

# JANE AUSTEN'S REFLECTION ON HER CHARACTERS

Treball de Recerca



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## 0. INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen is one of the most influential classic English authors. This project is focused on her life and situation and two of her most relevant novels: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. She was a writer in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in England, in the Georgian period. The main subject of my work has been the study of Jane Austen, her context, her era and these two novels.

The hypothesis for my work is whether Jane Austen reflected her life and personality on her novels. What I wanted to learn with the work I have done is if this was a true statement, and if it was, in which ways did she reflect herself and her surroundings on her narrative work, mainly in the two novels I read. I focused on how she portrays her life and thoughts in her characters, especially the female ones, which are the more developed and interesting ones in her novels.

I chose Jane Austen and these two novels as the subject of my project because I wanted to read some classic English literature and learn more about it. I wanted to do this because I enjoy reading and I had never read a classic English author before. I was interested in the stories and the language, which are quite different from the contemporary ones and the novels I had read in English before. I specifically decided to work on Jane Austen because my tutor recommended it, and after looking for some information about her I thought it would be interesting to read her novels and research about her and her characters, and especially the connection between the two of them.

My main objectives with this work were the following:

- Get to know Jane Austen as an author and learn about her life and about her era.
- Read the two novels and analyze their more relevant characters.
- Comprehend the situation of women in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in relation to education, work and family.
- Learn about the vision of marriage at that time and Jane's position in relation to it.
- Compare Jane Austen's life and the lives' of her characters. Compare her thoughts and positions in front of some important topics too, and how she expressed them by using her characters.

To fulfill my objectives and answer questions, what I first did was read *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* and watch its' movies. Meanwhile, I looked for information about Jane's life, her relationships and her era. I focused on women's situation at that time because the main and more developed characters in her book are the female ones, and they show a vast variety of personalities and situations. I've divided my work in three chapters: one to speak about Jane Austen's situation and context and the other two to talk about the novels I read.

# 1. JANE AUSTEN

## 1.1 BIOGRAPHY

### 1.1.1 Childhood:

Jane Austen was born December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire. She was the seventh child (out of eight) and second daughter of Reverend George Austen and Cassandra Austen. Her father was the local rector and had an income of about 600 pounds a year. This was a respectable income, but they were not rich.

In 1783, Jane and her older sister Cassandra were taught by Mrs. Cawley, sister of one of their uncles, in her school. But they did not stay long because there was an infectious disease that almost killed them. Later, in 1785-1786, they both went to the Abbey Boarding School in a town called Reading, even if Jane was considered too young for it, but she insisted on going because she refused to be separated from her sister.

“Not because she was thought old enough to profit much by the instruction there imparted, but because she would have been miserable (at home) without her sister; her mother observing that ‘if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate.’”

This was Jane's only education outside her family. In the family context, the girls learned to draw, to play the piano, and many other skills. These were some of the usual topics around “female education” at that time, because women were not allowed in public schools or universities, and they were basically trained for their domestic role. However, Jane read a lot of literature of the day (she once wrote that her family and herself were “great novel readers, and not ashamed of being so”) which represented an important part of her education.

Austen wrote her *Juvenilia* from 1787 to 1793. It consists of short satirical pieces written when she was younger than 20 years old and collected in three volumes. They include many parodies of the literature of the day, and were originally written for the amusement of her family. Between 1795 and 1799 Jane wrote early versions of some of her novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*



*The "Rice portrait" by Humphry, claimed to be Jane Austen as a kid, in 1877*

and *Northanger Abbey*. In 1799, *Pride and Prejudice* was offered to a publisher by her father, but he declined without even looking at it.

### 1.1.2 Early adulthood (Steventon & Bath)

Jane Austen enjoyed social events, and she attended dances and parties in Hampshire, as she wrote in her letters. She also visited London, Bath and Southampton, where she attended plays and other events.

There is not much evidence of any serious romance with men. Between 1795 and 1796 she had a mutual flirtation with Thomas Lefroy. He was an Irish relative of one of her close older friends. However, their relationship could not work because he could not afford to marry her and this relationship was not accepted by his uncle.

Jane's father retired in late 1800, and the family moved to Bath. During those years, the family spent the summers by the sea-side. In one of those holidays, Jane's most mysterious romantic accident happened. It was only told by her sister Cassandra, years after Jane's death. They were probably in South Devonshire, where Jane met a young man who seemed to have fallen in love with her.



2Portrait of Jane Austen, watercolor by James Andrews

Cassandra thought he seemed an appropriate man to marry Jane, but the family had to leave the coast and he promised he would seek her out, but, instead, the family heard of his death shortly afterwards. There is no evidence of how this news affected Jane, but it is thought that her novel *Persuasion* is inspired by this incident.

A better known incident occurred on December 2nd 1802, when Jane and Cassandra were staying with the Bigg family at Manydown, near Steventon. There, Harris Bigg-Wither proposed to Jane and she accepted to marry him. However, she reconsidered it the next day and she and Cassandra went to Steventon, where their brother was then the clergyman, to be taken back to Bath the next day. That fact was socially embarrassing for Jane, but she did not seem seriously affected. In the end,

neither Jane nor Cassandra got married.

In 1803, Jane sold one of her novels, *Northanger Abbey* for £10. But this novel was not published until fourteen years later.

In January 1805, her father died. Because of that, her mother, her sister Cassandra and she (the only two children who still lived at home) were left with a really small amount of money, approximately 450 pounds a year. Because of this, they depended almost completely on the Austen brothers, who always helped them. Later in 1805, Martha Lloyd, the sister of James Austen's wife and friend of the family, went to live with Mrs. Austen and her two daughters.

### 1.1.3 Maturity (Southampton and Chawton)

**SENSE**  
AND  
**SENSIBILITY:**

**A NOVEL.**

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

BY A LADY.

VOL. I.

London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

*By C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar,*

AND PUBLISHED BY T. EGERTON, WHITEHALL.

1811.

*3First cover of Sense and Sensibility, "by a Lady" in 1811*

when her authorship started to be spread outside her family circle, as she wrote in one of her letters in September 1813:

In 1806, they moved from Bath, first to Clifton and then to Southampton. Jane was happy to leave Bath, where she had never wanted to move in first place. In Southampton they were close to the naval base where two of her brothers, Frank and Charles, were living.

Three years later, in 1809, they moved to Chawton, in Hampshire, where one of the Austen brothers, Edward, provided them with a small house on one of his estates.

She started writing again soon after going back to Hampshire. She revised *Sense and Sensibility*, which was accepted by a publisher in late 1810 or early 1811. It was published anonymously ("By a Lady"), and at first only her immediate family knew of her authorship, and they kept it in secret. The novel had at least two favorable reviews, and its first edition brought her a profit of 140 pounds.

Encouraged by this success with her first publication, Jane revised *First Impressions*, which she later changed the title to *Pride and Prejudice*. She sold it in November 1812 and it was published in January 1813. She worked on *Mansfield Park* during that same year. It was also during 1813

“Henry heard *Pride and Prejudice* warmly praised in Scotland, by Lady Robert Kerr and another Lady; -- and what does he do in warmth of his brotherly vanity and Love, but immediately tell them who wrote it!”

She sold the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* for 110 pounds and she did not receive any more money when a second edition was published later in 1813. A second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* was also published in October 1813. Later, in May 1814, *Mansfield Park* was published, and it was sold out in six months. At that same time, she had already started working on *Emma*. Jane's brother Henry lived in London, and he acted as a mediator between Jane and the publishers. She also stayed with him in London in order to revise the publications. There, she was brought in contact with Mr. Clarke, Prince Regent's Librarian, who transmitted to her the Prince's request that she dedicated her following work to him. But it's pretty sure that Jane was not really excited about dedicating one of her novels to Prince George, who was drunk and superficial. That is the reason why the main male character in her novel, George Knightley, is the portrait of the perfect English gentleman, according to Jane's point of view, and appears as a complete opposite to the Prince's personality and behavior.

In addition to her work in her novels, Jane used to visit her brothers and their families, and other relatives and friends. She got really attached to her oldest nieces Fanny and Anna.

In December 1815 she published her novel *Emma*, dedicated to Prince Regent as she had promised. A second edition of *Mansfield Park* was published in February 1816, but it was not successful.

She started *Persuasion* in August 1815 and finished it one year later. During 1816 her health got worse and she was not feeling good: at first her walks were shortened, and later she was forced to lie down at home. In early 1817 she started working on a new novel called *Sanditon*, but she had to give it up in March because of her health condition.

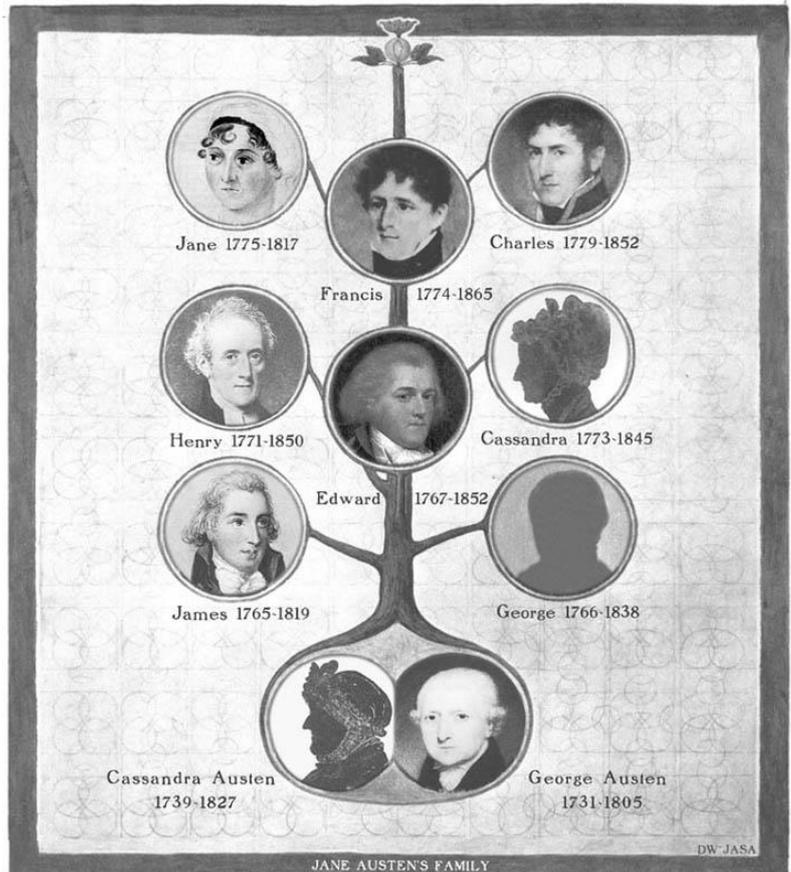
On April 27 1817 she made her will, leaving almost everything she had to her beloved sister Cassandra, and on May 24 she was moved to Winchester for medical treatment, where she died on Friday, July 18 1817. She was only 41 years old. The cause of her death was unknown and it remains unclear nowadays. For a long time, it was thought that she died of Addison's disease, a rare, chronic endocrine disorder in which the glands do not produce enough hormones. However, some more recent biographers think the cause of her death was lymphoma. The latest reports, based on the symptoms described in her letters and her family's ones, conclude that the most probable cause of her death was Bovine Tuberculosis. She was buried at Winchester Cathedral.

Her novels *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were gotten ready to be published by her brother Henry, and published posthumously at the end of 1817.

## 1.2 RELATIONSHIPS

### 1.2.1 Parents:

Jane Austen's parents were George (1731-1805) and Cassandra Austen (1739-1827). They were respectable middle class parents. George Austen studied at Oxford and he met Cassandra when she was visiting her uncle, who worked there. She was witty and astute, while he was a studious and a calmer person. They got married in April 1764, and after that, George took on the rectorship of Steventon, a parish of a good size in Hampshire. They were parents of 8 children. To get some extra income, Reverend Austen received students at Steventon, turning the parish into a private boarding school. He also farmed their property, and the family had financial security while the children were young. The reverend retired at the age of 69, leaving the parish to his eldest son James, and the family moved to Bath. He died 4 years later, and left the Austen women without any income, but the brothers helped them. The mother lived with her two daughters and a friend of the family, Martha Lloyd, and died in 1827, ten years after Jane's death.



*4 Jane Austen's family tree*

### 1.2.2 Siblings:

The eldest of the Austen siblings was James (1765-1819), a studious who went to Oxford University when he was 14, and was later ordained a clergyman in 1787. He wrote some poetry and edited a university magazine. He took on the family parish when his father retired. He married twice and had children who had a close relationship with their aunt Jane.

Her second brother was George (1766-1838), and not much is known about him, except that he was physically and intellectually disabled and lived with a nearby family who took care of him.

The third brother was Edward (1767-1852), who was calm, confident and business-like. He was adopted by the Austen's rich cousins, Thomas and Cassandra Knight, who could not have children,

and he eventually took their surname and inherited their estate in Kent. He also married and had children. Her oldest child became one of Jane's favorite nieces, whom she was really close to.

Jane's favorite brother was Henry (1771-1850). He was clever, funny and enthusiastic with everything he did, even if he didn't always succeed. He studied at Oxford University, got married and, after a business failure, he ended up as a Calvinist-leaning minister. He published *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abby* after Jane's death.

Cassandra Elizabeth (1773-1845) was Jane's only sister, her closest confidante and her supporter. It is known that they had a really close friendship and that they lived together almost all their lives. She shared all of Jane's thoughts and secrets.

One of Cassandra's main entertainments was painting, and some of her drawings have survived. She drew pictures of her sister several times.

The sisters exchanged a lot of letters during all their lives, to share news and thoughts on everything that happened when they were not together (they both enjoyed visiting friends and family and that's the reason why they were sometimes separated). Approximately a hundred of these letters have survived, and they have helped us to get to know Jane's character a bit better, but the majority of the letters between the sisters were burnt by Cassandra after Jane's death. The remaining letters did not have content of much importance, they just tell us about the details of their ordinary lives, giving us a glimpse of the sisters' relationship. Maybe the other letters spoke about more relevant and intimate events and that is the reason why they were burnt, but we will never know. Here are a couple of fragments of some of the surviving letters:



5 Watercolor of Jane Austen by her sister Cassandra, 1804

- "I saw some gauzes in a shop in Bath Street yesterday at only 4s. a yard, but they were not so good or so pretty as mine. Flowers are very much worn, and fruit is still more the thing." 1799

- "I cannot possibly oblige you by not wearing my gown, because I have it made up on purpose to wear it a great deal, and as the discredit will be my own, I feel the less regret. You must learn to like it yourself and make it up at Godmersham." 1800

In 1794, Cassandra got engaged to Thomas Fowle, one of her father's students. He could not afford to marry her because he did not have enough money, so they were engaged for 3 years. He eventually decided to join the militia and was sent to the Caribbean. He wanted to earn some money and go back to marry Cassandra, but he died of yellow fever in 1797. After this, Cassandra never married, just like Jane.

The two younger brothers, Francis (1774-1865) and Charles (1779-1852) both joined the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth when they were only 12. They fought in the British navy during the Napoleonic Wars and eventually became admirals.

### **1.2.3 Martha Lloyd:**

Martha Lloyd (1765-1843) was Jane's best friend. After Cassandra, she was the person whom Jane was most intimate with. As Jane's closest friend, Jane respected Martha's judgment and trusted her. They met when the Lloyds moved to a parsonage near Steventon in 1789, and their families became friends. Martha was ten years older than Jane, but Jane liked her because she had a sense of humor and they could talk and laugh for hours. They enjoyed reading, discussing books and taking long walks together. Here there is a fragment of one of Jane's letters to Cassandra, in which she shows her appreciation for Martha, and she talks of her like she was her sister:

'With what true sympathy our feelings are shared by Martha, you need not be told ... she is the friend and sister under every circumstance'

After Mr. Austen's death and Martha's mother's death, Martha joined the Austen women's house, and lived with them for the rest of Jane's life. One year after Mrs. Austen's death, in 1827, Martha married Francis Austen, Jane's brother, becoming his second wife. She was 62 when they got married, and they lived apparently happily together for 15 years.

### **1.2.4 Thomas Lefroy:**

Tom Lefroy (1776-1869) met Jane in 1796. He was an Irish relative of Anne Lefroy, Jane's friend. He was a law student who financially depended on his uncle, who expected him to reach a high status in the English society and marry well. He spent a brief time with Jane while he was on a holiday in the south of England, and they had what was closer to a love relationship in Jane's life. Tom and Jane talked,



*6 Thomas Lefroy's portrait*

danced and flirted during that time. They met at a ball, and Jane talked about him to her sister in the letters they sent to each other.

About the day they met, Jane said to her sister:

“You scold me so much in the nice long letter which I have this moment received from you, that I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. I can expose myself however, only once more, because he leaves the country soon after next Friday, on which day we are to have a dance at Ashe after all.”

Jane described him as a ‘gentleman like, good-looking pleasant young man.’ She was clearly attracted to him. Gossip started spreading soon after they danced together, saying that they were an item. People laughed at him because he was considered to be in a higher society than a clergyman’s daughter, so he became ashamed of the acquaintance.

She knew about his situation in front of society, and also wrote to her sister about how their relationship started to vanish because of the different places in society they occupied and how people laughed at him:

“But as to our having ever met, except at the three last balls, I cannot say much; for he is so excessively laughed at about me at Ashe, that he is ashamed of coming to Steventon, and ran away when we called on Mrs. Lefroy a few days ago.”

He left and they never met again. Years later, he said he had been in love with her, but declared it was “only a boyish love”. He got married and became the Chief Justice of Ireland.



*7 Representation of the couple in the movie "Becoming Jane"*

### **1.2.5 Mrs. Anne Lefroy:**

Mrs. Anne Lefroy (1749-1804) was Jane's friend and mentor. She was the person Jane turned to for advice and encouragement, and she also helped Jane in her choice of books. She was a great reader and writer of poetry, and was a beautiful, clever, witty and popular woman. She enjoyed a better economic situation than the Austens did. After Jane's relationship with one of her relatives, Tom Lefroy, did not end in marriage, she introduced Jane to Reverend Samuel Blackall, who was looking for a wife, but it did not work either. Even if the Lefroys often visited Steventon and the Austens visited the Lefroys, there are not any letters that describe to us the women's friendship. Anne died in an accident the day of Jane's 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 1804. Four years after her death, Jane wrote a poem in her memory which shows us how much she admired her and proves that they had a close relationship.<sup>1</sup>

## **1.3 EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE: A FEMALE WRITER IN THE 18TH CENTURY**

### **1.3.1 Society in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Jane Austen lived in Britain during the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. At that time, Britain was at the beginning of one of the most important social transformations in its history. But many of the transformations were not apparent at that time and, consequently, they are not featured in Jane's novels. The situation was complex, and defined by the following aspects.

In politics, Britain had a constitutional monarchy, which was based on the monarchy regime and the ministerial system. Specifically, the country was ruled by King George III, and the government was divided in hostile parties. The main ones were the Liberal Whigs, who were focused on protecting popular freedom, and the Conservative Tories, who preferred to give as much authority to the royalty as possible. Jane's novels have usually been associated to the Regency period, when Prince George assumed the power, but the truth is that King George III reigned during all of Jane's life. The Prince eclipsed his father in the public gaze because of his affairs and complications with his marriages. Prince Regent was described as a medley of the most opposite qualities: talent, wit, buffoonery and obstinacy. Jane dedicated a novel to the Prince at his request.

During almost all of her adult life, England was at war with France: from 1793, when revolutionary France declared war on Britain, to Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815. Some members of Jane's family were directly involved in the war. There are not any direct references to this situation in her novels, but they provide an occupation to some of the characters.

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<sup>1</sup> See annex 1

In 1775, the year she was born, the American Revolution began, and some years later Britain lost its American colonies. That same year, the steam machine was being perfected by its inventor, James Watt, machine which would later transform the landscape and transports. During her lifetime, there also lived some really important composers, like Beethoven and Mozart; painters, like Constable and Gainsborough; writers, like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron; and also scientists, explorers and inventors.

In economy, her period was characterized by the Industrial Revolution, which began in England some decades before Jane was born. The Industrial Revolution transformed England into the most powerful country, and there were several changes and technological advances.

In society, everyday life was transformed by the revolutions in industry and politics. Social status was determined by wealth and economic standing. The middle and upper classes had pleasant lives: they lived in luxurious large houses, wore the finest clothes and were never hungry. In contrast, the lower class suffered miserable and needy lives. In her novels, Jane always relates to us the lives of the middle and upper classes, hardly ever mentioning the lower one.

In relation to literature movements, Jane's period brought big changes in literature, especially in fiction. Most of the novels shared some common traits. One of these traits is the strong sense of social position among the characters which sometimes was the origin of the problems in the story. This can clearly be distinguished in Jane's novels. They also emphasize social manners and class issues, to bring detailed pictures of life in the different classes so that the readers could know about and understand different lifestyles. Another of its characteristics was the emergence of modern social thinking among the upper classes, which was the spark that started to transform the society and led to the actual one.



9 *"Deadham Mill" by John Constable, 1820. A landscape in which we could picture Jane's novels*

### 1.3.2 **Education:**

In Jane Austen's time there was not an education system supported financially by the country, so there were only a few options to educate the children. There were local charity or church schools, but these were not attended by the society Jane talks about in her novels. These were attended by children from lower social levels. Another way of education was apprenticeship, in which young men worked for qualified people to learn their profession. But neither of these were respectable enough for the middle and high society which Jane talks about.

The higher society children may be educated at home by their parents, or live with a governess or tutors. We can see examples of these kinds of education in *Emma*, where Miss Taylor is Emma's governess and she taught her everything she knew as well as took care of her like she was her mother. Another possibility for families with enough money was to send the children to private boarding schools or to live with a tutor. We can see another close example in Jane's life, because his father received some young men at Steventon to be their tutor. There were also a few local Grammar schools which taught the basics for high class boys, but they did not admit girls. The type of education each person had depended on the preferences and financial resources of each family.

At that time, women were not allowed to attend public schools nor universities. These were exclusively for men, and the subjects which were mainly taught to them in those schools were classical languages, Greek and Latin. Hardly any woman studied those languages. Therefore, women could not have degrees, and they could not participate in politics either, so there was not a general need for them to get higher education. That is why, at that time, they spoke of "female education": girls received practical and religious training for their domestic role as married women and to prepare them for their work as mothers. Female education was not relevant, because they thought that everything women had to do and care about in their lives was to look for a husband and take care of their house and children. Society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not cultivate women's minds because they were not supposed to be anything else than wives and mothers, in consequence, they did not take women's education seriously.

### 1.3.3 **Accomplishments**

For women in the genteel society the goal of nondomestic education was the acquisition of accomplishments. These accomplishments were the abilities to draw, sing, play music or speak modern languages, usually French and Italian. The young ladies took classes to learn and improve their skills in all those matters. The final purpose of all these accomplishments was to be in a better chance of getting a good husband. Sometimes it was the only reason why they learnt them, so some ladies even gave up on those skills after getting married, because they already had provided them with what they wanted, and they were not interesting in them anymore.

Most people thought that a woman was accomplished if she was good at some those skills. But people had different opinions on this topic, and having what it took to be accomplished was subjective. In *Pride and Prejudice* the accomplishments are an important subject, and I will comment on a couple of interventions with different opinions related to the topic:

“It is amazing to me,” said Bingley, “how young ladies can have patience to be so very accomplished as they all are. (...) Yes all of them, I think. They all paint tables, cover skreens, and net purses. I scarcely know anyone who cannot do all this, and I am sure I never heard a young lady spoken of for the first time, without being informed that she was very accomplished.”



10 Drawing of a Regency lady playing the pianoforte

The subject of accomplishments is clearly expressed in one of Bingley’s interventions in *Pride and Prejudice*, when he declares his amazement at young ladies being all very accomplished. His opinion is rather innocent and good natured, because he thinks all young women are talented and he is impressed with all of them. But at the same time, his intervention shows how superficial all of these skills were, because all the young ladies learnt them to be able to show their abilities off, be better than the others and try to get a better husband.

On the other hand, in the same chapter of the book, Darcy has a considerably different opinion:

“No one can be really esteemed accomplished, who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; 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, or the word will be but half deserved.”

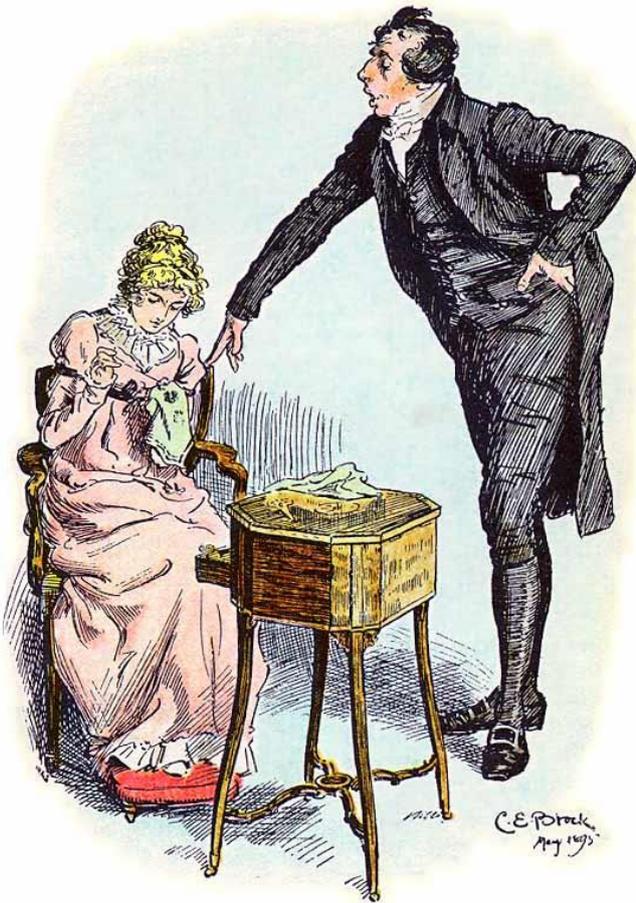
“All this she must possess,” added Darcy, “and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.”

Darcy thinks that it takes more for a lady to be really accomplished than what was usually thought. In his opinion, the most common accomplishments (playing music, singing, drawing, dancing and knowing modern languages) were the minimum ladies had to have to “deserve the word”. But in order to be really accomplished, ladies must be elegant and agreeable, and they should also exercise their minds with extensive reading. Darcy’s point of view is a lot stricter if we compare it to what was generally understood as an accomplished young lady. So in Darcy’s opinion, the typical accomplishments were not enough, because if a woman wanted to show that she was really worthy, she had to prove that she was above the rest, and all women at that time were able to sing, play music and dance, not all of them did it perfectly, but almost everyone was taught those skills. This difference in opinion had to do with Darcy’s higher position in society, as in a way of showing that it was an exclusive group of people that only admitted the best ones. However, Bingley is also a part of the high society and his thoughts are completely different.

All this does not mean that women were ignorant, but since there was no requirement for their education and they did not have a lot of chances to use such knowledge, it all depended on their families and which kind of education they gave to the girls in their childhood. It also depended on the ladies own interests and inclinations, because if they were clever, wanted to study, and the family would let them do it, they would have had a wider range to choose their studies from than men did. This happened because men were usually directed to Classical studies without being able to choose what they liked the most.

“Mrs. Goddard was the mistress of a School -- not of a seminary, or an establishment, or any thing which professed to combine liberal acquirements with elegant morality upon new principles and new systems -- and where young ladies for enormous pay might be screwed out of health and into vanity -- but a real, honest, old-fashioned Boarding-school, where a reasonable quantity of accomplishments were sold at a reasonable price, and where girls might be sent to be out of the way and scramble themselves into a little education, without any danger of coming back prodigies.”

This is a quote from *Emma* which speaks about women’s education. It talks about Mrs. Goddard’s school, which was a private boarding school for girls, probably similar to the one Jane Austen went to with her sister when she was young. It focuses on the fact that this kind of schools gave girls just a little education, related to the domestic tasks and the usual female accomplishments, but not anything further. They were clearly not interested in teaching them much, because they did not want to make the girls able think for themselves and question the traditions and what they were told to do. What was better seen at that time was for women to just follow the tradition (learning some



11 Drawing of a lady sewing while speaking

accomplishments, marrying and having children) and not to think much of anything not related to their circles and home (“without any danger of coming back prodigies”).

In this quote it also seems like young girls were sent there, away from their families, because as long as they did not marry, they were of no profit for the families. So they wanted the girls to learn all these things to have better chances of marrying a wealthy gentleman. Also, while they were away, the families did not have to worry about taking care of them, because they could not bring any money to the family but they spent what the father and brothers earned, so they were mainly seen as a financial burden on the families. Another aspect we can see in this quote is that there were different types of private schools for girls too, always depending on the financial possibilities of the families.

Mrs. Goddard’s was a modest school, similar

to the one Jane went to, and which was pretty different than the seminaries and more expensive private schools in London and other cities, which were more elegant and also haughtier.

Young girls received domestic training so that they would be perfectly able to take care of their homes when they got married. They all used to spend time sewing while having light conversations or listening to a novel being read. It was something useful they did to show off their abilities and occupy themselves during the long hours at home. However, most of the household work was done by servants. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs. Bennet considered herself and her daughters “too genteel” to cook.

### 1.3.4 Women’s role and marriage

“The utmost of a woman’s character is expressed in the duties of daughter, sister, and eventually, wife and mother. It is secured by soft attraction, virtuous love and quiet in the early morning. If a woman happens to have a particular superiority, for example a profound mind, it is best kept in profound secret.”

This is a quote from the movie *Becoming Jane*, a biographical movie about Jane Austen. It is said at the beginning of the movie, and it summarizes really well what was thought about women at that

time. It was common for people in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to believe that the only things women were useful for were to be a good daughter, sister, wife and mother. These were the only things that mattered to them when getting to know what a woman was like, it was not important if they were clever or had any particular qualities. They had to be as good as they could in those roles and they had to be excellent ladies who behaved perfectly well and were instructed in all the accomplishments, such as singing, playing different instruments and painting. As the quote says, it was also thought that they should not have any superiorities, such as talent for writing or anything else that involved a superior mind, because that was a gentlemen's matter and not the ladies' business.

Beyond a doubt, marriage was one of the most important things for woman at that time. It was the only way for women to try to avoid being poor and miserable, since they had no chance of being independent. Professions, universities and politics were not open to women, and the few occupations that were available for them (for example working as a governess) were not well seen nor well paid. Jane expressed this idea on this quote:

"Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favor of matrimony" -- Jane Austen, letter of March 13, 1816

Therefore, it was really important for most women to marry, because it was almost their only way to stop living under their parents' roofs and to get financial security. They could also inherit, but only if they had no brothers or close male relatives. The richest families could have daughters that did not need to marry, like the main character in *Emma*, but those were only a few cases. As we can see, marriage was an action more related to money than to the wishes of the two people. In fact, making sure the couple would have a guaranteed income when marrying was really important, not only to move out of the parents' house and make a good impression on society, but because at that time there was no social security, old age pensions, unemployment compensation or health insurance. So the only way for women to make sure they would have an acceptable life, especially when old, was to marry someone who had a good income. Their possibilities when they were looking for a husband depended on their own position in society: if they had connections and a respectable family, in addition to being accomplished, respectable, elegant and well-mannered, they were more likely to find a man with higher income that wanted to marry them.

Women who did not marry could only hope for a life depending on their families, because they were not allowed to live on their own and they could not have much income as their working possibilities were really limited and miserable. As a consequence of all this, being an old maid (unmarried aged woman) was not considered a desirable fate, as it carried financial insecurity and dependence for the rest of their lives. Because of all this, almost all women desired to marry to save themselves from being poor old maids. Most of them did not even consider not marrying a possibility, they just knew

they had to find a husband if they did not want to end being old, poor and not respected in their society.

In one of the novels I have worked on, *Emma*, they deal with this topic in a particular way: they talk about the difference between rich and poor old maids. On the one hand, we have Emma, who clearly says that she does not intend on marrying anyone, but she is extremely rich, so she knows that she will not have any kind of problem without a husband. On the contrary, Miss Bates, one of her neighbors, is an old maid, and she is poor. She lives with her mother, but her father died, so she has to live off charity. Anyway, she is a happy woman, but I will talk about her later on. We can see how money marks a great difference between their situations. In this fragment we can understand Emma's opinion on the difference between rich and poor unmarried women:

“A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable old maid! (...) but a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else. (...) If I know myself, Harriet, mine is an active, busy mind, with a great many independent resources; and I do not perceive why I should be more in want of employment at forty or fifty than one-and-twenty. Woman's usual occupations of eye and hand and mind will be as open to me then as they are now (...) And as objects for the affections, which is in truth the great point of inferiority, the want of which is really the great evil to be avoided in *not* marrying, I shall be very well off, with all the children of a sister I love so much, to care about.”

Here, Emma's opinion corresponds to the one that was most common at that time. She knows that she has money, so she does not have to worry about marriage, because marriage was only seen like a contract to assure financial security and being respected. But if she already has money and knows that she will inherit it when her father dies, she does not need a husband, and she will always be respected in society and pleasant to everybody. When talking to her friend, Emma is asked what will occupy her time when she is older and she is not married, because she will not have anyone to always be with nor will she have children. But Emma remarks that she is independent and her mind is always busy, and she will still be that way when she gets older, so her occupations will be the same as now. With this, she hints that women do not need men to be occupied and that they can be independent, but the only problem is that they need money, so if they are not rich like Emma, they cannot really be independent. In the children's matter, Emma says that the desire of children must be avoided in women who decide not to marry, and she states that it will not be a problem for her, because she will be able to take care of her nephews and nieces.”

### 1.3.5 Jane Austen's situation

In relation to these topics, Jane's life did not follow all of the standards that most ladies' lives did in her days. Now I will explain more specifically what her life was like in relation to the subjects I have talked about earlier.



*12 Sketch of Jane Austen, by her sister Cassandra, 1810*

Her family was from the middle class, so they could not afford a governess to take care of them and teach them. But she was sent with her sister Cassandra to a school in Oxford, which then moved to Southampton. Later, they went to the Abbey Boarding school in Reading. In these couple of schools, the girls were taught sewing, reading, spelling, writing letters and French. They also learnt to play the piano and were involved in some drama productions. But these were skills that they could practice at home too. Reverend Austen's reasons to remove them from the last school are uncertain, but it may be because they did not have enough money to have the two girls in school or maybe because he thought he was wasting the money in a place where they did not learn much.

As we can see, Jane did not have a chance to learn many things of importance in school, but at home there was a good atmosphere that allowed her to learn: her older and intelligent brothers were great role models, and she was able to read a lot in her father's library. His father encouraged her to read and accepted her writing desire, and even tried to help her publish her first novels when she was just starting. Most of her first short works were done for the amusement of her family, and this proves that they were a positive influence that helped her to develop her writing skills.

Jane always lived within her family circle and as we already know, she did not get married. This was really odd at that time, especially in middle class families, where marriages were important to assure some financial security for women's lives. She never worked either, because the possibilities were reduced and improperly seen in society. She was maintained by her father, and when he died, by her brothers, just like her sister. Because of this, she was able to dedicate her life to writing, reading and to maintaining social connections.

It was uncommon at that time for women to work outside their homes, but it was also uncommon for them to be writers and to be able to publish their books. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was an increase in the number of female writers, but poetry and theatre were mainly reserved to be written by men,

even if some women started writing poetry too. Female writers could dedicate their brightness to novels, but many times they were not valued as men's works were. However, Jane was interested in writing and even if it was a hard option for her, she managed to get her novels published, but she did it anonymously, signing 'By a Lady'. She received little public recognition in her lifetime. Some of Jane's contemporaries were Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and a bit younger, Mary Shelley.

Jane always had a critical mind, and she did not doubt to express her opinions directly and clearly. As I quoted earlier, she wrote about old maidhood in *Emma* when she was a 39 year old unmarried woman. She had a critical view of the society of her time, and she expressed it through her novels and her letters, which were ironic and had a subtle but firm morality.

Jane wrote about women's situation in society at that time, giving a critical and ironic opinion on those topics. I would like to point out a couple of short charades written by Jane which brilliantly express her thoughts on marriage and the role that women had in her society. Charades are short word puzzles, in which the word they had to guess, that is referred to as "my whole", is composed of two other words, "my first" and "my second", which they were able to guess from the context of the verses, and if they joined the two right words, they got the answer. Let's see the two examples:

"When my first is a task to a young girl of spirit,  
And my second confines her to finish the piece,  
How hard is her fate! But how great is her merit  
if by taking my whole she effects her release!"

- Charade by Jane Austen

The answer to this charade is "Hemlock", a kind of poison. The first part of the word, "hem", means sewing, and the second, "lock", is the object that confines her. If we look at the whole meaning of the charade, it talks about one of the things that employed young women's time: sewing. But it says that these employments confined young ladies to be locked at home, probably because their families forced them to stay at home doing that and practicing other accomplishments. This was not a desirable fate but what they ought to do not to disobey their families. But in the end, she claims that the bravest women are the ones to achieve freedom: by taking hemlock, a poison. This charade perfectly reflects Jane's way of thinking and her characteristic irony. It gives us a picture of a hard situation, because it clearly says that almost the only way for the women that wanted to escape the situation and role that was imposed to them in her time was suicide. But at the same time, I think it gives a message of hope: if they were strong and they did not accept what society imposed on them, they might be able to release themselves, but only if they were non-conformist and wanted to fight to break their locks.

The next charade talks about how marriage was seen in Jane's days. It follows the same structure as the previous one.

You may lie on my first on the side of a stream,  
And my second compose to the nymph you adore,  
But if, when you've none of my whole, her esteem  
And affection diminish -- think of her no more!

- Charade by Jane Austen

The answer to this charade is "Banknote", which is a synonym of paper money. The language used in this one is easier, so "my first" is "bank", where they could sit, and "my second" is "note" that they could write to their loved ones. If we look at the whole meaning of the charade, we can see that it talks about the close relation that there was between money and marriage. The charade basically says that if a woman heard that the gentleman she wanted to marry did not have money, she would not want to marry him anymore, and her "love" would vanish. With this charade, Jane creates an accurate picture of how the situations were in relation to marriage. Even if this may seem so cold or maybe a bit exaggerated, it was just this way: people were only interested in getting married, especially women from low and middle class, as a way of getting money and a house of their own. This way, women who were the most accomplished and had connections were the more likely to achieve a wealthy marriage. But there was also some criteria to determine which men were the best ones and most desired: their income. It did not really matter if they were ignorant, arrogant or vain, and even if these were seen as negative qualities, their income was far more important.

### **1.3.6 Comparison with the present**

When studying the situation in Jane's era, it is impossible not to compare it to the present. A lot of aspects of our life have changed if we compare the present to the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century, but there are some of the traits of our society that were already established back then.

We can find many things that have changed for the better since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: society has developed and the roles have changed. Education is now available for almost everybody, and the huge differences between the roles in society that men and women play are not so far away now. Women have many more opportunities than they did back then: somewhere in the progress of history we have broken the locks that kept ladies' confined back then.

In relation to marriage, which was a main topic back then, people have stopped marrying for economic reasons, at least in most western countries. Even nowadays is not so common and many couples simply do not get married, something that would have been unimaginable for Jane's contemporaries.

There have also been a lot of inventions and technological improvements since the Industrial Revolution. Life has changed a lot, and depending on our point of view, we can think that things were easier back then with less worries and work, or that are better now with technological advances making our lives easier. But what is obvious is that technology has changed our lives completely in comparison to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, transports are faster and safer now. Another example is communication: now we are constantly in contact with everyone around the world, and we say what we want and it instantly reaches the recipient. Back then they sent letters to everyone, which is almost a lost tradition nowadays.

But even if there have been so many changes in our world in these couple of centuries, there are some things that are still similar or that were originated in that period. For example, one aspect of our society that has remained similar is regarding money: people who have money have power, and this has not changed in over two hundred years. Money is different and even the conception of power has changed, but what has remained is the social structure in which the powerful are the rich. But luckily nowadays there are more possibilities of obtaining money and you can change your position in society classes in an easier way than it used to be. Something else that we can connect to that period is the Industrial Revolution and all of the inventions and discoveries, because it all started in that period, and it led, later on, to technology and advances of the present.

Therefore, it is hard to try to put ourselves in Jane's time, because things have changed a lot. But it is necessary to imagine her time to be able to understand what she writes about, what the problems were. If we make an effort, we can see that the two hundred years that separate our ages still have some aspects in common, and we can relate to some situations and understand them even if so much time has passed. This is the reason why her novels are considered classics: even if her stories are set in a society two hundred years away from ours, their most important characteristic is that they are timeless, which means that people can still relate to those situations and understand what the characters feel. How little must Jane have imagined that her novels, which did not have much recognition in her lifetime, would still be read and recreated so long after they were written.

## 2. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

### 2.1 SUMMARY

The Bennets are a modest country family that live at Longbourn. The family consists of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their five daughters: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Lydia and Kitty. Their estate is entailed, which means that it can only be inherited by a male, but the family does not have any sons, so when Mr. Bennet dies the house and all their property will be for the closest male relative, their cousin Mr. William Collins. The sisters and Mrs. Bennet will be left without a home or any kind of income when this happens. This makes all the family worried, especially Mrs. Bennet, and that is the reason why she desperately wants her daughters to marry well, so that they will have some kind of financial security when Mr. Bennet dies.

The action starts when a really rich young gentleman, Mr. Charles Bingley, comes to live to a house in the neighborhood, Netherfield. This makes Mrs. Bennet really excited, as she hopes to introduce her eldest daughters into the high society, always with the intention of them marrying well. Mr. Bennet contacts the young man, even if he does not agree with her wife in her hopes of marriage-making.

They meet at a ball at Netherfield. At this event, there is also Bingley's even wealthier friend, Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, and Bingley's sisters. Darcy appears really disagreeable to Elizabeth and all the women, when he refuses to dance with her at the ball. He is considered proud and is disliked by most people. On the other hand, Mr. Bingley soon falls in love with Jane, the oldest of the Bennet sisters, and she falls in love with him too.

After this first meeting, Jane is invited to visit the Bingleys, but she gets ill when she is there and she has to stay for a few days. That makes Mrs. Bennet, who made her go there horseback riding under the rain, extremely happy, because she wants her to get closer to Mr. Bingley. Later, Elizabeth walks to Netherfield to take care of her sister. While she is there, Elizabeth makes a good impression on Mr. Darcy, because he sees her caring nature and her intelligence, but she still dislikes him even more, because she is prejudiced against him. Bingley's sisters are not comfortable with Elizabeth because she is from a lower class and does not have money or position. Miss Bingley also dislikes her because she has her own plans to marry Mr. Darcy and she does not want anyone to interfere. After a few days, the Bennet sisters go back home.

Part of the English militia stays near Longbourn, and that is when Elizabeth meets George Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is really friendly towards her. He is the son of Darcy's father's steward. Wickham tells her that he grew up with Darcy and that he was really close to Darcy's father, who let him some money and a parish when he died, but Darcy took the inheritance away from him. That makes Darcy appear not only proud but also cruel in Elizabeth's eyes, who completely believes Wickham's story and is more hostile towards Darcy, while she becomes attached to Wickham.

That is when Mr. Collins visits Longbourn, with the purpose of marrying one of the Bennet sisters. At first, he wants to marry Jane, but Mrs. Bennet makes him change his mind telling him that she is soon to be engaged to Bingley, even if she is not sure of that at all. After this, Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth, but she refuses. This makes Mrs. Bennet really mad, while Mr. Bennet is happy she refused him, and Mr. Collins is truly offended. But he soon recovers and turns his attention to Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte Lucas, who is interested in marrying him to get financial security rather than finding love. They are engaged shortly afterwards, and she leaves with him.

At the beginning of the winter, Bingley and his whole party leave Netherfield to go back to London. That makes Jane extremely sad because Bingley's sister writes a letter to her saying that they do not intend to go back and that she predicts a match between Bingley and Darcy's sister, Georgiana. Jane is resigned, but at the same time, Elizabeth is angry because she thinks that Darcy and Bingley's sisters are trying to keep him away from Jane so that their relationship does not progress and they do not have a chance to get closer. After this, Jane is invited to visit her uncles in London, and she lives there for a few months without Bingley knowing about it.

Elizabeth visits her friend Charlotte and Mr. Collins at her new house in Kent, where he is the clergyman. They live near their patroness, Lady Catherine De Bourgh, who is Darcy's aunt. Elizabeth meets her and her daughter when the Collins are invited to have dinner with them. But Lady Catherine is really rude to Elizabeth, and is constantly asking her many questions and trying to intimidate her. Sometime after Elizabeth's arrival to Kent, Mr. Darcy and his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, visit Lady Catherine. Elizabeth is surprised by Darcy's behavior, who seems to look for her company and seems nicer to her, until one day he asks her to marry him. She refuses, because she is repelled by his pride and she thinks him responsible for Bingley's separation from her sister. A day after the refusal, Darcy sends a letter to Elizabeth, where he explains that he decided to make Bingley go away because he thought that her sister was indifferent towards his friend, and he did not want him to be hurt. He also explains that Wickham had been lying to her, and that he had wanted to marry Darcy's fifteen year old sister only to take her money and run away. This letter makes Elizabeth realize that she had been wrong about Darcy, and that her own pride prejudiced her against him.

After returning home, Elizabeth leaves again, this time on a trip with her uncle and aunt, the Gardiners. They go to Derbyshire County, and they decide to visit Darcy's property, the estate of Pemberley. While they are there, Elizabeth is surprised to hear how well the servants think of Darcy, who unexpectedly arrives to Pemberley. Elizabeth is really embarrassed but he treats the visitors with great hospitality, which surprises the Gardiners, who do not know about their relationship. Darcy even tells Elizabeth that he wants her to meet her sister, Georgiana. All this proves that Darcy's feelings are unchanged since the last time they met, and she is starting to feel the same.

But the visit is suddenly interrupted when Elizabeth receives two letters from Jane telling her about the situation at home: her sister Lydia had been away with some family friends in Brighton, where the militia was staying, and she has escaped with Wickham. This supposes a huge shock for the family, because it was inadequately seen for a family to have an unmarried daughter who ran away, and this meant that the family lost all its respect in their society. But after a long period of uncertainty, in which both Mr. Bennet and Mr. Gardiner look for the couple in London, they find them and they finally get married.

After the wedding, Elizabeth discovers something that was supposed to be kept in secret: Darcy looked for the couple and helped them financially so that Wickham would agree to marry Lydia and the honor of the family and the sisters would be recovered.

Darcy and Bingley visit the Bennets in Longbourn and the latter finally finds courage to ask Jane to marry him. This brings happiness to the Bennet family, especially to Mrs. Bennet, who had wished for this to happen ever since Bingley first moved to Netherfield. The family's happiness is interrupted when Lady Catherine De Bourgh visits Elizabeth: she visits her because she heard rumors of her being engaged to his nephew, and she cannot let that happen because she wants Darcy to marry her daughter. Lady Catherine warns Elizabeth of the imprudence of the match and wants her to promise that she would decline a proposal, but Elizabeth refuses. When Darcy knows about these events, he visits Elizabeth and they express their mutual love and apologies for the past misunderstandings. Both couples marry at the end of the story.

## **2.2 CHARACTERS' ANALYSIS**

### **2.2.1 Elizabeth Bennet:**

Elizabeth Bennet is the second daughter in the Bennet family. She is twenty years old when the action starts. Her physical description is rather short: she is described as pretty, with especially expressive eyes which capture Darcy's attention. But what she stands out the most for is her singular cleverness, wittiness, liveliness, honesty and good sense. Elizabeth also has a critical mind and is confident, both traits displayed in the dialogued interventions: she expresses herself quickly and brilliantly. All of these characteristics make her rise above most people in her society, for example her own family, who are described as rather plain characters.

“To Elizabeth it appeared, that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success (...) That his (Bingley's) two sisters and Mr. Darcy, however, should have such an opportunity of ridiculing her relations was bad enough (...)”

As we can see in this fragment, Elizabeth loves her family but she thinks that sometimes they ridicule themselves in front of other people when trying to make a good impression. But what Elizabeth dislikes is to see how other people, who consider themselves superior to her family, make fun of them, and use this to judge Jane and herself as not good enough for the high society, for example Mr. Darcy and Bingley's sisters at the beginning of the novel.

Also in relation to her family, Elizabeth is always considered Mr. Bennet's favorite child. But this opinion contrasts with Mrs. Bennet's, who thinks something completely different: she says Elizabeth is not as good as her sisters in various aspects. For example, she says that she is not as handsome as Jane or as good-humored as Lydia. But Mr. Bennet defends her favorite daughter by saying that she is the cleverest one and that this is more remarkable than being pretty or good-humored, because these qualities are worthless if the girls are silly. Here is the fragment where Mr. and Mrs. Bennet talk about her daughter:

"Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

Another of Elizabeth's characteristics is her lively personality. She is an observational person, so most of the time she can clearly distinguish the wise from the foolish, and she says that she loves to laugh at absurdities and foolishness:

"I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies *do* divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can."

But the only time when her observation skills fail is when she misjudges Darcy's and Wickham's personalities: she leads from a first impression and makes wrong conclusions on the personality of both of these gentlemen. But in the end she realizes her mistake in judging them and she sees the reality.

Elizabeth is different in her way of thinking too: she does not think of marrying as a main achievement she needs to get, nor she wants to marry well and find a rich husband. She is only interested in marriage if she finds someone she likes and wants to spend the rest of her life with. In fact, she shows a clearly different vision on the topic than the one that was common at that time: she does not think of marriage as a contract only based on money, situation and interest so that both of the

parts can make sure they will have a stable future. She is not interested in financial security or in being acquainted to the high society if this means she has to live an unhappy marriage. This is evidenced when Mr. Collins asks her to marry him: she could have accepted, making her mother happy and making sure that the family estate would still be on their hands when her father died. But Mr. Collins' proposal is only based on his need to find a wife, no matter who it is, and Elizabeth cannot accept such a proposal, because she prefers to become a poor old maid before being caught in an unhappy marriage.

Her rebel position in front of marriage is also made clear when they talk about the usual accomplishments which young ladies were trained in at that time: she does not practice as much as others do only to impress men and find a good husband. In several occasions, when she shows her skills in playing music, it is said that other young ladies are better than her, but she confesses that she is not as interested as them in practicing. She is also critical when talking about accomplishments with Mr. Darcy: when he says that ladies must be trained in so many abilities, and she declares that she thinks it is impossible to find all those qualities in one person, and at the same time she is making fun of his ridiculous standards:

Elizabeth: "I am no longer surprised at your knowing *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*."

Darcy: "Are you so severe upon your own sex, as to doubt the possibility of all this?"

Elizabeth: "I never saw such a woman, I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe, united."

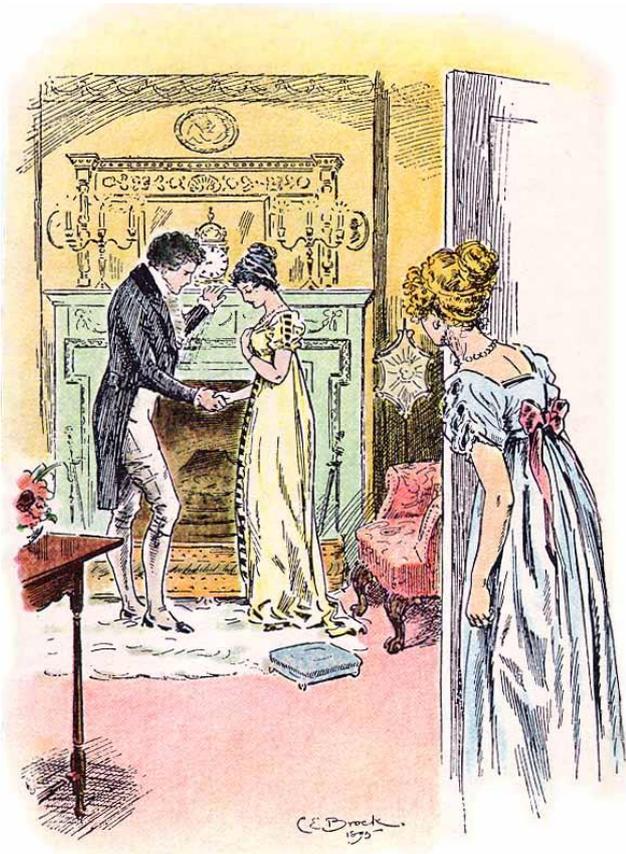
### 2.2.2 Jane Bennet:

Jane is the oldest of the Bennet sisters, she is 22 years old. She is described as the most beautiful of all the sisters, and one of the most beautiful girls in the neighborhood. Jane is Elizabeth's closest friend and confidant. They are together almost all the time that they can, and when they are far away from each other they keep in touch with letters. She is the person Elizabeth trusts the most, and the first one to know about her feelings for Darcy, because they know everything about each other.



13 Drawing of Elizabeth playing the piano for Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam.

Jane's personality contrasts with Elizabeth's. Jane is cheerful, good hearted, gentle, sweet and shy. She is sensible as Elizabeth but not as clever. Jane has always a positive and cheerful opinion about



*14Illustration of Bingley proposing to Jane*

everything and everyone, and this is seen in almost every conversation where she appears: she always sees the good side of the situations and never criticizes anybody, not even in the worse situations. For example when her sister tells her that she thinks Bingley left because her sisters and Darcy want to keep him away from her so that their relationship will not progress, she says that she probably misinterpreted Bingley's signals and that he probably does not like her as much as she thought. When talking about her sister's personality, Elizabeth says the following:

“Oh! you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in any body. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.”

As Elizabeth's confidant, she helps her all along the story, and offers her a positive interpretation of every negative situation in which they are involved.

Her good nature and cheerfulness only bring her one problem: as she is friendly with everyone, Bingley was not sure of her corresponding his feelings. Even if she is in love with him, she does not shown that with her behavior, because she is with him as sweet and nice as she is with everyone else. This is what makes Darcy think Jane is indifferent to his friend, and that is the reason why he takes him away so that he prevents his friend from getting hurt. This is the fragment where Darcy talks about Jane's behavior with Bingley in a letter to Elizabeth:

“Her look and manners were open, cheerful, and engaging as ever, but without any symptom of peculiar regard (...) the serenity of your sister's countenance and air was such as might have given the most acute observer a conviction that, however amiable her temper, her heart was not likely to be easily touched.”

### **2.2.3 Fitzwilliam Darcy:**

Mr. Darcy is a haughty landowner. He is twenty-eight, and he is the son of a wealthy and well-established family. He lives in the Pemberley estate. He is really rich, he gets 10,000 pounds a year. He is described as tall and good looking. He is completely devoted to his younger sister, and he cares about his estate, his tenants and his servants. But his sense of social superiority and his pride offends people. When talking about Darcy's personality, Wickham admits:

“Among those who are at all his equals in consequence, he is a very different man from what he is to the less prosperous. His pride never deserts him; but with the rich, he is liberal-minded, just, sincere, rational, honourable, and perhaps agreeable, -- allowing something for fortune and figure.”

When saying this, Wickham makes Elizabeth see that Darcy is a rational, just and honorable man, but that he has a strong sense of superiority and that he does not consider her his equal, at least at first. But after he gets to know Elizabeth, he starts fancying her. He asks her to marry him, but he dwells more on the unsuitable match she is than on her charms. She rejects him, telling him that he is not a gentleman, and this is what makes him change: he realizes how arrogant and assuming he has been, and he wants to change it. He reflects on why he is that way:

“I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. [...] I was spoiled by my parents, who, though good themselves [...] almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing; to care for none beyond my own family circle; to think meanly of all the rest of the world; to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own.”

The rejection makes him realize that she is right, he has not been a gentleman, it makes him build humility in him, and he is more sensitive to what all people feel. He demonstrates his continued devotion for Elizabeth by rescuing Lydia and going against his aunt's wishes. In the end, he proves himself worthy of Elizabeth, and when she sees how he has changed for good, she changes her mind about him and accepts to get married.

### **2.2.4 Charles Bingley:**

Charles Bingley is Darcy's best friend. He is twenty-two and he is a wealthy landowner who comes from a really rich family. He has two sisters, one married, Mrs. Hurst, and the other one single, Miss Bingley, who wishes to marry Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bingley is defined by his friendliness, cheerfulness and good nature. He is extremely agreeable and he is happy with everything: his personality reminds us of Jane's, who never saw a fault on anybody. When the older Bennet sisters meet him, they describe him as the perfect gentleman:

Jane: "He is what a young man ought to be: sensible, good humoured, lively, and I never saw such happy manners! – So much ease, with such perfect breeding!"

Elizabeth: "He is also handsome, which a young man ought likewise to be, if he possibly can. His character is thereby complete"

When he arrives to the new town, he soon becomes everybody's friend, and everyone thinks highly of him because of his openness and nice temper towards everyone he meets. Bingley and Jane Bennet are perfect for each other, and when they finally get married, Mr. Bennet comments how amiable and generous they both are, and how similar their personalities are:

"I have no doubt that of your doing very well together. Your tempers are by no means unlike. You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income."

Bingley's personality represents a big contrast if we compare it to Darcy's. But in the novel, the narrator tells us about their friendship, and how they get along so well because of their differences: Darcy likes Bingley because of his openness, and because he does what he says, and Bingley likes Darcy because he is clever and has a strong and reliable opinion.

"Between him and Darcy there was a very steady friendship, in spite of a great opposition of character. Bingley was endeared to Darcy by the easiness, openness, and ductility of his temper, (...) On the strength of Darcy's regard Bingley had the firmest reliance, and of his judgment the highest opinion"

### **2.2.5 Mr. Bennet:**

Mr. Bennet is married to Mrs. Bennet and they are parents of five girls. They live in Longbourn, in Hertfordshire. They are a middle class family, owners of land but not wealthy.

Mr. Bennet is an intelligent man, but he is most of the time alone in his library, where he hides and tries to avoid taking an active role in the family. He got married to Mrs. Bennet twenty three years before the action happens, and their marriage has been unhappy, but it was impossible to get divorced at that time. Mr. Bennet was captivated by youth and beauty and he decided to marry her soon after they met. But he soon saw the consequences of this: Mrs. Bennet has an illiberal mind and weak understanding, and this soon resulted in the end of any real affection between them. Their mutual respect and esteem have disappeared, and he usually makes fun of her ignorance. He enjoys books and living in the country.

His personality has to be pointed out: he is sarcastic and witty, and he makes ironic comments almost all the time. He reacts like this because of the ridiculous behavior of his wife, which drives him to

exasperation. He is a sympathetic figure for the readers. He usually does not take situations in his family's life seriously, he has assumed a detached attitude with bursts of sarcastic humor. A couple of examples of these situations are the following:

- When Mrs. Bennet asks him to change Elizabeth's mind to make her marry Mr. Collins, this is what he says to her daughter:

“An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do.”

Here he shows that Elizabeth is her favorite daughter, because he is worried about her future, and he does not want her to be stuck in an unhappy marriage just like it happened to him.



*15 Illustration of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet*

He prefers to risk the rest of his family, who will be left with nothing when he dies, than to sacrifice his favorite girl making her get married to someone who is as ignorant as her own wife and who would make her daughter's life miserable, only to assure financial security for the whole family. As it is characteristic in his interventions, he expresses his ideas with sarcasm and he makes it look as if it is not a serious topic.

- When he writes a letter to Mr. Collins announcing Elizabeth and Darcy's engagement, he says to him:

“I must trouble you once more for congratulations. Elizabeth will soon be the wife of Mr. Darcy. Console Lady Catherine as well as you can. But, if I were you, I would stand by the nephew. He has more to give.”

In this fragment Mr. Bennet's satirical comments are referred to how he was right about her daughter not marrying Mr. Collins, because she will be so much better married to Darcy: she will be happier and she will have a better and more comfortable life. Even if he did not really get involved too much in his daughter's problems, the little advice he gave to her resulted on Elizabeth being a lot better settled than she would be if she had followed her mother's advice.

## 2.2.6 Mrs. Bennet:

Mrs. Bennet's name is never mentioned, but we know she is the daughter of a lawyer from Meryton, Mr. Gardiner. She is the mother of the five Bennet sisters, and she has been married to Mr. Bennet for more than twenty years, so we can guess she is in her forties.

What is more characteristic of Mrs. Bennet is her ignorance and her silly personality: "She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper". This is displayed with almost everything she does, but the fact that most represents her weak understanding is her obsession to get her five daughters married. This is all she wants and all she lives for. The novel starts with Mrs. Bennet telling her husband to introduce himself to Bingley so that they have a chance to get one of their daughters married to him; and by the time the story ends she is extremely happy to have three of her daughters married. This character is a caricature that brings a lot of comic situations to the novel, because her behavior turns out to be ridiculous most of the time. One of these comical situations that appears all along the book is when she fancies herself nervous when she is dissatisfied with something:

``Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

She is the one that encourages Lydia to go to Brighton to follow the militia, even if that is not the best option for her daughter, which is the reason why she is able to run away with Wickham. She also pushes Elizabeth to make her marry Mr. Collins, showing her insensitivity in front of her daughter's aversion to a loveless marriage.

She is the character that exemplifies the most the first and probably most famous quote of the novel:

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."

She truly believes in this statement, and if all the single men who have good fortune want wives, her task is to be there and make her daughters become the wives of any rich men she can find. This is the reason why she is so happy when she knows about the new neighbors coming



16 Illustration of Mrs. Bennet's excitement when she hears about Darcy's income

to Netherfield, and why she is so surprised and delighted when she hears about the new neighbor's income. But her behavior in these situations makes her look ridiculous.

Her most desired dream is to marry all her daughters well, but she does not worry about their future lives and whether they will be happy married to someone they do not want to be with. But this is exactly what happened to her: she got married when she was young and now all the affection and respect in the marriage is gone, but they cannot get divorced. She is trapped in an unhappy marriage with a husband that makes fun of her most of the time, but she does not seem to want a different future for her daughters. So she dedicates all her time to plan and perform ridiculous strategies to try to get their daughters married. For example: she makes Jane go on horseback to Netherfield instead of carriage when she knows it's about to rain so that she has to stay there with Bingley for a few days.

### 2.2.7 Lydia Bennet:

Lydia is the youngest of the Bennet sisters, she is fifteen years old. She is the one who most takes after her mother. She is good humoured, emotional, immature and impulsive. She acts without thinking and she flirts with all the gentlemen and officers. Her personality combined with irresponsible

parents results in Lydia running away with Wickham. This brings disrespect for the whole family in front of society, but Lydia is not aware of it. She ends up marrying Wickham

Something important about how she has been raised up is particularly strange. At that time, there was a whole etiquette about women being allowed to "come out" in public, which meant that they were eligible for marriage. This was usually when girls were around seventeen or eighteen years old, but younger sisters had to wait until the older ones were married. But in the Bennets' case, we know that Mrs. Bennet "had brought (Lydia) into public at an early age". This is probably the reason why she flirts with everyone, does not know how to behave properly and runs away with the first officer that appears to be interested in her. The Bennets are criticized by Lady Catherine when she knows that they did not follow the tradition with their girls:



*17 Illustration of Lydia Showing off her ring after getting married*

“What, all five out at once? Very odd! The younger ones out before the elder are married!”

But for Lydia, disrespecting her family and getting married with Wickham, who is forced to do so, is not a problem at all, probably because she does not think about it. When she goes back home after getting married, she shows all her sisters how proud she is of being married. She even acts like she is superior because she is a married woman before her older sisters, and says that she can find husbands for them.

### **2.2.8 Charlotte Lucas:**

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's best friend, and their families are neighbors. She is introduced as a “sensible, intelligent young woman, about twenty-seven”. She is not married, and at that age, she is considered already too old to find a good husband, because she is not particularly pretty nor rich. That is the reason why she is led to marry Mr. Collins, the Bennet's cousin, who is ignorant and will not make her happy. But she knows that he is probably her last chance to marry, and she wants to leave her parents' house to be established in her own home, so she flirts with Mr. Collins after Elizabeth has rejected him and they are soon engaged. This shows how truly limited the possibilities were for women at that time: their only way of having their own house, being respected and having money was getting married. A curious fact is that she married a man who is younger than her, and that was uncommon in that era, because even if Mr. Collins behaves like he was an old man, he is only twenty-five.

In one of her conversations with Elizabeth, Charlotte gave her opinion on happiness in marriage:

“Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar before-hand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. (...) and it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life.”

This comment shows the reason why she does not mind getting married to Mr. Collins: Charlotte knows she does not have many possibilities, and that she will not be happy anyway if she stays at her parents' home and becomes a poor old maid, so she prefers to get married to him. Elizabeth does not understand her point of view, but she respects her way of managing her household and her ability to avoid Mr. Collins as much as possible when they are at home.

In another moment, Charlotte explains her reasons to marry Mr. Collins to Elizabeth:

“I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connection, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state.”

She tells her that she only wants a comfortable home of her own, not her parents', because she wants some sort of independence, and this was the best they could hope for at that time. That is why she says that her chances of happiness with him are high, even if she knows that she will not be happy to spend the rest of her life with a man like him, but that his situation and connections will let her live a comfortable life, and that is enough for her. This contrasts with Elizabeth's idea, because she prefers not to marry at all before being in an unhappy marriage, but it also helps Elizabeth realize that not everybody desires the same sort of life.

Charlotte's situation is much more common than Elizabeth's one. While Elizabeth's marriage is work of a romantic fiction, Charlotte's is a mirror of reality which shows the situation most women at that time were most likely to face. Even if this kind of marriages were not what all women wanted, they had to get married in situations like Charlotte's one so that they did not end being poor and alone.

### 3. EMMA

#### 3.1 Summary:

Emma Woodhouse is a young and rich twenty one year old woman who lives in a comfortable home, Hartfield, with her father, in the village of Highbury. Her mother died when she was really young, and she was brought up by her governess, Miss Taylor. Miss Taylor was with the Woodhouse family for sixteen years, but she just got married to their neighbor, Mr. Weston. Emma and her father are sad to lose Miss Taylor, who is also one of their closest friends, but the two families stay very close in touch. Emma claims that she made Miss Taylor's match with Mr. Weston possible, and that without her help they would not be married. She is now alone at home with her father, because her sister Isabella has been married to Mr. John Knightley for some years and lives in London with her children, so she only makes some visits to the family.

An old friend of the family, neighbor and Emma's brother-in-law, Mr. George Knightley, usually visits the Woodhouses, and he tells Emma that he does not think she made the Westons' marriage possible, but she insists on her great match-making skills, even if these supposed the loss of her close friend.

Some days later, Emma meets Miss Harriet Smith: a pretty seventeen year old girl who goes to Mrs. Goddard's Private Boarding School. Emma becomes really interested in this young girl, because even if she has no potential as a friend for Emma, she is a distraction for her from the loss of Miss Taylor's company. Emma decides to improve Harriet's character and manners to introduce her to the high society of Highbury, where Emma belongs and where she thinks Harriet would suit if she follows her advice. Emma insists on saying that Harriet's parents must be genteel, even if no one knows who they are. They soon become friends, and they spend a lot of time together.

Determined to improve Harriet, Emma discourages her from being close friends with Robert Martin, a farmer whom Harriet is in love with. Later, Emma starts planning to match her pretty friend with Mr. Elton, the young clergyman, who has a respectable spot in her society. To try to bring Harriet and Mr. Elton together, Emma draws a picture of Harriet, and Mr. Elton admires it so much and takes it to London to get it framed. Meanwhile, Harriet receives a letter from Robert Martin asking her to marry him, but Emma discourages her from accepting, and even helps her to write a denial, but she fools her friend to make it look like it was her own decision. Mr. Knightley and Emma have an argument because he thinks Robert Martin is good for Harriet, even better than her, so he is completely against what she did to separate them. Emma believes that Harriet and Mr. Elton are starting to have mutual regard, and she makes her friend believe so. She also tells her that she will never marry.

At Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. John Knightley come from London to visit the Woodhouses with their five children. On Christmas' Eve, they all go to Randalls, the Westons' house, for dinner. Mr. Knightley and Mr. Elton are also invited. The party's conversation turns to Frank Churchill, Mr. Elton's son from a previous marriage, who went to live with his uncle when his mother died and took the uncle's last name. They talk about why he has not visited his recently remarried father, but Mr. Weston surprises everyone when he tells them that he received a letter from Frank saying that he will visit them soon. Emma thinks that if she wanted to marry, Frank would suit her in age, situation and character.

It is a bad snowing day, so Mr. Woodhouse wants to leave early, and he is joined by Isabella and Mr. John Knightley. Emma has to go home in another carriage with Mr. Elton. While they are alone in the carriage he declares his love for her. She is really surprised by this and she refuses him and tells him that she thought he fancied Harriet. But he is also surprised by this and he declares he never thought of Harriet other than Emma's friend. After this situation, they are all confined at their respective houses because of the snow. The Knightleys go back to London, and Mr. Woodhouse receives a note from Mr. Elton saying that he is leaving to visit Bath. When Emma meets Harriet again, she has to announce to her the disappointing news about Mr. Elton and she blames herself for being wrong about Mr. Elton and tries to comfort her friend.

Some time later, Emma visits Mrs. and Miss Bates, and they tell her that Jane Fairfax will visit them next week, after a long time away. The Bateses are Emma's neighbors, who are poor but respected by everybody, and Jane is the Bates' granddaughter and niece. Her parents died when she was young and she was adopted by a friend of his father, Colonel Campbell. He gave her education and access to a higher society, which she would not have got if she had stayed with the Bates. Emma disliked Jane before meeting her, and when they meet Emma thinks she is elegant but too reserved, because she does not share her opinions and anecdotes with the rest of people, and that is viewed negatively.

One day, they receive news of Mr. Elton, who is going to get married after only four weeks of being away. They only know that he will marry a young and rich woman who is called Miss Hawkins, and a lot of rumors are created around her. Harriet visits Emma again and she tells her that she just met Robert Martin and one of his sisters in town, but Emma tries to make her forget about him by telling her about Mr. Elton's engagement.

Frank Churchill finally visits the Westons. Emma thought highly of him before meeting him, but he seems to live up to his reputation: he is good looking, lively and agreeable. Emma is pleased with the new acquaintance, but George Knightley does not like him so much. Everybody thinks that a match between Emma and Frank would be really nice. They all attend a dinner at the Coles' house, where Franks sits near Emma and he agrees with her when she hints about a relationship Jane might have had in the past, and who supposedly sent her a piano.

After this dinner, the Westons and Frank decide to prepare a ball, with Emma's help. But everything is stopped when he has to go back with the Churchills because Mrs. Churchill's illness got worse. Before leaving, Frank visits the Bateses and the Woodhouses, and he leaves Emma convinced that he is in love with her, even if she can only picture herself refusing him, because she does not think he is necessary for her happiness.

Meanwhile, the recently married couple is back, and Augusta Elton is introduced to everyone. Emma thinks Augusta is vain, overly talkative and insufferable. Augusta soon becomes Jane's close friend, and the first wants to find a job as governess for Jane.

Two months later, Frank returns and Emma realizes that she has no attachment to him, even if she thought so before. They celebrate the ball they had been planning before he left. Everybody attends and they all dance except for George Knightley. But he ends up dancing with Harriet when she doesn't have a partner because Mr. Elton refuses to dance with her, and he also dances the last dance of the night with Emma.

The next day, Harriet is attacked by the gypsies and Frank rescues her. This makes Emma think that something may be possible between Frank and her pretty friend, but she decides to not interfere this time. Some days later, in one of Harriet's visits to Emma, she tells her that she has moved on from Mr. Elton, and that she is interested in someone above her. Emma is sure that she talks about Frank, and she encourages her. Meanwhile, George Knightley suspects that there is something between Frank and Jane, but Emma does not think so.

In June, they all go on a picnic to Box Hill. Emma and Frank flirt, but she is over him and he asks her to find a wife for him, which in her mind is clearly a hint referring to Harriet. Mr. and Mrs. Elton do not get along really well with the rest of the party, and Jane appears bothered. Emma is rude to Miss Bates, and Mr. Knightley reproaches it to Emma, saying that she should not be so unfeeling to Miss Bates, who is poor and has lost all the comforts she had, and this should secure Emma's compassion. His comments make her realize how cruel she has been to Miss Bates and she feels terrible about it. The following day she visits her to apologize, and they tell her that Jane will be leaving soon to work as a governess. Frank has to leave immediately because of Mrs. Churchill's illness, who dies a few days later.

Ten days later, the Westons receive a letter from Frank, explaining that he and Jane had been secretly engaged for some time, but that they feared Mrs. Churchill would not let them marry because of her situation. Mrs. Weston tells the news to Emma, and she is worried about her feeling something for Frank, but she assures that she does not. Instead, she thinks of Harriet and is sorry for her and angry at herself for having encouraged her. But at the same time, she is happy for Jane, who now thinks of as her equal, and angry at Frank for having lied to everyone and kept the secret for so long that Jane almost had to work as a governess.

The next time she meets with Harriet and tells her about the engagement, fearing that she will be upset, Harriet tells her that she was not in love with Frank but with George Knightley. This is dreadful for Emma, who realizes that she wants Mr. Knightley to marry no one but herself. When Harriet leaves, Emma thinks about it and realizes that she has always thought Mr. Knightley superior and has never really been attached to Frank. She fears that he may correspond Harriet's feelings, and regrets having taken Harriet away from Martin and encouraged her to aim higher.

When Mr. Knightley comes back from a trip to London and visits Emma, they walk together: first in silence and then they speak about Frank and Jane's engagement. He means to console her, but she confesses that she has never felt anything for Frank. This leads Knightley to finally confess his love for Emma. She is really happy about this and confesses her feelings too, but she fears they cannot marry while her father lives, because she has to take care of him and she cannot leave him.

Later, a letter arrives from Frank, explaining everything that happened with Jane, justifying himself and expressing regret. This makes him good again to Emma and George's eyes. Emma is worried about Harriet's reaction to the engagement, but she is in London. When Emma first tells her father about it, he is shocked and tries to dissuade her. But he is finally persuaded thanks to Isabella, George and Mrs. Weston, who insist and convince him. Everyone is surprised by the match but they think they make a great couple.

One day, George tells Emma that Harriet and Martin are engaged: he went to London and he was still in love with her, so he proposed again and this time she accepted. Emma is now surprised but happy for her friend. When Emma and Harriet finally meet again, Harriet confesses that she's always liked Martin, and that his perseverance was irresistible to her. Something else also surprising is known: Harriet's father identity is revealed, he is a wealthy tradesman.

Out of the three engagements, Robert and Harriet are the first ones to get married. A while after this, some houses in the neighborhood are robbed, and this makes Mr. Woodhouse change his mind about the marriage, because if George is married to Emma and lives with them he will be protected at home. They are the next ones to get married, and they are followed by Frank and Jane.

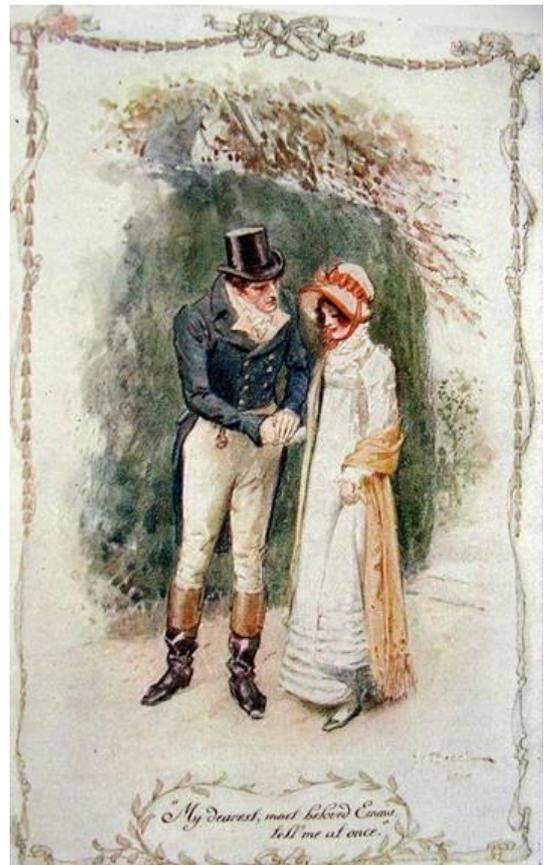
## **3.2 CHARACTERS' ANALYSIS**

### **3.2.1 Emma Woodhouse:**

Emma Woodhouse is described as "handsome, clever and rich, with a comfortable home and a happy disposition". She lives with her father, Mr. Woodhouse, in Highbury. She is clever, independent, generous and caring, and we see this in the way she behaves with her father, her family and the poor families she visits.

Emma is the top of the social pyramid in Highbury. She organizes society, and she is involved in all the events that happen there: she is always invited and she usually organizes or is asked to help. She is one of the most influential people in town, everyone asks for her opinion and trusts her judgment. As the “queen” in her society, she feels that it is her duty to remind everyone of where they stand on the social scale, and she has a competitor when Mrs. Elton comes to town, because she thinks that she is in the same level as our main character. Her sense of differentiation of the different social classes is clear, but at the same time, her good intentions make her put Harriet in a higher level than the one she belongs to.

But the narrator warns us that Emma possesses “the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself”: her vanity and her stubbornness are the causes of the problems in the novel.



*18* Drawing of Emma and Knightley, by C. E. Brock in 1909

Emma is never vain about her looks, but her ego is a bit too high because of her cleverness. She understands the society she lives in and most people who she knows, but the problem is that her imagination goes too far: she always imagines love affairs that have no basis on reality. This is what she does several times with Harriet, and the main conflict in the novel. Her personality is split between her expert understanding of social situations and a complete blindness to reality when it comes to her imagination.

But Emma’s imagination always sticks to love situations. That is because in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, women did not really have many options: as I already commented earlier, they could not have jobs nor property, so Emma does not imagine owing land or working in anything, because that was impossible just because she was a woman. So she sticks to the topics that she can realistically control, and matchmaking is one of them. She is smart enough to know that her possibilities are limited. With her, Austen shows us how even the women who best positioned in society at that time did not have many possibilities.

So as I just said, one of the main features that characterize Emma is her determination to act as a matchmaker. She enjoys bringing people together and finds love in everyone but herself: during all the action, she imagines a lot of romances, which in most cases do not succeed, but she never thinks about herself in a love relationship until the end, when she realizes she is in love with Mr. Knightley.

Her opinion at the beginning is that she will never get married, because she is rich. She does not need to marry like most women at that time, whose only reason to do so was to make sure they had money and a house of their own. She does not need that, so she never thinks of love and marriage as something related to herself, and she explains to Harriet very soon in the novel that she has no intention to get married.

She discovers her feelings for Mr. Knightley when she sees that she may lose him, when she realizes that he may get married to someone else. In this situation, she even gives up on her vision of him as a husband, because in case she cannot marry him, she prefers to just continue as friends rather than not being able to see him as much as she is used to:

"Let him but continue the same Mr. Knightley to her and her father, the same Mr. Knightley to all the world; let Donwell and Hartfield lose none of their precious intercourse of friendship and confidence, and her peace would be fully secured."

But in the end, they get married. Their feelings are based on their mutual respect, and their love is really similar to friendship. The relationship between the two has been stable: Mr. Knightley has always been there for her, visiting her and arguing with her, but the most important thing is that Mr. Knightley is Emma's "reality check". He always helps her to see reality when she is in her imagination, and she uses him as the standard of good behavior, because he is the best and most admirable gentleman she knows.

When it comes to her family, Emma always shows her love for them. She is really close to her father: she lives with him, takes care of him and eases her worries about illnesses and thieves. She cares so much about him that he decides not to get married until he dies, because she cannot imagine to leave him alone after her sister and Mrs. Weston have left. She is loyal to him and loves him unconditionally. She is also really close to her sister and brother-in-law, and enjoys looking after her nephews and spending time with them. Mrs. Weston, her governess, is also a part of the family, and she trusts her and respects her more than anyone, because she is like the mother she never had.

### **3.2.2 Mr. George Knightley:**

George Knightley is a very wealthy landowner, neighbor and old friend of the Woodhouse family. He is thirty-seven years old. He has known Emma since she was a child, and his brother is married to Emma's sister. He is the oldest son of his family, so he has inherited the family estate, Donwell Abbey, which is the largest in Highbury.

Ever since the beginning, Mr. Knightley is introduced as the perfect English gentleman. He is a model of good sense: he is honest with everyone but has tact and a kind heart, so he does not hurt them when expressing his opinion with honesty. He is intelligent and uses his cleverness to identify the

right moral conduct and help the others. Just like Emma, he stands out in comparison to the rest of the characters. In all of the novel, we can depend on his judgment to form our opinion on the other character's behavior and personality, because he is the one with the best sense and gives us the most trustworthy point of view. He is sympathetic and protective with the women in the community, especially with Emma, even if he disapproves of his behavior most of the time.

At first, Knightley's relationship with Emma was more similar to a brother and sister's, but somewhere in the course of the novel, this changes. However, George does not realize her feelings for Emma until he fears that he may have direct competition for her: Frank Churchill is disliked by him before they even meet, because even if he does not initially see it, he is jealous of Emma's regard for his rival.

With his love for Emma, Knightley behaves in an uncharacteristic way: he cannot control his feelings and he acts following impulses. This is why he runs away to London instead of directly expressing his feelings to Emma. But when he comes back, he finally tells her and he is corresponded. All along, Knightley has been Emma's model and influence, just like Mrs. Weston, and he helps her to moderate her impulsive personality and her tendency to distance her imagination from reality.

In the end of the action, we see how much he cares about Emma and how much he desires to marry her as soon as possible: he decides to move to Hartfield with her and her father so that she is able to marry without abandoning her father. This may not seem really important, but it is: he gives up his property to go to live to a smaller one, even if it is large and respectable too, and this may suppose a sacrifice in his social position, but he probably does not mind as long as he is able to be with Emma.

### **3.2.3 Harriet Smith:**

Harriet Smith is a seventeen years old woman who is studying at Mrs. Goddard's Private Boarding School. She is the "natural daughter of nobody knows whom", meaning that she is an illegitimate daughter and her parents do not want to take care of her, so they dropped her off at that school, which they pay for her. Emma adopts Harriet as a project to improve her, and they soon become friends. Emma thinks she comes from a genteel family and that she deserves to be among the high society.

Harriet is described as a really pretty young woman. She is humble but also ignorant. Harriet seems unable to finish a thought or a sentence without Emma's help, but that is perfectly convenient for Emma, who is able to make her do whatever she wants and even manipulate her mind. Here we have an example, when Harriet receives Mr. Martin's proposal and wants to know what Emma's opinion is:

"Oh! no, I am sure you are a great deal too kind to—but if you would just advise me what I had best do—No, no, I do not mean that—As you say, one's mind ought to be quite made up—One should not be hesitating—It is a very serious thing.—It will be safer to say "No" perhaps.—Do you think I had better say "No?""

In this situation, Harriet's opinion is completely changed by what Emma thinks is better for her: not marrying Mr. Martin, even if Harriet initially was delighted and wanted to marry him. But she is insecure and lets Emma guide her, even if she takes her in the opposite direction of her intentions.



19 Harriet and Robert Martin, by C.E. Brock 1909

attention to the honest, well written, ingenious and loving letter, she is only worried that it may be too short. A curious fact is that we can relate this to Jane Austen's novels: the critics said her novels were too short compared to her contemporaries, and here she is referring to the critics by saying that shortness can be brilliant, and if they do not appreciate works because of their length, they are being ignorant like Harriet is.

However, at the end of the novel, the social order is reestablished: even if Harriet fancied Mr. Knightley, she is not really upset when he decides to marry Emma, because she marries Mr. Martin as soon as he proposes again.

Later, Emma convinces her pretty friend to fall in love with Mr. Elton, which she easily does, but when Mr. Elton shows that he is not the least interested on Harriet, it is hard to make her forget about him. Emma thinks she can find a gentleman who wants to marry Harriet, because she defends that men only look for pretty wives, not intelligent ones so she thinks that Harriet does not need to change to get a good husband. This is the reason for one of her arguments with Mr. Knightley.

Another of Harriet's traits is her lack of judgment:

"It was short, but expressed good sense, warm attachment, liberality, propriety, even delicacy of feeling. [Emma] paused over it, while Harriet stood anxiously watching for her opinion, with a "Well, well," and was at last forced to add, "Is it a good letter? or is it too short?"

This fragment gives us an idea of Harriet's ignorance and poor taste: she does not pay

### 3.2.4 Mr. Woodhouse:

Mr. Woodhouse is Emma and Isabella's father, and the patriarch of Hartfield, the Woodhouses estate. This estate is only surpassed in Highbury by Mr. Knightley's estate. Mr. Woodhouse's main traits are his hypochondria, his nervousness and his physical weakness. He is always worried about his health and the other people's health, and he is constantly talking to the town's doctor, Mr. Perry, who seems to be visiting them all the time, because Mr. Woodhouse panics if he fears that food, drizzle or breeze may make him sick. He dislikes big parties, he likes to be only with a close circle of friends, and he also dislikes late nights. He always shares his worries and fears with his family and friends, who try to accommodate him as much as they can.

Here there is a fragment of the novel in which we can clearly see Mr. Woodhouse's worries. He is the host of a social reunion and he is worried about all of his hosts' health, warning them to not eat too much but telling them not to worry about the food they are serving:

"Mrs. Bates, let me propose your venturing on one of these eggs (...) but you need not be afraid, they are very small, you see—one of our small eggs will not hurt you. Miss Bates, let Emma help you to a little bit of tart—a very little bit (...) You need not be afraid of unwholesome preserves here. I do not advise the custard. Mrs. Goddard, what say you to half a glass of wine? A small half-glass, put into a tumbler of water? I do not think it could disagree with you."

Even if he tends to panic and he is really nervous, Mr. Woodhouse is not selfish, and he is worried about his friends as much as he is worried about his own health. He is friendly and really attached to his daughter Emma: she's the one that takes care of him, humors him and tries to keep him busy with visits of family and friends and many social events.

His personality makes him a laughable character. In most of Austen's novels, her heroines have ridiculous families, as we have already seen with Mr. and Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, therefore, Emma could not be different.

Another of his main traits is his opposition to marriage, because he is very resistant to changes. He advises everyone not to marry. Even if he is



20 *Emma and her father*, by C. E. Brock, 1909

always against marriage, he is unaware of them before the couple is engaged, because he does not pay much attention to anything that is not directly related to his health and comfort. This is how Emma expresses his father's opinion:

"Though always objecting to every marriage that was arranged, he never suffered beforehand from the apprehension of any; it seemed as if he could not think so ill of any two persons' understanding as to suppose they meant to marry till it were proved against them."

The reason for his opposition to marriage is because when people he cares about get married, for example his daughter Isabella and Emma's governess, Miss Taylor, who he is unhappy to see married; things change. He is also worried that if they get married they may not be as good as they were with him, but what he is really worried about is that they may not spend so much time looking after him. In the end, he also opposes to Emma and Knightley's marriage, but his fear of thieves is stronger than his aversion to marriage, so he is happy with the marriage as long as they do not leave him.

### **3.2.5 Isabella Knightley:**

Isabella Knightley is the eldest daughter of Mr. Woodhouse. She has been married for several years to Mr. John Knightley, George's brother. She lives in London with her husband and her five children.

Isabella is a devoted wife, a doting mother and a loving daughter and sister. She is everything that women were supposed to be: devoted to all of her family, dependent and not remarkably bright. She is a minor character, but she is important to us because even if she is described as the perfect woman, the novel implicitly prefers Emma's independence and cleverness. She is a tool that Jane Austen uses to prove that the ideal woman at that time might not be the best, and even if she does not completely break the rules, because in the end Emma gets married, but her main character provides a significant contrast to the ideal of her period.

### **3.2.6 Mrs. Weston (formerly Miss Taylor):**

Mrs. Weston has been Emma's governess for sixteen years, and she has lived with the Woodhouse family all this time. She has earned Mr. Woodhouse's affection and Emma's love and respect. At the beginning of the novel she gets married to Mr. Weston and moves in with him. This supposes an important change: she goes from being a governess, which was not really well seen because in most situations it meant that they could not find a husband and they had to work because their families could not afford to maintain them; to a place of social prominence in Highbury next to her husband. Mr. Woodhouse keeps referring to her as "poor Miss Taylor" because of his opposition to marriage, and he seems to be the only one not to realize that she has achieved an incredible change in her

situation, which was uncommon at that time. She has always been a kind and wonderful woman, who has the respect of everybody in Highbury.

Mrs. Weston is important because she is a sort of mother figure for Emma: she has taught her, she listens to all of Emma's problems and gives her advice. They are close friends, and she worries about Emma and takes care of her like she was her own daughter. She is generous and wise, and along with Mr. Knightley, she is the model of right conduct for Emma and helps her to see reality. Maybe Emma does not listen to her as much as she listens to Mr. Knightley, but she undoubtedly trusts her and wants her advice. For example, when Emma realizes her feelings for Mr. Knightley, the first one she talks to about them is Mrs. Weston.

### 3.2.7 Miss Bates:

Miss Bates is a sweet, generous, kind and friendly woman. She lives with her mother, Mrs. Bates, and is devoted to take care of her. Even if she is not married, pretty, clever or rich, everybody respects and admires her because of her cheerfulness and grateful spirit, even if she does not have much. She considers herself really lucky, because even if they are in a rough economic situation, she feels like she is surrounded by great neighbors and friends, and that is enough for her. She is popular and a friend of everyone in Highbury because she has a heart of gold: she is interested in everybody's happiness and admires everyone's merits. Here is her first description by the narrator:



21 Emma's visit to Mrs. and Miss Bates house, C. E. Brock, 1909

“She had never boasted either beauty or cleverness. Her youth had passed without distinction, and her middle of life was devoted to the care of a failing mother, and the endeavour to make a small income go as far as possible. And yet she was a happy woman, and a woman whom no one named without good-will. It was her own universal good-will and contented temper which worked such wonders. (...) The simplicity and cheerfulness of her nature, her contented and grateful spirit, were a recommendation to everybody and a mine of felicity to herself.”

The most prominent trait of her personality is her talkative nature. They all think she speaks too much, but everyone respects her. She loves gossip and always compliments everyone. At the beginning, they say that she is an old friend of the Woodhouse

family, and that she visits them a lot. It is said that she “was a great talker upon little matters, which exactly suited Mr. Woodhouse, full of trivial communications and harmless gossip”.

Miss Bates is always kind and forgiving, because even when Emma insults her, saying that she cannot limit the amount of dull things she says, and then regrets it, she is willing to forgive Emma and accept her as she did before.

Miss Bates is the representation in the novel of what happens to women who did not get married: they were destined to be poor and live of charity, always depending on others. We are told that she grew up in a genteel family, and that when her father and brother died, she and her mother were left with nothing. Her niece, Jane Fairfax, is an orphan who was adopted by one of her father’s friends, because her aunt and grandmother could not afford to take care of her. She is really proud of her niece and is really happy when she visits them.

It is a hard life for them, because they have not always lived like this, but their lives are not so bad because they have their neighbors’ respect and friendship. Moreover, we never hear Miss Bates complaining about her rough life or being sad because of her situation. Here, Austen proves to us that even if old single maids were condemned to poverty, and in most situations also disrespected (though not in Miss Bates’ situation), it did not mean they could not be happy that way.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

With all the information I have gathered, I can conclude that the hypothesis was right: Jane Austen does reflect herself on many ways in her novels. After studying the two novels, her biography and the situation in her era, to help me understand the context in which she wrote the books, I can clearly say that she reflected many different aspects of her life on her characters and also the situations which they live and how they live them.

Now, on to the main topic, I will analyze the main and more relevant similarities I have found between Jane's life and situation and those of her characters.

The first and most outstanding connection between her life and her novels I have found is the presence and importance of the sisters' characters. In both novels I have read we can see that the heroine has a sister, who is close to her and whom she trusts. The sisters are a source of security and acceptance for the main characters. It is obvious that this important role of the sisterly figure is inspired by Jane Austen's sister, Cassandra. We already know that they were the only two sisters in the Austen family and that they lived together all their lives and shared everything, so that is the reason why Jane probably wanted to portray her beloved sister in her novels. In *Pride and Prejudice* the sister is represented by Jane Bennet, and in *Emma* the sister figure is Isabella Knightley. I observed more of a connection between Cassandra Austen and Jane Bennet: they are living with their sisters, sharing secrets, sending letters and always helping each other. Jane Bennet is represented as the nicest, best hearted, and most cheerful woman, and it is probable that Jane Austen thought that her sister was that way, even if we do not have much evidence to rely on, because our main source, which is the letters they exchanged, was partially burnt. As we see this clear connection between Cassandra and Jane Bennet, I think Isabella Knightley does not resemble the author's sister as much. She is portrayed as a loving and devoted wife and mother, but she is not so close to her sister because she is married and they are separated, so their relationship is not as important as the Bennet's and the Austen's sisters relationships. I think the presence of the sister figure is always important for the author and so it is still there in *Emma*, which was written after *Pride and Prejudice*. But Isabella is a less important character in comparison to Jane in *Pride and Prejudice*, what is important is that she represents a sister figure too, but that we can find the real representation of the sisterly love and closeness in the Bennet sisters more than in the Woodhouse sisters.

Moving to another one of the connections we can find, there is the topic of the family. We know that the Austen's family was close and they all had a good relationship: the atmosphere at their home was inspiring and encouraging for Jane, the Austen women lived together during all their lives and the brothers helped them economically when Mr. Austen died and they were left with very little money. In both of the novels I have read the families of the main character are important in the story.

Mr. and Mrs. Austen are both described as good parents, who took care of their children and wanted them to be happy. He was described as intelligent and calm and she was witty and astute. At first, this description does not seem to match the Bennets or Mr. Woodhouse. But we can connect them too: Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Woodhouse all worry about their daughters in their own way (one being distanced but listening to them, the other desperately wanting them to get married and the latter warning her about all his fears), even if it may seem ridiculous. This is one of the aspects of the families that Jane Austen describes that is usually there and which would not match her own family: in her stories, they all seem ridiculous families, different from the Austen family, who seemed to be calmed, cultivated and respectable. This is a resource used by Jane to make the families in the novels more interesting to the reader. Especially with the fathers, if I disregard their ridiculousness, I can see a resemblance with the few things I know about Mr. Austen. For example, they are all worried about their children: Mr. Austen encouraged Jane to do what she liked, Mr. Bennet seemed indifferent except when it came to Elizabeth, and Mr. Woodhouse was as worried for her daughter's happiness as for his own health. All of the father figures are also characterized by their intelligence, just like Mr. Austen, and Mr. Bennet also shares his calmness of temper. Another trait that shows us how close Jane was to her family, is her depiction of the male characters in the book. She knew about the main jobs gentlemen were occupied with at that time because of her close relationship to her brothers and his father, who were businessmen, clergymen and militia officers. That close relationship to her family makes her male characters be inspired by what she knew about her family's men's occupations. To sum up, the family concept had a lot of importance in Jane's life and this is captured in her novels.

Another subject which was really relevant in Jane's time was marriage: as I have already explained earlier, marriage was really important as it was a way of getting financial security for the old age and a way for women to have their own home away from their families. It was crucial in relation to money, and families wanted their daughters to get married with the wealthiest gentleman they could find that would accept them. But Jane's life was not this way: she never got married, and her parents did not force her to do so, or at least it is not known. Except for her brief relationship with Tom Lefroy, the acceptance of a marriage which she declined the day after, and her friend Mrs. Anne Lefroy trying to pair Jane with a Reverend who was Anne's friend, Jane did not have many romances in her life. It was really unusual for a women of her situation to be unmarried, but it seems like her parents did not want to force her into an unhappy marriage and relied on her brothers to economically take care of her. These few experiences she had can barely be related to the huge amount of romances in her novels, except for some, like the similarity in Mr. Collins wanting to marry Elizabeth and the Reverend, friend of Mrs. Anne Lefroy, trying to get married with Jane. The separation of the lovers in her novels is another trait that could be connected to her personal experience in both herself and her sister: she had something with Tom Lefroy but they got separated and never saw each other again, and her sister's fiancé went to war and died. For example, in the novels, we can find these

situations when Elizabeth and Darcy are far away after she refuses her proposal, and it is also seen with Bingley and Jane and Emma and Knightley.

Something that represents an important contrast between her life and her novels is marriage: in the two novels I have read, practically all of the characters are married by the end of the novel, but she never got married. She became an old maid, which was seen as a dreadful situation, because it brought economic dependence and disrespect. This topic is touched in *Emma*, in two different ways. The first one is that Jane Austen would be in a similar position to Miss Bates, both old maids without much money, who live with their mothers and live depending on the money the others give to them. Miss Bates is an extreme version of what would have happened to Jane if her brothers had not been there. But Miss Bates is not miserable, she is happy even if she is not married and she is Jane's way of proving that they did not have to be married to be happy, even if the money a marriage brought could have changed their situations a lot. Even if Jane's situation is closely related to Miss Bates, her thoughts are expressed using Emma's mouth. Miss Bates is not characterized by any strong thoughts on marriage, as she tells us she says "many dull things". The second way in which she talks about old maidhood in *Emma* is through Emma's opinions, and this is where Jane really expresses her thoughts on this relevant topic which was close to her situation and had to be in her novels. Jane's and Emma's thoughts on marriage and single women are the same: they do not think women needed to get married to be happy, they think their minds will always be busy and they do not need a family to take care of to keep them entertained. The difference between the two is their income: while Jane did not have much money, especially after her father's death, Emma was remarkably rich. Jane probably decided to express her opinion through a rich character because it was the only way in which her opinion would be accepted at her time. As it is said in the novel, "a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable".

Some other traits that connect Jane's life with her novels and are quite related to the last one are the topics of money and society. Money was what everyone desired, and what determined the different degrees in society. Jane belonged to a middle-high class, because her father was a Reverend, and her family lived in an acceptable position during most of her life. The problems came when her father died and they were left with a very small income. This can be clearly related to the thing the Bennets fear the most: that Mr. Bennet dies without having her daughters married, and that they become poor and miserable. *Pride and Prejudice* was first written in 1795, but it was revised and published in 1813, almost ten years after Mr. Austen's death, so she evidently reflected her own situation on the fears of her characters, and remarkably through Mrs. Bennet's absurd personality. The economic situation and position in society in which Jane lived are best reflected on *Pride and prejudice*, where the Bennets are in a similar situation as she was in. There is contrast if we compare the Austens' and the Bennets' situation and position in society with the Woodhouses' ones in *Emma*, who are a lot wealthier. However, they all "officially" belonged to the same class: the gentry. This was Jane's class and the one depicted in all of her novels, because she pictured the society she knew.

The men in this class were gentlemen, and this is an important concept in her novels. At first, gentlemen were landowners, but later it also included businessmen, lawyers, clergymen and army and navy officers. During her life, Jane was surrounded by those who called themselves gentlemen: she was a gentleman's daughter, Tom Lefroy was a gentleman too, and many others. In her novels, the most desired men for marriage are gentlemen: Darcy, Bingley and Knightley are the main examples. But in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth exposes Darcy's behavior at the beginning and defends that it was not a gentleman's behavior, and this is what makes him change. This is probably a way in which Jane was able to express her thoughts about the matter: even if all the men who surrounded her were said to be gentlemen, they did not behave like they had to, and so it was pointless to call them all gentlemen. With this, Jane was questioning one of the bases of her society and criticizing it. She probably wrote this in connection to Tom Lefroy's relationship with her, pointing out that he did not act like a gentleman when he was ashamed of the acquaintance with her and he ran away.

In relation to this, the role of women in the Georgian society in which Jane lived is shown in both of the novels I have read: most of the time, women were only expected to dedicate themselves to the roles of mothers and wives, and consequently, the picture Jane describes to us is also that of a society where women had no importance outside the home circle, and their education was not important, except for the accomplishments they taught them. We can see a connection between Jane's experience and her novels in the education in *Emma*, where she tells us about Mrs. Goddard's private boarding school for girls, which can be related to the one Jane went to when she was young. Jane always wrote about these schools critically, because after her experience, she thought they did not teach anything important there. In *Emma*, this criticism to boarding schools for girls can be seen in Harriet's personality: she has been all her life in that school, but she is silly and the school has not helped her to learn anything. The role that was given to women in Jane's time is well expressed in the character of Isabella, Emma's sister, who is a devoted mother and wife but nothing else, and who represents a contrast with Emma, who did not plan on fulfilling any of the main roles women were supposed to do at that time. The rest of the characters also reflect the morality and mentality of Jane's era, and the main characters, Elizabeth and Emma, are the ones that seem less attached to its' principles: for example with Emma's first desire of not getting married (also her father's opposition to it) and Elizabeth's opinion on marriage and accomplishments, which was opposed to the main one at that time. Elizabeth is the character which is closer to the author's personality and thoughts, especially in her youth. She speaks for Jane's opinions, and is not afraid to speak her mind, just like Jane did with her novels. Even if we see some traits that could make the novels completely against that type of society, it looks like Jane finished the novels according to what was established, apparently accepting that kind of society and its flaws.

To finish, another remarkable aspect of the novels is their endings: they do not match the end of her life, they are completely opposite. While she never got married and always lived with her family,

depending on her brothers to survive, almost all of her characters get married at the end of the stories. Even if Emma and Elizabeth seem unlikely to marry at the beginning, they both end in prosperous marriages, and these are presented by Jane as happy endings. This could mean that she wanted to send the message that happiness could be found in marriage and not in being an old maid. This is the idea that was accepted in her era, but it was not the path she chose, and she did not seem unhappy with it, because if she had wanted to, she could have got married. So I think Jane wrote stories which apparently accepted the society, values and morals which predominated in her era, except for a few situations in which the characters seemed against it. But in my opinion, this superficial acceptance hid her real thoughts and a criticism of that society using her characters, which was based on her personal experience.

In conclusion, Jane Austen wrote realistic novels, because she wrote about everyday life, the world and the society she knew about, and so we can understand that this was all taken from her life experience, which was short but full of events. Her novels do not just speak about young women who are eager to marry or want to be a picture of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century society, as it is sometimes thought. I agree with some of the critics who say that behind her apparent acceptance of the social structure and values in her society there is an implicit criticism of that society. Her main characters are heroines who face problems in a society which does not give them many opportunities to live, study or be independent, and they do not rebel because they did not have any chance, but they express an implicit disapproval and criticism of the society Jane lived in.

## 5. ANNEX

### 1) To the Memory of Mrs. Lefroy who died December 16 – my Birthday.

The day returns again, my natal day;  
What mix'd emotions with the Thought arise!  
Beloved friend, four years have pass'd away  
Since thou wert snatch'd forever from our eyes.—

The day, commemorative of my birth  
Bestowing Life and Light and Hope on me,  
Brings back the hour which was thy last on Earth.  
Oh! bitter pang of torturing Memory!—

Angelic Woman! past my power to praise  
In Language meet, thy Talents, Temper, mind.  
Thy solid Worth, thy captivating Grace!—  
Thou friend and ornament of Humankind!—

At Johnson's death by Hamilton 'twas said,  
'Seek we a substitute – Ah! vain the plan,  
No second best remains to Johnson dead—  
None can remind us even of the Man.'

So we of thee – unequall'd in thy race  
Unequall'd thou, as he the first of Men.  
Vainly we search around the vacant place,  
We ne'er may look upon thy like again. ...

Fain would I feel an union in thy fate,  
Fain would I seek to draw an Omen fair  
From this connection in our Earthly date.  
Indulge the harmless weakness – Reason, spare.—

Jane Austen

## 6. GLOSSARY

**Acquaintance:** a person with whom one has been in contact but who is not a close friend.

**Accomplishments:** skills or talents, such as singing, dancing, and speaking modern languages.

**Affair:** a sexual relationship between two people who are not married to each other.

**Apprenticeship:** someone who works for a skilled or qualified person in order to learn a trade or profession, especially for a recognized period.

**Ball:** a social gathering for dancing.

**Boarding school:** a school providing living accommodation for some or all of its pupils.

**Charade:** a game in which players guess a word or phrase from a written clue given for each syllable and for the whole item.

**Clergyman:** a male priest or minister of a Christian church.

**Countenance:** a person's face or facial expression.

**County:** a territorial division of some countries, forming the chief unit of local administration.

**Diminish:** make or become less.

**Endeavour:** try hard to do or achieve something.

**Engagement:** a formal agreement to get married.

**Entail:** a limitation of the inheritance of property to certain heirs over a number of generations

**Estate:** an area or amount of land or property, in the novel's context it refers to an extensive area of land in the country, usually with a large house, owned by one person, family or organization.

**Financial burden:** an economical load, usually a heavy one.

**Gauze:** a thin transparent fabric of silk, linen, or cotton.

**Gentle:** having or showing a mild, kind, or tender temperament or character.

**Genteel:** a person of good social position, or who has the manners of a well-born person.

**Gentleman:** a man of good social position, especially one of wealth and leisure. At first it was only used to refer to men of noble birth who were attached to a royal household, but it has been used

later to talk about honorable men.

**Glimpse:** a momentary or partial view.

**Governess:** a woman employed to teach children in a private household.

**Gown:** a long elegant dress worn on formal occasions.

**Haughty:** arrogantly superior and disdainful.

**Hem:** to turn under and sew the edge of a piece of cloth.

**Hemlock:** a highly poisonous European plant of the parsley family.

**Hostile:** showing or feeling opposition or dislike; unfriendly.

**Humble:** having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's importance

**Hypochondria:** abnormal chronic anxiety about one's health.

**Income:** money received, especially on a regular basis, for work or through investments

**Inherit:** receive money, property, or a title as an heir at the death of the previous holder.

**Just:** based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair.

**Matchmaker:** a person who arranges marriages or initiates romantic relationships between others.

**Natural sibling:** an illegitimate daughter or son.

**Oblige:** make someone legally or morally bound to do something

**Old Maid:** an old unmarried woman, who was probably condemned to be poor and miserable.

**Parish:** a small administrative district typically having its own church and a priest or pastor.

**Parties (political):** a formally constituted political group that contests elections and attempts to form or take part in a government.

**Praise:** to express warm approval or admiration.

**Prejudice:** preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

**Pride:** a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of one's close associates, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired.

**Prince Regent:** a prince who acts as regent (appointed to administer a state), in particular the title of the future George IV, who was regent from 1811 until he became king in 1820.

**Profligate:** recklessly extravagant or wasteful in the use of resources.

**Regard:** related to or concerning something.

**Sew:** join, fasten, or repair something by making stitches with a needle and thread.

**Stubborn:** having or showing dogged determination not to change one's attitude or position on something, especially in spite of good reasons to do so.

**Surpass:** exceed; be greater than something.

**Temper:** a person's state of mind seen in terms of their being angry or calm.

**Tenant:** a person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord.

**To be an item:** to be involved in an established romantic or sexual relationship.

**Tumbler:** a drinking glass with straight sides and no handle or stem

**Understanding:** having insight or good judgment.

**Vanish:** disappear suddenly and completely.

**Vanity:** excessive pride in or admiration of one's own appearance or achievements.

**Wealth:** an abundance of valuable possessions or money.

**Whim:** a sudden desire or change of mind, especially one that is unusual or unexplained.

**Witty:** characterized by quick and inventive verbal humor.

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