LITR 5435/ WGST 5931

Fall 2024

Dr. Elizabeth Klett

Claudia Meadows

Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*:

A Family Affair Bennet Style

“It is universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife” (Austen 3). This is the first sentence in chapter one of Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice* which sets the mode for the complete work and leads the reader into a typical society of 18th and 19th centuries English countryside gentry with their standards and desires. Most families of this tight community are playing by the rules of engagement to fit and not be the subject of any unnecessary spectacles which would be most unwelcome by the other members. Freedom of feelings and speech are suppressed to maintain a hypocritical cover of acceptance which enhances the chances to find a suitable marriage prospect which is arranged to the smallest detail and is led by money, class, and gender. But not everyone plays by those standards and is ready to break them by changing the role a woman has to play and reversing it in some points to survive a patriarchal society.

This essay’s interest and focus is set on the Bennet familywho are considered as a normal family within the limits of their society, if it had not been for their five daughters and a situation to compromise them. Specially, the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and them managing their daughters’ needs to the satisfaction of being accepted but not being lost because of their gender which lets women only a few opportunities. Mary Wollstonecraft writes in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, about the importance of being educated and independent from the burden of finding a marriage prospect to guarantee financial security that is scandalous but possible from the writer’s perspective. She describes an idea on feminine behavior which is too radical for Austen and the society, including the Bennet’s.

Since Mr. Bennet’s role as a father is rather passive, it is Mrs. Bennet’s responsibility to take the initiative and provide for their daughters’ social and moral well-being. As a man, Mr. Bennet would have more opportunities to get his daughters introduced to the right connections and set them up with marriage prospects. His aloofness could be a part of his general character, or he is simply too comfortable to resume his duties as a father in a patriarch society which treats women by different standards. Catherine H. Copeland’s article, “Pride and Prejudice: A Neo-Classical Work in a Romantic Age,” criticizes his passive attitude because he seems as being described as a man of intelligence who has no issues to solve problems. Furthermore, it should not make it necessary to get Mrs. Bennet involved at all, but the opposite seems to be the case to care for their daughters Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia.

On the other hand, Mrs. Bennet transforms the role of the mother into a practical endeavor which lets her seem all business, but her situation should be considered as a woman who will not stand by to see her daughters being disinherit by law without a marriage prospect. Robert D. Hume points the reader in “Money in Jane Austen” to the matter of money and its importance in Austen’s novels that agrees with Mrs. Bennet’s pragmatic nature of doing things and contradicts her husband’s behavior. One needs also to understand her role as a female and the desperation which excuses her sometimes frantic and irrational actions like described in *Pride and Prejudice* and other sources. Mrs. Bennet’s continues focus on securing marriage prospects for her daughters, driven by an anxiety of social decline and Mr. Bennet’s limited support, eventually turns her into a woman of business and points out the pressure placed on women.

What is considered a marriage prospect in 18th and 19th centuries England? In contemporary society, we understand a person to cherish and love and eventually marry for selflessness. In Austen’s time, marriage was a business which is usually conducted between two families of equal class and financial assets like Lady Catherine De Bourgh points out to Elizabeth Bennet. Today, we would think that such things are nonsense, and in case of money shortage, both partners can support each other through work opportunities for all genders. The consideration for a woman not be able to work would initiate an outcry in our gender-based society. So, it makes it even harder for us to understand why women like Mrs. Bennet act a certain way which would be considered as a fortune hunter to find support for her unmarried daughters. I think it is important to interpretate the term of marriage prospects and have a more realistic relationship with Jane Austen.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs. Bennet is portrait as this frantic and money-loving character who leaves no chance out to embarrass herself and her whole family to find suitable marriage partners for her five daughters. “A single man of large fortune, Four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!” (Austen 3). The question of money plays a great deal in Austen’s novels, which is not surprising how marriage is understood as a business to support a certain lifestyle fitting one’s class or trying to go beyond. Most families, including the Bennet family, are dependent on the marriage prospects for their daughters because women are not able to inherit property or work for their financial support. So, the question of money is essential and is a matter of survival. “For women, working to support themselves was incompatible with genteel social position, they could inherit money or marry it, there were no other options” (Hume 293). This financial trap lets the relationship of two human being, even if they are deeply in love, look like a transaction of goods where the female is being exchanged for the highest amount on the market. In our contemporary society, this would be considered unethical, and everyone participating would be cast out to redeem themselves. But in Austen’s lifetime, this practice is the only way to allow females to survive a harsh patriarchal world.

Rules dictate that it would be for Mrs. Bennet impossible to visit a marriage candidate on her own, instead she has to suggest to her husband to take over this role which is required by social standards and emphasis the dependence even more. “Indeed, you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not” (Austen 4). Mr. Bennet’s duty to his daughters and wife would put him into the position of a messenger and advertiser to let marriage prospects know of his coming-of-age daughters and their availability. Many fathers in the same situation would be glad to find someone to marry their daughters, but Mr. Bennet’s aloofness seems rather puzzling because marrying off daughters means there is also less financial burden on their parents. Besides, it also puts his wife’s efforts on hold to be the first to get a visit from the male prospect and secure her girls future as a wife and mother. “The doll is the peculiar amusement of the females, from whence we see their taste plainly adapted to their destination” (Wollstonecraft 82). The feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft notes that women adapt early to their destination as a wife and mother, even if they have the capability of doing other things which is not typical female. This natural adaptation is enhanced by getting girls toys like dolls which encourage their instinct through play to prepare them for their future role without considering them as an individual to be nurtured more to move from a basic instinct to advanced education. In the present day, we are still behaving in the same fashion to prepare our daughters to accept the role of a typical female by buying exactly those toys which our grandmothers called their own. The difference is that our girls today also have some other options like being a professional or making appointments, which are things past generations could not do.

“The business of her life was to get her daughters married, its solace was visiting and news” (Austen 5). This does not sound much, according to Austen, but it can develop into a full-time job with five daughters and a husband who does only the necessary duties. Appreciating Mrs. Bennet’s work as a mother of an only female household does not seem on the author’s agenda, even she is familiar with the marital practices of her generation. “Through her portrayal of Mrs. Bennet’s attitude toward Mr. Collins before she meets him and her change of attitude when she learns that he wishes to marry one of her daughters, she reveals the comic irony involved in the marriage problem” (Copeland 159). First of all, Mr. Collins is going to inherit Mr. Bennet’s estate because he is the next of kin and only male heir of the Bennet’s through an agreement. Mrs. Bennet’s anxiety is understandable because she hopes to beat this agreement by marrying one of her daughters to the gentleman in question. I am sure this is not an easy step for her and does not excuse her husband short-sighted action to provide for his family. Austen could see it in such a way that is better than making fun of a woman who is anxious for her family’s survival.

In a similar statement, Austen shows more compassion toward Mrs. Bennet, which is a conversation in the Bennet family. “If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield, said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for” (Austen 7). Mrs. Bennet receives more compassion from Austen because she lets her look like a woman who cares for her daughters deeply and wants nothing else than to see them happy with the right suitor. Mrs. Bennet might be practical and all business, but she is still a mother who makes the best out of everything for her girls’ welfare. “For most women, lacking men’s access to work and inheritance, economic survival means marriage” (Newton 30). I am glad that Newton points this out about women and their choices in Austen’s time because it demonstrates an understanding for this particular society and for Mrs. Bennet’s constant search for marriage prospects to prevent her daughters from poverty and despair.

Unlike her daughters, Mrs. Bennet had luck with her father who left her money she brought into the marriage with Mr. Bennet. “Her father had been an attorney in Meryton and had left her four thousand pounds” (Austen 21). Surprisingly, many readers of Austen seem to be unaware of this fact because Mrs. Bennet is always thought of as woman who takes advantage of her husband’s assets which is not quite the case. Means, Mr. Bennet’s fortune consists out of her money and his estate which is entailed and will go to a distant relative after his death. This leaves his daughter without any financial security and shows a part of Mr. Bennet which we might call irresponsible for a loving and reasonable father as always mentioned. Mr. Bennet’s role as a father might be not the typical patriarch, but the feeling occurs that he does not take his part seriously or feels quite uncomfortable with his parental responsibilities. “The irony of Mr. Bennet’s joking appeal to the traditional authority of fathers underscores his discomfort with his role” (Burgan 540). Burgan’s statement and my belief that Mr. Bennet is a father who could show more effort towards his daughters' upbringing, creates the image of a man who is too comfortable to face the real world and take charge. Instead, he leaves everything to his wife who is disrespected for a role she is not equipped to play. Mrs. Bennet is forced into a male role of taking sole responsibility for her daughters, comparing to her husband’s part of living in his own little world of peace and comfort. A world which does not include his wife or daughters with the exception of Elizabeth Bennet, second oldest child in the family and Mr. Bennet’s favor because of her wittiness. All his other children are considered silly and apparently not worth worrying about like a traditional father would.

“Well, my dear, said Mr. Bennet, when Elizabeth had read the note aloud, if your daughter should have a dangerous fit of illness, if she should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley, and under your orders” (Austen 24). Mr. Bennet refers to his daughter Jane who is in love with a certain Mr. Bingley, the occupant of Netherfield and a young man of large fortune to provide for a wife. Of course, Mrs. Bennet takes action to keep the relationship going because her daughter's destiny to live in security depends on it. If Mr. Bennet has an objection against his wife’s drastic measures, he just should say so, and Jane would stay home in Longbourn. Instead, he prefers to say nothing and lets Mrs. Bennet take all responsibility and even makes an ironic suggestion about her unconventional action. This behavior is not acceptable for a father who takes his role seriously and does not turn his wife into scapegoat for his own mistakes as a parent. This also questions the marriage between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their own affection for each other. “Jane’s recognition that she does not know the degree of Bingley’s affection accounts for her unwillingness to entrap him” (Weinsheimer 411). The author gives us a reflection of Jane’s character and her reluctance to secure a marriage on the matter of security alone which is commendable but also risky to find a marriage partner in her community. A place where marriages are mostly arranged with money and class in mind and the blessing of the family is of significant importance. We do not know too much about Bingley’s family besides that he has two sisters, and both are not very fond of the idea of her brother marrying into the Bennet family, whatever the reason seems to be. But Mrs. Bennet is secure enough as a woman with a plan to ignore such attempts of disrespect and continues to fulfill Jane’s dream to marry Mr. Bingley. Mothers are there to support their children, and specially to help their coming-of-age daughters to find the right way to happiness and a home, if fathers fail to take responsibility for their families.

Opposing her mother’s business-like thinking about marriage, Elizabeth Bennet could not win her mother’s affection and sympathy, even if her happiness depends on it. “Elizabeth was the least dear to her of all her children, and though the man and the match were quite good enough for her, the worth of each was eclipsed by Mr. Bingley and Netherfield” (Austen 79). This strenuous relationship between Elizabeth and Mrs. Bennet goes on for a while because Ms. Bennet is the favorite of her father and seems to be more respected than her own mother. So, Mrs. Bennet’s feelings and pride are hurt through her husband’s constantly undertaking of siding with his second oldest daughter who shows only displeasment and disobedience in return. It is nothing unusual that mothers and daughters fight, but usually fathers stay out of it. “Her motives, maneuvers, and judgement are all wrong, but in the business of her life she is successful” (Manheimer 534). In encouraging her daughters to seek out the right marriage prospects, Mrs. Bennet is incredible inventive by appealing to their pride and reservation to follow a set goal for securing the right husband. But she also knows her girls and their weaknesses but also their strength which is a little bit more than the luck to get it right. It is always good to know that mother knows best, and Mrs. Bennet has enough experience to do the business.

Austen seems to have a weakness for middle-aged men like Mr. Bennet or Mr. Gardiner, Mrs. Bennet’s brother, who fulfill the expectations of sensible and educated men and fathers. According to her, “Mr. Gardiner was a sensible, gentlemanlike man, greatly superior to his sister as well by nature as education” (Austen 106). It is the author’s choice to let her characters look silly or smart and sensible because she is writing a fiction, and the characters are not based on historical people. Therefore, it would be easy for her to indulge in more merciful behavior against Mrs. Bennet and more like her. Instead, she prefers to put Mrs. Bennet in a place where the reader is constantly confronted with her stupidity and ignorance with a very few exceptions. Even secondary sources are so obsessed with Mrs. Bennet as a villain that it is hard to find something which compliments her. “Much of Mrs. Bennet’s foolishness, and the humor of that foolishness, consists of an inability to see the contradictions in her own thinking” (Deresiewicz 509). This example is typical what other sources think of Mrs. Bennet and her way of thinking because Austen presents her in this unfortune way, and nobody has courage enough to criticize her. Mrs. Bennet is different from Austen’s image how a mother should be, but this also requires a different husband who is not occupied by his own business.

Of all the women in *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine De Bourgh shows some admiration for Mrs. Bennet in her role as a wife and mother. “Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! I never heard of such a thing. Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education” (Austen 124). Lady Catherine’s astonishment comes from her understanding of class and what is appropriate which does not include caring for one’s own children and being involved in their education. It might come as a surprise to everyone, including every critic of Mrs. Bennet, there are women in this society who are less competent to play the role as a mother and require all the help, they can get. Even today, it takes a lot of effort to bring up five daughters, and not every woman is made for the image of loving motherhood with the sentiment of a saint. Maybe Lady Catherine would enhance Mrs. Bennet’s effort to find the right marriage prospects if they ever were properly introduced. But Mr. Bennet, with the support of Elizabeth, is taking everything away to make Mrs. Bennet respectful by belittling her efforts in society. “Mr. Bennet is, in effect, robbing her of the respect which is due to her as both a wife and mother, no matter how silly she is” (Sherry 618). I totally agree with Sherry because it is gruel and unjustly to punish a woman for her support of her daughters and try to make connections in a society which is ruled by class. Mr. Bennet should be aware that his daughters are dependent on the role their parents play in the community and making fun of his wife does not help anybody. Why his daughter Elizabeth has such a disrespect for her mother, we do not know exactly because Austen seems to hold her in high regard, which is opposing her sister Lydia, the youngest of the Bennet sisters. She is the favorite of Mrs. Bennet which should be tolerated regarding her status as the baby of the family.

“Our importance, our respectability in the world, must be affected by the wild volatility, the assurance and disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia’s character” (Austen 172). If the fate of a family depends on the actions and characteristics of a sixteen-year-old girl, this society should be questioned and criticized. Mrs. Bennet sees it in quite a different way than some family members because she supports her daughter in an effort to go to Brighton with friends of the family. Mr. Bennet could stop it, but he is apparently prepared to take the risk of his daughter being exposed to real life without her parents. It could be also possible that he is too comfortable to take responsibility for Lydia’s possible mischief in Brighton and wants to leave everything to his wife to carry the burden of shame. On the other hand, Mrs. Bennet is courageous enough to let her daughter some freedom and fun in a restraint environment which treats women with different measures as men in the same age. In this moment, she overcomes the barrier between male and female by following Lydia’s desires. “Austen argues against love at first sight and in favor of the slow growth of a rational affection based on gratitude and esteem” (Allen 425). If we see Austen in this particular way, it seems logical why she would resent women like Mrs. Bennet and Lydia who are driven by their emotions and frantic behavior. In the matter of marriage, Austen prefers a relationship which is based on knowing the partner first before rushing into a commitment of love instead of desire.

“But how little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue, she could easily conjecture” (Austen 231). The couple in question is Lydia and her financier Mr. Wickam, who has indeed a charming character, but he has a past which consists of debts and womanizing. Specially, young girls are the victims of his desires, and Lydia with her passion and childish behavior fits into this category. According to today’s standards and knowing these facts would be considered aiding a criminal act to take place. But in Austen’s society, it is considered as a normal procedure to marry off a very young girl to a much older man, if the circumstances allow for such a drastic step, and the girl’s virtue can be saved. Hearing the news of Lydia and Wickam, Mrs. Bennet is beside herself, but she is also the one who takes immediate action by informing everyone in her family about the misfortunes. Her goal is now to get Lydia married to Wickam as fast as possible to save her daughter from the shame of being considered dishonorable and easy. A fact which would create long shadows on the other girls as well because nobody wants to have connections with such a family. “Lydia’s elopement is distressing because it suggests that desire can lead an individual to violate cultural rules, to leave willingly the bounds of society and respectability” (Allen 438). Lydia’s mistake and misfortune is aided by a man who is much older than her, and he should be responsible enough to resist his own passion and Lydia’s. Instead of caring, Wickam fails his responsibility towards Lydia and her family by being selfish and violating every social boundary which are unwritten laws but are followed by everyone. Luckily, Mrs. Bennet is a mother who stands by her daughter no matter what and just wants to see her happily married even without Mr. Bennet’s full approval. After Lydia and Wickam are married, Mrs. Bennet insists that they must visit them at home in Longbourn, which strongly opposes her husband’s relationship with his own child.

Mrs. Bennet’s continued efforts to find suitable marriages for her daughters creates one match, which is a surprising union between Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins. After being denied by Elizabeth Bennet, Mr. Collins finds companionship and marriage in Charlotte Lucas who turns from friend to heiress of Longbourn through her husband. Like Mrs. Bennet, Charlotte wants to have a husband who provides her with financial security and a home. Since Mr. Collins can effort this by being not only in an heir’s position but also being part of the clergy and a project of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, he is the ideal husband by Charlotte’s and society’s standards. She is also the ideal wife for him because she demands nothing which would exceed his capability of giving her like passion and love. “There is in everything a most remarkable resemblance of character and ideas between us” (Austen 161). Both are obsessed with finding a suitable partner for the sake of creating a marital relationship to please expectations their community demands from them, which is pleasing Lady Catherine as an authority and relieving parents from financial ruin to support a daughter. “Nevertheless, Collins does design Charlotte for a wife, and at the same time, she designs him for a husband, though both are merely searching for any mate available” (Weinsheimer 409). Mr. Collins’ search for the perfect wife needs to be approved by Lady Catherine because her attitude does not allow her to leave her class, so she expects this from everybody else. For example, she would not allow Mr. Collins to marry her daughter and start a family without considering his lower status, money, and connections. So, Charlotte is the suitable candidate because she is according to her class and her parents’ financial situation, which is compatible with Mr. Collin’s. To Mrs. Bennet, this would not be the reason for getting married, and unlike Lady Catherine she wants to see her daughters married to be secured and cared for regardless of class.

The matter of class is all present in Austen’s novels, and so it is in *Pride and Prejudice* where class means everything to some. “But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it” (Austen 27). This statement about Jane Bennet in connection with her relationship with Mr. Bingley is an example how class can be a division in someone’s own family. Mr. Bingley and Jane are in love which is not allowed because his sisters are so driven by their snobbish behavior of being grander than the present society including the Bennet family. It is surprising that two women can go against their own gender by demolishing the reputation of the parents out of pure upper-class bias and vain to prevent happiness. Jane needs all the help she can get from her parents, and specially her mother’s not always appreciated interference will get them together. Mrs. Bennet is not scared to move in upper circles because she is too witty and self-confident to fail her mission to get her daughters married. “Jane and Bingley are clearly established as lovers, and we can see quite as well as Elizabeth that they are meant for one another” (Sherry 614). It is true that Jane and Bingley have affection for each other, which is obvious from the beginning on. But this does not mean that they can easily get married and live happily without any objections from others like family and community. Since we know that Bingley’s sisters are intriguing against Jane and her family, it would be not surprising that the match does not take place. To her sister Elizabeth surprise, it takes much longer and lots of time to get the desired result of a relationship. Since she is never in consultation with her mother, she has no idea how much experience a woman needs to establish a meaningful relationship without prejudicial behavior. If Jane and Bingley are strong enough to set aside any doubts about their love, they can be very successful in coming to an agreement which satisfies both of them and their loved ones.

Mrs. Bennet’s ambition to get everyone married is her daughter’s Elizabeth nightmare because Lizzy has different ideas what is needed from a marriage prospect. Her image of the perfect mate is connected to love and equality in a relationship which seems to be impossible to find in a patriarchal society. Her sense to find an equal partner leads her outside of her mother’s perimeter and into the circles of upper-class gentry which touches her in many ways. “They were all of them warm in their admiration, and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberly might be something!” (Austen 181). Pemberly, the home of such an upper-class gentleman with the name of Darcy and an attitude which can be described by many critics as arrogant and proud. Specially, Mrs. Bennet does not like him because of the same attitude as mentioned before and provokes him in every situation involving her daughter Elizabeth. Some would say that Mrs. Bennet is a stupid and ignorant woman, but in this moment, she cares less about her daughter being eventually mistress of a very large estate. Apparently, Elizabeth is impressed by such beauty which Pemberly has to offer and imagines herself of occupying the place as the wife of Mr. Darcy, the nephew of Lady Catherine De Bourgh. “Lady Catherine’s reaction to a union between Darcy and Elizabeth is, in the end, very like Mrs. Bennet’s” (Wiesenfarth 269). I do not agree with Wiesenfarth because Lady Cathrine is driven by class and snobbery to get Darcy away from Elizabeth to boycott the marriage. She makes her point noticeably clear by involving Lizzy in an unpleasant discussion about the Bennet’s reputation and connections which ended with an insult to Mrs. Bennet. On the other hand, Mrs. Bennet does not even interfere in her daughter’s relationship with Mr. Darcy and lets it run its course. The difference between those two women should be obvious to everyone who reads the novel and research into the matter. Naively. Elizabeth is impressed by Pemberly as any young woman would be who sees it for the first time, and her mother, I can imagine, would understand her.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Bennet takes the lead in her own marriage to Mr. Bennet and so develops her practical sense of business, even though Austen does not think so. “Mrs. Bennet had no turn for economy, and her husband’s love of independence had alone prevented their exceeding their income” (Austen 228). In this statement, Austen makes Mrs. Bennet responsible for the financial misfortune of her family who should be led by Mr. Bennet’s intelligence in money matters. Instead, she apologizes for his deletant managing of the Bennet household and minimizes his responsibility by pointing out his preference for independence which he has as a man anyway. Mr. Bennet’s independence is not fully explained by Austen because being independent does not mean forgetting one’s family and providing for their future. She does not hold him fully accountable for his daughters’ financial situation and provides no solution how to make it better other than getting married and eventually escape poverty together with their mother. Austen’s responsibility against Mrs. Bennet should be by supporting her as a woman who is desperate to fight against societal norms. “The affection of husbands and wives cannot be pure when they have so few sentiments in common, and when so little confidence is established at home, as must be the case when their pursuits are so different” (Wollstonecraft 200). Wollstonecraft’s description fits exactly the situation in the relationship between Mrs. Bennet and her husband. Both have different ideas how to provide for their daughters which seems almost like a contest between two people who come into the danger of failing themselves and their daughters. Mrs. Bennet recognizes this danger and her husband’s incapability to function as it would be expected of him. Instead, everyone looks at his wife’s behavior and is amused by scolding her as foolish and frantic which is disrespectful to a woman who tries her best according to her status as a wife and mother.

In the conclusion of this essay, I would like to point out that a woman in Mrs. Bennet’s situation has no choice but to act without relying on her husband’s passive behavior and societal standards, even though she has to overcome herself to see her daughters happily married. Specially, her daughter Jane and Mr. Bingley, who are so in love with each other but without a prospect of getting married because they are listening to everyone else. Accordingly, Mrs. Bennet interferes by giving them time to find each other again because she knows how to manage her daughter without pushing her over the edge. I think it is her greatest success as a mother to give her daughter the chance to find real love and security in a man who is also an individual with a good and decent character. Even though, Mrs. Bennet pays more attention to the practical aspect of a union because of her marriage to Mr. Bennet and the status of women in general. The marriage to her husband with their indifference in character seems to be described by Austen as easy going regardless of problems. But I can imagine outside of a fiction, it would be the place for tension and drama. Furthermore, Mrs. Bennet is a woman who has a mind of her own and is not scared to show it like defending daughter Lydia from scrutiny by Mr. Bennet after the marriage to Wickam. Finally, Mr. Bennet should be proud of his wife for carrying out her duties as a woman beyond her expectations because she overcomes class and society by being herself and letting nobody tell her otherwise.

Works Cited

Allen, Dennis W. “No Love for Lydia: The Fate of Desire in Pride and Prejudice.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 27, no. 4, 1985, pp. 425–43. *JSTOR*,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754783>.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by James Kinsley, Oxford UP, 2019.

Burgan, Mary A. “Mr. Bennet and the Failures of Fatherhood in Jane Austen’s Novels.” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 74, no. 4, 1975, pp. 536–52. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27707956.

Copeland, Catherine H. “Pride and Prejudice: A Neo-Classical Work in a Romantic Age.” *CLA Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1970, pp. 156–62. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44328334.

Deresiewicz, William. “Community and Cognition in Pride and Prejudice.” *ELH*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1997, pp. 503–35. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030146.

Hume, Robert D. “Money in Jane Austen.” *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 64, no. 264, 2013, pp. 289–310. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42003625.

Manheimer, Joan. “Murderous Mothers: The Problem of Parenting in the Victorian Novel.” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1979, pp. 530–46. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177512.

Newton, Judith Lowder. “Pride and Prejudice: Power, Fantasy, and Subversion in Jane Austen.” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1978, pp. 27–42. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177624.

Sherry, James. “Pride and Prejudice: The Limits of Society.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 19, no. 4, 1979, pp. 609–22. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/450251.

Weinsheimer, Joel. “Chance and the Hierarchy of Marriages in Pride and Prejudice.” *ELH*, vol. 39, no. 3, 1972, pp. 404–19. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2872192.

Wiesenfarth, Joseph. “The Case of Pride and Prejudice.” *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1984, pp. 261–73. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29532288.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Edited by Stanley Appelbaum and Candace Ward, Dover Publications, 1996.