

The women in Pride and Prejudice

by Jane Austen



TREBALL DE RECERCA

Sofía Cereceda Ferrer

2n Batxillerat. 202

Classical languages department

Tutor: Mar Muelas

INS Puig Castellar

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*I do not want people to be very agreeable,
as it saves me the trouble of liking them a great deal.*

- Jane Austen

*“What a sad era when it is easier to
smash an atom than a prejudice.”*

Albert Einstein

ABSTRACT

Este trabajo está enfocado a poder entender la psicología detrás de las diferentes mujeres del icónico libro *Orgullo y Prejuicio*, saber cómo y por qué actúan, si está influido por la autora Jane Austen y si están correctamente descritos en relación a las mujeres de la época de la novela.

Además , como parte práctica, analizaré los prejuicios de aquella época y de hoy en día, y haré una comparación entre ellas.

La investigación ha sido exitosa, pudiendo explicar las diferencias intrínsecas entre el siglo XIX y la actualidad, comparándolas. Esto, nos ha permitido ver el trabajo de una manera más global y definitiva después de haber descrito teòricamente las características de Orgullo y Prejuicio y su contexto histórico.

Aquest treball està enfocat a poder entendre la psicologia darrere de les diferents dones de l'icònic llibre *Orgull i Prejudici*, saber com i per què actuen, si està influenciat per l'autora Jane Austen i si estan correctament descrits amb relació a les dones de l'època.

A més, com a part pràctica, analitzaré els prejudicis d'aquella època i d'avui dia, i faré una comparació entre elles.

La recerca ha estat reeixida, podent explicar les diferències intrínseques entre el segle XIX i l'actualitat, comparant-les. Això, ens ha permès veure el treball d'una manera més global i definitiva després d'haver descrit teòricament les característiques d'Orgull i Prejudici i el seu context històric.

This essay focuses on the understanding of the psychology of the different women described in the iconic novel *Pride and Prejudice*, to study their behavior and its influences from the author Jane Austen's ideas, and if they are accurate for the time period.

As far as the practice part is concerned, it will be analyzed and compared that era's prejudice and nowadays.

The research had been successful, being able to explain the intrinsic differences between the 19th century and today's society, comparing them. This has allowed us to see the thesis in a more global and absolute way after describing theoretically the characteristics from *Pride and Prejudice* and its historical context.

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1.- INTRODUCTION

Women have always been an important part in the evolution of our society, even though sometimes they did it in the shadows.

That's why I would like to explore the women and their psychology of one of the most iconic and important books ever. *Pride and Prejudice* is arguably one of the novels that have impacted more in our society and have resonated more with the international public of all ages. And it just so happens, it is one of the books that I have read the most.

I don't know exactly if it's because of the old aura that emanates from the pages or maybe the main character and her feminist mentality; whatever it is, there's something in this novel relatable and electric that attracts me to it every time I read it.

The way the novel portrays women, with a relatively slight modern view, is in part the cause for millions of women in the world to be in tune with its storyline and characters. Jane Austen the author, made a space where are represented different types of women who are more than decoration for their husbands, their struggles can be understood and even be identified with, and are the protagonists and the ones who make the story impactful for the audience.

To really understand if the novel is accurate to the time period, I will analyze the women, their minds, the thoughts behind their actions, and standard for the women of the 19th century, in order to correctly see the differences.

With this, I would also like to discover exactly the origin of the inspiration of Jane Austen for her female characters; and really understand each woman in the book alongside with their personality and psychology to see if the author's life or personality has been reflected in the novel.

1.1.-Hypothesis and practical part

My first hypothesis is that Jane Austen's literature has been influenced by the ups and downs of life as a woman who wanted more than marrying a well off man.

Another hypothesis is that there's more than meets the eye with the women of the book. Because each one of them, and especially the protagonist Elizabeth, could

represent a fault or defect of society, and they all have a specific archetype¹ that has been seen in literature.

Moreover, for my practical part, I will be explaining in detail the book's impact on society from that time and its prejudices alongside how these have evolved over time. My purpose behind it is to really emphasize the modern society that we live in still has faults that often are not seen by the majority of the population.

With this, my last hypothesis comes into play. This comparison will show that the evolution of these prejudices may not have been as drastic as we think, they are really similar nowadays but they have evolved and are present in a different way.

2.- PLOT OF THE BOOK

This well known book narrates how the Bennet family and their five daughters navigate in the demanding society of the English rural area of the early 19th century. Ms. Bennett, the matriarch, has a big goal in life, to marry all her offspring with wealthy and well established men. Meanwhile her husband, the clergyman Bennet is a more laid-back and chill parent who tries to balance her spouse when it comes to the children's marriage, and especially her favorite, Elizabeth (the protagonist).

The arrival of the new gentleman Charles Bingley, who is single and healthy, to the town causes stir amongst the neighborhood. One of the most interested will be Ms. Bennet who will desperately want to have him choose one of her daughters to marry. One of his closest friends, Mrs. Darcy, another rich and important young-man, makes a strong impression on one of Bennett's girls, Elizabeth.

After their ups and downs caused by their polarized ways of seeing society, together they learn and unlearn about love. And how their pride and prejudices can get in their way of truly finding each other.

In between there will be other love stories, some hardships along the way, old ideals about women, and the spirit of overcoming that will let the women learn their true path in society.

¹ *Archetype: pattern that shows the different personalities of characters*



Image 1. The Bennet family in the 1995 show

http://images4.fanpop.com/image/articles/107000/pride-and-prejudice-1995_107154_top_full.jpg?cache=1304630435

3.- JANE AUSTEN'S BIOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT

In order to properly understand this thesis fully, it is mandatory to know the author's Jane Austen biography to connect some details to the novel and context. However, other parts of her life will be explained later when they are required.

Jane Austen was born on 16th of December of 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire, England. She was the second daughter of the eight offspring of the Anglican Reverend George Austen and his wife, Cassandra Leigh.



Image 2. Image de Jane Austen.

[https://www.eluniverso.com/resizer/mCPjBySeCeb55vMELbw-Vz-cC0o=/1461x1005/smart/filters:quy\(70\)/cloudfront-us-east-1.images.arcpublishing.com/eluniverso/GFVUSVNHQFIAOOZ33DWD6T4.jpg](https://www.eluniverso.com/resizer/mCPjBySeCeb55vMELbw-Vz-cC0o=/1461x1005/smart/filters:quy(70)/cloudfront-us-east-1.images.arcpublishing.com/eluniverso/GFVUSVNHQFIAOOZ33DWD6T4.jpg)

At the age of 8, Jane was sent to a boarding school with her sister Cassandra. She is known to have been infected with fever there, and was on the verge of death. She left school three years later, in 1786. Aside from that, Jane was also mostly taught at home by her mother, who instructed her in French, Italian and learned how to play the piano.

Since she was in one's salad days (she was young), Jane had a passion for telling stories and communicating emotions through writing. In her adolescent years, she wrote short stories as a hobby that amused her family. In the form of an epistolary novel (a novel written as a series of letters), she wrote a volume called *Juvenilia* that describes with humor and sarcasm different comedic and parodies about life. This is a much younger, inexperienced and fresh Jane than in her later novels, due to the fact that she was only 12 when she started writing this project, and it would take her 5 years to finish it.



Image 3. Painting of Jane austen. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/J._Austen.jpg

Just two years later, she would publish another novel, and she would continue to issue several more novels in the years that followed, one of them *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813. This last one, at that time called *First Impressions*, was written between 1796 and 1797 (when she was 21). She later published four more novels, and one that was never published completely finished because of her death.

It is to note that for eight months, she published her work anonymously.

In 1801, Jane moved with her sister and parents to Bath. The constant moving of her family was the reason why she published her books years after she finished them. When her dad died in 1805, she settled and started working with her sister and her mother in a house in Chawton. In this time, she changed *First Impressions* into the novel that we know today, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Jane died on July 18, 1817 at only 41 years old, in Winchester, Hampshire. The root of her early passing is a mystery, but a lot of academics have speculated different diseases like some type of Lymphoma, Tuberculosis or even an overdose. The catch is that no one knows for sure even with the detailed list of her known symptoms; plus a lot of these supposed causes weren't even discovered when she was alive.

However, a curious detail to note is that the same Asuten had a hypothesis of her illness, she wrote in her letters a few times that Bile (Reflux) was the cause of her discomfort. A sickness that had also affected some of her family and friends.

Despite that, her biographers have investigated the multiple illnesses that the writer suffered in her lifetime. She was prone to infections, she had numerous severe infectious illnesses due to this. Also chronic conjunctivitis that obstructed her from writing, a fatal lymphoma and immune deficiency. So, during the majority of her adult life she was often weak.

With this, although a mystery, her death could also be attributed to her already existing extensive medical report, and possibly to Hodgkin's disease, a type of lymphoma.

We don't know what caused her demise, but her last words are documented:

"God grant me patience, Pray for me Oh Pray for me."



Image 4. Austen's house where she spent her last 8 years.

[86.jpg \(669x446\) \(tacdn.com\)](#)

4.- THE WOMAN IN THE BOOK

The book is based at the beginning of the 19th century in rural England. There are a lot of important female characters in this novel with really different personalities, so it will be explained the general atmosphere of the chronicles when talking and displaying ideas about its women. And later on, the main character in the plot will be analyzed in detail.

First of all, it has to be put into words that this novel has been cataloged as a *novel of manners*², a usual genre for the author seen as she is known as its prime referent. So, it will narrate a high class intricate society and characters and their values that navigate through that world.

A fundamental part of the values represented in this novel are determined by the Anglican's church's ideals of a good society. In every aspect of life back then it could be seen this impact. There was a perfect idea of a perfect woman and wife, someone who stayed at home watching the kids, doing the chores and who did not raise her voice to her husband. Marriage, social rights and expectations, and the unspoken rules were all commanded how religion wanted to at that time. What that means is that if the canons were not followed the way the church wanted to, shame and disgrace were called upon that person.

² Literary genre based on the recreation of a highly developed community and its customs and values.



Image 5. The Bennet women in the movie

https://blogger.googleusercontent.com/img/a/AVvXsEg92iJsGWDBvDMdvFc7GGkVe8xxH5oSZBvolpfiTckTOXCKfcuK9JbfnWxL2mKvpiP3qG5YD34uVt6ohEnkRqX4emAcJLP89jZI-NkjQ369FjeEmg7tP3GcGoUBSWQDI8KPa_M77Pco8hPqmPJTNmYKuDJ3WWOyEoyBKB-JACvUJ572L-b5j_qykP=w640-h244

As said, marriage is a mainstay in the novel. And it was a necessity at the time, especially for women and women of lower class. So, for this, wealthier families would educate their daughters artistically and skills used for attracting a gentleman. In the movie, most of them are middle-upper class women and have life slightly easier than women who were low income. Meaning, they got opportunities to be more educated in terms of the arts, and how to dance, sing and behave appropriately. They all were allowed to attend balls or formal events and interact with wealthier families (like the Bingley's).

The majority of young girls thought that it was demanded to fight between them to find the perfect husband, oftentimes pushed by their own moms. Here, it can be seen how the pressure to be the most elegant and perfect young debutant was passed through generations and was long-established for centuries.

The exception to this paradigm of a flawless young lady could be seen in the protagonist character, Elizabeth. With her rule breaker persona and a desire and drive to be more than a housewife, she breaks the mold willingly multiple times during the novel. So, she decides to ignore the proper behavior for a girl her age. Her persona will be later discussed more in depth.



Image 6. *Rebellious Lizzie portrayed in the 2005 take.*

<https://m.media-amazon.com/images/M/MV5BMjIzNDU2Nzk4N15BMTI5BnBnXkFtZTcwMjY1OTk0OQ@@. V1 .jpg>

5.- THE WOMEN OF THE 19th CENTURY

As it has been mentioned before the novel takes place in the early 19th century; where the woman was always in the shadow of the man, that legal tutor could be her father or her husband.

At the time, English society (like most of the Western world) was based mainly on the Anglican Church's values. So the woman had to be a compliant and submissive wife and a good housewife whose main task was to take care of the home and the children; denying her any type of important matter in the household.

5.1.- Education

This is important to note because women's whole education had solely one purpose: to find a husband. Since they were young, girls knew how to take care of the home duties and responsibilities, like cooking or sewing.

Higher class women were taught in the arts, they painted or played instruments, this was called "*accomplishments*" that was often learned in boarding school or resident governess (like the author herself). Because the more talented and skillful they were,

they would stand out more and have more chances of a better marriage when looking for a husband.

Lady Caroline (character that will be explored more in depth later), with her snobbish attitude, enumerates all the qualities that a young lady should achieve:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages ... ; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions ... (ch. 8)

It has to be said that this was possible thanks to the servants who carried out all the domestic duties.



Images 7 and 8.

Women were expected to play an instrument or sing, and to be good at doing embroidery.

<https://georgianera.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/music-harp.jpg>

<https://yalebooksnetwork.org/yupblog/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/08/Pair-of-Pockets-119.jpg>

Other characters also highlight the importance of women having elegant, soft sophisticated manners, who were not interested in literature or more intellectual topics (those women were called *Blue-stockings*³). This is due to the fact that these traits and passions were seen as manly and unappealing, as it was considered as seizing to steal the men's "natural" enlightened superiority.

Even some clinicians arrived at the conclusion that a high amount of reading and studying could cause a harming outcome to the women's ovaries, which would turn "like dried-up prunes".

³ Term derived from the English society of women originated in the 18th century in England.

Despite all of this, they were never allowed to pursue any type of education beyond that, because it was easier to control women who were not able to go against the system imposed. In other words, they wanted women who could be easily manipulated by not letting them have quality education.

5.2.-Marriage

However, and with all this said, a young debutant was expected to not look too hard for a spouse, because being too interested in marriage could mean that the woman had a significant amount of sexual appetite, which was off-putting and considered disgraceful. This is due to the fact that young girls had to be interested in a union to become mothers and breed children not to have emotional satisfaction.

In short, marriage was solely seen as a transactional agreement between man and women to have children, and sometimes benefit from proprietary or titles. And on rare occasions, there were couples that did seal their true love and were able to marry the one they loved.

The usual and expected age for mademoiselles to get married was mid-20s while their spouses were normally a few years older. In a way, this is because the man who was the one that financially supported the family, had to have enough money to provide and maintain the household. But the important aspect of this difference, is that we see once again the roles and hierarchy that was also represented in society, the man was always the provider and protector of the family, and for that, he had to be older.



Image 9. Portrait of an early 19th century high class family.

https://image.invaluable.com/housePhotos/doyle/34/659334/H0061-L197812456_original.jpg

Another double standard in British society at that time, was the chastity vote. This meant women were expected to enter the marriage without having been with a man before. It shows the unequal and hypocritical mentality, because men were not seen as sluts or crazy (like women were) if they did sleep with someone before the union. This was taken to the extreme, seen as women could not talk or approach a man alone, if there was not a married woman present as a witness.

On top of this, if a woman did something seen as not honorable or appropriate for a lady (like not marrying, being with a man before marriage, running away from home, etc), she would be severely judged in the community and be a freak who would be treated as a disgraceful person.

5.3.- Separate spheres

A big part in marriages at that time was the empirical separation of both sexes, as much as in the private and as in the public spheres.

At home, both spouses lived in different parts, separated. On normal days, they would only see each other when having breakfast and dinner. High class couples would also attend balls, celebrations and social gatherings together.

And like this, in the public scene, men were the ones that take an active part in the political, economic sphere. They were the breadwinners, the ones that could work and vote. Meanwhile, women were relegated to the domestic sphere, taking care of the house and kids, and taking care of visits there and at church; as it has been since the dawn of time, until the 20th century, where women's position in society started to shift.



Image 10. Late 18th century photography that shows the time period's roles, reversed.
[https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/r0-tXbWiCbLuU03DPsLz2ZeG2hY=/1500x0/filters:no_upscale\(\):max_bytes\(150000\):strip_icc\(\):format\(webp\)/Domestic-Roles-463960009-56aa28645f9b58b7d0011b6a.png](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/r0-tXbWiCbLuU03DPsLz2ZeG2hY=/1500x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc():format(webp)/Domestic-Roles-463960009-56aa28645f9b58b7d0011b6a.png)

This, again, comes back to the “natural” characteristics of both men and women. They were different and with this, were meant for different tasks. Women were contemplated as frail, delicate and incapacitated physically, but still, morally superior to their male counterparts. The domestic sphere was perfect for them, they took care of the house and prepared their children for the future. In fact, being the women considered so perfect for the household, was an argument used against female vote at the time. At the same time, men were strong and independent, perfectly suited for the social and community-based jobs and duties.

Despite this, it should be kept in mind that although experts of that time thought the gender divisions were deep-rooted in nature, they are actually a product of the social construction of gender. Basically, the ideas ingrained on men and women based on their different social beliefs, that entitle ones and sanction or constrict others.

5.4.- Women's rights

In the (early) 19th century women did not have plenty of options when choosing what their life would look like when grown up. As we have seen already, the range in which they could actually do things is really narrow and limited.

When married, they would be considered under coverture, which means that man and wife became one and basically the women's rights would be taken away and restrained by their spouse.

As unfortunate as it sounds, it is easier to list what they were not allowed to do. Legally, they could not own lands or properties, vote, and they had no legal right over their own children (even though they gave birth and instructed them). On top of that, they were looked down upon if they chose to work a regular job instead of being a stay-at home mom, and if they did, they obviously were paid a fraction of what the men would. Thus, they were submissive and dependent on the men, as previously mentioned.

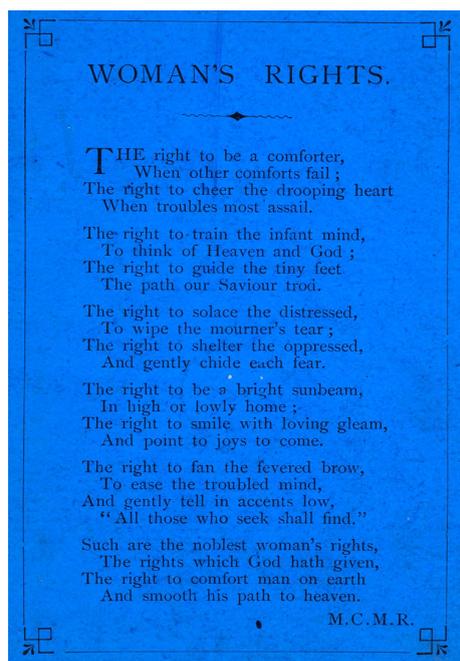


Image 11. "Women's rights" card that represents the traditional ideas of women.

<https://www.bl.uk/britishlibrary/~media/bl/global/dl%20romantics%20and%20victorians/collection-item-images/m/1/9/m%2019th%20b20070%2008.jpg?w=1920&h=1280&hash=385298365466B5A25489F8F6AC807D0E>

Due to this, in the early 19th century, feminist movements began to rise. By the 1850s it was an actual and formal concept. The political wave demanded equality for women in education, labor and the right to vote.

So, there already existed a female demographic that wanted to change things in society, realizing the unfair inequality in every aspect of life.

6.- LEVEL OF ACCURACY IN THE PORTRAYAL OF THE WOMEN IN THE BOOK

With this in mind, it has to be said that the women in the book are totally and downright accurate to the time period that the novel is based on.

The portrayal of the middle class and wealthier women is spot on. This is mainly because Jane Austen wrote about what she knew. She grew up in a rural area, surrounded with strict values for women and oppressive social canons that clashed with her constant need to break the canons and be a writer. Therefore, she created a book that navigated a world where women were pressured to marry for wealth and

not love, and where the protagonist struggles with her free mentality as opposed to her authoritarian surroundings.

All of this is influenced by the Anglican church's ideas of womanhood. And although Jane Austen is Anglican, she still lived in a society where religion was ingrained in every part of life.



Image 12. Scene of the 2005 movie.

https://i.guim.co.uk/img/media/26b3f27f8e210d8ce8f0c4c0c6e5f6a6901ecd54/0_156_3000_1800/master/3000.jpg?width=1200&height=900&quality=85&auto=format&fit=crop&s=9b07c123352bcce8e3d9c05b1741b349

Women's rights (or the lack of them) is also easily visible. Seen how every single woman, even the richer ones, were not able to do everything they pleased. They were in separate scenes from the men (even when married), been relegated to the domestic chores or welcoming guests in social gatherings. This is also represented in the movie, with almost every female character having a differentiation from the male counterparts.

The necessity of marrying the offspring of a household to wealthy and high status spouses was a crucial part of education. Especially for women, who had to train in the arts in order to attract more men. This is exactly reflected in the novel, with the protagonist's mom, who dedicated her life to what she thinks is the betterment of her family, marrying all her daughters to the best suitor possible.



Image 13. Mrs. Bennet and her daughters.

<https://assets.mubicdn.net/images/film/4665/image-w1280.jpg?1620910232>

It's also seen how when women broke the established canons like marrying someone below their status, running away or being comfortable with their sexuality, they are talked down to. They are considered a disgrace, even for their families, who think they bring dishonor to the family name. This same situation happens to the protagonist's little sister Lydia, who will be described in more depth later on.

6.1.-The criticism behind the novel

The recriminations behind this novel are of two kinds, social and gender criticism. They are both equally important, seen as they are essential for the storyline to progress.

First, social criticism. There were mainly high class (like Lady Caroline), middle class (the Bennet family) and low class citizens in the early nineteenth century, based on family wealth and connections.

It has to be noted, that in the novel there is no representation of lower income people, because as we know, the author only wrote what she knew about.

The hierarchy in social status developed a strong disingenuity between the different positions of the social strata. Due to the fact that they had to preserve their *status quo* and their seemingly unreachable reputation. And here is where love makes an

appearance as cupid, love is what in the novel unifies the two main couples, despite their differences.

The social commentary in her work is based on exposing how the different classes interact with each other. The biases when dealing with wealthier people, the prejudices against others higher than you, and the detriment against middle class people by wealthier families. All this is seen in a subtle way, but is detectable.

Jane Austen wants to show how established competition and rivalry is between different social classes, and how it affects the deterioration of society.

Another distinction the author makes is the contrast between the internal merit of each one and the external merit based on rank and ownership of assets.

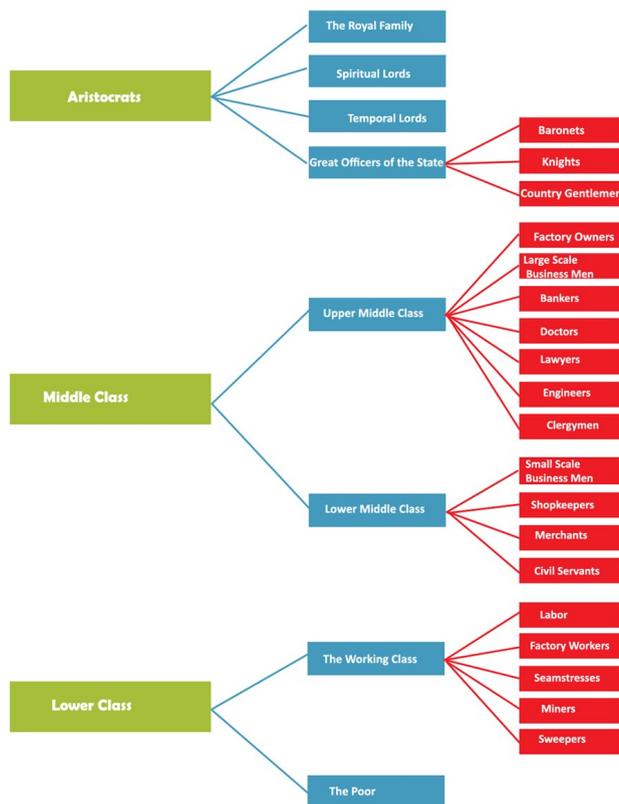


Image 14. The division between the three classes in the early 19th century.

<https://www.hierarchystructure.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/19th-Century-England-Social-Hierarchy.jpg>

With satire (humor referenced during all the novel) she talks about snobs, poking fun at the lack of self-awareness most high-class characters have. In other words, in the author's reality, she had to coexist with wealthier people that thought they made their fortune by themselves, when in reality it was thanks to connections or their family inheritance.

Second, is the gender criticism, which is the easiest to recognize in the novel. It could be considered partly an outcome of the divided society.

As explained extensively prior, women lived confined to society's ideas of an honorable woman.

They were told excessively what they should think and do, how they should act, how to properly behave; all this, to get the attention of a suitable bachelor.

The author, through a critical point of view, subtly exposed the situation for women at the time, how even if you were born with a silver spoon (like a few characters) you still had no complete decisions over your life and your body. Jane Austen made people see struggles and hardships every woman (in different degrees) had to struggle with, in order to have a good and honorable life.

And by simply explaining the facts and not giving opinions, she could pass the censorship that was common at that time, letting the novel be free to interpretation.

7.- THE DIFFERENT FEMALE CHARACTERS

As a *novel of manners*, a genre of novel where the premise surrounds relationship between characters, manners and social behavior; it is vital to understand the female characters that intervene in the plot.

For this, the main or important characters will be explained; their personalities and lives will be exposed, also how they are important to the storyline and how they affect their environment.

And in order to understand the pressures and duties of the women at the time and understand the different archetypes of Jane Austen's novels it is mandatory to deeply analyze their psychology and distinctive character traits.

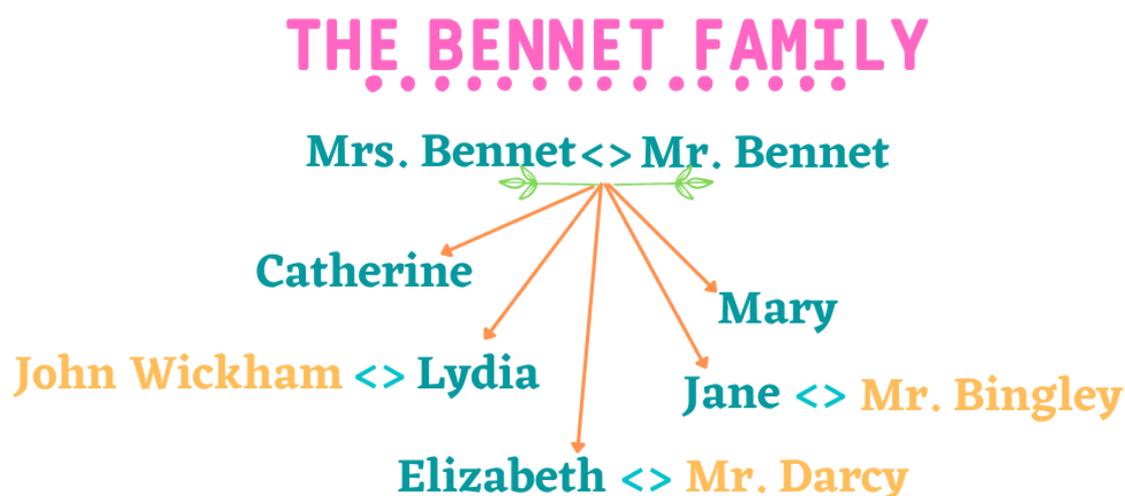


Image 15. The Bennet's family tree.

Jane Bennet

The eldest Bennet daughter. She is described as a young beautiful woman who is altruistic, selfless, kind, humble and kind-hearted, making everyone laugh with her contagious good humor. On the contrary of Elizabeth, she is naive for her age, which leads her to fail when recognizing people with bad intentions.

Her character doesn't evolve much during the course of the book, that is mainly because she does not need to. First, the evolution of the main couple doesn't really affect her character traits, because she has never been prideful or prejudiced towards other people, like Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth have been; and second she is already a full dimensional (in society's eyes) character at the beginning of the story.



Image 16. Jane Bennet in the 2005's adaptation.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/82894449360777165/>

The virtuous and pure Jane, as mentioned before, is almost the perfect and flawless sister. She fits perfectly in society, yet doesn't really seem to notice its many defects and limitations.

The author makes this character the perfect portrayal of a young woman who fits into society and at the same time can't detect the dangers that exist beneath it.

Her naïveness is subtly criticized by Jane Austen herself, but she specially criticizes the system that leads her to it. The institutionalized system that puts women in a lower status than men, making them internalize the feeling of not being enough. So, again her innocence comes back to the root: the patriarchal society of that time.

This makes her incomprehensible to the idea of being mean or to think badly of people surrounding her. As said by Lizzie (Elizabeth): she's "*never see[s] a fault in anyone*".

The constant positivism and desire to look at the bright side of the story can make her vulnerable when other characters in the story have stingy intentions. Although it's a good thing, as she always tries to help and give a supporting perspective; the negative take can be that she is taken advantage of because of her trusting personality, which can be really damaging.

Furthermore, this naive and shy personality created by the society around her, that creates women that live to be mothers and nothing more, also is seen when she can not defend her ideas and points of view.

This pattern forced to be followed compels most of Jane's character. That is a big issue with her nature, she behaves exactly like she is supposed to, almost as if she is a puppet controlled by her mother, who is the person in charge of enforcing these ideals on her children. Following the strict rules to seem appealing to the male gaze at that time makes Jane a character with a relatively plain archetype who always wants to protect her family reputation.

That is why we say she doesn't evolve much during the course of the novel, because she already falls into the expectations of society for women at the time.

With her doubting and bashful personality, she is the antithesis of her younger sister, Lydia (who will be later discussed). The author puts these two characters to show the

opposites that should not be followed; Jane is too introverted and unconfident, and Lydia is overconfident making her a cocky woman who never cares about the consequences of her actions.

Jane plays the role of the lover (apart from the innocent). A person who is romantic, soft, hopeful of a good future who meets her soulmate (Mr. Bingley) and puts all of her energy into the relationship. The couple, even after having difficulties surrounding their different status and economic position, end up together at the end, because true love is often portrayed as indestructible and infinite.



Image 17. A scene representing Jane Bennet's and Mr. Bingley's wedding in the 1995 take on the classic.

https://rosefairbanks.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/bingley-jane-pride-and-prejudice-couples-954337_1024_576.jpg?w=1024&h=&zoom=2

Mrs. Bennet

Mrs. Bennet, the mom of the clan, is a superficial and not really sharp woman, who instead of giving a proper education to her daughters, spends almost the entirety of the book trying to marry their offspring with wealthy suitors.

She is actually the most stereotypical woman of Jane Austen's time period due to her snob attitude, her dull personality and her desire to attract rich suitors.

Her simple mind can be seen when she says "*a woman has to learn to respect her husband*", meaning that love in a marriage is not fundamental. Quote that could later be seen again by her or Lydia Bennet.

Because of her out-of-touch mentality and her need to say unfiltered opinions, often other characters around her, like her husband and her daughter Elizabeth, feel shame when Mrs. Bennet speaks. The matriarch feels like her main responsibility is to marry her daughters rather than comfort them or support them in any other way, so she comes off as uninterested or shallow.

But it has to be noted that this character is no villain. The author, Austen, simply exposes the reality for many families at that time, the most important thing was to marry the offsprings and instruct them to get the best spouse viable; like Mrs. Bennet wants.

It has been noted that Elizabeth and her mother have their differences. The distinction between mother and daughter is really apparent; while the matron wants for Lizzie to finally come to her senses and start behaving like a lady to find a husband, the young girl rebels and wants to live writing poems and novels (like the author) and wait to find the love of her life.

In short, Mrs. Bennet is a character that in part has the purpose to be the antithesis of Elizabeth. To make Lizzie's character more appealing and show how oppressed she feels, Mrs. Bennet is there to remind the readers why her daughter feels that way.



Image 18. Mrs. Bennet portrayed in the 2005's take.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/U3ny3vtHa52bv6JBA>

Mrs. Bennet is a simple-minded and a plain character who is basically employed as a comedic relief in the novel. She is fundamentally a ferocious caricature of a dumb, shallow-minded woman whose only goal is to marry her daughters to wealthy men. With this, most of her contributions in scenes are used by the author to criticize the character with ridiculous and out of touch monologues.

Her dull and unsophisticated mentality is a mix of different situations that surround her.

For once, she is an old woman in the 19th century, so her actions can be seen as realistic; she thinks women's priorities are to marry rich and have children, that they should be always obedient and agreeable to their husbands while being maintained by them. It is what she knows, what she has been taught. In reality her character could be in part more accurate than Elizabeth herself, who does not follow the rules and does not behave with the proper etiquette.

It could also be said that her passive and uncooperative husband does not assist on matters in the house, and Mrs. Bennet has to organize all the tasks by herself. Mr. Bennet has also not helped economically with little to no money saved for her daughters who will become low status in the future if they are not helped. So, the woman with her little understanding of the world, has to run a house while dealing with her unproductive husband. Related to this could be why she is always trying to better her daughters to find a good match for them.



Image 19. Mrs. Bennet gossiping

<https://austenprose.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/pride-and-prejudice-1995-allison-steadman-x-450.jp>

Lydia Bennet

She is the youngest out of all the Bennet's daughters. She is shallow, dumb, flirty, materialistic and dull; what makes her the mum's favorites, because they both go after their desires without thinking of others around them.

Being described as lazy, negligent, ignorant and without a doubt conceited, her character has, at first, a more plain and simple arch; but that is because she does not need it. Lydia has a good sense of humor, is popular with the officers and likes shopping and gossiping. Her interests do not go beyond living life with overflowing charm and fun and has finding a proper husband as one of her lifelong desires.

Their similar characters make Lydia and her procreator two really similar characters in terms of depth and richness as characters. Her mother thinks of her as having "high animal spirits, and a sort of natural self-consequence". With this, the colleen is authorized to go to social events and meet gentlemen. Disregarding her age (15), Mrs. Bennet puts her daughter out in the market, hoping to fulfill her only wish in life.

Her relaxed and fun-loving character gives a 180 turn when she runs off with Wickham, a man who is known to have a dreadful past. In a selfish and hurtful letter that she prepares so her family can see it when she has already left, Lydia notifies them almost in a sarcastic tone, poking fun at the situation and taking importance in her actions. And even when Wickham is forced to marry her, even though he never intended to, she still focuses on herself as the main star who has a perfect life with no problems.



Image 20. Lydia Bennet in the 2005's adaptation of Jane Austen's novel.

<https://twitter.com/pandp2005/status/1462549321925099529?lang=zh-Hant>

Despite her young age, Lydia is an unbothered adolescent who does not seem to ponder about the outcomes of her selfish and foolish actions, the complete opposite to her sister Jane who is an extremely naive and bashful young debutante.

She is a reflection of the teenage girl who is seen merely as a chatty spoiled brat archetype that has appeared in tv and cinema for the last century. As a result, her persona does not evolve in the course of the plot because she does not learn anything. Even though she is left by George Wickham, who tricked her into thinking he was going to marry him, she still does not seem to learn one single ounce of responsibility or morals.

Even when the two finally get married (thanks to Mr. Darcy, who forces Wickham), Lydia lives at her sister's expense.

It also has to be noted that this Jane Austen novel is a *novel of manners*⁴. And this means that the characters that do not conform to the rules of society are punished, like Lydia. When the young girl finally marries Wickham, she finds herself in a mediocre and distant marriage, where her new husband soon loses interest in her and her youthful nature becomes a mature aura of a trapped wife.



Image 21. Lydia Bennet and George Wickham in the 2005 adaptation.

<https://pin.it/3WEylbP>

⁴ Genre of novel where it follows the decency of the social rules that are established.

On the other hand, being her character boring or unassuming does not mean the author did not pay attention to her writing. In fact, Lydia can be analyzed in depth and detect more than what meets the eye to appreciate her complex nature.

Although at first the young lady seems a mere archetype and plain character, her personality and disposition are better developed than what one would assume.

In Lydia's usual little twitch of sarcasm incorporated on her, Austen exposes a common trait in adolescence, the rebellion against the unspoken rules that people are obligated to follow. In her young life she searches for friends, happiness and intense love; she wants this so desperately that when Wickham gives her the bare minimum of attention she makes up her mind that she is in love.

It has to be said that Jane Austen never judges Lydia directly, she simply exposes her actions and their repercussions. In any event, if she is blaming or putting the guilt on someone it is on the education provided for the youngster, the one that actually shapes who she becomes when she grows up.

Related to this, the advanced and modern mind of the female author gives a subtle hint of Lydia's sexual liberation as embarrassing and shameful. Alongside with other elusive topics in the novel, this proves Austen as being ahead of her time in terms of her women's liber mentality.

Charlotte Lucas

Charlotte is Elizabeth's best friend and neighbor; and like her she is intelligent and sensible, but on the contrary she has never been beautiful for society's standards.

And unlike Elizabeth she does not believe in real love and thinks of marriage entirely as a pragmatic transaction. She marries a gentleman and is rejected by Elizabeth only because she does not want to be unmarried forever.

So, it is obvious that her character is there to be the opposite to her best friend, the hero. Unlike Elizabeth who dreams to be free of society's impossible expectations, Charlotte settles and marries someone who does not love just so she can assure a good and stable life. She exchanges finding her true love to fit what is expected of her, which most women did at the time.



Image 22. Charlotte Lucas in 2005's film adaptation.
https://janeausten.fandom.com/wiki/Charlotte_Lucas_Collins

Further to my previous statement, Charlotte as a character is used to depict the heartbreaking reality for young women in her time: to marry for convenience. She believes strongly that marriage's only use is the only way for well-educated young girls to have an honorable and stable future. As a result of this, she ends up marrying Mr. Collins (who has been previously rejected by Elizabeth) with whom she has a kid.



Image 23. Mr. Collins in 1995's adaptation.
[82ca63c4b87cc1a616fa612c9601a73a56742a74.jpg \(396×222\)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/1/582ca63c4b87cc1a616fa612c9601a73a56742a74) (bbc.co.uk)

The author tells that the life that Elizabeth aspires to is almost impossible at that time, or at least without sacrificing something in return.

Especially because Charlotte, who is believed to not have the economic or social status of the Bennet's, is even more pressured to find a husband as quick as possible. Not like her best friend who has the luxury of having plenty of sisters who can marry before her.

Charlotte is meant to always be the opposite of her best friend. That's her archetype: Elizabeth's foil ⁵.

Charlotte is an excellent judge of character who does not reduce Mr. Darcy as a brute after the first ball, like the Bennet family. Unlike Elizabeth, who has a lot of prejudices about people and especially Mr. Darcy. She tries to understand his point of view when he makes a negative comment about Elizabeth's sister.

At the end of the novel, Charlotte becomes proud of her life, and thinks highly of her and her status as a married woman.

Caroline Bingley

Caroline is Mr. Bingley's younger sister who is a selfish, superficial and shallow woman. Like Mr. Darcy, she is prejudiced specially when it comes to low status people, but the difference is that she is not nearly as honorable and venerable as him, who is well respected.

She is portrayed as an awful and manipulative person, and almost like the villain; for the reason that she is cruel and mean towards the Bennet family, and especially towards Jane and Elizabeth. This attitude comes from her upper class self who makes up her mentality of being too good to be with someone of a lower social status.



Image 24. Caroline Bingley in the 2005 movie adaptation.

https://www.reddit.com/r/KellyReilly/comments/tb4rds/kelly_as_caroline_bingley_in_pride_prejudice_2005/

⁵ Character in literature that is the point of contrast of the protagonist.

Following the cyclical archetypes of Jane Austen, she is the antagonist or villain of the chronicles. She constitutes this aura or energy that is present in the plot, trying to make the protagonist fail with normally no outcome.

When the main character (Elizabeth) encounters her future nemesis, she elucidates that Caroline has a cunning, pretentious attitude and is always eyeing the sheep ⁶.

“Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them, such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank. She was not rendered formidable by silence; but whatever she said, was spoken in so authoritative a tone, as marked her self-importance”. -Explains Elizabeth when she meets Caroline (p298).

Besides, Lady Caroline is also in love with the idea of Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth's love interest. It's understandable seeing how he is a single rich man with control of his own fortune (a very important aspect at the time). Especially when Mr. Darcy is her brother's best friend, and picking him as her partner is a really reasonable and achievable goal. Consequently, the protagonist's love interest being a target for Caroline, makes the readers loathe even more her character.

She employs her time applauding and lionizing Darcy, trying to pull his attention towards her. An act that does not help her that much at the end of the novel, like for all the other villains in Jane Austen's books. In part, it could be attributed to the fact that Caroline does not know him more than to a surface level, they have no affinitive hobbies, and she has zero real interest in his intellectual capacities or personality.

In fact, it could be contemplated the fact that Caroline helps, in a way, Elizabeth without even realizing. Lizzie becomes stronger and more true to herself after finally ending up with Mr. Darcy. So all her malicious intentions and malevolent traps actually wards Caroline off.

⁶ *She thinks she's better than others.*



Image 25. Lady Caroline with Mr. Darcy.

<https://qph.cf2.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-899e360fc1aa0bd09bafeba4d4a7ab06-pjlq>

It is obvious that Austen makes the only economically independent and single woman the archetypal villain in the situation. However, the antagonist never loses her status or her influence in her environment; this is normally because of her leadership skills, her ability to guide people at her mercy and her subtle domination on the people that she surrounds herself with.

But at the same time, her cocky attitude could be attributed to the society she has grown up in. She's a young girl in her 20's, who does not really know how love works, and has been instructed to search for a wealthy spouse instead of true feelings.

So everything about the women's relationships with their environment in the novel is a result of the environment itself. The women behave in a certain way because it is what they know and what they have been instructed to do. Lady Caroline thinks she is better than people that have a lower social status because as a rich woman is what she has grown up to know and does not think about the rightness to her actions.

We also see that Caroline's mental abilities are average: she has benefited from her ladylike education, but she does not understand why anyone would aspire to

anything more. Since she perceives love as a kind of beauty contest, to be won by the woman with the greatest physical charms, she has not realized that Darcy is only attracted to intelligent women. Since he only seems to be meeting intelligent women at the rate of one a year, it is not surprising that he is still single at 28.

7.1.- Elizabeth Bennet

The protagonist of this novel is Elizabeth, the second to the oldest of the Bennet sisters. The young woman shines because of her intelligence, independence and her strong willed character. Her way of talking directly and frankly, and firmness when it comes to her ideals have been influenced by her passion for literature; she is practically always seen with a novel or a poetry book.



Image 26. Scene of Elizabeth Bennet reading from the movie "Pride and Prejudice", from 2005.

<https://zancada.com/wp-content/imagenes/2016/11/elizabethbennet.jpg>

Her stubbornness about her personal points of view, can make her prejudiced on a lot of occasions, due to her determined mind that does not change very easily. This can be observed by the constant judging directed to Mr. Darcy when she does not even know him or has not interacted with the gentleman.

“There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises at every attempt to intimidate me.”- Elizabeth admits her obstinate nature and the unnerving attitude of people towards her.

Her prejudices are what make her, as a character, realistic. She could be considered a total package suitor but her set of ideals and sharp mouth get in her way. Everyone has its faults, and hers is to believe that she can judge a stranger with just a glance or a conversation. It's ironic that she is portrayed as someone with a quick-witted and sharp mind, but spends her time talking about other people's failures and not giving them the benefit of the doubt.

This is odd and peculiar, since she is a well versed and educated individual who can think for herself and has acquired tons of knowledge. During the years, Lizzie has read thousands of different books about different topics, and with this, she has nurtured her mind and soul; so with this, one would think that she has an open mind and does not shame or have preconceived notions of others surrounding her. However, the young lady does not seem to understand it is wrong to judge a book by its cover

“I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine.”- Says Elizabeth when talking about Mr. Darcy.

Only when Elizabeth has navigated through a different world and has known deeply Mr. Darcy, she changes her mind and admits that she was wrong to be prejudiced, realizing at the end her mistaken actions.

It can be said that Elizabeth is a modern woman for her time; since she doesn't think of marrying for power or land, but rather to get the true love that she has seen in her books since she can remember.



Image 26. The main couple in the 1995 edition.

<https://auntymuriel.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/firth-and-ehle.jpg?w=1024>

Even though she's intelligent and knows that her future husband has to be wealthy, her priority is not marriage. That is what makes her stand out from the rest of the debutants⁷, who try to find the richest man to marry, almost making it like a competition among them.

With this, the author Jane Austen not only makes a female character that portrays similar personality traits as herself, but also with ingenuity and humor tries to show the ridiculous standards for women of the time. Elizabeth is the author's voice when saying all the problems that they had to face, like for example unwanted marriages with older men or being looked down on if you didn't marry at a young age.

Her archetype in the novel is a mix between both, the heroine and the outlaw. This could be attributed to her complexity of her character as the protagonist; she fits into a lot of characteristics found in both paradigms.

The first one is the heroine. As the protagonist, Lizzie is in a journey through the majority of the book, to fight her urges of pushing away Mr. Darcy because of her deep rooted prejudices. So, the importance of her character is the symbolism of a

⁷ *Young women presented in society.*

strong determined female character, who has to overcome an obstacle usually derived from their environment or other's character's influence. In Lizzie's case, is to let go of her past prejudices against others who do not think or act like she finds correct.

When conquered, thanks to her witty charm and sharp mouth, it always leads to happiness, comfort and success for the main couple, like Elizabeth and Mr.Darcy. At the same time, she consistently has a helping hand for loved ones, highlighting her kindly and humble personality.

She also comes from an upper middle class family that owns land, a representative trait usually associated with the heroine. Elizabeth also has personal features that distinguish her and make her a role model. For people around her and especially the audience, as Jane Austen had in mind.

Obviously, a slight hint at modernism is seen due to her persona being a strong woman that proves that men and women have the same opportunities of succeeding. This is shown through her standing up for her ideals and morals, as badly received as it gets.



Image 27. Image from the 2005 adaptation that shows the tension between Mr.Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet.

[f0cf37878531290a7a98af358e66a850.jpg \(500×725\) \(pinimg.com\)](#)

It could also be considered a second archetype in Elizabeth's character. The outlaw or rebel, who tries to break from the rules and abides society's demands and expectations. Even though this term is molded by Jane Austen to fit the time period, the essence is still there.

This insurgent mannerism is made clear, especially when the character is talking to socially high ranked individuals like Darcy. Lizzy always says what she thinks, making her the only female character that speaks her mind without thinking of how she is supposed to behave and the expectations put on her. With provoking a disparity and righteousness, Jane Austen, through Elizabeth, is criticizing the big social flaw of her society: being determined by social status.

Elizabeth is an independent girl who only wants to marry for love, a rare thing at the time seeing that most marriages were arranged or for convenience. So, she is going beyond society's etiquette in order to finally feel free. That's why she is an outlaw.

As a result of this, we could call her character a feminist; a name given to women who refused social norms at the time. Elizabeth has read thousands of different books probably from other parts of the world, is interested in poetry and is more open minded than her female counterparts. So, her erudite mind allows her to realize the wrongs of society and the systemic problems emplaced in it. She does not really go against the norm aggressively and loudly expresses her opinions, she just subtly spends her time doing her things and not bothering about social gatherings or shallow gossip. When asked about a certain topic though, she has no problem expressing her honest views, although maybe it is not socially acceptable. So, the definition of feminism is an antiquated version, more in line to the time period.

As we have said earlier, she defies the expectations that her mother and the community in general have for her. She has to marry a well-off partner who can support her while she has the duty to produce a great deal of children.

Without fail, Elizabeth speaks her mind with whatever topic comes up, unafraid to give others her honest opinion lets her sometimes as a strange or marginalized woman who is laughed at by other characters, specially men. This is because it was an uncommon situation for young women, who only were seen as breeding stock.



Image 28. Lizzie in the 1995 tv show.

Episodio #1.5 (1995) (imdb.com)

With the remarked importance of the protagonist's novels, it could be said that Jane Austen already pleaded for the education of everyone and knew the importance of books to develop a critical mind and curious personality.

Although the author represents a more modern take on the women of that time period, it also follows *the novel of manners*, where the characters get punished when they do not follow the social norms. In short, Lizzie defies the norms and does not want to marry anyone with money, and for this, she is somewhat penalized with her prejudiced mind.

But still It is not as severe as Lydia, who actually completely breaks the rules when she runs off with a man.

In my opinion, Elizabeth's character attracts the reader immediately thanks to her sharp mindset and similarities with the modern day women, which differentiates her from the rest of the female characters.

When a young determined and mature woman is depicted, it establishes a role model for other young girls. That is why a lot of girls (like myself) have been attracted to this book and specifically this character for decades now.

8.-JANE AUSTEN'S INFLUENCE IN THE NOVEL

On top of the previously detailed biography of the author, it is going to be explained now her love life and how that partly correlated to the history in the book. Alongside with other topics.

8.1.-Jane's love life

In terms of marriage, a recurrent topic in her novels, Austen never had a spouse. This could be attributed, in part, to her lack of dowry, caused by her father's financial hassles who could not provide any economical support for her two daughters. With her witty character and flirtatious personality, Jane knew she had to "compensate" for her shortfall of funds with her irresistible charms that no man would ever turn her down.

Having said that, historians have made it clear that it was not because of lack of opportunities, seeing how she turned down a few changes at long-term love.

In 1905, when she was 20 years old, she met an Irish politician and judge, Tom Lefroy. The two started writing to each other, and visited their respective residences for 4 weeks. It is believed the relationship ended after that with Jane waiting for a marriage offer that never came, although it is not sure, because a lot of letters were thrown away by her sister when Jane passed away. So, naturally, the brief romance soon faded away.



Image 29. Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy portrayed in the 2007 biographical movie about the author's life, "Becoming Jane".

<https://www.pluggedin.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/becoming-jane.jpg>

Later in life, a year after moving to Bath, she met Harris Bigg-Wither, a brother of one of her friends. At that time, she was 27 years old, which meant she was already relatively old to get married, and although Harris was 6 years younger she accepted when the man proposed to her. It was more than marriage, it was a deal that benefited both parties.

Just the day after, Jane did a flabbergasting thing for anyone in her circle, she broke up the engagement. It is not known why the woman would do something of that sort; if she did it because of her sister Cassandra who was deploring the death of her soon husband-to-be, because she thought she would have not been able to write once married, or because of simply not liking Bigg-Wither.

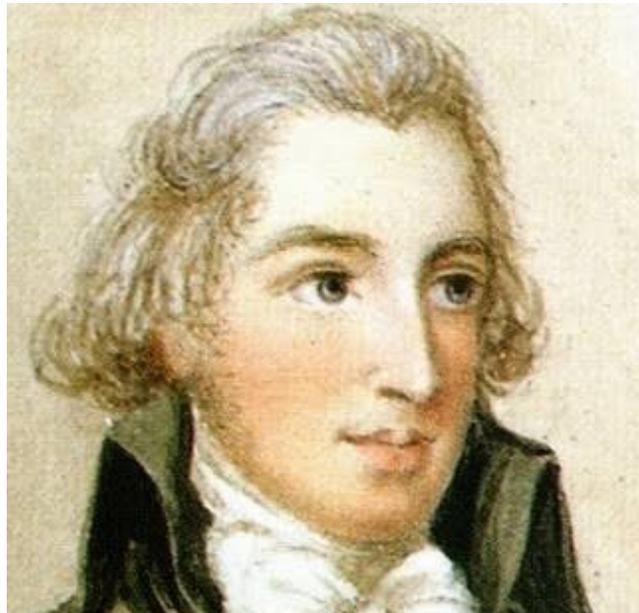


Image 30. Harris Bigg-Wither

[img_2972-1.jpg \(323x400\) \(wordpress.com\)](#)

One thing is clear though, Jane knew about all the dangers that marrying without love had, and she was conscious of how deep rooted in money the act of marrying was. Writing in one of her letters, she said that it was unusual when two spouses actually loved each other, implying that the dowry was the crucial part of the arrangement:

“Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance”.

While her five brothers worked in successful jobs and got married, Jane and her older sister Casandra never got married.

It is worth mentioning an important aspect of that time's society, religion. As mentioned, Jane's father was an Anglican minister and two of her brothers were clergymen, and that was the faith practiced in her family. The author was a practicing and believing member of the Anglican Church of England.

She considered herself a christian, and it is known that she was not evangelical. With that, she was a humble christian who did not label herself too fervently.

She wrote prayers, she read sermons, she did charity and based her life on some religious values.

8.2.-It's reference in the novel

Austen, as seen in her previous books, references her personal situations and experiences in her books. Thanks to her sarcastic, clever and elegant prose, she details her way of seeing the world that surrounds her and expresses her thoughts on the ups and downs of English society at that time.

Her way of mixing her own stories with a subtil criticism works perfectly thanks to her detailed and humorous narrative; which allows her to create portrayals of women who have a hard time searching for romantic love.

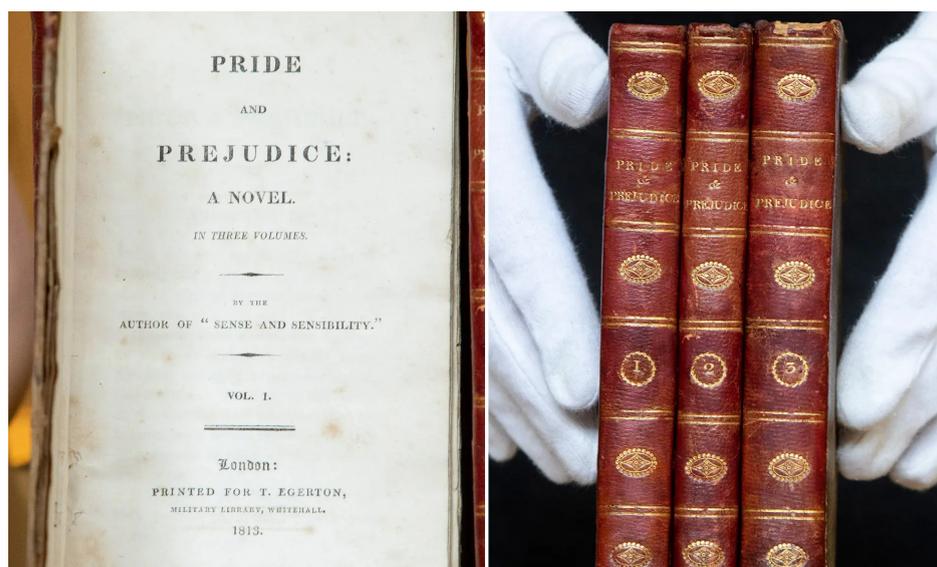


Image 31. The first edition of Pride and Prejudice
[pride-and-prejudice22.jpg \(744×495\) \(nypost.com\)](#)

Jane Austen never got married in view of the fact that she had already established a deep and devoted relationship with writing, and possibly because of this, she considered that none of the possible connections that any gentleman could offer would be as genuine as this one. And on the other hand, she knew that if she got married, she would have to abandon her passion and start doing domestic chores pressured by her spouse.

Due to Austen's situation with marriage, most of the women in her novels, like in *Pride and Prejudice*, search beyond the surface when looking for a husband. The female protagonists are young but clever and sharp, who want a marriage like in their books. They do not waste their time waiting for the perfect gentleman to arrive, they continue with their lives and focus on their passions.

In *Pride and Prejudice* it's the same, Elizabeth Bennet, does not prioritize marriage in the slightest, wanting to focus on herself. Just like the author, who puts writing as her number one concern.

However, even if Lizzie does not necessarily search thoroughly for a husband, she ends up with a man that appreciates her for who she is and who helps her through a pace to better and improve herself as a person. So, love falls right on her hands, we could say.

That could be attributed to Jane Austen's real love life. Regarding her brief love affair with Tom Lefroy, some influences in some of the female main characters of her work can be seen.

For instance, she did not end up having a positive outcome in that relationship, but that frustration changed when she wrote all the protagonists with happy endings and adoring spouses (like Elizabeth Bennet).

Jane was unfortunate enough to not have it, but her heroines did. The writer definitely sees and reflects herself in them, in a different way in every novel.

Just like in the novel with the supporting character Lady Catherine de Bourgh (Mr. Darcy's aunt), in real life, Tom Lefroy's aunt also condemned their relationship. So, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine represents the old way of planned marriage and clerical servitude that did not support Jane's real love story.

On top of that, more trivial and small details can be perceived. The close bond between the two sisters in the novel was inspired by the real relationship of Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra. Jane, as Lizzy, was a gentleman's daughter because he was a clergyman. Resembling the Bennet family, she also grew up in a rural area, having less contact with more sophisticated and cosmopolitan cities in the country.



Image 32. Elizabeth and Jane portrayed in the 2005 adaptation.

https://img.huffingtonpost.com/asset/5bb5fdc62200004301dc9e5f.jpeg?ops=scalefit_720_noupscale

When talking about historical context at the time, the Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815) and other warlike conflicts were the big issues while Jane was alive. They threatened the safety of the monarchies in Europe, and they censored literature strictly. This could be a reason why the author does not mention the conflict in her novels, even though it impacted her environment.

As mentioned prior, religion was a big portion of the society back then. However, the female author did not deem adequate to represent or discuss Judeo-Christianism per se in her novel. So, faith was never a topic directly talked about in the book. And this can be uncanny, because most fellow writers at the time described religious experiences in their storylines or dialogues.

In spite of that, some insinuations or intrinsic values were shown, because it was hard not to, seen as they were part of their everyday life. For example, evidently they attend church, religious issues are talked over as a superficial conversation in the

background, and mainly, unethical or wicked characters get punished for not following the good Judeo-Christian values of society.

9.- THE BOOK'S IMPACT ON SOCIETY

After hours of intense research, no valid or well grounded information has been found on the book's impact on society at that time, since there are no documents that describe precisely the repercussions of the novel.

However, it is pretty clear that the piece of literature crafted in the 19th is still relevant to this day. This could be attributed to a few different reasons: the modern approach of the author with the female characters and modern irony, the several TV and film adaptation of the book or another type of art inspired by it, the themes told in the novel can be understood still to this day (the search for love, friendship, etc).

The book's impact nowadays is more subtle than it was when it got published, but that does not mean it is completely useless in today's society. All during the 20th and 21st centuries a big wave of new found feminism rose up in popularity more than before. And like that, in this day and age it is still talked about.

So, part of the book's importance today is the open discussion of modern women being written in the early 19th century. A debate about the protagonist being a feminist, an analysis on the different characters and how they relate to each other, or struggles that young ladies had to face when entering womanhood (like emancipation or lack of freedom), are all traits commonly seen in the media or even people's lives in this day and age.

Love, which is arguably one of the few things there will always be in society (and in art) is also reflective of the importance of the novel. Everyone can relate to the struggles when finding love as a young person, having to face rejection, having fear and insecurities when you notice butterflies, and the fight for more tolerant morals.

So, although its impact in the past can not be known, it can be understood why it is still culturally relevant . Its capacity to relate to it makes the novel timeless, meaning that it is able to capture the human essence, something everyone can experience. That is why it is, still to this day, translated, talked about and significant.



Image 33. Painting of 19th century women

<https://hgotc2014.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/b.jpg>

Nevertheless, we could also talk about the struggles that the author had when trying to publish her works and how that made women not give up when pursuing their own dreams. Jane had a hard time approaching her works to different publishers. But, even though the novels were classified as intolerable, she did not call it a day and continued searching. She knew her books were as good as other writers of her generation and deserved to get her novels issued.

This set an example for other young girls who had ambitions out of the ordinary, showing them they could follow their dreams too without worrying about others.

An additional interesting fact to discuss is the influence or guidance that she had from other authors or her impact on other (female) work.

The major contribution to her works done by other writers are from Frances Burney and Samuel Richardson. The first one and his work *Cecilia* had an effect on *Pride and Prejudice*'s title. And Samuel Richardson impacted Jane Austen, and later that would be seen in *Mansfield Park*.

And at the same time, Jane Austen herself was the influence behind Lynn Shepherd's *Murder at Mansfield Park*. It took inspiration from the English author's *Mansfield Park*, where she basically took the environment and the characters to create a new story.

Another riveting and curious fact is the despise from Charlotte Bronte to Jane Austen. Against what a lot of literature lovers think, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* was actually not an influence from Austen.



Image 34. The English writer of Austen's time period, Charlotte Bronte.
<https://gatopardo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/charlotte-bronte-retrato.jpg>

10.- ANALOGY OF THE WOMAN OF THAT TIME AND TODAY

To do a good and efficient practical part of the thesis, a (brief) context has to be explained first. That is why, a comparison of the woman of the 19th century and its evolution to the woman of today has to be explained.

As mentioned previously, society back then was really unequal. But that has changed and our morals, goals and ideals as a community have shifted too. Especially for women.

Since explaining the whole structure of women's life would be really draining for my analogy, I will focus mainly on how different women's thoughts (morals, ideals, goals, etc) are from the start of the 19th century to now.

First, we have to address the fact that women in the 19th century were almost non-existent. However, depending on their status, they could have access to more events and social gatherings.

Let's start with the majority of the female population in Victorian England: the working class women. Most of them worked in factories or doing domestic service for rich families to maintain themselves and their children. On top of that, without help from their spouses, they did most of the chores in the house like cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, etc. Often, they would also do home-based work, like preparing snacks to sell or finishing garments for factories, or working in fabrics, because extra pennies were always well received.

Young poor women helped their mother, received an insufficient education at home and started following the matriarch's footsteps pretty soon.

Also, low-income housewives (the majority of the female population) were not allowed to go out without a man, and only the rich and high class could attend balls and social events in the evening with their spouses.

There were also middle class women. They had a couple of servants, but the women also worked doing domestic chores. They had a slightly better education than lower-class women, but they also worked in factories.

So, although there were mainly two social and economical classes in society, the middle class also existed, but it is hard to pinpoint their characteristics, but they differ.



Image 34. Representation of low class working women in the early 19th century

https://media.istockphoto.com/id/1201855926/vector/victorian-low-lodging-house-st-giless-london-19th-century.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=7m6CGHkAxpHpqyXFofrk_kUopIP7unx8KmHJKzDOKqs=

Wealthier women, on the contrary, were able to enjoy all types of activities due to their free time and their generational wealth. While poor women worked in factories, they traveled, bought expensive clothes, and good food. They also had the privilege to have social gatherings with other important women or host balls and guests in the evening. All this was possible thanks to their servants and staff that took care of all chores in the house.

It is undeniable that affluent women at the time did not have to do labor work and did lavish hobbies; however their lack of basic rights basically did not exist either.

On a day-by-a-day basis, young high class girls were always at home, developing art skills, like sewing or signing, that could help them attract another wealthy husband in the near future. With this, a social difference could be noticed, mannerism and elegance were the distinction that the elite used to distinguish themselves from the low-paid.

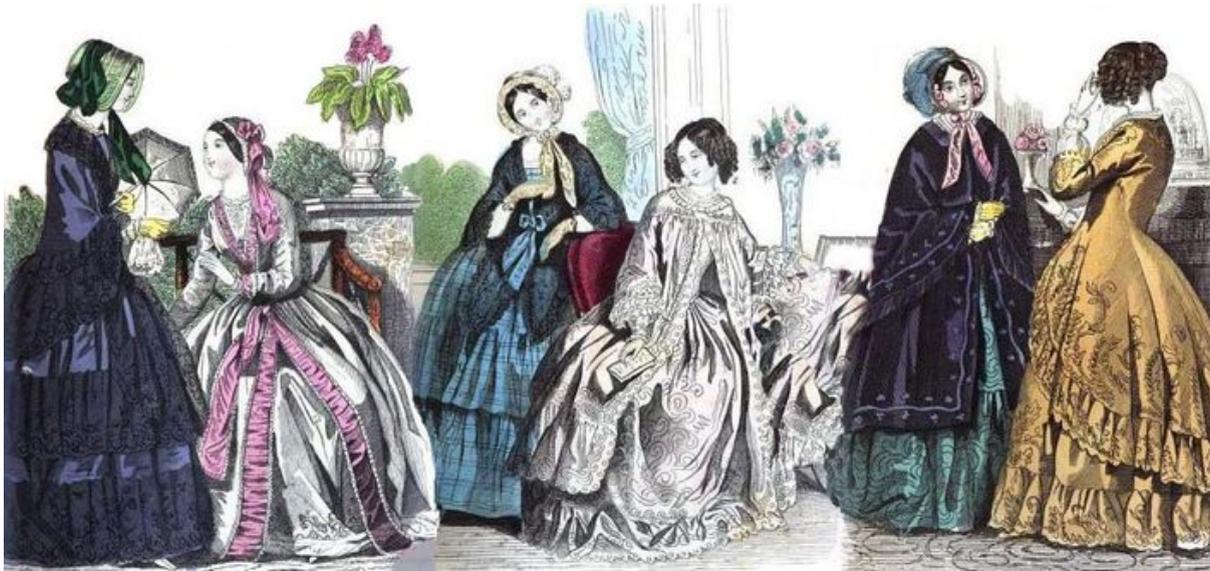


Image 35. Visual depiction of women at the time and their expensive fashion and garments.

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/81/55/f2/8155f234ae483d30bb4dc8a2fd2487b5--cabinets.jpg>

In summary, we could say women in the late 18th century and early 19th century were, regardless of social status, second to men. Obligated to be in their shadow, they were merely a trophy and the mother of the children. The most upsetting part is that they had to be content with this lifestyle, otherwise they would be confronted and left out from society.

Like, practically during all history up to the mid 20th century when the western world started to shift, women were like objects to decorate and maintain the house like slaves (if they were not wealthy). And at best, they could go to social events and marry for love.

They were invisible in society's eyes, no matter what they did.

Thanks to the suffragette movement, born at the end of the Victorian era in the UK, women's voices started to be heard. It would evolve, becoming an important movement in the western world. With all types of women standing up against their discrimination, one of the most predominant social changes would begin to change the occidental world.

Nowadays, there is nothing a woman can do, at least in the Occident. Because that is another thing to note, everything that is talked about in this thesis about women's rights, is based on western culture. A lot of Asian, African and South American still are not as developed as for example England (the country of *Pride and Prejudice*). But in terms of women's rights, they are practically as the men's, and they are growing more equal every day.

10.1.- The prejudices of both times

1.1.1.-What is a prejudice?

To properly address and understand the systemic issues of prejudices during the last two centuries, it is rather compulsory to state the standard definition of the word.

It is understood as prejudice, as the opinion or judgment formulated without previously being examined. Beyond this broad depiction, it is to be noted the fundamental aspect of this phenomenon: the social distinction. In other words, a lot of the time, the prejudices come from the divergence of the different social strata and the discrimination that it generates.

Prejudice is a phenomenon that happens in group processes. When saying prejudice is a group sentiment, it means the natural intercommunal disparities between them are the key for the level of prejudice and conflict. This usually tends to happen when a certain group, that always targets the same other, inflicts more force or domination.

Provoking a sublimation from the discriminated group that just starts more contrariety. It could be said that it is a vicious circle that starts with prejudice and ends with straight-up hatred.

It is wrong to think that all prejudices start with hate, because they are usually a symptom of ignorance that is led up by not wanting to understand and know more points of view.

So, a prejudice is directed towards a community specific, that could be towards a specific race, ethnicity, culture, gender, social class...

Two of these last ones are the ones mainly seen in the novel.

One, are prejudices based on gender. The constant disdain that men have towards women is because they have a certain thought ingrained in their mind about them. Men thinking women are weaker or less intelligent than them, is the whole cause of inequality between the genders. An interesting thing is that prejudices are linked to emotions, whether it is from the prejudiced person or it inflicts a certain standard to the one being discriminated against. Like women at the time, who were supposedly more emotional and less rational, though still to this day is present in some men.

It is impossible to miss the prejudices in the novel. Elizabeth is constantly being undermined for being an empowered and decisive woman, sometimes by her female relatives and friends. That showed how ingrained it was on society to think based on biases.

Social class is the other prejudice portrayed. Based on the different social strata that often also come stereotypes. In the 19th century, society was even more divided and with this, there were harder repercussions or discrimination to people from a certain part of the strata.

In *Pride and Prejudice* this case is present, the lower-status women suffer even more negative bigotry than the ones who can afford to be educated and well instructed in the arts. An example of this would be Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte. As opposed to Lady Catherine, who is of high class and was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Another interesting prejudice is Elizabeth's against Mr. Darcy. She seems to not find appropriate a wealthier man who thinks highly of himself. However, her prejudices are more subtle and are harder to link to his social status.

Another important biases that were not depicted as thoroughly in the novel are sexuality and race. It is not a shock that people outside the canons were pushed and hated even more than low class people.

In spite of that, it has only been mentioned negatively, the one that comes to mind when talking about this topic, but it also has to be noticed that positive ones exist. A preconceived notion or idea can be up to the mark or unsatisfactory and denigrating. In this assignment, the lens will be focused on the more obvious and hardening ones, although it is always good to keep in mind the other side of the spectrum.

In conclusion for this part, the main prejudices in society were based on gender, social strata, sexuality and race.

1.1.2.-Psychological comparison between the two eras

It's ironic to say that a lot of the prejudices that existed in the 18-19th century are still present today.

Back then, women, people of color or gays were the most oppressed by a system designed to follow the Anglican Church's ideals. Nowadays, we can still find some inequality between genders, racism is prevalent in a lot of individuals, and LGBTQ+ people still face discrimination.

This can make society think and ask themselves if they have changed that much. It is no doubt that in the modern era everyone, in the western world, has practically the same rights, we have more education and work opportunities for everyone. Slavery is over, there are communities of different people that come together in support, there is much awareness spread by more and more people.

However, on a much deeper level and outside legal limits, we still collectively have some similar biases when it comes to certain communities.

How does that happen and why, since we all seem to be understanding that negative preconceptions about others are wrong? The key is supposedly to reflect on your

preference in your ideas and your preconceived notions to try and dissolve the biases in your head.

Prejudices are rooted in the lack of empathy that a group of people has. That can be understandable in the 19th century, where it was constantly perpetrated that certain members of society were inferior and there was no doubt about that. So, they had no empathy because they thought the discriminated people did not deserve to be treated with empathy.

Nevertheless, nowadays, there is more empathy between communities. We are constantly navigating the world trying to better ourselves with an open mind. But there are still biases in the world that affect people negatively. This is due to the fact that empathy is not an emotional feeling, therefore there are people that don't feel morally wrong with putting someone in a box and qualify them as an outcast.

Other things that trigger unhedged biases are the feeling of being threatened by someone's position or reaffirming one's value by degrading others

It is concerning to think that there are still people out there who care about skin color, sexuality, culture, gender enough to immediately tick them off from their life.

Racial prejudice over time

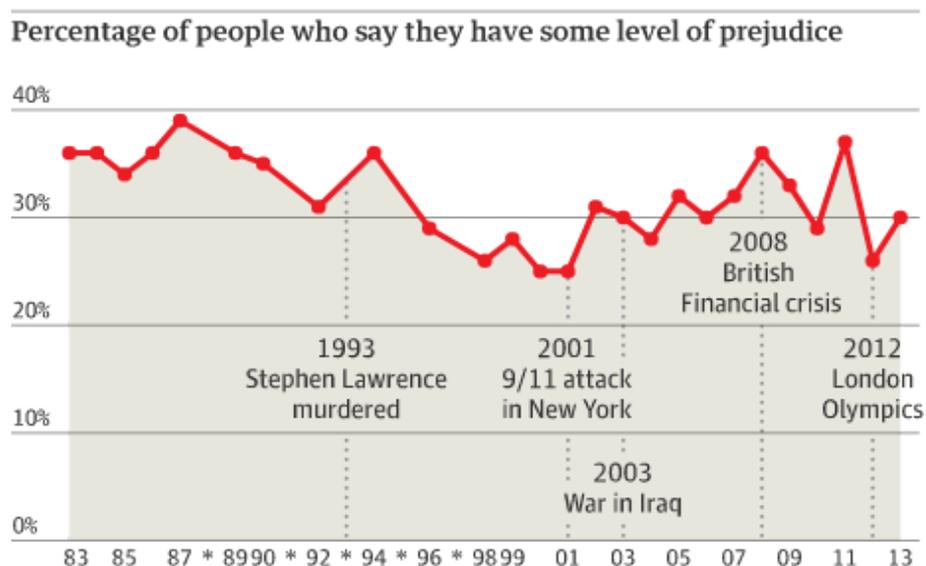


Image 36 . Graphic that shows certain instances that created prejudices in the UK.

https://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1401203197769/Racial-Prejudice_2805.svg

It can be comprehended, with this graphic as one of the numerous examples, that prejudice is a social process. Which means that it increases when there is a detonating event done by a particular group or community; for example, like the 9/11 attack and the later effects of the massacre on the prejudicial minds of people against muslim people, who were seen as terrorists for many years later.

Subsequently, panic and reluctance is contagious and people follow what they see, so on top of being a subtle act, prejudice is a community-based organization of different feelings.

As I see it, it is a matter of education. Education is the root of every good and bad thing that happens in humanity. Including basic respect. If everyone would be raised in equality without any type of differentiation from each other, we would see ourselves as equals and not a threat or an inferior.

With this, prejudice would slowly fade away or at least they would be acknowledged. That is another problem, the lack of awareness that there is. People are so fixated on saying that we are not in the 19th century anymore that they can not see that there are systemic issues that are still ingrained in us. If they would recognise the problem of racial injustice, sexual discrimination or sexism perhaps they would realize that there is something that needs to be fixed in our communities.

It is known that prejudices can be triggered by some incident that happens in the social group. Which shows that it can be used as a way of defense almost, as if pushing people away from society would change something. That is another problem embedded in society in general. We want to avoid conflict while creating a barrier that divides us at the same time. And this all comes back to education.

On top of this, it is also interesting to note that there are also other types of prejudices. Having stated only bad prejudices, which are the most striking and interesting ones, we could also mention the benevolent prejudices in society.

However, good biases are not portrayed in the book, and they are not as menacing to society as a community. There are no universal prejudices that come to mind when you say "good biases".

So, prejudices, as evolved as they are, have changed for the new era. They are everyone surrounding us, even if we do not see it.

Putting the spotlight in school, for example, there are several preconceptions. There are the more obvious ones, like judgements based on grades, ethnic and racial background, popularity...

Moreover, based on the stereotype you fit, you are classified with a certain characteristic. The “nerd” (someone who likes video games and who studies regularly) is a weirdo, a loner and is often left out. Movies and TV during the 20th century have perpetuated this image of an unattractive teen with big glasses and messy hair. The popular girl, that everybody knows her and wants to hang out with, is often portrayed as blond, skinny who is involved with a lot of school activities based on popularity.

Mainly subconsciously, but these can create harmful prejudices when we meet someone who fits these descriptions.

Another paradigm is the way the cities are predisposed and how we navigate them. It is a broad matter, because it constitutes a big way on how we choose to live, conditioning ourselves.

Certain neighborhoods in our towns, usually far from the center, tend to make us skeptical about making our way across it if not strictly necessary. There are some prejudices about the people that live in poorer and more immigrant-populated areas that do not prevail with other ones.

Every store and big chain supermarket are designed to appeal to a certain audience, based on a prejudice of what type of people consume each product.

A lot of the time, baby products and formula are in the same hallway as products for female hygiene, perpetuating certain prejudices that come with maternity.

Using a really popular trend right now, second-hand shopping can also be seen as the pass of time and how that affects the way we think about different topics. Second-hand shopping or *thriftling*, is a really well liked way of purchasing good items. However, it was not always seen this way; Thirty years ago buying used

clothes was the synonym of someone raggedy and poor, instead of a worldwide phenomenon that is in today's standard. So, the previous prejudice has been shifted according to our new way of thinking.

With these examples it can be seen that preconceived notions of someone based on shallow impressions determine who we are and how we relate to the space around us.

It is proven that once again society is blind to the issues that we have been dragging for centuries. It seems that although nowadays negative social issues seem to be overcome by a lot of people, they still cause detrimental effects on how we view others. So, it is safe to say that there are influences from the past in our present and it seems there is no way of making it better. But that is something we have to work on as a community because prejudices are more than simple bigotry for a lot of people. There are groups of people being looked down at or not well received for being a woman, a thing that happened back in the 19th century as we have seen with every female character. And although they have been represented differently, Elizabeth and Caroline have both struggled in their own way for being girls surrounded with prejudices.

So, prejudices have evolved with us and the advances of society and although there is still room for improvement, education, awareness and respect can be beneficial when fighting the modern-day prejudices.

10.2.-Poll and its explanation

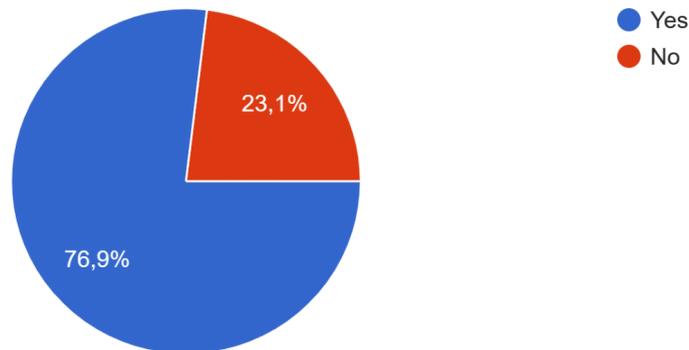
Besides this thorough explanation, I have created an open poll for people to comment and state their opinion about prejudices.

There is a fine line between prejudice, a certain opinion or particular taste, and straight-up discrimination. It is hard to differentiate, as the context and the intensity of the statements can determine if there is a prejudice or just a preference for something or someone.

With more than 25 responses from different people, these various questions help to define and clarify concepts regarding prejudices and its impact in society.

Do you know what a prejudice is?

26 responses



Most people know the textbook definition of prejudice, but they do not know how to utilize this information to make an effort and try not to have it affect how we think about others. Basically, even though we know what it is, we do not attempt to try and fix it when we know it is incorrect when it comes up in our minds.

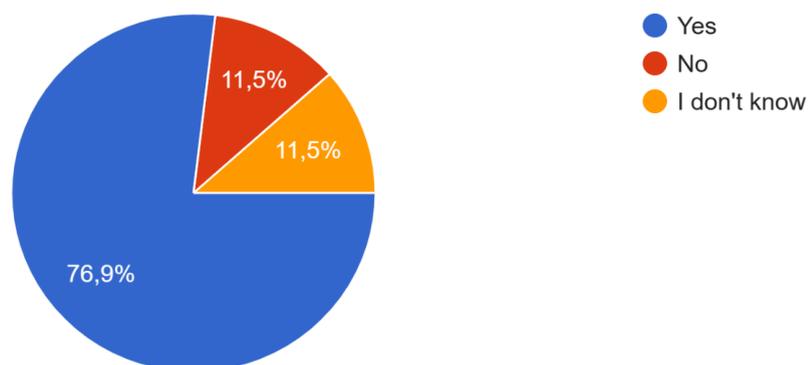
When asked to describe the definition with their own words, most people depicted the word correctly. A few examples are:

“Preconceived idea about someone without a real motive or reasoning behind it conditions your opinion about something.”

“As the word implies, something you believe before thinking, thus without analyzing the righteousness of it.”

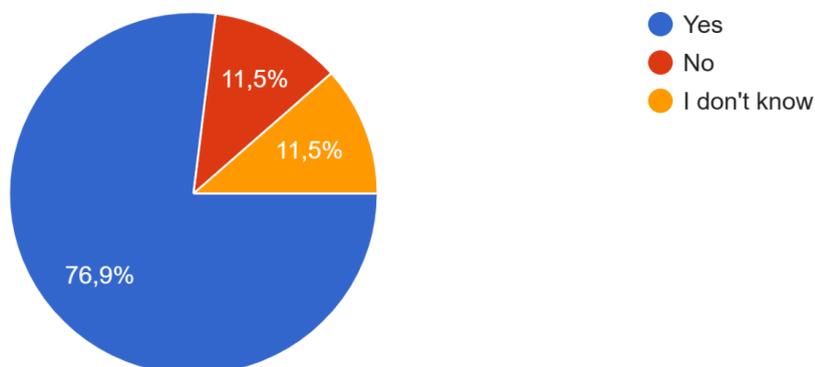
Have you ever been the victim of a comment/act based on a prejudice?

26 responses



Have you ever made a comment to someone based on prejudice?

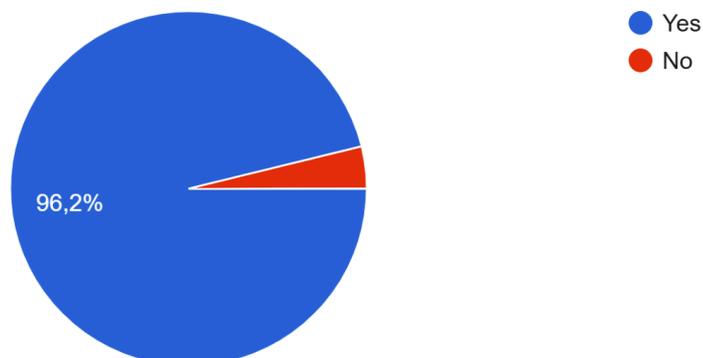
26 responses



With these quizzes and the high percentage of “yes” notify us that prejudices are a common acquaintance among us. When ingrained into our ways of thinking, it is almost unachievable to disregard how our brains are set up to think.

Prejudice has always been ingrained into society. Do you think prejudice still exists?

26 responses



Again, it is hardly difficult to notice prejudice as a process still to this day present in society.

When questioned about it, the interviewees had different opinions, but mainly all said prejudices are so established that they are hard to spot. Some different answers will be shown as examples to further analyze the topic.

“Yes it still exists. Because there are still many stereotypes at all areas and ages.”

This question, although really easy to get mistaken, is not entirely veridical. There is a fine line between a stereotype and prejudice. While a prejudice is an opinion or judgment, generally negative, without previous motive or knowledge, a stereotype is a way to arrange groups that have a certain characteristic in common.

So, even though they are both an untrue way of categorizing the world, they are not the same.

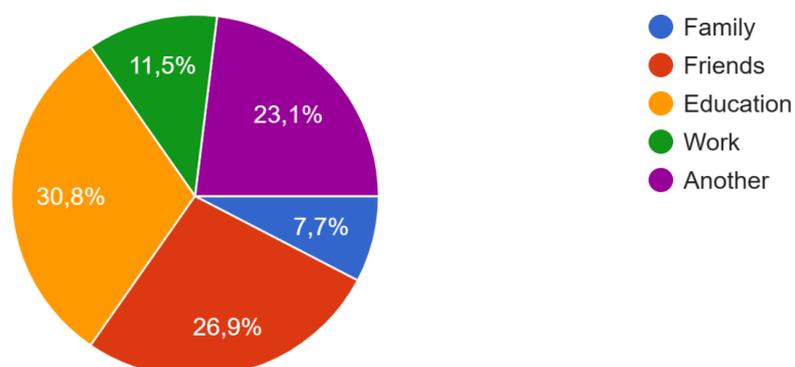
“We need a belief system to function (we cannot avoid using our brain) and it is faster not to analyze every shred of reasoning every single time you act. Wherever there is thought-guided conduct, there will be prejudice. Question is when prejudice is such; when it can be perceived or when it is utterly unconscious. I am not sure whether my view of what prejudice is matches yours.”

This, by far, is the most well-rounded and interesting answer among all. Sometimes it is easier to simply give in to our established prejudices than trying to combat it questioning every thought that we have. Whilst it is hard to say with precision if every time we have to decide or make a decision based on a thought there is prejudice involved, it is a part of our daily life.

It can be said that most of the time prejudice is disguised as an unconscious bias or preference, and that we put the reasoning of us simply deciding liking what we say to make up for the fact that there is a problem behind it, impairments and social damage.

In what areas of our lives can you see them most?

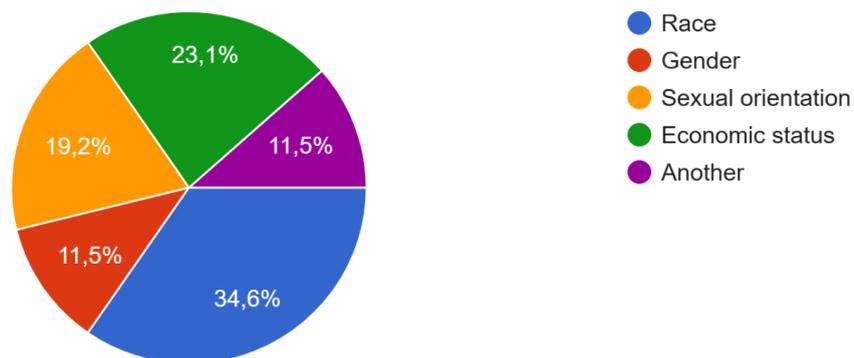
26 respostes



Here, there is a diverse amount of answers. The most answered option is Education. Prejudices in school are mainly based on accents, looks, grades or skin color. That, like everything in schooling, has an impact on other areas of our lives.

Which issue do you think is the most attacked by prejudice?

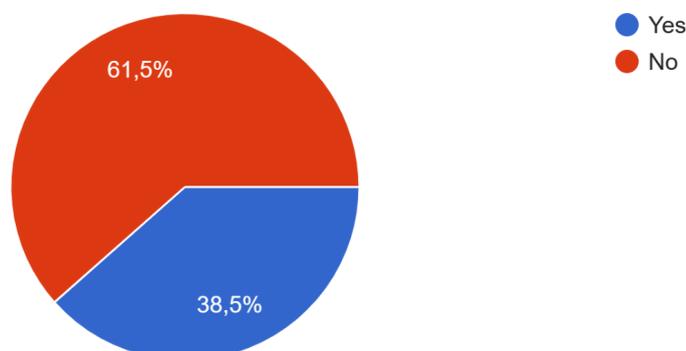
26 responses



Again, there is a wide range of replies. People believe that the issue or community most attacked by nowadays prejudices is race. This makes total sense, seen as the numerous studies and articles indicating that people of color suffer one of the heaviest and more harsh discrimination than any other social group.

Do you think prejudices can be positive?

26 responses



Contrary to popular belief, prejudices can be positive. A preconceived notion about anything can be equally as good as bad. However, it is not to blame that most times we think of harmful ideas because it is what we are most used to hearing.

However, a “benevolent prejudice” can also create stereotypes or simply expectations for a certain group of people. For example, when saying that everyone from Africa is athletic.

When asked why, interviewees really understood what a “good prejudices” is and had a similar answer to this explanation. For example:

“Preconceived notions can also be positive, but they aren’t as aggravating or harsh in society.”

“For exemple think that the little brother is a good student only because his older brother is.”

For the last question, as I wanted to see solutions, I asked how they thought prejudice could be eradicated. Most were a mix, some thought of education as the only key to stop it, while others denied that it could be eliminated. Some of these remedies are the following:

“Individuals can try to be aware of it to a wide extent. Societies can lower its impact by encouraging and teaching its members to think. this being, the true education.”

“I think that they can never be completely eliminated, but they can be partially eradicated by changing education.”

“I don’t think so, I think it is so present in our everyday lives that it is hard to even notice some prejudices or small discriminatory behavior.”

Evidently, with the poll’s aid, it has been reaffirmed that still to this day prejudices are prevalent in our world, making it harder not to be guided by them.

11.- CONCLUSIONS

After months of research, scratches, investigations, lists and hypotheses, the thesis is over and with that all the work behind it is finished.

In these pages it has been studied in the book *Pride and Prejudice* in much depth. Specifically, its women have been the main protagonists. It has been studied on various topics such as: historical accuracy, the psychology of the characters, a comparison between the 18th century and today's society... just to name a few.

Basically, women represented in the classic english novel, their importance in the novel but also for the author Jane Austen. Moreover, how women have influenced or have been influenced by their context and how it can be explained and adapted to today's society.

My reasoning for choosing this novel in the first place was my emotional connection to it. But on top of that, I have also realized the beautiful way it was written thanks to Jane's poetic vocabulary, making you engage with the story and the characters. The plot is undoubtedly witty and amusing, forcing you to constantly want to read more.

The positive aspects certainly outnumber the negative ones.

I have learned many historical facts about women and how they were treated in society, which has made me more grateful to be living in the 21st century. I have collected information about *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen as its author, while connecting the book with its context and searching for similarities. That has allowed me to learn how to properly connect and adapt concepts and how to express it in a more clear and critical way.

While talking about the prejudices in the final part I have realized how lucky I am to live in an environment where I feel secure and represented.

I am also proud of my consistency, which I think is the key to a good and complete work. I have dedicated a few weekly hours to the project for about 5 months and I think it has been worth it. I was able to maintain a pretty consistent and steady mundane life, with other assignments and my free time, I managed to do a compatible amount of advancements weekly. It is reflected in my thesis, but also it has given me more time to study and focus on my other academic projects.

Another thing I realized related to the content itself, is why Jane Austen continues to be relevant even two centuries later. Her portrayal of love, struggle between classes and families and the personality traits of her characters are all today's issues, too. She basically explains the human essence that is so relatable to everyone. Perhaps in a different approach, but her work is still referenced in books and mainstream media speaks volumes. As long as there is importance in love and complications between social classes (like today) Jane Austen will prevail in the literary world.

There are no big errors or major faults in my thesis that I don't think I should not incorporate again but there are a few aspects that could be improved if I had to do the investigation again.

Mainly, I would choose a topic that could allow me to do a more practical part. It is true that I have done one where I have made it by myself with my opinions and personal facts, and I have done a poll to help me finish polishing my statements, but it could have been chosen for more of a practical vision.

The poll or quiz was not a thing I had originally in mind, however when finishing the assignment I got to the conclusion that exterior thoughts could help me perfect some explanations as well as showcase what people think about prejudices.

When it comes to my initial hypothesis most of them have been corroborated and well explained.

The first one, that was that Jane's works were influenced by her life, was completely spot on. Her difficulties with love and her complicated relation with marriage were influences for books like *Pride and Prejudice*. But also, her intelligent mind and cultured soul were reflected in the book's society, who, like her, wanted to be a free and single women while writing books.

The second hypothesis was not far from true. The different female characters all represent a typical archetype seen before in literature, however they do not represent a defect of society. It is true that they all have attributes and defaults that contribute to their humanity as full dimensional characters, and some are written specifically to symbolize or criticize different traits of society.

And for my third one in the practical part, it is also accurate. The evolution of prejudices have evolved to accommodate our modern day society, just as I had in

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