

***Pride and Prejudice* in the Peripheral Characters: An Analysis of the Titular Traits in Jane Austen's Novel**

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Abstract:

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* is quite possibly one of Jane Austen's best works. Along with the appreciation of the author's prose genius, it has been the subject of lots of criticism as well. Certain concepts in the novel like gender, society and human behavior have been constantly taken up for discussion by many critics and scholars around the world.

One such concept is the meaning and context of the titular terms 'Pride' and 'Prejudice' and their application in the novel. It has been clearly stated by many critics and readers of the novel that the terms mainly apply to the main characters, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. However, it might also be noted that various other peripheral characters in the novel also represent the traits of pride and prejudice along the story on various occasions. This paper seeks to discuss the terms 'Pride' and 'Prejudice', how the word 'Prejudice' can be depicted in another light rather than the conventional usage, and how the peripheral characters exhibit those attributes throughout the course of the novel.

To support my research, I will be referencing certain articles by other authors and critics who discuss the aforementioned terms and characters in relation with each other.

Keywords: pride, prejudice, Darcy, Elizabeth, marriage.

INTRODUCTION

The story follows the life of Elizabeth Bennet, a witty young woman in nineteenth century England, and her family. Her mother, Mrs. Bennet is determined on getting her five daughters well-married off and she would scruple at nothing to do so. The novel focuses majorly on Elizabeth

and her elder sister Jane's pursuit to find love and happiness in the marriage-oriented society. Jane's attempts at finding love are jeopardized by the other characters in the story, while Elizabeth jeopardizes her attempts herself with excessive prejudice against her counterpart, Mr. Darcy.

One of the main objectives of the novel is to establish the character development, especially in the main characters, Darcy and Elizabeth who are initially clouded by pride and prejudice respectively. When we talk about the dual themes of pride and prejudice, we automatically center our attention on these two characters whose flaws are the most apparent throughout the story and which also keep both of them from realizing their feelings for each other until the end. The delay in this realization caused by Darcy's extreme pride in himself and his social class, and Elizabeth's prejudice against him makes up for the majority of conflict in the novel. It is also interesting to see how both of them overcome these flaws to a happy resolution at the end.

But it is not just their pride and prejudice that sets the story in motion. Austen has created many other three-dimensional characters with their own pits and falls that facilitate the development of the main characters as well as their own. Characters like Mr. Collins, Lady Catherine, Caroline Bingley and many others are laced with the traits of pride and prejudices of their own and throughout the events of the story there are many instances where we get to see just how these traits of theirs affect the main characters as well as justify the title of the novel.

The first section of this paper is dedicated to the discussion of the terms pride and prejudice, the dictionary meanings of the words as well as my own interpretation of them in relation with the dispositions of the characters in the novel. I will also briefly mention the pride and prejudice in the main characters, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy and how they support my analysis of the terms.

The next section will provide an insight into some peripheral characters who demonstrate the same attributes round the course of the novel and advocate the title to its fullest. Since Austen heavily relies on narrative and dialogues for character development, I will be quoting certain parts of the novel itself to support my claims in the research.

SECTION ONE

It is a well-known fact that Jane Austen's characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* are some of the best created characters in classic literature. With each of them having their own goals and motivation to behave the way they do; they also have deep rooted opinions of themselves and

the people around them. Sometimes those opinions are what leads to them being labeled as ‘proud’ or ‘prejudiced’. This chapter dives in detail into the meanings of both the titular terms and their personal interpretations.

The basis of this research is the definitions provided by *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* of the words ‘Pride’ and ‘Prejudice’. There are several meanings of both the words. My paper will focus on the ones relevant to the research.

The word ‘Pride’ has two apt definitions, ‘elation or satisfaction at one’s own achievements, possessions, etc.’ and ‘unduly high opinion of oneself’. Although the word is mostly used in positive sense in day-to-day life to describe a feeling of pleasure or victory when someone or people connected with them have achieved something, just like the first definition suggests, but in the novel most characters we talk about exhibit the negative context of the word ‘pride’, which inclines more towards the haughty sense of being better or superior than the people around. In this paper, I will be talking majorly about the latter.

Pride, just like Prejudice is directly related to one’s opinions, either about something or someone else, or oneself. Everett Zimmerman in his article ‘Pride and Prejudice in Pride and Prejudice’ explains that ‘Pride is a detachment from other human beings in which the self is not seen as involved with others but as superior to them, as unconcerned.’ (Zimmerman 65). But as he states later that the ‘characters in Jane Austen’s works cannot remain aloof: with or without intention they are drawn into the affairs of others.’ (Zimmerman 65-66). This way, one can be proud of oneself, one’s accomplishments and acquisitions or simply of one’s own being, or they can be proud about the same things of their direct or indirect acquaintances. There are several characters in the novel I will be mentioning in this paper that justify either one or both of those dimensions.

The word ‘Prejudice’ means a ‘preconceived opinion’ or ‘(against, in favor of) bias’. Prejudice is mostly received as a negative term used to convey an unfair or unreasonable opinion about something or someone without prior knowledge or information. However, if we look at the etymology of the term, it comes from the Latin word ‘Praeiudicium’, which further broken down is, ‘prae’ (pre) meaning ‘before’ and ‘iudex’ (judge) meaning ‘to form or give an opinion about’.

Considering the dictionary definitions and the etymology of the term, nowhere does it imply that the word connotes a positive or a negative opinion. Therefore, the term could mean either of the two. A person could have a positive opinion of something or someone beforehand or negative.

More background to support my explanation is the term 'Benevolent Prejudice', which is a positive type of prejudice that is expressed as apparent positive beliefs and emotional responses. This type of prejudice validates the phrases 'preconceived notion' and 'bias (against, in favor of)', which are principally vague and unspecified when it comes to a legitimate definition of the word 'prejudice'.

The same way, the title of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* doesn't clarify anywhere if it is meant to be positive or negative prejudice that the author talks about, which means the term is open to different interpretations.

Several characters in the novel demonstrate either of the two prejudices at times. Sometimes a specific character shows prejudices at the same time. To support my explanation of the terms, I will take the example of the two main characters, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy.

Although not many claim the fact that Elizabeth Bennet was proud, her actions and conduct say otherwise. She is quick to judge Mr. Darcy only based off upon his appearance and air. This shows how she took pride in what she was as a person. Not necessarily the negative side of pride, but she held a high opinion of herself and was very confident in her judgement of others.

When she first meets Darcy in the Meryton Ball, just like the general public opinion, she passes him off as a disagreeable and proud snob. 'His manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud; to be above his own company and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared to his friend.' (Austen 14-15)

Darcy's initial prejudice of Elizabeth, "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me" (Austen 16) didn't help the matter any further. She continued to develop a negative sense of prejudice against Darcy throughout and it only strengthened with Wickham's false story.

Also, after hearing the story, Elizabeth formed a high opinion of Wickham without further background knowledge. Only based off upon his appearance and manner of conduct, later supplied by the fraudulent tale of his being wronged by Darcy, she forms the opinion that:

“a young man, too, like you, whose very countenance may vouch for your being amiable.” (Austen 93)

Later, expressing her sense of belief towards Wickham to Jane, Elizabeth claims that “there was truth in his looks” (Austen 99). This way she demonstrated a positive sense of prejudice against him. Not knowing his real story or true intentions, ‘Elizabeth honored him for such feelings, and thought him handsomer than ever as he expressed them’ (Austen 92).

This initial positive prejudice against Wickham leads her to form a harsher judgement against Darcy. It also leads her to be way proud of her own opinion and ingenuity, sometimes clouding the very judgement she was so proud of. This way she demonstrated both kinds of prides and prejudices through the course of the story.

As for Darcy, he was irrefutably proud of his own accomplishments and possessions, so much so that he formed a prejudice against Elizabeth as well.

‘His sense of her inferiority- of its being a degradation- of the family obstacles which had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit.’ (Austen 204)

This episode could be the result of some latent immaturity in Darcy or as Obure Mark in ‘Pride and Prejudice-1’ points out: ‘an example of his inner struggle and between his individuality and his position inherited through birth’ (Mark 9), but he made it very clear in his proposal the prejudices he held against her and her family.

“Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations whose condition on life is so decidedly beneath my own?” (Austen 207)

Although he loved her in spite of everything she was, he could not overlook the fact that she had inferior connections and her social class was lower than that of his. This automatically

makes Darcy prouder than ever, along with being unfairly prejudiced against the woman he loves, no matter how much he is ready to accept her despite all of it.

Also, another instance where Darcy shows prejudice is related to his friend Mr. Bingley and Elizabeth's sister Jane. After a few months' stay in Netherfield, the Bingleys and Darcy leave for London, much to everyone's dismay. Elizabeth, true to her character, blames Darcy for the separation of Jane and Bingley. The belief is even more strengthened by Caroline Bingley's letter to Jane which stated how they were expecting Mr. Bingley's attentions to turn towards Darcy's sister.

In his letter, Darcy narrates to Elizabeth how he believed his friend to be in love with her sister, but Jane, "even though she received his attentions with pleasure, she did not invite them by any participation of sentiment" (Austen 212). Without knowing Jane's true feelings or intentions, he assumes that she doesn't share the same regard for Bingley as he does for her. His pride in his opinion and judgement of Jane's regards leads him to take a life-altering step for his friend. He confesses about his part in separating the couple on grounds of misunderstanding, by convincing Bingley of Jane's indifference towards him.

Such were the pride and prejudices of the main characters in the novel. The next chapter in this paper deals with the same traits among other characters and whether or not they are resolved till the end.

SECTION TWO

This Chapter focuses on six secondary characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* and the extent of their advocacy of the title. Although there might be many other characters in the novel which demonstrate pride and prejudice in their own ways, these characters have been chosen because their behavior and conduct are the most prevalent in the light of those traits. I will mention both the pride, and prejudice of each character I talk about in this chapter. As explained earlier, the pride could be two ways: pride of oneself or pride of someone else. Similarly, the prejudice characteristics could also go both ways: either positive or negative prejudice against someone.

The first character that I will be highlighting is Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth's mother and a rather one-track minded woman. All she cares about is getting her five daughters married and she would go to any lengths to assure that. She is also a petty gossip-monger who doesn't think twice

before letting down someone else to raise her own and because of her frivolousness, repeatedly embarrasses Elizabeth in front of company.

She is one of those characters in the novel who takes pride in someone else, by doing which she facilitates her own pride. Her actions and dialogues clearly state that her eldest daughter, Jane, is her favorite child of all. Her statements like “Jane was so admired, nothing could be like it,” (Austen 17) show the confidence she took in her daughter. One could appraise her for the motherly pride and affection she displays, if only not for her extravagant claims and degrading remarks about others compared to Jane.

“First of all, he (Mr. Bingley) asked Miss Lucas. I was so vexed to see him stand with her! But, however, he did not admire her at all; indeed, nobody can, you know;” (Austen 17)

Perhaps the way she delights over Jane and aspires the best match for her is a manifestation of her own expectations in marriage. Later in the story, Austen presents a picture of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet’s incompatible marriage and the former’s incompetence as a husband. Mrs. Bennet clearly doesn’t want that for her favorite child, and that desire stages as pride for Jane and making every attempt to uplift her and make everyone like her. Sometimes she goes too far in those pursuits that she devalues her other daughters. The most apparent victim of her paltriness is Charlotte Lucas, who is continuously compared to Jane by Mrs. Bennet, claiming that Miss Lucas is “very plain” (Austen 52). She constantly assumes that everyone is jealous of Jane and that her beauty is the only thing that recommends her to everyone around.

Also, at times her excessive subconscious pride in Jane’s appearance leads her to objectify her beauty. After Bingley’s proposal to Jane, she is enormously happy and in that sense of delight she exclaims:

“I was sure you could not be so beautiful for nothing.” (Austen 365)

Evidently, she means Jane’s beauty was meant to attract handsome and wealthy suitors like Bingley for her marriage. This shows the weight she places on physical appearance as an affluence in order for one’s successful marriage. This is probably the reason why Mary Bennet isn’t much talked about by her mother in terms of eligibility for marriage.

Mrs. Bennet displays a very dramatic contrast to the very person she takes pride in. Austen shows Jane Bennet in a very different light than her mother, or any other character in the story for that matter. Her sensible, kind and considerate disposition ridicules Mrs. Bennet's character and establishes her as a shallow and vulgar woman who only thinks about her own and doesn't even blink before degrading someone else's character to her own benefit.

Just like any other character in the novel, Mrs. Bennet is prejudiced against Darcy as well. It goes without saying that everyone in Hertfordshire, except Jane Bennet, held a prejudice against Darcy. But the extent to which Mrs. Bennet was prejudiced surpassed even Elizabeth's. 'Amongst the most violent against him (Darcy) was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behavior was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters' (Austen 15).

According to Elizabeth, '(I) she could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified (mine) hers' (Austen 25), which means she had an allowance for forgiveness and changing her prior judgement, had she not overheard him rejecting the very idea of asking her for a dance. But Mrs. Bennet is comparatively much harsher in her judgement.

"So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! he walked here and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I wish you had been there, my dear (Mr. Bennet), to have given him one of your set-downs. I quite detest the man." (Austen 17-18)

Her words are more a verdict than just a judgement. Her opinions allow no scope of modification. She even goes as far as to say "that Lizzy does not lose much by not suiting his fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing" (Austen 17). This statement is interesting in particular because later on when Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins' marriage proposal, Mrs. Bennet is startled and furious, even though it is very clear ever since his letter arrived at Longbourn that she had always despised Mr. Collins for the entailment. Still, the prospect of her daughter being married to "that odious man" (Austen 72) is far more welcoming to her than Elizabeth making it into Darcy's good books. She would rather have Elizabeth marry the person she hates the most for entailing her home, than have her commended by Darcy. This proves that Mrs. Bennet's judgement held Mr. Darcy even lower than Mr. Collins.

It takes Elizabeth and Darcy's final engagement to suddenly eradicate Mrs. Bennet's prejudice. Just as hasty as she was to judge Mr. Darcy initially at the Meryton Ball, her prejudice goes away equally quick as soon as she fixates on the thought of her daughter being the mistress of such a large fortune. She repeatedly exclaims her contentment on the match by praising the amount of riches Elizabeth would have after her marriage. In that moment, even Jane is overshadowed by her mother's overt joy.

“-how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it- nothing at all. I am so pleased- so happy. Such a charming man! So handsome! So tall! – Oh, my dear Lizzy! Pray apologize for my having disliked him so much before. I hope he will overlook it.” (Austen 397)

Although her new impression of Darcy inclines more towards her satisfaction of the gratification of her greatest desire and purpose in life, it still accounts for the change of opinions towards the person she had hated throughout the story. She is well-close to her desire of getting all her daughters married, and hence, is ready to overlook any prior prejudice she held against Darcy.

Mr. Darcy wasn't the only character in the novel Mrs. Bennet was prejudiced against. After the residents of Netherfield left for the town, she is highly distressed for Jane, as she watches the possibility of her expectations not being met. She keeps comforting herself with the idea that Bingley would return for Jane, but as soon as she hears of his not being back ever again, all her hopes are crushed and the once dear Bingley becomes a detestable man to her all of a sudden, without bothering to know the reason behind such a development. She complains that her daughter has been used by him and she would never have put up with that, if she were Jane.

But once Bingley returns and she starts noticing the earlier prospects rising again, she is not slow to change her opinion again. Bingley yet again becomes the most handsome man for Jane in her eyes, and nothing gives her more pleasure than to have him for her daughter. Even without any explanation for his supposed inexcusable behavior in the past, she is ready to accept him again.

These instances show how hasty Mrs. Bennet is in passing judgements. She is also very unstable and indecisive about her opinions. Once formed, they are either too harsh or too mild, until she sees it fit to change her opinion owing to her own satisfaction.

The next character that I will be focusing on is Mr. Collins. He is Mr. Bennet's cousin and is entitled to his estate after his death. The Bennet family is not particularly fond of Mr. Collins because of the entailment and his legal authority to turn Mrs. Bennet and her daughters out of the house after her husband's death. Adding on to that, his pompousness and absurdity makes him even less likeable to everyone.

He takes excessive pride in his patroness Lady Catherine de Bourgh and the position of clergyman she has bestowed on him. Although he feels as if he's setting a good example for the society by entering into matrimony, his actions state that he's trying to fit in and be respected as a position of authority simultaneously. But more than vanity in himself, he holds superior pride for Lady Catherine and his manners, behavior and words are all meant to please her. He owes whatever he is to her and cannot seem to hold any conversation without mentioning Lady Catherine and how fortunate he is to have her as his patroness.

He is perhaps the only character in the novel who is proud of and prejudiced against the same person. His pride in Lady Catherine is so high that he overlooks the obvious and where his patroness is a snobbish and arrogant woman, he thinks her to be perfect and amiable. In his attempts at flattery, he even declares Lady Catherine's daughter to be the most handsome among her sex, when everyone knows her to be cross and sickly.

It is this pride of his that leads him to be prejudiced against Elizabeth. Just like Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Collins is an indecisive person and his opinions keep changing according to what suits him. But his opinions about people's social standing remain intact, sort of like Darcy and Lady Catherine. According to him, he is choosing to marry Elizabeth because Lady Catherine has advised him to marry "a useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way." (Austen 120). Since her father's estate is entailed to him and he is under Lady Catherine's patronage, he supposes that he could never be refused to by any woman he wants to marry and henceforth, is doing a favor to Elizabeth by asking her to marry him.

Also, just because her social standing is lower than his, he assumes Elizabeth to be inferior in judgement than him as well. In the Netherfield ball, when Elizabeth tries to stop his endeavors to introduce himself and acquire the unattainable commendation of Darcy, he declares that although he values her opinion, she is far less educated and knowledgeable than he is, to decide if

the introductions should be exchanged or not. For him, a person's social class is representative of their wisdom and prudence.

Mr. Collins is considered as one of the most ridiculous characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, and his reasoning is mostly responsible for that. During his proposal to Elizabeth, his ludicrous dialogues reveal certain prejudices he held for the opposite sex. According to him, "it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second, or even a third time" (Austen 121). He declares it to be the established custom of the female sex to reject a man on the first application. This absolutely nonsensical stereotype did not amuse Elizabeth, who expressed her wonder on those types of women even existing.

Later on in the story, when Elizabeth visits Hunsford after Mr. Collins and Charlotte get married, though he is still boastful of his patroness and the favors she had granted him, he seems to have changed her former opinion about Elizabeth. He is visibly more concerned about what Elizabeth thinks about him and his wife's plain lifestyle than the other way around. This accounts for the removal of most parts of his initial prejudice for her.

Another such character is Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the owner of Rosings Park and the aunt of Mr. Darcy. She is undoubtedly one of the most proud and arrogant characters in the novel. Her sense of pride in herself and her social standing is even more fueled by flattery from people like Mr. Collins.

Extremely class-conscious, even her acts of charity suggest her covetousness for regard in the society. Everything she does and says implies her conceited assumption that everyone highly esteems her because of her rank, in spite of how imperious she is. According to Mr. Collins, "she likes to have the distinction of rank preserved" (Austen 176). Just like Darcy, she places much importance on a lady's accomplishments and is vainly still proud of herself. She is astonished when she learns that not all of Elizabeth's sisters play or sing or draw, in spite of not being accomplished in any of those things herself. She even goes on to instruct Elizabeth about learning and practicing music and brags that she would have been proficient at it if she had ever learnt, and so would be her daughter if her health had allowed her.

Her pride leads her to be prejudiced against Elizabeth and her social status. Later when she visits Longbourn in order to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Darcy, she makes it clear that her daughter's engagement to Darcy could not be "prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family!" (Austen 372). Her conversation with Elizabeth shows how much she gives importance to her own opinion and the belief that everyone should comply with her and her judgement because she is the one who has given it. She declares Elizabeth to be an obstinate and headstrong girl "without family, connections or fortune." (Austen 373). She even insults her family and asserts that it will be a disgrace for her nephew to marry into a family like the Bennets. She is in the habit of making decisions for others without even considering their wishes in between. Her sense of self-importance is so high that she just assumes that everyone wants her interference in their lives and her opinion and decision is the only one that matters. As Katarina Anderson in her article 'The Pride and Prejudice of the characters in Jane Austen's novel' points out: 'Lady Catherine does not hesitate to give her opinions about everything, and this arrogance comes from her pride, the matter is not that she is carefree of what others think of her, the matter is that she simply assumes that she will be liked.' (Anderson 12-13).

Lady Catherine's pride and prejudice doesn't terminate throughout the novel. Though she does meet a rebel in Elizabeth Bennet, she just considers her as an unreasonable and tenacious person who tends to defy authority and important figures like herself. Her pride in herself and her rank continues to have a hold on her conduct.

These character traits of Lady Catherine bring about another character which mirrors her quite well; Caroline Bingley, the haughty sister of Mr. Bingley. She is just as class-conscious and conceited. Her extreme pride in her status leads her to have a hand in separating his brother and Jane. Although she likes Jane better than her family, she doesn't want her brother to marry into a family like the Bennets, just because they had less fortune and did not satisfy her alternate schemes. She wants her brother to marry Miss Darcy, so she could marry Mr. Darcy and it would all be in the family.

Her prejudice against Elizabeth stems from her jealousy. She repeatedly tries to recommend herself to Darcy, but he takes an admiration to Elizabeth instead. This makes her envious and wounds her pride, for she thinks her rank in society is enough for her to have any man

she wants, much like Mr. Collins. This immodest assumption of hers is put to an end when she realizes that a woman with less fortune like Elizabeth stands in her way.

“Her manners were pronounced to be very bad indeed, a mixture of pride and impertinence; she had no conversation, no style, no beauty.” (Austen 43)

She makes every possible effort to undermine Elizabeth in the eyes of Mr. Darcy by demeaning her family and connections, and observing that Elizabeth is nothing more than just a plain and ordinary woman with no special features whatsoever. She even goes on to comment about things like her face, complexion, nose, teeth and that “in her air altogether, there is a self-sufficiency without fashion, which is intolerable” (Austen 286). Such insults coming from her, although she is well-aware that they’re not going to alter Darcy’s opinions about Elizabeth, are indicative of the level Miss Bingley could stoop to in order to satisfy her pride and prejudice.

The next character worth mentioning is George Wickham, the godson of Darcy’s father. He is an officer in Colonel Forster’s regiment and is shown to be handsome enough to charm women wherever he goes. After coming to Meryton and in terms with his godbrother Darcy, he fabricates a false story to make everyone dislike him and gain sympathy for himself. He is so proud of his own abilities to make people believe whatever tale he feeds them that he quickly attains Elizabeth’s trust and affection owing to that.

With his extreme politeness, Wickham uses strong reverse psychology to convince others that his beliefs about a particular person or event are true and are to be complied with. And because of his success with the same, he is very proud of the confidence he inspires in others.

He is a smooth talker and his false story is supported by facts and events, enough to victimize him and villainize Darcy. His claim over himself being wronged by Darcy emanates from his pride over Darcy Sr.’s treatment of him. He was always treated very fondly and provided with all the necessities and facilities that were bestowed on Darcy and his sister. He was even provided a legacy and an assurance to promote his advancements after Darcy Sr.’s death. This made him impudent and liable to claim his right, and to defame Darcy on unreasonable grounds.

In his letter, Darcy mentions how Wickham lived a “life of idleness and dissipation” (Austen 216) after his father’s death which prompted Darcy to not aid him anymore. This makes Wickham form an ill opinion of him and disgrace him in front of anyone he could. He even tells

Elizabeth that Darcy's behavior to him "has been scandalous", (Austen 90) leaving out the real part of the story. According to him, Darcy had been jealous of his father's extreme preference for Wickham and that had been the reason why they were not on good terms anymore.

He even defames Darcy's sister, even though he tried to elope with her once. Since he wasn't successful in his insincere endeavors, he goes on to spread infamy about her.

"I wish I could call her amiable. It gives me pain to speak ill of a Darcy. But she is too much like her brother- very, very proud." (Austen 94)

Later in the story when Elizabeth meets Miss Darcy herself, she discovers that instead of being exceedingly proud, she is just exceedingly shy.

Wickham's elopement with Lydia, although it was consensual, seems to be aimed at taking a hint on Darcy's pride. Wickham was well aware that Darcy would not let the matter go unresolved, and hence, just like Miss Darcy, he convinces Lydia to run away with him. But unlike with Miss Darcy, he is successful with his intentions with Lydia. Darcy finally relents and decides to aid the couple in order to make Wickham marry Lydia. This shows how Darcy was not so proud after all, as alleged repeatedly by Wickham.

At the end, after everything is settled and he is married, he has a final conversation with Elizabeth which shows how much change his character has gone through. Though he doesn't display any regard or gratitude for Darcy, he does seem to have changed his opinions about Miss Darcy. There is no speck of his former pride in him anymore.

The last and probably one of the most interesting characters of the novel, Lydia Bennet is the youngest daughter of the Bennets. She is quite young but holds staunch opinions about the institution of marriage. Many critics have remarked that she is a young Mrs. Bennet, owing to her flighty and reckless nature.

Just like her mother she has been brought up to believe that marriage is the ultimate goal and source of happiness in a woman's life. As a result, she is opportunistic and a harebrained flirt when it comes to wooing men. She is immensely proud of her 'good-humored countenance' (Austen 53) and ability to charm men. Just like Lady Catherine, she is exceptionally confident of that fact that people like her wherever she goes and want to listen to everything she has to say. Her

pride has made her rude and indifferent to other people's opinions and "she seldom listened to anybody for more than half a minute." (Austen 239). For instance, when her father declares that she and Kitty were the silliest girls in the country, she continues her gossip without as much as even flinching. She also disrespects Sir William Lucas when he announces Charlotte's engagement, exclaiming that Mr. Collins was supposed to marry Lizzy. Austen, at that moment, describes her as 'always unguarded and often uncivil.' (Austen 141). Just as Anderson notes, 'This shows that Lydia seems to think that people who criticize or contradict her must be wrong, which is a kind of prejudice. She has decided that people who do not want what she wants are wrong, and she cannot even consider that she might be wrong.' (Anderson 14)

True to her flirtatious manners, she develops an obsession with pursuing the officers in the regiment that visits Meryton and invests all her time devising ways to be with the officers. Because of which she takes a fancy to Wickham. Without striving to know anything about his whereabouts or intentions, she declares that he was the only man in the world that she loves. Enough to persuade her to run away with him. She believes him to be an angel and that she could never live without him. This way she demonstrates a positive kind of prejudice for Wickham. Even after she comes back, Elizabeth notices that Wickham's affection for Lydia was not the same as Lydia's was for him. But:

"Lydia was exceedingly fond of him. He was her dear Wickham on every occasion; no one was to be put in competition with him. He did everything best in the world;" (Austen 333)

Just like Mrs. Bennet, Lydia is boastful of any success related to the marriage field. Throughout the novel, all Lydia can be seen talking and stressing about is how she could have a hand at marriage before her sisters. After her marriage with Wickham, she continues to brag about her wedding events to her sisters, even though it is clear that her audience is not interested. She is so proud of being married at such a young age that she resorts to shallow show-off tricks, like taking off her glove and letting her hand out the carriage, so that people could see her ring and acknowledge that she is married.

Also, her preoccupation with the institution of marriage leads her to believe that married women are the happiest in their lives. She constantly keeps slighting her sisters after her marriage to Wickham and thinks that they all envy her. When Mrs. Bennet asks her for frequent correspondence, she replies:

“But you know married women have never much time for writing. My sisters may write to me. They will have nothing else to do.” (Austen 345)

This shows the misconception she carries about the responsibilities of marriage, and also her vanity and prejudice against unmarried women and marriage itself. She thinks once a woman is married, she has fulfilled her purpose in life and that she will be happy forever. That unmarried women like her sisters could never be content in life until they're married.

Her opinion does not change till the end and although her sisters feel that her marriage is not a successful one, she seems to be in high-spirits and her inexperienced teenage mind does not grasp the dynamics related to her reckless decision.

Lydia's upbringing is fairly responsible of her immature understanding of such a mature concept. Although she has firm beliefs and is highly opinionated when it comes to marriage, she doesn't distinguish between marrying for love and marrying just for the sake of it. Any kind of marriage, as long as it is with a man of fame and fortune is suitable to her.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to establish that the title of the novel, *Pride and Prejudice* is not only indicative of the titular attributes in the main characters, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, but the other side characters as well. By defining both the terms, I proved that both could have more than one meaning, depending on the exhibition and execution by a particular character.

I started off my paper by examining the pride and prejudice of the main characters first, how Elizabeth was proud of her own judgement and negatively prejudiced against Darcy, and positively against Wickham. Darcy was exceedingly proud of his fortune and accomplishments which lead him to be prejudiced against Elizabeth. He was also prejudiced against Jane's affections for his friend, Mr. Bingley.

In the next chapter I mentioned six recurring characters and their own sense of pride and prejudice. Mrs. Bennet took pride in her eldest daughter Jane and her beauty; she was harshly prejudiced against Darcy and later, Bingley. Mr. Collins was proud of her benefactor, Lady Catherine and the rank she had so kindly bestowed on him. He was unfairly prejudiced against Elizabeth due to her low social class and also about the female sex in general. Lady Catherine took

excessive pride in herself and her estimation in the society because of her rank, and she was prejudiced against Elizabeth because of her inferior social standing. Similar was Caroline Bingley, who was highly vain and conceited due to her upper class, being prejudiced against Elizabeth because of the admiration she inspired in Darcy. Wickham was proud of his ability to gain a confidante with his story-telling skills and also the preferential treatment he had received from Darcy's father. Because of this, he was prejudiced against Darcy and his sister and continued to disgrace them in front of everyone. Lastly, Lydia Bennet was proud of her personality that she believed helped her in charming men, and later about the fact that she was married. She was prejudiced against the institution of marriage and just like Elizabeth, positively prejudiced against Wickham.

Thus, I have proved that along with the main characters, the peripheral characters in the novel also justify its title to an extent in many ways of their own. Some of them own up to their pride and prejudices and seek to change them, while some with their firm beliefs and opinions, remain the same throughout the novel. Nevertheless, every Austen character has distinct personalities and it is interesting to read and analyze them from different perspectives.

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