

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

***Ambivalence of Selfhood in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice****

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**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Ms. Lalu Maya Karki Dholi has completed her thesis entitled "Ambivalence of Selfhood in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008 A.D. to February, 2009. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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## **Abstract**

The position of Elizabeth is that of unsuccessful revolutionary which makes her the character of ambivalent personality. For she was educated differently and was frequently encouraged by her father to get involved in intellectual debates, she grew in an environment that detached her from being a hypocrite. Due to the impact of education, Elizabeth's struggle to seek autonomy in the society under patriarchal discourse was a good initiation. Being a genuine woman, her refusal to be an educated slave leads her to refuse marrying a man wealthier and more intelligent than herself. Her endurance to revolt against her mother's interference in her private life is because she respected her individuality and freedom. But she can not completely accept or deny the social discourse. Along with the impact of education, the ideological conflict between her parents makes her change from one opinion and mood to another. She is situated in such a position in which it is difficult for her to make choice between two distinct opinions of her parents. She lives the life of mixed feelings and thoughts. Her ambivalence is not rude or negative that results in difficulty caused due to the choice of one between undesirable two; but she swings between mixed feelings so that can't locate herself in a fixed position expected by herself or the society.

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## I. Jane Austen and Female Issues

Jane Austen's heroine Elizabeth Bennet, in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), seems ambivalent regarding her selfhood. It is due to her being trapped between her growing female consciousness (impact of education upon her) and her inability to escape the ideology and institution of marriage dominant during Victorian era.

Elizabeth Bennet, in the beginning of the novel, appears to be assertive and conscious of female autonomy. She protests against the expectation and boundaries set by the Victorian society and refuse to get marriage to the handsome man with large fortune. She seems as the rebellious self-willed and self possessed woman who respects her individuality. So she rejects the proposal of wealthy man like Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy. But at the end of the novel, she agrees to marry a wealthy man Darcy which reveals her submissiveness. Elizabeth does so because marriage was made such an inescapable social institution by the Victorian notions of prosperity, dignity, and security attached to the marriage. So Elizabeth could not escape from the Victorian ideology of marriage and got married with Darcy for her life security because the women like Elizabeth Bennet are bound to depend on the male figure like father, brother and husband.

To analyze the ambivalence selfhood of Elizabeth, ideas of Marry Wollstonecraft and some other feminists in regard to the role of education and ideology of marriage are the focal point. Wollstonecraft, focusing on the way of education that matters the thoughts of women says "Were women more rationally educated, could they take more comprehensive view of things"(397). Whereas severely attacking the social ideology which measures and defines women with reference marriage and attitude of women towards sexual intercourse writes "MARRIAGE is destiny traditionally offered to women by society" (445).

Jane Austen, a writer of Victorian age, began story writing in the early of her life. She wrote poems, stories and comic pieces for the amusement of her family. As she continued her writings, she became adept at parodying the sentimental and gothic style of eighteenth century novels. Some of Austen's writings survived in three notebooks entitled *Volume the first*, *Volume the second* and *Volume the third* which contained her novels and plays written before she was sixteen. She is mainly recognized by her six novels: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* (1818) and *Northanger Abbey* (1818) were published in the same year after her death at the end of December 1817.

Among her early works, now called the Juvenilia, one finds a satirical novel with a deliberately misspelled the title, *Love and the Friendship*. It appears that Austen began work on what would become *Sense and Sensibility* in the late 1790s. In 1798, she began *Northanger Abbey*, a satire of Ann Radcliff's famous novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In contrast to the stories told in the Gothic novels that she parodied, Austen led a quiet and uneventful life.

Jane Austen is renowned for her wit, her lightness of touch, and the elegance of her prose style. There is not a great deal of drama in her novels: people fall in love; some of her heroines test out patience and there is usually a marriage. The manner in which she orchestrates these events and her shrewd insights into human frailties have made her an enduringly popular writer.

Austen deals with the domestic life of the village though her novels have universal significance. She has knowledge of a certain aspect of domestic life and she deals with this aspect in her novels. Austen's novels show us the inner lives of her characters, and depict the contemporary system of patriarchy. Being a moralist, Jane Austen believes in right and wrong and seeks for justice in the society. Austen is the



writer of familial affairs as her novels explore the problem of a family in relation to patriarchal society in her age. Most of her novels represent everyday life of society and mingle satire and sentiment.

*Sense and Sensibility* (1811) casts two sisters Elinore and Marianne Dash Wood as representative of *Sense and Sensibility*. Elinore bears her social disappointments with dignity and restraint-and thereby gets her man. Marianne on the other hand is excitable and impetuous, following her love to London-where she quickly becomes disillusioned with him. Recovering and gaining more 'sense', she then sees the good qualities in her old friend Colonel Brandon, who has been waiting in the wings and is now conventionally on hand to propose marriage.

The first part of *Northanger Abbey* (1818) is set in drawing rooms of Bath. The heroine is imaginative Catherine Moreland who falls in love with Henry Tingly, a young clergyman. When he invited her to meet his family at the Abbey however, she sees nothing but gothic melodrama at every turn-since they were very fashionable at the time. Her vision of medieval horror proves groundless of course. This is Jane Austen's satirical critique of Romantic cliché and excess. But Catherine eventually learns to see the world in a realistic light-and gets her man in the end.

*Mansfield Park* (1814) is more serious after the comedy of the earlier novels. Heroine Fanny Price is adopted into the family of her rich relatives. She is long-suffering and passive to a point which makes her almost unappealing-but her refusal to tolerate any drop in moral standards eventually teaches a lesson to all concerned.

In *Emma* (1816), Charming and willful Emma Woodhouse amuses herself by dabbling in other people's affairs, planning their lives the way she sees fit. Most of her match-making plots go badly awry and moral confusion reigns until she abandons her self-delusion and wakes up to the fact that stern but honorable Mr. Knightly is the

right man for her after all. AS usual money and social class underpin everything. Some wonderful comic scenes and a rakish character Frank Churchill who finally reveals his flaws by making the journey to London just to get his hair cut.

*Persuasion* (1818) is the most mature of her novels, if one of the least exciting. Heroine Anne Eliot has been engaged to Captain Wentworth, but has broken off the engagement in difference to family and friends. Meeting him again eight years later, she goes against conventional wisdom and accepts his second proposal of marriage. Anne is a sensitive and thoughtful character, quite unlike some of the earlier heroines. Jane Austen wrote of her “she almost too good for me”. There is a shift of location to Lyme Regis for the novel, which reveals for the first time a heroine acting from a deep sense of personal conviction against the grain of conventional wisdom.

Austen’s performance in the literary field was flourished with *Emma*. She is honored and praised by both feminists and other critics today. Critics praise Austen and her works for depicting plain human society. Austen is that novelist who not only presents the codes and sex discrimination of male dominated society but also she reveals the self in her works. Her novels talk about income and properties, inherited or acquired social rank, manner of all kinds, gender oriented professions, courtship and marriage, dress and fashion and so on.

Many readers and critics fail to appreciate her skill. The main reason is that at that time fiction was not considered as the branch of literature nor one looked for genius in the novelist. Yet her art is found appreciated because readers found their society reflected in the background of humorous and realistic characters

Austen’s novels are appreciated by Sheridan, Maria Edge Worth, Marry Lascelles, Milford and Walter Scott. They admired her novels party because they were full of wit and varieties of characters, and mainly because they represented harsh

realities. Marry Lascelles was surprised by Austen's true and mature outlook and also burlesque style. Lascelles applauds Austen's heroine for maintaining her femininity while solving the social issue. But these remarkable qualities didn't impress the common readers a lot and her books never became best sellers in her own lifetime.

George Pillow appreciates, "Austen as the wittiest and the brightest women" (176). He admires Austen's simple description of the common familiar environment and finds her novel entertaining. He adds that Austen possesses one rare faculty: scientific precision in literature and art.

Modern critics have distinct concepts regarding Jane Austen. Their techniques to criticism are scientific and their perspectives are inventive. Therefore, Austen's novels are better received than they were in the Victorian period. Today, Austen is honored as a fine painter of life. D.W. Harding admires Austen for fulfilling the duty of a citizen that is of the presentation of the comic foible and ambivalent weakness of people which shock the society. Harding regards Austen's novel "interesting and innocuous caricature of life" (42).

Most of the modern critics of Austen stress on her morality. Among them Malcolm Bradbury in 1962 expresses his ideas; "Austen is concerned with two kinds of world- 'the social world' and 'the moral world' and she does not simply mirror a society but subtly composes into existence" (173).

Austen occupies a peculiar position in the history of English novels. She was the contemporary of Romantic Poets. But she can't be described as a Romantic. She works with materials extremely limited in them but she develops out of them themes of broadest significance. Austen's novels are valuable social documents. But besides their social significance, they have a deep concern with morality. Her subject matter is itself limited to the manner of a small section of English gentry and her novels deal

widely and deeply than Jane Austen were able to expose it. She deals with the domestic life in villages, yet her novels have a universal significance. She has an authentic knowledge of certain aspects in her novels. Austen's novels show us the inner lives of her characters, and her novels also talk the existing system of education on women's life and show the evil effects of improper education.

Austen was a literary artist who perfected her works with magnificent art and beauty. She has been compared with Chaucer and Shakespeare. People say that it is impossible to be a novelist without having a wide experience but Austen refuted this thesis as she had a very limited experience but became in course of time a great novelist. As a novelist, she became more important and crucial towards the end of the twentieth century. She keeps a distinguished position and popularity among the literary figures because the theme, setting, problem and their resolutions as well as the present action of characters are all unique. Mostly, her ingenuity is reflected in her presentation of female characters. Austen's age was very critical for women socially and politically.

In Austen's time, the existence of female was miserable. The atmosphere of society for women was unfavorable. The female writers had to struggle more than male writers to establish themselves. There was no organization that favored women. So, as a result, women couldn't develop the sense of unity and could not participate in the activities of the world. The male governed society laughed at women and ridiculed their arts so the female works didn't flourish in Austen's time. However to make the works popular, some female writers disguised their names. When Austen appeared in the literary field, the age of reason was about to end and the Romanticism was emerging as a dominant literary movement. Miss Austen unites in the romantic era but, however her style and temperament are classical. Jane Austen was writing novels

in the period of ups and downs all over Europe. The whole Europe was plunged into the state of war, causing tremendous political as well as social changes. The instability of Europe led to the execution of French monarch Louis 14<sup>th</sup> in 1783. Thus the whole Europe during Austen's time was in turmoil that ultimately ended in the early eighteenth century with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. It was the period of political unrest in England. Poverty, unemployment, injustice were common in England. The situation of England was reflected in art music and literature.

Evaluating Austen's heroines with a new perspective, Maderie Hope Dodd's compared them with the young women of eighteenth century women who used to like to spend life just in marry making. Dodd's comments:

. . . A plea for independence of thought . . . . It is one of the curious anomalies of criticism that Miss Austen's heroines are censured nowadays for being prim and colorless, while in her own time they were regarded as dangerously willful and head strong, setting a bad example to other young women. If the two, the earlier opinion is the more correct. Under their demure are, they all hide strong characters and independent mind. (88)

Austen's second novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) opens with the line "It is universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune in want of wife" (1). The whole novel moves around the marriage circumstances. In this novel Austen tried to reflect the Victorian society where people gave priority to social status to get married. From the very beginning of the novel, all characters are engaged to talk about marriage and social status of the people. 'A young man with large fortune' used to be a concern of every Victorian parent for their daughter's marriage. So Mr. and Mrs. Bennet seem to engage to talk about such young men they have five

unmarried daughters. This novel also focuses on Elizabeth Bennet, an intelligent young woman with romantic and individualistic ideals, and her relationship with Mr. Darcy, a wealthy gentleman of very high social status. Similar to Austen's other work; it is a humorous portrayal of the social atmosphere of Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-century England with courtship rituals of the English gentry.

*Pride and Prejudice* has been the subject of volumes of diverse critical reactions since its publication. Evaluations of this work are of various natures. Many early critics focused on the social realism of the novel, commenting on the depth, or lack of depth, of Austen's characters. Criticism of the novel from the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century also tended to regard Austen as moralist, discussing the value system that *Pride and Prejudice* establishes. Critics from the 1920s to through 1950s focused on Austen's characteristic themes and stylistic devices, as well as discussing her choice of subject matter and the moral and ideological journey that Elizabeth undertakes through out the course of novel. During the 1960s and 1970s commentators offered contextual criticism that evaluated *Pride and Prejudice* within the literary and social world in which Austen wrote. It was also during this period that new direction in criticism of the began to expanded. Since the late 1960s, for example critics have approached Austen's novel from a variety of linguistic standpoint, such as Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, as well as analyzing the work in terms of postmodern theory and applying new developments in psychology to the text. There was also been increased attention given to the political sub text of novel suggesting new ways of interpreting its relationship to the historical context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the later decades of twentieth century and into the early years of the twenty-first century, the most prominent trends in criticism of *Pride and Prejudice* have deprived from the

perspective of literary feminism, including analysis of the novel's view of female oppression, its portrayal of the patriarchal society of the time, and its treatment of the possibility, fantasy, and reality of female power.

Different critics have observed *Pride and Prejudice* in different ways. One critic, Mary Ann O'Farrell shows blushes in Austen's novel. She writes:

Throughout '*Pride and Prejudice*,' Jane Austen notes with frequency the blushes and colorings of her characters. Austen's blushes seem sometimes to work as natural and involuntary signals of embarrassment, vexation, anger and love. Jane Bennet for example blushes the warmth of her feelings for Bingley even while verbally denying their strength. (128)

James Sherry focuses on opposition and reconciliation of Darcy and Elizabeth in *pride and prejudice*. He says:

For most people, both interest and meaning of *pride and prejudice* reside in the splendid opposition and gradual reconciliation of Darcy and Elizabeth. There may be differences in the interpretation of individual episodes, or in the estimation of where or with whom the values of the novel finally lie; but there seems to be general agreement that the essential impulses of the novel is dialectical, and hence that both Darcy and Elizabeth must undergo some changes of heart and of some changes of heart and of opinion before the novel can reach its beautifully poised and profound resolution in their marriage. (609)

Another critic, Judith Lauder Newton, focuses on the economic differences of male and female in Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Giving emphasis on first two sentences of the novel, he makes subtle and ironic point of that distinction: 'a single

man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of wife'. Such man is considered as a "rightful property" for Victorian parents. Some single man had independent access to money whereas some single women or daughter have to be married for it. Newton here focuses on role and status of male and female in regard to the wealth possessed.

Regarding the theme of *Pride and Prejudice*, another critic Robert C. Fox opines:

Darcy and Elizabeth embody the respective traits of *Pride and Prejudice*, and the plot revolves around the destruction of this barrier which separates the two. Some such interpretation is stated or implied in the usual critical discussion but there is danger of being misled by investing the title with more significance than is warranted. We should keep in mind the circumstances surrounding the publication. (185)

Though Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* is approached by various critics through various perspectives, the ambivalence selfhood of Austen's heroine Elizabeth is not observed yet which is equally important to analyse. So, this research focuses on this aspect which is very much different from other perspectives.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The very first chapter deals with overall introduction of the novel and the writer, the main issue raised in the thesis, literature review and my point of departure. The second chapter deals with theoretical tools in which the idea of feminist like Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir in regard to women education and marriage is mentioned. The third chapter is the textual analysis and the last chapter is the conclusion and findings of my thesis.



## II. Education for Rationality and Depatriarchalization

Feminism politically emerged in late 1960s intending to basically define women as autonomous human being and to challenge the hierarchy based on male ideology, and as a theoretical discourse to advocate the rights of women and their political social and economic equality both in theory and practice. The goal of feminism as a political movement is to make aware of what they deserve on the one hand and to make them aware of their existence as autonomous human being on the other.

It is very disgusting that due to the lack of equality of both the sexes, females are compelled to revolt against patriarchy. The age long position of female is that of inferior sex or second sex. Under the pressure of male dominated society females are endowed with no opportunity to forward their ideas, feelings, emotions and thoughts. Feminism is to redefine women's activities and goals from woman-centered point of view and refuse the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that has reduced women as submissive other. Arvonne S Fraser defines the goal of feminism: "The object of feminism was to elevate the equal lights and human right status of women of race language or religion in all fields of human enterprise and to eliminate all discriminations against women" (44). She is of the opinion that feminism studies the bitter reality of oppression and rejection of freedom regarding women. Besides, she focuses on elimination of any kinds of discrimination in regard to sex. At present the feminist movement is strong enough to alter the stereotypes created by old fashioned patriarchal society.

Though feminism as a literary movement began in 1960s, we can trace the seeds of feminism back in to ancient Greek play *Lysistrata* for the play depicts women physically and intellectually superior. Mary Wollstonecraft, who wrote *A Vindication of Rights of Women* in 1792, is considered to be the first feminist

writer and philosopher. Though some of her ideas are challenged by radical feminists, she can be unambiguously called a feminist. Wollstonecraft finds that it is the education and the upbringing of women that can create their limited expectations based on a self image dictated by male gaze. She believes that both the sexes contribute to the inequalities and takes it for granted that both would require education to ensure the necessary changes in social attitudes. Regarding the role of education Wollstonecraft opines:

To do everything in an orderly manner is most important percept which women, who generally speaking recline only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from their infancy are broken in to method observe this negligent kind of guesswork. For what other epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of a sort of instinctive common sense never brought to the test of reason - prevents then generalizing matters of fact: so they do today what they did yesterday merely because they did it yesterday. (94)

Wollstonecraft blows the society that wanted to keep and maintain women in sentimental and emotional state by restricting the rational and intellectual awareness. By providing emotional and sentimental education the male oriented society created such a discourse that made women emotional and sentimental. Imposition of such education was to some extent to validate the male hegemony considering that women can not be rational and intellectual. Wollstonecraft here is to argue that awareness on the part of women could be possible when they are given proper rational education and brought in to the mainstream of multisectoral development of society. In terms of capacity, skill and intelligence she thus urges both the sexes to be equal. To make the

female sex aware in terms of intellectual and rational activities and to turn their brain towards rationality and to refuse the gender given to women by contemporary society, she writes; “I advise my sex not to read such flimsy works, it is to induce them to read something superior, for I coincide in opinion with a sagacious man, who having a daughter and niece under his care, pursued a very different plan with each” (399).

Wollstonecraft says that the problem of eighteenth century education regarding females was the problem of order, method and system. Due to the lack of gendered perspective of Victorian society, the place of education either at home or at school has caused many distractions on women education. Women’s education was generally assumed to be incomparably inferior to that of men’s. Boys were encouraged to be more confident for they were to play public roles in future whereas girls were imposed the idea that to compete in public world or the notion of competition in women is distasteful. Besides most importantly boys were given chance through friendship to widely advance their mind whereas girls were encouraged to have a dignified marriage for their grand promotion. The social opinion that the girls were destined to live domestic and private life and boys to live public life, then education should respectively be correspondent to their destination i.e. Girls should not be educated or should passively be educated at home and boys at school. Due to such discourse female writers of that time as Michele Cohen writes, “Education of girls in the period has generally been neglected so that the story of the early education of even there celebrated ladies suffers from confusions and contradictory” (585).

There has been a vast difference between theory and practice of feminism throughout the world. Valerie Bryson in regard to the contemporary writers to

Wollstonecraft who were contradictory in terms of theory and practice of feminism writes:

. . . the French writer Condorcet insisted that the women were capable of reason and should be educated according that they had therefore the same political rights as man and that to deny this was an unacceptable tyranny. In practice he did not anticipate the widespread involvement of women in politics but this he said was no reason to deny them political rights in principle – indeed he argued that women could no more be logically excluded from politics on the grounds of menstruation or pregnancy than could a man because he was suffering from gout. (19)

Von Hippel, a contemporary of Wollstonecraft was more revolutionary and one step ahead for his revolutionary thoughts. He was to challenge the social ideology and gender roles given by the society. He argued that instead of promoting the traditional sex roles, both men and women should be given equal education and rights but the problem was, as Valerie Bryson stating Von Hippel opines, “Enlightened men who had to act to liberate women, for they themselves had been rendered incapable of independent political action” (19).

The problem of practicalizing the theory has been existing in such various aspects including feminism. Though eighteenth century is known as enlightenment era, enlightenment was confined to thoughts and principles rather than the behavioral practices to liberate human beings.

For it was the reality of the time, another writer Catherine Macaulay supports the argument of Mary Wollstonecraft. Her view is forwarded by Valerie Bryson thus:

. . . she insisted that the different between the sexes were a product of education and environment and not of nature; she attacked the way in which women's mind bodies has been destined to please men and she demanded that boys and girls be given the some education – and here she went beyond uncritical acceptance of male values to demand that the education of boys too be changed to provide them with traditional female skills. (20)

Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of Rights of Women* especially adopts the idea that mind doesn't know sex. She is critical of the society that is wasting its assets retaining women as domestic being and also the society that denies the economic independence. Michele Cohen analyses the consequences behind the inclination of contemporary women towards physical outlook. Cohen puts forward the idea of Wollstonecraft and her contemporary Hannah More which are even terminologically similar. She writes:

Both Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft wanted, in different ways, an improvement of women's education and both were similarly critical of the education women were getting: they even used the same term to describe its effects: it 'cramped' their minds. How did this occur? (592).

Here, both the feminists are of the opinion that women mind was corrupted due to the education that excluded them from the proper exercise of reason and intellect. Cohen further writes, "for Mary Wollstonecraft, it was result of disorderly kind of education" that prevented women forming the habits of those men have because they are early 'broken into methods' (93).

The slave type consciousness of the women is the worst thing that the traditional ideology of society has imposed and exercised to women. It is even worse for her that women have always been subordinate to others ideas generally patriarchal. It is even more disgusting that pending upon such ideas they perceive themselves and validate the slave like mentality which has the worst effect in the mind and whole life of women. It's all due to the patriarchal ideology that never promoted the women's education. Valerie Bryson, in her essay, *Eighteenth Century's Rebels* draws the following excerpt of Wollstonecraft to illustrate the contribution of contemporary male intellectuals that led to corrupt female thoughts due to their influence in regard to female education.

. . . I may be accused of arrogance; still I must declare what I firmly believe, that all the writers who have written on the subject of female education and manners from Rousseau to Dr. Gregory, have contributed to render women more artificial, weak character, than they would otherwise have been; and consequently more useless members of society. (1)

Wollstonecraft attacks the intellectuals for their contribution to degrade whole human species by degrading the half of it.

Valerie Bryson further supports the idea of Wollstonecraft in which she attacks Rousseau who regarded women to be inferior sex which is a disgusting foolishness. Valerie writes:

Rousseau declares that a women should never for a moment be herself independent that she should be governed by fear to exercise her natural cunning, and made a coquettish slave in order to render her a more

alluring object of desire, a sweeter companion to man, whenever he chooses to relax himself. (7)

Wollstonecraft has powerful reaction against Rousseau's programme for the education of women. She has strongly established herself as a Rousseau's antagonist. Her attempt is interpreted as definition of mainstream feminism, though what Wollstonecraft wrote was hardly applicable only to less number of middle class women. The situation of subaltern women was and is worse even today. However, Wollstonecraft's argument that women must have same rights, have benefits such as; women will get rid from the hell that has been denying the chance to develop as moral human beings, not reduced to vain fools and frustrated old maids and incompetent mother. Secondly it is illogical to deny women the same educational opportunities as men if reason and virtue are same in both sexes. And finally the society will benefit in all sorts of ways if women are given the same right as men.

For most of the ideas of Wollstonecraft are concerned with the distribution of equal right to both the sexes, freedom of women to participate in public and political activities beyond the household works and reformation and development of liberal society offering equal opportunities, she is considered to be a liberal feminist. Generally reformist feminists are called liberal but in close analysis of the context Wollstonecraft should in my opinion, be called a radical feminist for her extreme voices for revolution.

Virginia Woolf is another writer who has similar views with Wollstonecraft in regard to the psychological condition under which men and women were brought up. In the essay "A Room of One's Own" Woolf argues similar to Wollstonecraft that if equal time, money, space and freedom is provided, women can do as that of men. Besides she discusses the issues about women's conditions throughout the history and

their cultural education and economic disabilities within patriarchal society which prevented them from realizing their potentiality. She also directly focuses on the causes of women authors' inability to identify their creative potentiality. Analyzing the poems and novels of different female writers she declares that the limitation in the vision of female writers. Expression of harassment and distraction with hates and grievance is the result of their confinement to patriarchy.

As result of oppression of patriarchy, most of the works of female writers were as Woolf writes, “. . . we feel the influence of fear in it; just as we constantly feed an acidity which is the result of oppression, a buried suffering smouldering beneath her passion, a rancor, which contrasts these books splendid as they are, with a spasm of pain” (823).

She condemns patriarchal consciousness that women should be fully dressed, load themselves with jewels, stay inside house, busy themselves knitting and mending shocks, do the kitchen work and remain silent. Writing was considered unsuitable for women and effort to create literary work was satirized as ‘a blue – stacking with an inch for scribing’. She supports the female writers and their creations from the accusation of impotence by stating that every literary work is the result of one's experiences in life. She further considers the narrowness of the female writers to be the result of the narrowness of life imposed upon women.

Woolf criticizes the myths created for women to inherit, as a hindrance in the process of women's development. She ultimately blames the patriarchal discourse that prevented women from education. In absence of proper education, time space and economy, women were consequently imposed ignorance dependency, weak and delicate.



Critics have opined that Wollstonecraft contends men and women to be equal in the eyes of god rather than unequivocally stating that men and women are equal. For Wollstonecraft men and women are equal in most important aspect of life not all. Wollstonecraft doesn't make the claim for gender equality as that of late nineteenth and twentieth century feminist for the context and social background was different. Though Wollstonecraft ideas do not seem to be revolutionary to twenty first century readers, its implication were revolutionary during eighteenth century. As Wollstonecraft calls on men rather than women, to initiate the social and political changes, she is criticized for she seems to bias addressing male readers. Any Elizabeth Smith in defiance of Wollstonecraft writes:

. . . the text reveals her belief that women could not perform the revolution alone. Men empowered legally and socially were also needed to effect change. Yet they too could not work alone; then as now, women must be convinced that the revolution would be to their benefit before they will take an active role. (556)

Unlike other critics, Smith here focuses on Wollstonecraft's technique on addressing the readers for the responsibility of both the sexes. Smith further clarifies that Wollstonecraft was not to consider that Wollstonecraft was to address both the sexes for a complete revolution. Here Smith too supporting Wollstonecraft seems to be afraid of declaring an individual and autonomous being. Smith seems to be preoccupied with at patriarchal discourse for she supports the significance of addressing male readers. Smith, similar to Wollstonecraft focuses her ideas on reforming the society by equalizing the rights. Distinct to this, radical feminists give significance on declaring oneself an autonomous and free individual and practicality it. Rather than giving priority to reformation of female sex to male standard, radical

feminist such as Simon de Beauvoir regards the bottom line of feminism that is equally of both the sexes. Besides Beauvoir traces the biological complexities of female body to argue that except the biological difference, both the sexes are essentially equal, free and autonomous. She describes such female as modern in her book *The Second Sex*. Thus:

The emancipated woman, on the contrary, wants to be active a taker and refuses the passivity men means to impose on her. The 'modern' woman accepts masculine value: she prides herself in thinking taking action working creating on the same term as men instead of seeking to disparage them she declares herself then equal. (727)

Beauvoir is of the opinion that rather than enchaining oneself to the society first ones should declare oneself a free and autonomous individual. Her argument is much story and convincing. She is radical in her views. Despite there various mind-blowing ideas she sounds to be sexiest in language and blames men rather than the patriarchy and its discourse. However, gender discrimination is practiced in language use which should be condemned for. It teaches human beings distinction between male and female.

However Beauvoir sounds more convincing and strong in her arguments, Wollstonecraft; if the context and background of social thoughts upon which both the writers write are analysed, too sounds radical and revolutionary. Katherine Binhammer supports the argument of Wollstonecraft that focus on rationalizing the women mind. Binhammer writes:

. . . theorists attack assign a gender difference to the mind because of the female body [ . . . ] If men keep women in a state of mental ignorance to turn them in to sexual slaves, freed from this sexuality, women should be able to cultivate their mind and reason. The second

stage in their critique or the goal of desexing the body is unsexing the mind. (674)

Here Binhammer is to support the idea as Wollstonecraft blames women of that time to be superficial and silly. Here she is to argue that this is not because of innate deficiency of mind but rather because patriarchal discourse denied them access to education. Wollstonecraft, in her specific educational plan argues that all children should be sent to the same school and same education should be given at home for the inspiration of love of home and domestic pleasures. Arguing the marriage of men and women to be the cement of society she further suggests the schooling of men and women should be co-education and follow the same model. Binhammer further argues upon these ideas of Wollstonecraft associating the ideas with ungendered mind. She writes, “to desex is to argue against a particular sexuality of the body, to unsex is to refute a particular gender of mind. It is in the name of this unsexed-that is to say, ungendered mind, that hays, Robinson and Wollstonecraft make their call for women’s rights and female education. (125)

Thus Binhammer associates the idea of Wollstonecraft that focuses on female education with its significance to ungender human mind. Ungendered mind of every human being is the target of feminism as Rosemarie Tong asserts, “Feminist tend to agree, a person’s biological sex should in no way determine his/her psychological or social gender” (31).

Wollstonecraft’s concept of education is very relevant even today for the understanding of sex and sexuality through education can make the society humane and ungendered. Besides, feminism is to recognize the social structure that is formed on patriarchal ideology and to revolt against the network of ideological domination of patriarchy examining the experience of diversities of life of women from all races,

classes, cultures and ethnicities. The networks established by the patriarchy through the help of so-called rationality and masculinity have been dominant in cultural and psychosexual context of a society. Studying the context and revolutionary the discourse, feminism should alter the old fashioned patriarchal hegemony.

Wollstonecraft's focus on education of female is relevant thus to struggle against all kinds of institutionalized definitions that may either promote any kinds of discriminations. Wollstonecraft's vision of rational women is to free another generation from fighting the same war. For the establishment of harmonious and humane society, Wollstonecraft suggests for rational friendship of male and female that is the 'cement of society' rather than business contract like marriage.

### III. Ambivalence of Selfhood in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Elizabeth Bennet, highly self-willed, rebellious and self-possessed character is the protagonist of the novel. She is an intellectual girl as she has many admirable qualities such as the consciousness about her female autonomy. She is clever and she can converse brilliantly. It is all because of the impact of education upon her and the growing female consciousness.

Elizabeth Bennet shows her revolutionary attitude and distinguishes herself from other female character. Her thought is different from her sister Jane in regard to men (suitor). Jane has normal Victorian assumption whereas Elizabeth has different view. Commenting on Mr. Darcy she says:

‘He is just what a young man ought to be,’ said she,  
‘Sensible, good humored, lively; and I never saw such happy manners!  
- So much ease, with such perfect good breeding!’  
‘He is also handsome’, replied Elizabeth, ‘which a young man ought  
likewise to be, if he possibly can. His character is thereby complete’.  
(11)

This conversation takes place between Elizabeth and her sister Jane after seeing a young man in the ball dance. Which clears that Elizabeth couldn't be tempted by a person's physical appearance. She is guided by reason so she believes a person's character makes him/ her perfect rather than outer appearance.

‘I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment.’  
‘Did not you? I did for you. But that is one great difference between us. Compliments always take *you* by surprise and *me* never’. What could be more natural than his asking you again? He could not help

seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room'.(11)

This dialogue implies that Elizabeth is a kind of different girl whose thoughts differs her from rest of her sisters. When a wealthy young person, Mr. Bingley offered Jane to dance with him, she is very much flattered. It makes her surprise. But Elizabeth takes it very simple thing. She believes that her sister Jane could deserve such compliment.

Elizabeth got this knowledge which distinguishes her from the other characters and that is her consciousness about her female autonomy. "Not enough handsome to tempt me" (3). This remark of Mr. Darcy touches her much though she tries to make it funny with her friends and she decides not to dance with him. "I always speak what I think" (11). This remark of Elizabeth clears that she is a very strong character.

In Victorian era, women could not get proper education and they have to follow the norms and values set by male figure. Especially families' responsibility used to be on male figure. But in the case of Elizabeth she thinks herself responsible though the role is not given to female. "I do not wish to avoid the walk. The distance is nothing, when one has a motive; only three miles" (27). When Jane is invited to Netherfield Park, she gets soaked and falls ill. Hearing that news Elizabeth decides to visit her sister on foot. It makes her a courageous figure as well as a responsible sister. To take such position is one of her revolutionary attitudes towards patriarchal society because patriarchal norms and values do not give such task to female.

To make Elizabeth such distinct character her father's role is also equally important. "Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sister" (12). Though he has five daughters, Mr. Bennet praises Elizabeth for her special qualities of dealing others which shows her self confidence, sharp minded and quicken.

Despite all these things, Elizabeth's views are different from normal Victorian girls in the case of her wishes regarding the life partner. Ordinary girls are normally tempted by wealth and are always in search of wealthy husbands. They go to ball dance and try to have a huge impression on a young man and to be chosen by him. In the case of Elizabeth, she rejects a marriage proposal of a wealthy man Mr. Collins:

‘Upon my word, sir,’ cried Elizabeth, ‘your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. – You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so’. (95)

With the words above, it is clear that Elizabeth actually doesn't have a high regard for wealth alone. She wants a partner with whom she could be happy and she has this strong confidence on what she was saying. Her mother wants her to marry Mr. Collins but she doesn't care about her mother's desire as her mother was looking after money alone. While talking about the Victorian young girls, they couldn't go against parents' desire but the case of Elizabeth was different.

Her rejection to Mr. Collins shows her strength. She couldn't be intimidated by his wealth. Mr. Collins frequently tries to convince and wants to get married with Elizabeth. He praises her. Collins, at any cost, is trying to entrap Elizabeth and after passing the remarks like 'you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females' (96). But Elizabeth clears his confusion:

‘I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretension whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart’. (96)

Her conversations show her expressing power. She is clear in her mind. She knows what she is saying and what she is doing. She is an intellectual being and she respects her individuality and freedom. She is unlike every other Victorian lady.

On the level of intellectuality too, Elizabeth differs from other female characters. So by presenting the character Elizabeth, Austen tries to show the growing female consciousness and impact of education on female in patriarchal society.

Elizabeth seeks autonomy in Victorian society. She is a capable to handle problems on her own. When Mr. Collins forwards the marriage proposal to her, she rejects instantly. As a matter of fact, she does not consider him a suitable one to be her husband despite her mother's full readiness to give her hands to Collins. So being self conscious, she distinguishes herself from the rest of girl in her society.

In Victorian era, gender discrimination was highly prevalent. The women were often considered as the second category of human being. Therefore they were ever deprived of all major social, political and economic affairs. They are sexually discriminated. Their intellectual capability and moral manners are often defined in terms of sex. Jane, elder sister of Elizabeth is an emotional character but Elizabeth



believes in equality and tries to play the role of responsible figure which was often supposed to be the job of male.

Girls usually have passion for dress, dancing and music rather than laboring for rationality and intelligence. They try to depend on male figures. Miss Darcy is the fine example of it who can't realize her own existence and has to live under the supervision of her brother Mr. Darcy. Another female character, Miss Bingley has passion for dress and fashion. But in the case of Elizabeth she always tries to struggle for her self identity. A female character used to seek shelter in a society constructed institution via marriage institution. After rejecting the proposal from Collin's, Elizabeth seems to be attracted with her new friend Wickham. She is impressed by him for not knowing about his original side of being a fortune hunter.

The following conversation between Elizabeth and Lady Catharine de Bourgh clears how brilliantly Elizabeth could converse:

‘Has your governess left you?’

‘We never had any governess’

‘No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! - I never heard such a thing. Your mother most have been quite a slave to your education’. (144)

When Lady Catherine criticizes the Bennet sisters' upbringings, Elizabeth takes side of family, "Suspected herself to be the first creature who held ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence" (146). Lady Catherine asked several questions to Elizabeth,

How many sisters she had, whether they were older or younger than herself, whether any of them were to be married, whether they were handsome, whether they had been educated, what carriage her father

kept, and what had been her mother's maiden name? Elizabeth felt all the impertinence of her questions, but answered then very composedly. (144)

Elizabeth seems very talent girl who can converse brilliantly; "Compared with some other families, I believe we were; but such of us as wished to learn, never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary" (145). While Lady Catherine tries to insult Elizabeth saying that without the governess, education would not have been possible, Elizabeth replies in this way. So the Conversation of Elizabeth with Lady Catherine shows how intelligent Elizabeth is.

Mr. Darcy, a very young wealthy and, well educated person slowly and gradually gets attached to and impressed by Elizabeth and proposed her. Instead of being tempted by his wealth and rank Elizabeth rejects his proposal. She has no temptation towards wealth and rank. "You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way they would have tempted me to accept it" (169).

Other young ladies used to accept the marriage proposal easily. Elizabeth always wants such partner who could be suitable for her. A young person like Darcy also could not impress Elizabeth because of his pride. So with no difficulty, Elizabeth rejects his proposal as well. "You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it" (169). Elizabeth is always clear in her opinion. She could express what she really thinks. She has good conversing skills. She clears why she couldn't accept Mr. Darcy's proposal in this way:

From the very beginning, from the first movements I may almost say, of my acquaintance with you, your manners impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish

disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that groundwork of disapprobation, on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry. (169)

In comparison with other girls, Elizabeth stands out in regard to the social boundaries. It's a kind of her revolutionary aspect. She is not ready to follow the social norms take the way normally other girls used be conscious about the social status of her suitor. Elizabeth, though a very wealthy young person proposes her, couldn't be impressed i.e. she believes in equality and doesn't like Darcy's arrogance.

In Austen's time, there was strict law for women. For woman, success is defined solely in terms of marriage and domestic affairs. All aspect of society and human behavior are controlled and guided by men alone and, all social, culture, literary, economic, religious and legal and many other aspects are dominated by men to suit their purpose. Authority is parted through the male line. 'Your fathers' estate is entailed on Mr. Collins' (144). Mr. Bennet has five daughters they can't inherit their ancestral property and he entailed on Mr. Collins a cousin of Mr. Bennet. Austen reflects this aspect of her society in her novel. There were different types of people for whom social status, rank, civility used to be the major concern.

Lady Catherine has a kind of pomposity of her ladyship. So she always tries to insult and misjudge Elizabeth, "Allow me to say Lady Catherine, that the agreements with which you have supported this extraordinary application have been as frivolous as the application was ill judged. You have widely mistaken my character if you think I can be worked on by such persuades as there." (209). Lady Catherine has a kind of prosperity but Elizabeth, is unmoved by her "I don't pretend to possess equal

frankness with your ladyship. You may ask questions which I shall not choose to answer" (210). This shows that Elizabeth could converse very well.

"I am a gentlemen's daughter" (31). Elizabeth defends her family, declaring this sentence and then asserts her independence from the exasperating control that such chubs as Mr. Collin, Miss Bingley and Lady Catherine herself always attempt to exert over their social inferior when Elizabeth refused Mr. Darcy's proposal to her, she told Darcy that was not a gentlemen "you are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman like manner" (169).

Elizabeth feels herself very responsible towards her family. She is worried about the relation of her sister Jane and Bingley when Bingley was far from Jane. Especially she is worried about her sister Lydia's manner and immaturity. So she talks to her father not let her to go Brighton. She says:

If you, my dear father, will not take the trouble of checking her exuberant spirits, and of teaching her that her present pursuits are not to be the business of her life, she will soon be beyond the reach of amendment. Her character will be fixed, and she will, at sixteen, be the most determined flirt that ever made herself and her family ridiculous. (202)

Elizabeth shows maturity of her mind when she urges her father not to allow Lydia to go to Brighton with Mrs. Forster. She tries to make her father get acquainted with the unpleasant consequences which are likely to result from Lydia's stay in Brighton where she would be absolutely free to do the things as she wishes.

Elizabeth's there bold suggestions justify the fact that she is very much intellectual and mature in thinking.

Aristocracy is highly privileged in Victorian era, people used to be engaged talking about money, marriage, status, rank, position and power. A young man with large fortune used to be concerned of every Victorian parent. People used to give priority to social status of their daughters marriage, "however little known the feelings or new such a man way be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the mind of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property some one or other of their daughters" (1). This makes it clear that how the marriage ideology is set during Victorian era.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are fine example of Victorian parents who are obsessed with the idea of marrying their daughters. They often appear in quest of a rich bachelor for their daughters who can provide them the economic security. Mrs. Bennet's obsession of marriage regarding her daughter get more apparent when she says, "if I can but see one of my daughter happily settled at Netherfield [. . .] and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for" (6). The daughters happen to be burden for the parents so they are always in quest of rich men who can assure their daughters, the secure life. Victorian society considers marriage crucial because it is the only accessible form of self definition of girls. So, marriage ideology affects the women's self. Victorian ideology of marriage doesn't let a girl to be out of it. Victorian norms and values are deeply rooted in the mind of people and beliefs which says that women's security and betterment lies within the marriage institution. The opening line of the novel *Pride an Prejudice*: "it is truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of wife" (1). This ideology guides the mind of Victorian girl and they couldn't revolt

against it. All women character sees their fate and security on marriage. Dance used to be taken as a metaphor of marriage in Victorian society. All Victorian mothers tried their best to make their daughter more handsome and send them to the ball dance. Young and wealthy young person come to participate in the dance.

Despite these all fact, after receiving the letter from Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth slowly changes her manner. "How despicably have I acted" (181). Elizabeth realizes that her attitude towards Darcy corresponds to the judgement she has already made about him.

"I have prided myself on my discernment! - I, who have valued myself on my abilities! Who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blamable distrust" (182). It clears that Elizabeth is ambivalent regarding her selfhood. In the beginning, she rejects the proposal of Mr. Darcy because she thinks that he is too arrogant, which is the part of her first impression of him at the marten ball and because of the role she believes he played in disinherit wickham and his admitted role in disrupting the romance between Jane and Bingley. But after she regrets upon her behavior towards Mr. Darcy and says: "How humiliating is this discovery" (182), Elizabeth feels humiliation on her behaviour with Darcy and says:

Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly. - Pleased with the preference of one, an offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, if have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. (182)

It all clears that in the beginning though Elizabeth seems to be a strong and rebellious character, she could not escape from the Victorian ideology, and slowly her affection towards Mr. Darcy starts to act developed. Though she defense strongly Mr. Darcy, his one letter could changed her and make her believes what he mentions in the letter is truth. She thinks that the way what she behave, is unjust to Mr. Darcy. Her anger was turned against herself and it all shows that she couldn't be different from other girl, after all.

“To be mistress of Pemberly might be something” (211). Elizabeth tours the beautiful estate of Pemberly with the Gardiner's; she imagines what it would like to be mistress there, as Darcy's wife. Elizabeth's visit of Pemberly, Darcy's home town, is a kind of a journey of exploration of Darcy's ground. When Elizabeth enters at Mr. Darcy house, she finds the rooms very lofty and handsome. Elizabeth is all amused by seeing the beauty of Darcy's house and its decoration. “I might have been mistress” (212) and this expression of Elizabeth clears that she is tempted by the beauty and luxury. She could not keep herself far form aristocracy that is deeply rooted in Victorian mind. Once she strongly rejects Mr. Darcy but now she likes to be his Mistress “Instead of viewing them as a stranger, I might have, rejoiced in them as my own” (212). It clearly shows that how Elizabeth changes herself. She thinks Mr. Darcy's home as her own. When Mr. Darcy's housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds asked Elizabeth whether Mr. Darcy is handsome or not. Elizabeth replies, “Yes very handsome” (213). This response also proves that changing attitude of Elizabeth upon Darcy. When Mrs. Reynolds says that Darcy, in his youth, was “the sweetest, most generous-hearted in the world” (214). Elizabeth is surprised by this and realizes how she misjudged Mr. Darcy. The visit of Pemberly helps to clear more about Mr.

Darcy's attitude. Elizabeth is surprised by hearing an agreeable description of a man she considers unbearably arrogant.

After visiting Mr. Reynolds, Elizabeth thinks all about Mr. Darcy. She seems restless. She is kind of happy because she hears a lot about Mr. Darcy's positive aspects which compels her to think about Darcy's positive aspects "as a brother, a landlord, a master, how many people's happiness were in his guardianship" (216). It all shows the growing attachment of her. She changed herself. She could not stand on the strong point. Though she seems conscious about her 'self', she herself seems in-between position. It is all because of the discourse deeply rooted in the mind of Victorian girls. When Mr. Darcy proposed to Elizabeth, she refused. It shows that she wants to marry with the man who could be approved by her progressive horizon of mind. "It is impossible that he should still love me" (221) this expression of Elizabeth shows her duality. She starts to love Mr. Darcy and worried whether he loves her or not.

Lydia, Elizabeth's sister elopement with Mr. Wickham brought ups and downs in Bennet family. It is the fruitful time for Mr. Darcy to prove how much he loves Elizabeth. He tried his best to impress Bennet family. Elizabeth, knowing the fact that Mr. Darcy's contribution plays a vital role on Lydia's marriage, realizes that Darcy is so helpful and he is not what she used to think before. "He had taken on himself all the trouble and metrification attendant on such a research" (283)". After knowing the fact that it was Darcy who found Lydia and Wickham, and who paid Wickham the money that facilitated the marriage, Elizabeth is surprised Mr. Darcy has done all this because of his love for Elizabeth. These all are the proves what Elizabeth thinks and her changing attitude, and slowly developing attachment with Darcy. Elizabeth totally changed herself. "Let me first see how he behaves" (291). After seeing Mr. Darcy with



Bingley, she waits how Mr. Darcy behaves. It clears that Elizabeth couldn't distinguish herself from other girls. She couldn't express what she thinks before Mr. Darcy.

"If Mr. Darcy is neither by honors nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?" (310). Lady Catherine de Bough visits Elizabeth by hearing a rumor that Darcy is planning to marry Elizabeth, she tries to stop Elizabeth informing that they are planning Mr. Darcy engagement with Miss de Bough. But Elizabeth's such expression clears that in a reasonable way, she also wants Mr. Darcy and she will accept the proposal from him. Though Lady Catherine de Bough's manner and behavior are insulting, Elizabeth is also seems impressed by Darcy and she express her likeness to him.

When Elizabeth get chance to talk with Mr. Darcy she immediately says:

Mr. Darcy, I am very selfish creature; and, for the sake of giving relief to my own feelings, care not how much I may be wounding yours. I can no longer help thanking you for you unexampled kindness to my poor sister. Ever since I have known it, I have been most anxious to acknowledge to you how gratefully I feel it. Were it known to the rest of my family, I should not have merely my own gratitude to express.

(319)

Elizabeth expresses all these in front of Mr. Darcy. She is very much thankful of her because he helps Bennet family in difficulty. Elizabeth says herself selfish because she thinks for her benefit or betterment she wound Darcy's feelings. It clears the position of her selfhood.

"Let me thank you again and again, in the name of my family for the generous compassion which induced you to take so much trouble, and hear so many

mortifications, for the sake of discovering them”(319). Bennet’s family is very much worried after the elopement of Lydia with Wickham. But Darcy, help to stop to ruin the life of Lydia. So Elizabeth expresses. “You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were lost April, tell me so at one. My affections and wishes are unchanged but one word from you will silence me on this subject ever”(320). This extract given in the text clears the inner desire of Elizabeth. Elizabeth couldn't be different from other girl. She starts to love Mr. Darcy and she is willing to be loved by him. Once she rejects the proposal of Darcy. So it is hard to believe her sister Jane that Elizabeth is in love with Darcy. “He still loves me, and we are engaged” (326). This expression of Elizabeth with her sister Jane proves that Elizabeth and Darcy are engaged.

“It has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberly” (327). As Elizabeth shows her revolutionary attitude in the beginning, finally she reveals the fact that she is tempted by Mr. Darcy's beautiful ground. It gets clear that Elizabeth couldn't stand in one point. Her position seems in-between. She is entrapped in the discourse created by her society where a very young and wealthy person is supposed to be all in all for a girls' marriage.

Elizabeth, in the conversation with her father says that Darcy is not proud and he is really the object of her choice. Her father doesn't believe that Elizabeth wants to have Mr. Darcy and question “Are you out of your senses to be accepting this man? Have not you always hated him?”(329).The given extract clears that Elizabeth is really in love with Mr. Darcy. “I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable” (329). After all Elizabeth loves and accepts Mr. Darcy's proposal of marriage. It shows her submissiveness.

Elizabeth, the protagonist of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* couldn't escape from the Victorian ideology of marriage. There are various social norms and values to overcome her from her dynamic situation. All the novels move around the marriage circumstances. This conversation clears that how much worried Victorian parents used to be for their daughter marriage:

What is his name?

Bingley.

Is he married or single?

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! (2)

Hearing the news that a young man is entering the village, this conversation took place between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. Aristocracy is highly privileged at that time and during dinner. Ball dance, party used to be a platform where women could show off their jewelry and they try their best to decorate their daughter thinking that young and handsome man could be impressed by their daughter and offer to marry.

Parents of Elizabeth are conceptually distinct. Mother prefers strict Victorian ideology whereas father seems to rebel and promotes his daughter to be an autonomous and free individual. The conceptual distinction can be seen in the conversation of Elizabeth and her father in regard to the selection of life partner. "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*" (99).

Besides her confinement to Victorian ideology and her attitudes in regard to marriage of her daughter as a burden can be examined in the lines: "Miss Lizzy, if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you

will never get a husband at all - and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead" (100). Here she inspires her daughter to use the beauty of her body threatening that otherwise she could remain unmarried throughout life. Frequent circulation of Victorian ideology slowly challenges Elizabeth's thoughts. Her position as rebel is not strong for the discourse begins to work on her. Her attitudes such as "I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands" (275) are later changed due to the exaggeration of her sister, Lydia in regard to charm of Victorian type marriage. "...and what do you think of my husband? Is not he a charming man? I am sure my sisters must envy me. I only hope they may have half my good luck" (275). The conversation of Lydia and her mother compels to Elizabeth to think about her position.

Along with these textual evidences the protagonist of the novel Elizabeth can be declared a character of ambivalence. She can't completely be a rebel neither can she accept the traditional values. Her location in traditional phase: a phase in which she is in-between revolution- status quo, individuality- society, father- mother makes her confused and unable to locate herself in a particular place or ideology.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The position of Elizabeth is that of unsuccessful revolutionary which makes her the character of ambivalent personality. She has been presented as a female rebel confused and contradictory within herself. She is confused and contradictory between her own thoughts and the unfixed position she has in the society due to such thoughts. The big gap between her awareness and contemporary social discourse makes her confused. Elizabeth is not completely able to be guided by her own thoughts and philosophy in regard to her life. It's more importantly due to the impact of education she grew out to be revolutionary girl. She revolted against almost all the gender roles and discriminations imposed upon the women by Victorian society but ultimately surrender to Victorian ideology. The problem is that she can not maintain her thoughts and awareness throughout her life.

Austen demonstrates Elizabeth as a capable and intelligent woman able to handle the problems herself. Since Elizabeth was educated differently and was frequently encouraged by her father to get involved in intellectual debates, she grew in such a environment that detached her from being a hypocrite. Due to the impact of education her struggles to seek autonomy in the society under patriarchal discourse was a good initiation. Her ultimate marriage with a man who meets the target of Victorian marriage institution is in some extent the result of her helplessness. The life she lives before and after marriage is contradictory.

Besides her married life that seems more contradictory, her unmarried life wasn't less confused. As Elizabeth thought differently to that of her contemporaries, she was in a different position for she couldn't stick herself to tradition. Being a genuine woman, her refusal to be an educated slave leads her to refuse marrying a man wealthier and more intelligent than herself. Unlike other Victorian women, her

endurance to revolt against her mother's interference in her private life is because she respected her individuality and freedom.

Along with the impact of education, the ideological conflict between her parents makes her change from one opinion and mood to another. She is situated in such a position in which it is difficult for her to make choice between two distinct opinions of her parents. Despite her desire to follow father's advice that could increase the quality and value of her revolutionary thoughts, she, being a member of a Victorian society could not avoid the imposed values that were against her own thoughts.

She lives the life of high theoretical expectations which she can't give up but has been unable to practice. Thus she lives the life of mixed feelings in regard to her own thoughts, life and herself. Her ambivalence is not such rude or negative that results in difficulty caused due to the choice of one between undesirable two; but she swings between mixed feelings so that can't locate herself in a fixed position as expected by herself or the society.

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