

Tribhuvan University

Deflection of Standardization in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts in English

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Kirtipur, Kathmandu

July 2024

Tibhuwan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
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Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Kungsang Thing (Tamang) has completed her thesis titled “Deflection of Standardization in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from March 2022 to June 2024. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis titled “Deflection of Standardization in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Kungsang Thing (Tamang) has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Mani Bhadra Gautam, PhD, Asst. Prof. at Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, for his valuable time, close observation and regular support. His direction and motivation throughout the research period helped me complete this research work on time.

I am also indebted to the Head of Department of English, Prof. Jib Lal Sapkota, PhD, for his encouraging advice. Similarly, I would be delighted to extend my gratefulness to Laxman Bhatta and all the respected professors and lectures of CDE for their valuable directions in conducting this research.

Moreover, I must express my very profound gratitude to my mother, Dev Maya Bomjan for her endless support and love. Similarly, I'm thankful to my sister Mahima Tamang and my maternal uncle Rekh Bahadur Bomjan and family members for their financial and emotional support throughout my years of study. Lastly, I would like to thank to all my friends for their help with the research work. And, my thankfulness goes to those authors and researchers whose works have been consulted during the preparation of this thesis.

June 2024

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Deflection of Standardization in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Abstract

This thesis presents Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice from the perspective of deflection of standardization in the conceptual frame of the Marxist class. Considering the social and economic status of eighteenth-century Europe which had set the notion of categorization among the people and the division of the society in terms of economic standards and social class, this thesis interrogates a sense of dichotomy prevalent in eighteenth century Europe and deflects the perpetual assumption of a distinguished class system. Significantly marking the economy as the guiding mechanism to regulate society, this thesis points out Austen's presumptions in understanding the variation of society not in terms of monetary value but in terms of morality. Initially this novel presents the character traits of the people representing the aristocrats and middle-class people and their consciousness, with the development of the plot. The novel extends the idea in opposition to the conventional societal conceptions. Moreover, Austen, picturizing the union of characters from distinct classes and economic standards, prioritizes the destabilization of the standardized concept of class consciousness. This thesis, therefore, analyzing Austen's craftsmanship that presents how it has deflected the standardization and assisted in the formation of a harmonious and nonhierarchical society.

Keywords: Standardization, class consciousness, subversion, aristocrats

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, through the portrayal of the major characters including Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, destabilizes the conventional notion of British aristocracy that was prevalent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Published in 1813, it Austen's novel satirized highly

dominant social and economic sectors that the society was facing. The social, political, and economic condition of the nation was in continuous flux. According to Peter J. Kitson, “[a]t the beginning of the... period, Britain was still an agricultural economy with much of the population employed as rural workers or in domestic service; by the end of the period, it was a rapidly industrializing nation with mushrooming towns and cities” (311). The social, political, and economic condition of the nation was in continuous flux. As Kittson further argues, “[t]he Romantic period witnessed enormous political and social upheaval with such political events and social processes as the American and French Revolutions, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the prosecution and criticism of the transatlantic slave trade...the Industrial Revolution, and much more” (306). Converting the social dimension into more urgent and immediate economic actions, these revolutionary movements turned the countenance of British society.

These movements were guided by certain motives and intentions. William J. Long, for instance, argues, “[t]he causes of this threatened revolution were not political but economic. By her inventions in steel and machinery, and by her monopoly of the carrying trade. England had become the workshop of the world” (388). At the junction of human intelligence, natural resources, and mechanical production. Society was more concerned with economic values rather than the other aspect of society. These divisions of social, political, and national investment had created a dictotomy in the society which was relegating aristocrats with high standards while the workers were underprivileged. Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, therefore, projects such an unequal social dimension and strives to deflect the standardization.

To analyze the prevalent domain of the elite group, Austen is susceptible to critiquing the dominant standardization of economic classes. To destabilize the social

practices where elite people are more standard than the common folks, Austen projects a character like Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy who is wealthy and meanwhile full of pride and arrogance. However, Darcy's transformation at last and abundance of love for Elizabeth Bennet—a middle-class girl—shows the transposition of an aristocratic behavior to social and egalitarian practices. Austen's attempt to mingle with Bennet and Darcy metaphorically symbolizes she is trying to curtail the social uneven distinction.

Blurring the hierarchy prevalent in the society, Austen projects an alternative mode of resistance to commensurate asymmetric division of power and standardization. As James Sherry mentions, “[a]gain and again in discussions of *Pride and Prejudice* we come upon some variation of the terms individual and society (609). Like as behavioral difference between of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet towards their daughters. Austen, in this novel, critiques capitalistic and individualistic tendencies, assimilates individual into a social realm and converts individualism into the community. For instance, Darcy, a pompous and isolated man, strengthens his relationship with the Bennet Family.

This thesis particularly investigates into the capitalistic standardization and its prevalence that subordinates common people. Excavating the aristocratic values, the paper illuminates their practices and destabilizes the hardcore standardization they accommodate. Definitively, Jerry Moles et al.

The standardization of concepts involves developing sets of specifications or rules that relate a given concept to some empirical phenomena These types of behavior were nurturance, succulence, responsibility, dominance, submission, self-reliance, sociability, achievement, and aggression. All of

these concepts are abstract and give no specific directions to the investigator as to what should be observed. (238)

The formation of norms and values that enhances the behaviors which are more self-centered and tilted toward personal growth makes standardization directionless. It reiterates individuals to evaluate themselves according to the principalities of achievement and success. Therefore, as Moles et al. say, this standardization lacks communal behavior and its profiting social practices. Austen, in the same light, presents her notion in a subtle way in the novel rather than explicitly.

Problematizing the so-called standard values, the novel strives to affirm the demand for social equality in terms of economic justice, deflecting the hierarchy. The most important aspect of the novel which is more critical and calumniatory is the impact of standardization deployed on the characters. The novel depicts the dependence of women on marriage in the pursuit of favorable social standing and economic security. For instance, Mrs. Bennet—a mother of five daughters—expects Mr. Bingley, who has just bought Netherfield Park, to fall in love with Elizabeth or any one of her daughters. When she hears Mr. Bingley is unmarried she utters, “Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!” (5). Mrs. Bennet's words reflect the inner spirit of the lower-class people who are thirsty for luxury. This major intention initiates the conflicts in the novel and the entire plot revolves around the struggle to find a compatible husband and wife. Despite obstacles presented by both social conventions and the intoxication of social standardization, the novel encapsulates the mindset of lower-class people that their life is secured only by annexing themselves with wealthy people or monetary value is the only cost they can pay for the security of their life.

Austen's proposition foregrounds her dissatisfaction with the material production and economics that ultimately determine the course of value judgment. Its guiding principles pave the way for the guideline on how individuals of one status treat those of another. The novel seems to be countering the economy as the prevalent factor in shaping relationships in society. This thesis, therefore, discusses the economic issues of the novel and Austen's attempt to deflect standardization. Being based on the qualitative and close reading of the text, it adopts Karl Marx's concept of class consciousness for analytical interpretation of the text.

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, picturizes modern Europe's social and economic scenario during the romantic era. According to SarbanBandyopadhyay, "[t]he Romantic age in Britain 1798-1837 was a time when imagination was perceived as the major driving force behind the creation of literature and all other arts" (1). Austen's creative imagination succeeded in illustrating the social picturesque prevalent in her period. The literary production embraces the rapid transformation of society at its full pace and moderates the era towards a new form of a social picture. Peter J. Kitson writes, "[b]y 1830 something like a modern class consciousness had emerged with ore clearly identifiable upper, middle and working classes, notions of rank, order, degree, and station based on birth became supplemented by groups of landlords, and capitalist laborers" (311). The social groups confirmed the grades of the people according to their economic status and the practice of well living.

The progressive and changing scenario had polished the dramatic outlook of society which was more optimistic and pragmatic to enhance the social dynamic. The witnessing of the French Revolution, (1789) and the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, (1798) was reckoning the era with a new terminological frame. As David Eastwood

says, “[t]he period from 1789 to, say, 1802 is, commonly, we might even say uncontroversially known as the Age of Revolution” (92). More importantly, the change in societal discourses and the standards of the people gradually pivoting towards a new day. For instance, Peter J. Kitson broaches, “[t]he transport system improved considerably throughout the period” (312). Moreover, he adds, “[t]here were substantial changes in agriculture as the countryside was transformed. Agrarian capitalism reached a period of development and crisis in the early nineteenth century with the growth of a class of agricultural workers who possessed only their labour to sell to tenant farmers”(313). In these remarks, Hoxie N. Fairchild argues, “...English romanticism is far more evolutionary than revolutionary” (24). The gradual development of the social playground was significantly marching towards the process of betterment, simultaneously making a departure from the conventional and traditional way of life. Ultimately, as Kitson claims:

Eighteenth-century Britain became a society with a marked difference between two spheres of activity, the public and the private. There developed an expanding public sphere of political, civil and intellectual life, typified, in particular, by the growth of coffee house as a venue for reading and debating information. In contrast, the private sphere involved family life and the care and education of children. These two spheres were gendered as masculine and feminine. (314)

Analyzing these instances, we can assume that the public spaces were more captured by the elitist group who could roam around and elevate themselves as intelligent fellow. Contrarily, private spaces would occupy the phenomenon of the lower class people who could not possess the standard of the aristocrats. The social dichotomy was ardently prevalent to create a demarcation between those economic groups. These

social and economic backgrounds are eloquently presented in *Pride and Prejudice* where the story of the novel encapsulates the essence of the then time being particularly focused on the economic aspects of the characters, taking moral obligations into consideration.

The novel begins with an explanation of the thrilling experience of the people in Netherfield because of the arrival of Charles Bingley. Most affected was Mrs. Bennet as she owns five daughters who are yet to marry. She hopes to let one of her daughters marry him. Mrs. Bennet, therefore, attends the local ball, and there, an aristocratic person, Bingley's friend Fitzwilliam Darcy was also present. His refusal to dance with Elizabeth Bennet, daughter of Mrs. Bennet, presents him as a proud person. However, later, Darcy's interest in Elizabeth grows and he proposes to her for marriage. Poor Darcy was rejected! and comments on Elizabeth's vanity. As the story moves, one of Elizabeth's youngest sister, Lydia elopes with Wickham and another Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley gets married. Amidst, the changing relationship status of her sisters Darcy proposes to Elizabeth again and she accepts him.

Observing the scenario, the novel has been analyzed by different researchers from different perspectives. According to HaiyanGao, "[t]here are about 387 pieces of articles studying *Pride and Prejudice*" (385) and the issues of the study vary across the research. Some have argued this novel is the interrogation of human liberty whereas some have defined it as the depiction of contrary opinions of the title itself. It portrays the confinement of middle class mentality. For instance, Susan Morgan argues, "*Pride and Prejudice* explores the special question of the meaning of freedom, given the premise which Jane Austen assumes throughout her fiction, that the relation between a character and public reality is at once problematic and necessary"(54). Morgan's lines clarify that the social relationship of an individual is arbitrary and has

ambivalent connections. Although it is problematic, one cannot remain out of its nexus. In defining the novel, in terms of Austen's common theme, Everett Zimmerman mentions, "[t]he meanings that "pride" and "prejudice" acquire are related to the central theme of all of Jane Austen's novels the limitations of human vision"(65). His analysis conjoins us with the artistic features of Austen and helps us to see the novel from the vantage point of human limitations, on the basis of their class.

Prioritizing the significance of chance in the novel, Joel Weinsheimer views, "[c]hance is given significance in Austen's novels by her insistence on the value of its opposite-rational and deliberate choice"(404) and "[i]t is the chance involved in Bingley's spontaneously picking Netherfield as a home that initiates the novel's action" (410). In addition, William Deresiewicz argues, "[t]he novel takes as its point of departure, not customs or conventions, but cognitive processes. In particular, it begins by setting out the kind of cognitive process that crucially characterizes the community's thinking, the deductive logic of the syllogism" (505). Weinsheimer's point seems to valorize the aristocratic notion and implies an opportunistic instance of the middle-class Bennet family; and, Deresiewicz's argument makes a modernist approach and advises a breakthrough from the conventional notion of the society which has problematized the logical connection of the social assumption. Although Deresiewicz has rightly pointed out the cognitive process of the novel that has destabilized the societal presumption. He failed to acknowledge the economic standard that was playing a pivotal role to jeopardize the conventions. It is the class consciousness of the characters that is frontier to dismantle the logical intertwines. Similarly, Weinsheimer's argument may be ordinary if we generalize the economic standard of society and accept the economic hierarchy; however, peculiar from the

perspective of lower-class people. Because, it is not chance that marked the beginning of the novel, but rather the issue of economic stabilization that paves the way for the novel. Moreover, the word deliberate choice is misleading the notion of class consciousness which is the founding principle of societal discourse.

The novel has also been researched marking the dominance of the narrative perspective, for instance, E.M. Halliday argues, “[t]hought and feeling, and their verbal expression-this is the world of Jane Austen, so beautifully illuminated for us by her artistic control of narrative perspective”(71). Jane Austen has artistically set the story forward marking the narrator’s point of view. The introduction of the characters, mostly, is provided through the narrator which marks the impression of valorizing the narrativization techniques.

The novel also has been researched in critiquing pre-established notions. For instance, Kenneth L. Moler argues, “...*Pride and Prejudice* as we have it is not simply, as critics have suggested, an imitation of the work of Jane Austen's fellow-novelists. It is, in part at least, an attack on Richardson and Fanny Burney and their patrician heroes”(505). Moreover, boycotting the economic instances, the novel has been researched as Judith Lowder Newton argues, “[i]ndeed, for all its reference, *Pride and Prejudice* is devoted not to establishing but to denying the force of economics in human life(29). Judith Lowder is, perhaps, right if we consider the amalgamation of Darcy and Elizabeth in the process of breaking the economic hierarchy. But problematic, if we do not hinder the entire story that revolves around the economic prejudice.

Analogously, there are other researches that have been conducted examining the marriage, ideal man, and intelligence, sibling rivalry, and so on concerning the societal and psychological facets in the novel. In contrast, some have taken literary

elements, for instance, plot, musicality, theme, and so on. into consideration for the space of analysis. Research has not been conducted yet concerning the notion of standardization and its deflection. Thus, unlike other research, this thesis explores the economical factor of the characters and focuses on the conception of standardization in the novel. More specifically, *Pride and Prejudice* deflect the preconceived notion of economic standardization and advocates for equal social identity, recognition, and representation. Therefore, *Pride and Prejudice*, I argue, portrays two types of socioeconomic groups: Aristocratic and Middleclass where, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley, to be more precise, are the aristocratic actors whereas the Bennet family, mainly, are the representative of the middle-class family.

The researcher is relegating the character to two socio-economic groups because, the novel captures the class system of the then period where, R. S. Neale puts, “[t]he three-class model of the social structure in the early nineteenth century is that in which... individuals are placed into one of three categories: Aristocracy, Middle Class, Working Class”(4). To illustrate it more vividly, moreover, Rpowell, in the article “Social Class and the Bennet Family in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE” mentions, “[i]t is quite apparent that Mr. Darcy was a member of the upper class. He was the owner of a vast estate in Derbyshire called Pemberly. His estate earned him £10,000 pounds per year.” Similarly, the novel begins portraying Mr. Bingley, friend of Mr. Darcy, who has just bought the Netherfield Park and earns “. . . four or five thousand a year”(6). In the contrary, as Rpowell further mentions, “Mr. Bennet, Elizabeth’s father, was an English gentleman who owned the estate, Longbourn” but was comparatively lower, in economic status, to those two wealthy fellows.

The entire story falls within the compass of these two families where the novel exempts to put on the socioeconomic realities of the society in which the economic

status determines the consciousness of an individual. The economic standard of the characters and the consciousness they adopt seem to be the major obstacle that forces the story to move on. Mrs. Bennet's conception of fragile economic condition and her greedy intention to elevate their position by marrying her daughter to a wealthy man articulates the transposing or anteriority of an individual to ladder one's position. In depicting such prefaces, Jane Austen seems to employ Karl Marx's notion of class consciousness as he says, "[l]ife is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life"(47). It means that what life bear as economic status paves the way for the thought of human beings and our consciousness is not the dominant aspect to monitor our life rather it is the economic status that shapes human consciousness. The way we think, assume and plan are driven by our economic condition. In these remarks, we can analyze Mrs. Bennet's mind is on such a ground that is founded on her economic level. She strategically overviews people and tries to hold the attention of the liked one because she is conscious of her middle-class status.

Mrs. Bennet destabilizes the notion of which middle-class women are supposed to stay. Her interest in attending to balls and interacting merely with aristocratic people makes us comprehend her intrinsic desire. She, in the novel, is mostly dramatized in terms of her economic position and her economic notions. For instance, she always fantasizes about a secured economic life and ever strategically moves to achieve her target bringing her daughter and marriage into account. As the novel describes, "she was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news" (7). The thirst of Mrs. Bennet for economic security is framing her

consciousness which ultimately challenges the social standard and the prevailing notion of society inflicted by monetary values.

Mrs. Bennet's desire and firm enthusiasm to acquire financial security and annex her family with an aristocratic hero through marital tactics is even more conspicuously staged when her eldest daughter Jane falls sick because of her soaking dress while traveling to Mr. Bingley's home in his call. When she is informed about Jane's illness "Oh! I am not afraid of her dying. People do not die of little trifling colds. She will be taken good care of. As long as she stays there, it is all very well. I would go and see her if I could have the carriage" (27). The patience of Mrs. Bennet with firm assurance on her girl being treated well in a novel place reflects her intrinsic aspiration to make her daughter match with aristocrats.

Her daughter Elizabeth Bennet's story baffles the audience and happens to realize that she is contrary to her mother who dislikes aristocratic arrogance. When she rejects the proposal of Mr. Darcy, symbolically the plot hints at her distinction with her mother; however, her marriage with the same guy whom she had rejected satirizes the fleeting notion of standardization and firmness in the economic panel. These instances in the novel foreground the process of changing societal behavior in need of financial reliability. In the words of Amy Baker, "[w]ith Austen's critical eye and realistic writing, each of her novels becomes a microcosm of society as a whole"(169). The novel picturizes the bitter reality of society and deflects the notion of standardization. According to Liora Salter, "[s]tandardization is also a means to an end in the case of the new economic relations among major firms, which seek to establish their hegemony through a combination of *de facto* and *de jure* standards"(129). Creating a certain distance with the people—through the exercise of power—it segregates beings in terms of certain standards. Here, *de facto* is an action

taken without strict legal authority to do so, but recognized as legally valid nonetheless and *de jure* is the expression for “by law” or “by right”.

The term standardization is generalized which means the stable notion or assumption of a particular subject which is disseminated by the discourse of class consciousness. More precisely, in this research, standardization means the thoughts and perceptions regarding a particular standard or class of people that work as a framework and guidelines for a particular group of people. This notion of standardization has been swindled in the novel. For instance, Darcy, an aristocratic landowner, breaks the conventional notion of hierarchy and falls in love with Elizabeth, the daughter of a countryside gentleman. Darcy’s characterization symbolically counters the prevailing notion of society and illustrates the possible solution for the problematic class society. The novel, William H. Magee writes, “*Pride and Prejudice* at once satirizes the business-like marriages of the times and parodies the fantasy romance of the courtship convention”(201). Implicitly, interpreting affection as the key element of marriage, Austen, explicitly, tries to shatter the preconceived commoditized notion of marriage.

Austen’s succinct attempt to draft the social phenomena seems to record the dynamic of the human beings who are intoxicated by material needs and financial values. Moreover, it portrays the vision and pretension of the middle class and aristocratic families. Portraying women as vulnerable characters, infused with the pressure of their parents and obliged to pay the debt of their sensibility, Austen has depicted the bitter truth and social dominant dogma that would determine the life of women by then. As Philippa Levine writes, “[t]he meaning and significance of marriage in Victorian England represented a central pressure point in the lives of all women. It was undoubtedly one of the major agencies of socialization to which

women were exposed; the pressures it imposed were enormously persuasive and difficult to resist”(150). This reality is conspicuous when Mrs. Bennet forces her daughter to accept the proposal of Mr. Collins though Elizabeth denies it and Collins remains acceptable in her denial. When her daughter seems dubious to her, she says, “Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have her!”(89). Mrs. Bennet’s impatient echoes the moral obligation coercively imposed upon women. Despite the rejection, Elizabeth is obliged to accept the proposal.

In these scenarios, Austen is relinquishing to exclaim that the economic standard of people is a relative perception that affects differently to different people. As Darcy and Bingley, the most wealthy characters of the novel are not paying much attention to the economic classes and are in love with the girl, comparatively of lower status, whereas the lower standard woman, Mrs. Bennet, is embellished with the economic standard that the wealthy character possesses. The features of these characters and their behavior mirror the fleeting and contrapuntal relationship between their actual status and their will to acquire and adjust. Moreover, Austen has gleaned the absolute perception regarding the class status and had illustrated different ideological wit to address the characters. For instance, Susan Morgan assesses:

Unquestionably, Mr. Darcy is an outstanding member of society, a landowner with both power and responsibility. His position and an accompanying sense of duties and obligations do justify a proper kind of pride. Yet this should not obscure the fact that Darcy's nature, far from being social, is reserved, independent, isolated, private, and vain. And it is Elizabeth who points to this

discrepancy when she remarks to Colonel Fitzwilliam on Mr. Darcy's rude conduct at the Meryton dance(55-56)

Mr. Darcy is a nobleman with enormous wealth. His every instance and behavior is unquestionably a matter of pride and celebration; however, his attitude has been justly pointed out, in negative remarks by Elizabeth. This act obscures the background status of the characters and apparently discloses their reality of Darcy.

The subtle reason underneath this representation might be to show the fallacy of standardization. Because, generally, people naturalize the impact of standards and take it for granted. They accept it as normalcy and comprehend the discourses without interrogation, but the standard of Darcy, in the novel, has been questioned. It means the notion of standard and its discursive regime has been challenged and interrogated. Here, Austen's goal seems to reflect her inner understanding of the standard which is not a systematic deployment of stagnated ideas but rather a fleeting and unrest logic of reality.

Presenting characters guided by orthodoxical social norms, Austen proceeds plot revealing the flexibility in the characters. For instance, Darcy is presented as an adamant and stubborn man, but his love for Elizabeth is genuine. Susan Morgan writes, “[t]o judge others in economic or social terms is the very sort of thinking Jane Austen would expose. Mr. Wickham is socially unacceptable, but for moral reasons rather than economic ones, not because he has no possessions but because he has no principles. And this is no more a question of manners than it is of position or money” (56). Elizabeth Bennet, an intellectual with a sharply witted tongue, gradually falls in love with Darcy, a man about whom she had initially prejudiced thoughts. Being a daughter of a materialistic centric mother, she, throughout the play, copes with her

desperate desires. Implementing her virtue and ethics, she rises above all the hindrances and succeeds to fathom the positive energy. As Amy Baker writes:

Austen is one of a few skillful authors who can create whole people out of literary characters by their words. She gives each a unique voice, structure pattern, and manner of speaking unlike any other character in each novel. This is clearly seen in *Pride and Prejudice*, where Austen distinguishes the voices of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy by their unique sentence structures in dialogue. (170)

Elizabeth's dialogues reflect the brilliant craftsmanship of Austen. The words uttered carry an intellectual meaning encapsulating the inner notion of Austen herself. She is a mouthpiece of the author through which the major message of the text has been disseminated.

Austen's picturization of society and the hardship to blend the distinct pretensions proliferated in the social regime is translucent in the emotional battle between Darcy and Elizabeth. Joel Weinsheimer claims, "[t]he anxiety of Elizabeth and Darcy demonstrates that their reappraisal of the operation of chance does not make them capable of molding the world to their satisfaction. Whatever additional control the recognition of chance gives them is dwarfed by their glimpse of the far greater chaos beyond their direction"(415). There are ample hindrances that resist them to achieve their will and demands. The asymmetric division of social groups, in terms of the economic indicator, has framed their obligation and disciplines which are not to be violated, at least, in the social domain. It is not an easily acceptable thing, in society, that an aristocratic man marries a girl from a lower class. However, this unacceptable thing for the society, in the novel has been presented that deflects the conventional notion of standardization.

Darcy is an ideal man who has adopted the conventional notion of standardization. He, in the initial phase of the novel, replicates the characteristics of a man with conventional thoughts and attitudes. His words are more solid and concrete regarding his thoughts, perception, and comprehension. For instance, When Elizabeth passes a contradictory assumption upon him he says:

My temper I dare not vouch for. It is, I believe, too little yielding — certainly too little for the convenience of the world. I cannot forget the follies and vices of other so soon as I ought, nor their offenses against myself. My feelings are not puffed about with every attempt to move them. My temper would perhaps be called resentful. My good opinion once lost, is lost forever. (47)

Darcy's proclamation, as a noble character, sounds stagnated in his words, venturing into the impossibilities of changes and remembrance of the events that he went through. Moreover, his ideality and forbearance seem likely to address his distinct characteristic among the people. As Richard McKeon mentions, "Darcy draws the attention of the room by his appearance and by the report of his larger fortune....His manners give disgust, however, and he is discovered to be proud, when he declines to be introduced to or converse with the ladies"(519). He does not want to be assimilated with lower-class people in the party. He is trying to create a difference between himself and others, especially ladies. His statement, "[a] lady's imagination is very rapid; it jumps from admiration to love, from love to matrimony in a moment" (24) reveals that he considers ladies more inclined to emotions and has no static conceptions; ladies have fragmented perspectives.

Moving with the plot, his conceptions change with no objections to his nobility. The vision which was robust at the beginning of the novel grows supple and changes him to a vulnerable character. His permutation deteriorated his initial

presumption and happen to address him as an emotional character, though he remains noble in his economic instances. His words, when he confesses his fallacy, “[y]ou showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased” (286) explicates his inability to understand women and inconsistency in his words. His acceptance of his vulnerability, at last, depicts a break in the standardized affirmation he had within him.

Darcy’s changed conception, on the contrary to his economic bases, Elizabeth, in the beginning, was, too, a firm character, motivated by her inner thought and ideology merely. In reply to her laugh, when Miss Bingley praises Mr. Darcy, she says, “I hope I never ridicule what is wise and good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can” (47). These lines evoke her inner spirit and presumption regarding people. More subtly, she seems to be an independent girl with a free will where she dislikes interference in her liberty. Moreover, her words, during the conversation with Jane, “[t]here are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it, and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of merit or sense” (107) exposes her real face that how different she is and what place do the people occupy in her heart. More than a common girl, she is, to a larger extent, a distrusting and suspicious creature who, not easily, believes the world and worldly creature.

Elizabeth’s rigidness turns around and changes the scenario of the novel when she confesses her love for Darcy as she says, “I do, I do like him . . . I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable. You do not know what he really is; then pray do not pain me by speaking of him in such terms”(292). The turn

of her choices of dislike into love reflects her changing attitude of solidity in her presumptions. It is, indeed noteworthy that her transformation in terms of perceptions not only disregards her initial supposition of ideality but also her notion of standardization and perpetual behavior. Her voice is audible for the contested form of stabilized identity that provokes the reader to think of the alternative mode of standard which is not confirmed in any category of people. In terms of replicating the society, in *Pride and Prejudice* as Amy Baker says, “. . . individual voices both become real to life and illuminating of class and nature”(170). Elizabeth’s voice is the mouthpiece of the author through which one can acknowledge the standard notion of economic standardization.

The intense and dramatic shift in the characters, most importantly, in Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth Bennet mirrors the fallacious understanding of standardization. The interpretation dispersed in society and regulated in an arranged group of people has been critically observed by the author and significantly satirized the loopholes by presenting the alternative mode to commensurate unequal distribution of social groups. Jane Austen has uniquely introduced the problem of society and its leading mechanism that voluntarily affects the livelihood of the people.

In addressing these pathetic relational situations of society, Jane Austen seems to valorize class consciousness as a major determinant of the obsolete living spirit of the social actors. Because, “[i]ndeed, consciousness, when it comes on the scene, appears not as "pure spirit" but rather as "burdened" with matter "which here steps on the scene in the form of moving layers of air, sounds, in short, language” (qtd. in Warmins (121). To be more specific, the conscious outcome of the social status of the characters is the major obstruction to conjoining harmonious relationships in the novel.

It is class consciousness that was pushing Mr. Darcy away from the closeness of Elizabeth and vice versa. The social codes formulated for the guidance of aristocrats and lower class people had equipped these characters to be disdainful from the pleasing homogeneity. The unpredictable and unprecedented action taken by these two characters step beyond the boundary of the social norms and prevalence. As Mordecai Marcus claims, “Darcy and Elizabeth are deep and strong enough to hope for each other's continued affection even after circumstances have borne strong evidence against it. Also, they are able to stand up against excessive social claims” (227). The consciousness of the characters and the ideology they are acquainted with are the imperatives to mechanize their behavior which was the offspring of their economic class. However, they succeed in debunking such restrictive walls and writing a new history that was yet to be written. As Marcus further writes:

Darcy becomes willing to associate himself with the Bennet family (Lady Catherine's opposition is a much slighter obstacle). Although the excessive social claims which Elizabeth must resist may be slighter, they are not negligible. First, she must resist an overbearing verbal storm from Lady Catherine (which surely would have crushed a Jane Bennet), and then she must assert her claim to Darcy despite her realization of her family's true nature. (277-278)

It is not as easy as we presume it to be, rather a herculean task to fight against society. Lady Catherine, in the novel, is the symbolic demand of society that pulls the leg on the ladder of the individual verdict. Although Darcy has no problem marrying Elizabeth, Lady Catherine remarks on the social prejudice that plays the role of antagonist in one's decision. And these obstructions are not an exception neither is immutable, but rather a natural cause that makes one either a hero or a vulnerable self.

Lady Catherine is not merely a symbolic representation of societal norms but also, as per my comprehension, the only antagonist of the novel. Her prejudice and the stereotypical notion of the standard is her hubris which commonly represents the harsh reality of aristocrats. Her understanding of marriage and elitist rejoice in celebrating its dogma figures family with demanding aristocratic lineage. Her intense domination resonates with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' words, "[t]he bourgeoisie has torn away from the family and its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to mere money relation"(9). It also means that society has created a certain dichotomy and has merely given an economic spectacle to gaze at people. The relationship between the family as a microcosm and society as universal has turned into an economic relationship where the monetary value determines its robustness.

More significantly, in terms of women and their position, they are taken as an apparatus to consolidate the economic standard and position they hold. The standard notion of the aristocracy converts women into a mechanism to generate economic value rather than a societal relation relationship imbued with harmony and pleasure. As Marx and Engels claim:

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women. He has not even a suspicion that the real point is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production. (40-41)

The position of women is the position of human force involuntary subdued by the aristocratic domination and surpassed by the guiding elitist principle. They are expected to be the means of economic source in which social standard is maintained. It is necessary to comprehend that a woman is merely compatible with the labor force

similar to her standard. Therefore, it will be a misunderstanding to take woman's equal social positioning in every standard rather, they are merely equivalent to their equal standard because her labor force is not compatible with the higher or lower standard she stands for. Here, in relevance to the novel, Marx and Engels seem to be quite equivalent to the notion that Lady Catherine accommodates. She knows the relationship between Mr. Darcy, her nephew, and Elizabeth, she dominantly scolds Miss Elizabeth and happens to address the economic status and the profundity of the standard of the family. She says:

My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient — though untitled — families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their respective houses; and what is to divide them?(276)

The line clarifies that Elizabeth is not appropriate for Lady Catherine's nephew because his standard demands more than Elizabeth is eligible for. Darcy's fortune is merely sparkling when he finds a girl felicitous to his position which Elizabeth is not. More specifically, Mr. Darcy has to choose Lady Catherine's daughter because they are from a similar economic background and will carry their status for which her daughter will help her nephew to perpetuate the economic values.

Her notion is vanquished by the result that is reflected in the novel when Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth mingle. Their togetherness is what the novel strives to the foreground as a message to the audience. The uncompromising stand of the standard values and the rigid practice of standardization is demolished with the ultimate happiness of the couple blooms with their individual choice. Since these two characters are the major spirit of the novel, Austen has subtly used them as a

mouthpiece to disseminate the obtrusive codes of standardization and has powerfully articulated her intention regarding the social practices prevalent in society.

It is apparent that Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* tries to advocate for the deterioration of sturdy standardization which is robustly rooted in society for ages. If not, then, the end of the novel is conspicuous to picture the essence of the statement. The marriage of an aristocratic male with a middle-class lady on their own choice and wishes, callously noticing the social restriction shows Austen's understanding of social-economic classes. Although it is a common factor as Judith Lowder Newton mentions, “[i]t is only in Austen's fiction that we begin to feel a certain edge, a certain critical emphasis being given to the difference between the economic privilege of middle-class women and that of middle-class men” (28). It is more eloquent to observe closely the end of the novel how subtly she blurs the distinction with a profound and thought-provoking message.

Austen presents two groups of people with distinct economic standards whose consciousness is determined as per their class. Foregrounding three characters: Darcy, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Bennet, the novel replicates the deflected notion presenting the marriage between, Darcy and Elizabeth, two distinct economic classes of people. The union of two distinct classes at the end of the novel satires each people in society who prioritizes the class. The prevailing standardized notion in society is blurred with subtle implications of marriage between the characters who succeed in breaking the hardcore economic factor, choosing their inner spirit for their pious life.

Pride and Prejudice is a classic love story. Valorization of affection in *Pride and Prejudice*, eclipsing the concept of class consciousness dispenses. As categorization builds hierarchy and does not let in the proliferation of the society the standardized economic conceptions must be dilapidated from the society. The

novel, therefore, deflects the rigidity of the standard and projects the message to form a society, blurring the notion of standard and the economic class system that imagines a harmonious society where the individual choices can be addressed in free will.

In the beginning of novel, the news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley had caused a great stir in the nearby village of Longbourn, especially in Bennet house. Miss Bennet has five unmarried daughters and is worried about her daughter to find suitable match. Once he attend a ball where he met Jane and danced with her. Bingley exclaims to Darcy that Jane is "the most beautiful creature" that he has ever held. He suggest Darcy to dance with Elizabeth, but Darcy refuses by saying, "she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me" as she is a middle class girl. Elizabeth also finds Darcy, "too proud to be likeable".

Bingley and Darcy had an opinion on attributes of women for "accomplished women" which Elizabeth feels that it is too demanding and she hasn't seen such women such accomplished women. But eventually, they fall for Jane and Elizabeth respectively who were not from their class and don't constitute an attributes of "accomplished women". But, in starting, they tried to hide and avoid their feeling. Bingley left Neitherfield Park and promised to never return there and will marry Darcy's sister Georgiana Darcy. Though he liked Jane, he was scared of downfall of his own class. With the movement of plot, Darcy and Elizabeth met for several times. Every time he gets attracted towards her. He used to show his courtesy and towards her and her friend. At one meeting, he eventually expressed his liking for her.

She refuses his proposal. After her refusal also he never stopped liking her. He helped to find her sister, Lydia when she secretly eloped with Wickham. When Miss Bingley attempts to criticize Elizabeth "rather pretty", Darcy replies that he now considers Elizabeth "one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance". At the end

Bingley and Darcy cannot move away from their feeling and they returned to Longbourn and asked Mr. Bennet to marry his daughters. In the new state of equilibrium marriage between arrogant Darcy and dignified Elizabeth, Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet happened which mingled the existing class consciousness. Here, Austen successfully portrays the strong emotion 'love' to dilapidate the economic ground of difference between humans.

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