984

Poovey Writes about the role of women Writers in socIety during the late eIghteenth and early nIneteenth centuries

Warren Roberts, *Jane Austen and the French Revolution,* St. MartIn's, 1979

In this study, Roberts traces the Impact that the French Revolution had on Austen's own life (her brothers served in the Royal Navy in the struggle against Napoleon Bonaparte) and on the type of fiction she wrote.

LeRoy W Smith, *"Pride and Prejudice'* No Improper Pride," in his *Jane Austen and the Drama of Woman,* Macmillan, 1983, pp. 87-110.

This essay concentrates on the social, moral, economic, and sexual dilemmas Elizabeth must face as a middle-class woman In nineteenth-century society.

Michael Williams, *Jane Austen Six Novels and their Methods,* St. Martin's, 1986.

Williams discusses six Austen novels, including *Pride and Prejudice,* and concentrates on the methods Austen uses to construct her stories.

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Donald J Gray, "Preface," in *Jane Austen Pride and PreJudice, An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Reviews and Essays in Criticism,* edited by Donald J Gray, Norton, 1966

Robert B. Hellman, *"E pluribus unum'* Parts and Whole in *Pride and Prejudice,'"* in *Jane Austen- Bicentenary Essays,* edited by John Halperin, Cambridge University Press, 1975 Elizabeth Jenkins, *Jane Austen: A Biography,* Gollancz, 1948

MarvIn Mudrick, "Irony as Discrimination *Pride and Prejudice,"* in hIs *Jane Austen Irony as Defense and Discovery,* Princeton University Press, 1952.

Review of *Pride and Prejudice,* in *British Critic,* February, 1813, pp 189-90, reprinted in *Jane Austen The Critical Heritage,* edited and compiled by B. C Southam, Routledge, 1968.

Review of *Pride and Prejudice,* In *Critical Review,* March, 1813, pp. 318-24, reprinted In *Jane Austen The Critical Heritage,* edited and compIled by B. C. Southam, Routledge, 1968

B C Southam, editor, *Jane Austen. The Critical Heritage,* Routledge, 1968.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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