

A STUDY OF THE USE OF SATIRE TO EXPRESS FEMINISM
IN THE NOVEL PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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Approval Form

This research paper hereto, entitled “A Study of the Use of Satire to Express Feminism in the Novel Pride and Prejudice” prepared and submitted by Samantha Yung Kah Khei in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Language is hereby accepted.

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ABSTRACT

Austen was well known for her use of satire and was often suspected of feminist tendencies within her work, which provided a gap worthy of research as there were several studies concerning Austen's use of satire and existence of feminism in *Pride and Prejudice* separately, but not as inter-related elements. This thesis was focused on the study of the use of satire to express feminism within the text of choice, *Pride and Prejudice* penned by Jane Austen. The study made use of several sources of information and studies that were conducted based on Austen's use of satire and hints of feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*, synthesising the information into a single coherent foundation for the content analysis. Utilising naturalistic observation and in-depth analysis revealed that the use of satire did express feminism within *Pride and Prejudice*, in all sorts of aspects including narrative, theme, characters and settings. Discussion of the analysis led to the observation that feminism could be expressed without the use of satire, but satire was necessary to enhance the expression and appreciation of feminism. Conclusively, it was seen that Austen's life and writing skills had a great influence on how feminism was perceived in *Pride and Prejudice*.

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covered several areas that would be the groundwork for the research paper, starting off with the background of Jane Austen to observe how her personal life may have affected her works. Next, the background of the literary era of the work was introduced to understand the themes of the novel in relevance to its literary era. There after, the chapter would cover both feminism and satire, which were the elements to be studied in the research. Lastly, a brief insight on the novel's theme was covered in relation to the elements which would be studied in the research.

1.2 Author's Background

Jane Austen, born in Hampshire in the year 1775, was a writer of the Romantic Age, though her works were mostly published towards the end of the era and posthumously (Penguin Popular Classics). Penguin Popular Classics mentioned that Austen, who was the seventh child of Reverend George Austen, her works were greatly influenced by her own life, if one was to observe her personal history during her writing years, as could be seen in the social status of the women in Austen's works, who were of landed gentry like Austen herself. Austen's reading habit gave her an extensive knowledge on the writings of authors such as the likes of Sir Walter Scott and George Crabbe (Penguin Popular Classics).

Her life was rather quiet, focused on her writing and family. Though she received several proposals from suitors and even on an occasion, accepted one, Austen revoked her

acceptance the following day, leading a life of spinsterhood instead (Penguin Popular Classics). Penguin Popular Classics also pointed out that her heroines similarly emulated this selectiveness of their suitors, as the reader would notice. *Pride and Prejudice* which was published in 1813, was Austen's favourite among her own works, believing that its heroine, Elizabeth Bennet reflected her best (Penguin Popular Classics).

1.3 Background of the Romantic Age Literature

The Romantic Age boasted of writers of great ideals, due to the movement of the French Revolution, and that included the introduction of ideals that women deserved equal rights to men, as evidenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Besides Wollstonecraft's publications, several other female authors had stepped forward to publish their works, as stated by Mellor (183). Most were often seen as tinged with the feminist theme, including *Pride and Prejudice*, though the addition of the latter to the growing list of feminist novel debate was much later after its publication.

Despite claims that the theme of *Pride and Prejudice* was anti-feminist in itself, Jane Austen's work was constantly related to feminism in literature. Though Jane Austen is now considered a great author, her works were once sidelined from the major publications of the Romantic Age because it covered 'the common household' instead of portraying the big issues of the era, mainly the French Revolution, but later was acknowledged as there is opinion that Austen depicts the French Revolution in microscopic details through portrayal of its effects in the small, but realistic society of her works .

Her work *Pride and Prejudice* was published towards the end of the era in 1813 and was believed to be a revised version of an earlier rejected work, *First Impressions*. Set

in the background of the English gentry, the general theme of the novel was how a woman finds a husband. This theme complied with the common ideas of the women authors of the Romantic Age, which rather than being a pro-patriarchal society notion, such a theme was believed to be the aesthetic theory of women writers that realistic depictions far often served better to educate the readers about morality as it was readily more believable than the idealistic universe created in poetry and drama written by most famous male writers of the Romantic Age (Mellor, 190-91). Mellor described that the Romantic Age is well-portrayed by the element of nature, in which it was common to depict the most desirable form, which was an idealised form of nature; whereas the male authors follow this unwritten rule almost methodically, women authors preferred a portrayal of society, then believed as the most realistic setting and easily understood by its reader (190-91). For women of the Romantic Age, it was common sense that a woman, whose status in society was decided by the status of her husband, should strive to achieve a good marriage, as it was obvious that without a marriage, a woman in the Romantic Age had no economic means of supporting herself, and laws made it impossible for women to inherit property, making them homeless unless they were married off to a man who possessed property, and Austen's style of portraying such trends in a small community reflected a realistic society that made much sense to the readers in her era.

1.4 Feminism

Feminism, though not introduced during the Romantic Age, certainly received its boom from the masses of female writers who made themselves published in the era (Mellor, 181). Mellor explained that women writers unknowingly elevated the status of women as their works were acknowledged as eligible material that could be enjoyed by readers, additionally commenting that works published by women also generated a new

market of readers among women which gave the patriarchal society of the Romantic Age reason to worry that women may step out of the boundaries of their traditional duties as their status were still inferior to men (Mellor, 183-84). Men generally believed that reading might encourage women to adopt rather 'outrageous' notions such as being equal social counterparts to men (Mellor, 184). Such inequality was protested by Mary Wollstonecraft, and it was believed that many female writers echoed her call for acknowledgement that women were capable equals to men. Such portrayal of equality has been reflected by the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet, leading to one of the factors of widespread debate as to whether *Pride and Prejudice* was a feminist publication or not.

1.5 Satire

Satire, although not a feature of Romantic Age literature, was often said to be the antithesis of the themes of Romantic Age literature, though not a common element of Romantic Age literature, satire as its opposite has played a major role in the development of themes that make up the common Romantic Age literature, since Romantic Age literature as earlier stated, often focused on the idealisation of nature, thus creating an image of a rather fantasy-like perfection (Jones, 390-91). Satire, on the other hand, focused on realistic matters and mocked them, and no one utilised the genre of satire better than Jane Austen in the Romantic Age (Jones, 391).

1.6 Pride and Prejudice

The main plot of *Pride and Prejudice* revolved around the recurring themes of pride and prejudice, both aspects which could be readily identified with the hero, Mr Darcy, and the heroine Elizabeth Bennet. The novel progressed in a state where Mr Darcy

was aware of both his pride and prejudice, but never quite realised how these two aspects of himself affected his character so badly that he was chastised by Elizabeth's comment,

“..had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner.” (150)

Elizabeth Bennet, on the other hand, was not aware that her ability to discern a person's personality had become her pride, leading her to develop prejudices against Mr Darcy, and was utterly rebuked when she was made aware that she possessed the two aspects she never thought she would have. The irony of such situations that involved the characters in the novel drove home the implications of the novel's central theme that cautiously balanced the matter of pride, prejudice, and the social status of men and women. The satire which mocked the traditional constitutions of the social community of the Romantic Era subtly underlined the fact that Austen may have been a feminist, as seen in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, which tackled the issue of status and gender inequalities with delicate manoeuvring to make the main characters see each other as equals, an achievement in the opinion of feminists.

1.7 Statement of Problems

There had been researches that discussed feminism in the works of Jane Austen, some who claimed that Austen was a feminist who possessed more subtlety than Mary Wollstonecraft, some who said Austen was a primitive type of feminist which differed with the modern definition of feminist and some who claimed that Austen was not a feminist at all. However, it was an established fact that Austen's works were tinged with satire, whether through direct mockery or utilisation of irony to convey similar mocking sentiments. Satire was famous in the Romantic Age as one of the more influential aspects of literature due to its previous boom during the Augustan era with several authors penning satirical works during the Romantic Age, such as Thomas Love Peacock, particularly in

the novels, and Austen was most renowned as the author who inserted satire in her works. Therefore, the problem that would be tackled by the research was how satire is used in *Pride and Prejudice* in relation to feminism, as these two elements were the most outstanding aspects of debate in relation to *Pride and Prejudice* and were inter-related in the novel.

1.8 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the usage of satire through the tool of irony to expound the feminism which could be found in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, especially when the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* received derision from the male-dominated society, which could have led to Jane Austen using satire to convey feminism in a subtler way. By studying how irony reflected the satirical opinions that brought out feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*, this study also worked in the assumption that the novel *Pride and Prejudice* was a feminist work and thus secondarily aimed to reassure the argument that *Pride and Prejudice* was a publication which is feminist in nature.

1.9 Objective of Study

In this study, there were two main objectives to be achieved:

- (a) To investigate how satire through the use of irony expounds feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*.
- (b) To investigate whether feminism in *Pride and Prejudice* can be properly conveyed without satire.

1.10 Scope of Study

Overall, the whole body of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* would be used as the scope of study to be analysed. The scope would be further narrowed down by eliminating extracts of the text that do not fit into the research requirements, that was the extract must be satirical and ironic as the research was focused on these two aspects.

1.11 Significance of Study

The completion of this study would shed light on the penetration of feminism into literary works, especially in an era which started the introduction of women in published literature, although the position of women authors were hardly acknowledged. The results of this study would enlighten students of literature about the ways to interpret hidden meanings or values within literary works, considering the various angles that might be an influence such as the author's background, the society the author lived in and the elements that were common in the literary era of the author. In this research in particular, the focus was the novel *Pride and Prejudice* published by Jane Austen, an author of the Romantic Era whose works were often analysed from different angles, including the claim of Jane Austen as a feminist, which remained largely ambiguous. By conducting this study, we were able to discover more on the premise that Jane Austen was a feminist, and whether *Pride and Prejudice* contributed to the works published in the same era as a novel that illustrated subtle feminism.

1.12 Limitations of Study

In terms of time, the research had been given ample amount but unfortunately there was a lack of resources in terms of finances and research material. As the research was a qualitative study, review of related literature and previous researches were crucial, but unfortunately most of the research materials were not up to date as they were mostly in the

publication year range of 1950s to 1990s, thus reducing the value of the information that could be found and used in this research. It was also costly to travel back and forth to external sources of information that cannot be found within the school library, and a certain fee had to be paid per entry into the other university's library. Overall, the study was limited by a lack of personal resources.

1.13 Definition of Keywords

1.13.1 Novel

An invented prose narrative that is usually complex and tackles human experience through a usually connected sequence of events (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

1.13.2 Feminism

A concept that demands equality between genders (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

1.13.3 Romantic Age

A complex literary movement which originated in the second half of the 18th century (English literature: The Romantic Period).

1.13.4 Satire

A literary genre which uses irony, sarcasm, ridicule or such techniques to expose and scorn human folly and vice (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

1.13.5 Irony

A literary technique which indicates the intention of the plot or character which is the opposite of its literal meaning (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

1.13.6 Jane Austen

An English novelist, lived from 1775-1817, who was famous for portraying middle class families (Princeton University).

1.14 Conclusion

By covering the necessary information in this chapter, it could be understood that there was an angle to be studied that had not been researched before. There were many works that used *Pride and Prejudice* as its research basis, but the gap which was the use of satire to expound feminism had yet to be studied. Austen's work, *Pride and Prejudice* was considered unique even among its peers of Romantic Age literature, for its theme of marriage and heroines who were able to think and act for themselves. By researching the gap, new information on *Pride and Prejudice* and its author, Jane Austen, might be revealed.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In chapter two, information that was gathered to be used in the data analysis of the research would be summarised. The information would cover both print media and electronic media, which were works of authors who had done their research and published it and also journals of researchers who had done research which was similar to this study. As this research focused on the gap which was how satire expounds feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*, the review of related literature included studies that had conducted researches on the use of irony in *Pride and Prejudice* and the premise of Austen's feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.2 Romantic Era Novel

Gilroy and Verhoeven noted with much interest that at the time of the Romantic Age, the novel was not considered much as a novel as it was a 'moral tale' by author Maria Edgeworth (147). It was mentioned so by Gilroy and Verhoeven as the novel was considered a dangerous material particularly for easily influenced female readers, as it has been in Chapter 1 of this research, but before judging whether Romantic Age literature were novels or a moral story, Gilroy and Verhoeven first focused on defining the Romantic Age (147). In Gilroy and Verhoeven's study, it was pointed out that the Romantic Age has been diminished due to its indefinite borders, with the 18th Century and Victorian Age both extending their reach into the years that supposedly fall under the Romantic Age. Things were further complicated by the numerous values that emerged during the Romantic Age,

which included historicism, cultural materialism and feminism (Gilroy and Verhoeven, 148).

However, it was precisely the variety of genres that made it considered as a core component of the Romantic Era as Gilroy and Verhoeven pointed out (150). Novels were considered class commodities, but by allowing the bourgeois class access to novels, the growth of the novel had a democratising effect on the society (Gilroy and Verhoeven, 151). The access to these works was also how the term 'novel' came about, which referred to the new type of writing, which was works about the act of writing; this genre was born from the massive production of novels published in the Romantic Era (Gilroy and Verhoeven, 152).

Gilroy and Verhoeven however highlighted the fact that the novel was feared by its critics as a danger due to its influence; they considered it to have negative influence on the social settings of society (153). Gilroy and Verhoeven noted that the critics thought the novel's generic style represented its moral looseness, and that there was a need to 'discipline' the genre of novel in order to re-confine the novels to their more narrow genres, particularly Anti-Jacobin novels (153). For this genre, satire was its greatest weapon as it attacks the principles of the Jacobin (Gilroy and Verhoeven, 153).

Gilroy and Verhoeven also wrote that the novel suffered through various transformations before a ground-breaking review written by Sir Walter Scott had decidedly cemented the depiction of novel, that it possessed a style which gives the reader the most accurate portrayal of the events that occur around them everyday (154-55).

As Miles observed, the Romantic novels were initially considered an embarrassment due to the fact that it was thought to be a feminised form with the advent of women writers (181-82). Miles also noted that the novel acted as a vehicle for ideology, and to consider a work as ideological, it should fulfil 3 conditions which were the critique, goal and agency (186). The 3 conditions were defined as such; critique is to be able to perform a self-conscious analysis of the present without being restricted by the previous modes of authority, goal being the concept of happiness while agency refers to the transfer from the ineffective 'old' to the better 'new' (Miles, 186).

Miles pointed out in particular regard to Jane Austen that a new niche versus the typical philosophical romance of Romance novels was developed from her utilisation of irony and free indirect speech, which allowed her readers to identify with her heroines while underestimating their ability to do so (196). By doing so, Austen's works have enabled her readers to redirect their consciousness towards social integration, which is usually depicted in her works through marriage, rather than issues which belong to the public sphere (Miles, 196). In a nutshell, Miles described the Romantic novel as a philosophical romance, which was eventually overcome by the institutionalisation of Romanticism, the emergence of nationalism which prompted questions on origins which were mainly seen in the works of Sir Walter Scott, and lastly by the victory of the Austenian novel form over philosophical romance (201).

2.3 Feminine Consciousness during the Romantic Age

Kirkham noted that during the eighteenth century, there were no completely clear-cut principles of the feminine consciousness, but it could be seen that the ideas had been developed during the era ("Contemporary Feminism" 154). It was pointed out that

feminine consciousness nurtured feminism, which first began with the questioning of the moral and spiritual status of women, leading to the thought that the improvement of the education of women as the main concern (Kirkham, "Contemporary Feminism" 154). This claim had often been overshadowed by political implications, especially during the French Revolution when the rewritten constitutional rights did not include the rights of women, which Wollstonecraft protested with the publication of her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Kirkham, "Contemporary Feminism" 155).

Brown pointed out that feminine consciousness was existent in Jane Austen's works (156). The feminine consciousness was illustrated by the fact that the novel did not emphasise on the restriction of women's status, but rather how the women develop despite the restrictions (Brown, 156). There were examples where the women in the novel could not accomplish it, but the central figures always manage to prove the point (Brown, 156). Brown noted that despite the disparaging differences between the status of men and women, a woman who was educated stood to possess a powerful influence, suggesting that the feminine consciousness is a force that was yet to be acknowledged (156-57).

Generally, feminine consciousness was defined as biological morality but in Austen's case, it was more intellectual than biological, which was shown by Austen's characters who had multiple surrogate parental relationship than actual blood relations (Brown, 158). Brown exemplified this with the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Georgiana Darcy, explaining that the older and stronger character influenced the younger and weaker character, acting as a guide (158). Before the advent of actually acknowledged feminist writers, Austen's confidence in opportunities of feminine expression likely surpassed any other women writers of her age (Brown, 170).

2.4 Review of Related Literature

2.4.1 Satire

Jane Austen was most renowned for the use of satire in her works, which, if a reader was to observe carefully, more often than not mocked the society's opinion of women, albeit showing support for the patriarchal society. Much research had been published on Austen's satirical style and utilisation of irony, especially in the works of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*. Though existing research on irony in *Pride and Prejudice* was not as detailed, these journals still provided much information on the satirical tone and use of irony in the novel. In Hatfield's opinion, Austen is the personification of the unity of satire and novel in the 18th century (286).

Before the Romantic Age, satire and novel had been considered to be genre at odds with each other, as satire was a genre of traditional value whereas novel, as its name implied, compiles new values but Hatfield described that satire eventually assimilated into novel, and by 18th century, satirical works had become the novel, and many authors who were satirists in the Augustan Age was essentially the same as the Romantic Age novelist (284-85). This statement was clearly illustrated by Jane Austen's works, which had been compared often to the Augustan satire despite her being a Romantic Age novelist.

Sherry pointed out that irony was utilised to address many aspects of *Pride and Prejudice*, be it the characters, plot, or settings (611). Furthermore, it was implied by Sherry that irony was one of the most important factors in the progression of the novel, as

Sherry described how irony overshadowed the interaction between the characters and created opportunities for the plot to evolve, at the same time mocking the conventionalities of the society that existed within the novel (614-16). Indeed, it is as Hatfield quoted from Paulson, “*Pride and Prejudice* is ‘satire-sublimated’” (286).

Counts made a similar comment to Sherry, in which she pointed out that Austen’s use of irony was seen by some researchers as a technique of expression backed-up by the author’s use of indirect free style narration (31). In addition, Count commented that the combination of these techniques created chances for Austen to review singular and communal opinion, which was a topic of discussion among scholars who researched Austen’s works (31). Counts claimed that Jane Austen had written most of her works with a feminist vocalisation, including *Pride and Prejudice*, particularly through her use of intelligent heroines who spoke their mind freely, something quite unthought-of during Austen’s day (4). Indeed, Tuite remarked that Austen’s use of irony and her underlying satirical opinions served not to reconcile the social background reflected in her works, but to attack the typically valued concept of class, which she deemed as ‘snobbery’ (4-5). Tuite made a valued observation which was reflected in almost all of Austen’s works; Austen’s connection to feminism was depicted through the themes of class and gender which was inter-related in the form of a novel (10).

In Mudrick’s opinion, the utilisation of irony in *Pride and Prejudice* acted as a tool to discriminate between the characters that were representative of a social stereotype, and characters that were uniquely individual in their behaviour and action, claiming that irony was a dimension of Elizabeth’s character, and it assisted her in forming her perceptions (120-25). It was mainly by Elizabeth’s opinions that the story was formed and her ironic

actions served to separate Elizabeth from her peers in the novel, displaying her ability to consider her own choices whereas the other characters typically limited their own choices, or in some cases, deliberately chose not to see it, due to their class and gender, further cementing Mudrick's opinion that irony was utilised to discriminate between a character with individuality, which was Elizabeth, and characters that act as the avatars for the social stereotypes without a defining will, such as Mr Collins and Charlotte Lucas (123-24).

Deviating from the focus of *Pride and Prejudice* as a satirical work was Brown, whose opinion was that *Pride and Prejudice* was a work of ironic comedy rather than satirical realism (37). Brown further supplied evidence of the novel being a comedy rife with ironies with a set of characteristics that fulfilled the comedic novel requisitions, one of them being that the heroine must have a moment of self-realisation of the world she lived in and accept it as it came, but the despair brought about by this realisation was only momentary; this was clearly exemplified in *Pride and Prejudice* when the prospects of marriage for Elizabeth was almost ruined by her mother and family who did not act as appropriately as they should, but a happy end came about for the heroine as she reconciled with Mr Darcy with a second marriage proposal, whereas in a satirical realism novel, the despair was more acutely and mercilessly felt (38, 42-43). In a nutshell, the main difference between an ironic comedy and a satirical realism was the heroine, and Elizabeth of *Pride and Prejudice* fit into the niche of ironic comedy.

However, Brown did concur with other researchers on the use of irony by Jane Austen, remarking similarly to Counts that irony was used by Jane Austen as a tool of expression, particularly through narration to insert ideas which would otherwise be unable to be displayed by characters due to limited, almost non-existent passive observation (25-

26). Brown, like Mudrick, also saw irony as a form to distinguish between the individual and the general public, and pointed out that the opening line of *Pride and Prejudice* laid down the most fundamental irony of the story, and this irony echoed throughout the whole story, which enabled the reader to appreciate this irony to its fullest potential (26).

2.4.2 Feminism

To the opinion of Jane Austen as a feminist writer in general, there had been many accounts of researchers both supporting and denying the theory that Jane Austen was a feminist, as stated by Tuite, who also added that such attackers and defenders of Austen's feminist stand were complicated by contradictory evidences of feminism and anti-feminism in *Pride and Prejudice* (8-10). To increase explicit understanding on the elements that point Jane Austen's works in the direction of proto-feminist literature, Tuite described that Austen's portrayal of the feminine consciousness, market of readers and the beliefs concerning the status of women that Austen upheld were crucial indicators of Austen's feminist stand (9). Tuite added that Austen's representation of the relationship between genders, class and genre created a niche for female writers and a market of female readers alike, reforming concepts of property relations and women's status; in Tuite's opinion, particularly the bourgeois and cultured women (10). In a nutshell, Austen had revolutionised the female identity in writing and in reading culture (Tuite, 10).

In addition to Tuite's claims, MacPherson's study (1-4) gave a detailed view of how Austen implies property relations in regards to the inequality of gender, quoting the case of Mr Collins, highlighted the scene where Mrs Bennet bitterly complained about how unfair it was for Mr Collins to be the one their estate will be entailed to instead of the daughters, describing how the other characters, such as Jane and Elizabeth, tried to explain

that it was not unnatural (1-3). Indeed, Austen had depicted the common practice of her time to have the property left to the closest male heir, leaving the women dependent on them in order to have a place to live. Such inequality was natural to the society in which Austen lived in as MacPherson points out, providing more concrete evidence that Austen revealed undeniable facts that women's rights were neglected, and Austen's works have redefined such property relations as Tuite remarked (10).

Nestlerode stated that Jane Austen's feminist stand was most like the influence of other feminist writers in her era, such as Mary Wollstonecraft (2). Nestlerode also added that Jane Austen's viewpoint on women's capability was quite obvious from her rejection of gender roles in *Pride and Prejudice*, remarking that modern feminists often criticised Jane Austen due to the fact that her novels seemed to revolve around the 'biological foundation' of women's purpose, which was to marry and bear children, though it was discovered that recent studies viewed Austen's works as a collection of ideas on the identity of women and their social functions in the era that she lived in (8-9). It was true that Austen's works focus on the achievement of a marriage, which to the society of Austen's era, was the most important event of a woman's life, but Nestlerode pointed out that within each plot, Austen inserts feminist themes that defy the common notion of marriage (6).

One such example was how Elizabeth Bennet willingly rejects a marriage proposal from her cousin Mr Collins, although the marriage would have benefited her socially and financially, furthermore securing the inheritance of her home (Nestlerode, 11). From this angle, Nestlerode argued that Austen was supporting feminist values by describing that women too deserved choices that allowed them to pursue their happiness and on a wider

degree, deserved to have their own rights (6-8). Nestlerode described that Austen's novels were not emphasising the importance of marriage for women, but the adversities faced by women because of their lack of rights and how these conditions left them no other choice but to depend on men for social and financial security (8-10). Nestlerode stated that Austen's heroine and her narrative style carried the feminist tone very well, exploring all sorts of inequalities between men and women within her works; enabling her to mock the injustice done to women by the society that she lived in (7-8).

In her work, Wiltshire examined the arguments concerning Jane Austen as a feminist and quoted critic Edward Neill who claimed that the ending of *Pride and Prejudice* actually strengthens the stand that Jane Austen was not a feminist. Indeed, the ending of *Pride and Prejudice* had been mind-boggling to an extent that even some supporters of Jane Austen as a feminist had to make an exception for it, as Elizabeth finally married Darcy and was implicated to be merely a wife. The critics saw this as an attempt to diminish Elizabeth's status as a feminist heroine from this unsightly submission, but Wiltshire argued that the scene did not reduce Elizabeth to simply another girl.

The scene itself Wiltshire said was a conclusion of the psychological process that Elizabeth went through to re-evaluate the person known as Mr Darcy, and to re-consider her opinions, and she finally realised that Mr Darcy was her equal. In Wiltshire's study, it was not that Elizabeth submitted to Mr Darcy, as many critics saw it as a symbolical gesture of women's submission to the patriarchal society, it was that Elizabeth has deemed Mr Darcy her equal, as Mr Darcy has deemed her his equal. Wiltshire proceeded to conclude that both the characters have acknowledged each other to be equal to the other, which by referring to feminism can be seen as indeed, a triumph for women.

Yelin's review on feminist criticism described how *Pride and Prejudice* had embodied the connection between literature and social change, as the plot told of the achievement of the bourgeois women (171). She used Igor Webb's work as a foundation for her review, stating that the novel was used as a medium to convey new values versus traditional values, expressed by an individual in relation to society, pointing out that the patriarchal society was challenged by women's aspirations, which was reflected in *Pride and Prejudice* (171-72). Apart from Webb's work, Yelin also referred to Mary Poovey's work to strengthen her review, relating *Pride and Prejudice* and Austen to feminist ideologies, stating that unlike Mary Wollstonecraft or Mary Shelley, whose attempts at controlling the feminine expression were lacking, Austen pulled it off perfectly by maintaining a balance with her readers, managing to express both her unique style and criticism of the society at the same time (182-84).

Kirkham too, contributed Austen's feminist angle in *Pride and Prejudice* to the changes in the society around her ("Feminism and Fiction" 33-34). Kirkham pointed out that the women authors in the Romantic Era should not be diverged into feminist and non-feminist, as getting published as an author was already considered a feminist act ("Feminism and Fiction" 33). Kirkham surmised that the feminism in Austen's works were the results of influence by previous feminist writers before her, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, remarking that in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen utilised irony as a weapon to criticise the faults of tradition, society, and the laws implemented for their inability to acknowledge women as equal individuals who can think for themselves, further expressing that Austen's diligence in maintaining her feminist principles was not from widening the

social spectrum in the realm of the novel, but by extending and giving more meaning to the allusive irony used in the novel("Feminism and Fiction" 34, 38).

2.5 Conclusion

It could be seen that Jane Austen was a crucial author in the Romantic Age. It could be possible to even say that Austen was a turning point within the Romantic Age, with her unique style of the novel form that contained the key elements to the development of feminism. *Pride and Prejudice* illustrated her abilities to do so, as noted by the various researches on how Austen's style of writing, utilisation of irony and narrative stances expressed her thoughts and principles on the society that she lived in.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology of the research would be recorded. The first section covered the sampling method to determine how the text was chosen as the focus of research, then explaining the methodology which was used to conduct the research. After that, the research question design was listed to reiterate the purpose and objectives of the study before concluding this chapter.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population which was used in this research was the whole text of *Pride and Prejudice* which was penned by Jane Austen. A purposive sampling was conducted to single out this work among the other works of Austen. *Pride and Prejudice* was chosen based on the fact that it was said to be Austen's favourite among her own works, making it possible that Austen's principles and stand on certain matters were more visible in this text than any other novels that she penned. The version of the text used for this research was *Pride and Prejudice* authored by Jane Austen, published by Penguin Popular Classics, London in year 1994.

3.3 Methodology

The methodology used in the study would be qualitative in nature. The study would be based on information that was acquired through several reading materials that could be found on the subject which was tackled in the study. Based on the literature review, the analysis would be carried out on the body of text to answer the research questions. The

method of naturalistic observation was employed to determine the instances of satire within the text, and in more advanced observation, it was determined how the use of satire in the context would expound the feminist quality. A detailed reading analysis was first conducted to break down the text of *Pride and Prejudice* to determine the extracts that would be analysed in the research.

3.4 Research Question Design

Throughout the research, the analysis was focused on two main points to make sure that the research did not stray from its intended purpose. As the research was qualitative in nature, there was no questionnaire or survey conducted. However, in the course of research that was conducted via naturalistic observation and detailed analysis based on the review of literature and previous studies, the research followed two guidelines to comply with the research purpose. The research question designs were as follows:

- (a) How does the use of satire illustrate the instances of feminism found in *Pride and Prejudice*?
- (b) Will feminism be successfully conveyed without the use of satire in *Pride and Prejudice*?

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter made it clear that this research was heavily dependent on the literature review and other textual information as it was a qualitative study, making it heavily focused on in-depth analysis and reasoning.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CONTENT ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the text would be analysed based on the information and knowledge gathered from the review of related literature. The analysis was conducted in the chronological order of the text. The analysis would include the extracts from the text, an explanation of the irony or satirical instance in the extract, and a further explanation of the implicit feminism which could be found in the extract. This content analysis would answer the first research question, which was how the use of satire illustrated the instances of feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*. The next section, discussion, where the analysis would be discussed in detail, would answer the second research question, which is whether feminism would be successfully conveyed without the use of satire in *Pride and Prejudice* or not.

4.2 Content Analysis

In the content analysis, the extracts which were taken from the text of *Pride and Prejudice* would be analysed. In order to make the categories of the analysis more coherent, the content analysis had been divided into narrative, theme, characters and settings analysis. This would enable the reader to understand better in which way satire was utilised to express feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*.

4.2.1 Narrative Analysis

In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, there were a lot of obvious instances of ironic or satirical statements, but not all of them contain implicit feminism. The extracts that would

be analysed should contain both irony and feminism. In fact, in the novel, the very first sentence itself was ironic and feminist.

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” (5)

From the surface, it seemed to be a simple statement, the narrative expressing the statement as if it were a common fact that everyone should know. The irony however, laid in the fact that the exact opposite is meant from the statement. In the setting of the novel, in fact, the setting of Austen's society who would read the novel, it is women who are in want of a husband with good fortune. A bachelor with good fortune is not necessarily in want of a wife, and even if he is, he has the leisure to choose, as it is illustrated later in the novel by Mr Collins, who thought to propose to Jane Bennet when he finds out that Jane is likely to marry another man and so simply turns his attentions onto Elizabeth Bennet, who rejects him before finally proposing to Elizabeth's best friend, Charlotte Lucas, all which is done in a short span of three days.

A woman on the other hand, has nothing unless she marries. Only by marriage can a woman secure her social status and financial security. This was where the feminism was found; Austen implied the disadvantages of women in the society that she lived in, that they have no means but to rely on men and marriage for a secure livelihood. The manner in which she phrased it so ironically basically was a mockery of that fact, an implication of how unfair it was to have such segregation between men and women. This segregation was in reality, still encouraged, with some authors publishing works that determined that women are of the inferior gender and must be subservient to men; to them it is an obvious

culture, as the first example in character analysis showed, in regards to the inclusion of Fordyce's Sermons in the text.

“This he considered sufficient encouragement; and the avowal of all that he felt...but was very unlikely to recommend his suit. In spite of her deeply-rooted dislike, she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man’s affection...she lost all compassion in anger.” (147-48)

This verse was a narrative on the proposal of Mr Darcy to Elizabeth, describing the mode of proposal that Mr Darcy made to Elizabeth and Elizabeth’s reaction to it. The irony in this extract was quite obvious to the reader, as Mr Darcy was certain that his proposal would be most flattering to his intended listener, the narrative made it obvious to the reader how Elizabeth shifted from an awkward and appreciative mood into a mood of anger and disapproval following Mr Darcy’s proposal which was narrated to be rather arrogant in recommending his suit and emphasising the disadvantages of Elizabeth’s connections and status, ironic as Mr Darcy was convinced that Elizabeth was pleased and would readily agree to his proposal when the reader knew otherwise. It was this point that revealed the implicit feminism, where Elizabeth could not rationalise herself to accept Mr Darcy who could have given her all the wealth and status that were desirable, instead becoming offended at being treated inferior as she did not see herself lacking compared to Mr Darcy, thus enforcing the concept of feminism that there should be equality between genders.

“Jane and Elizabeth attempted to explain to her the nature of an entail. They had often attempted it before...in favour of a man that nobody cared about.” (50)

The extract above was a narrative on Mrs Bennet’s reaction in the entailing of their home to another male relative, Mr Collins, who could evict the entire Bennet family out of

Longbourn, the entailed home, should Mr Bennet pass away and the home be inherited by Mr Collins. The ironic fact here was that readers of *Pride and Prejudice* in Austen's era probably appreciated the protests of Mrs Bennet as what it seemed, the protest of a woman whose intelligence was unfortunately limited to the settlement of marriages for all her daughters. Despite how strong the protest sounded from the narrative style, the reader would take it as a joke as it is Mrs Bennet's emotions that were used for the basis of narration.

The irony is further strengthened by the satirical view that Austen has subtly included by using Jane and Elizabeth in the narrative to explain the inevitability of the entail, that the laws had made it so that the living male relatives must always be the first choice to inherit property, and that there was nothing the women can do, enhancing the irony that was performed on the readers by Mrs Bennet's rant, which would actually be the most sensible thing that she had ever said. The feminism within this extract was actually in plain view, which was in the form of Mrs Bennet's protests. Women should had have just as much rights to inherit the property of their father as his closest living relatives, rather than entailing the property to a male relative whom they had never even seen before, further emphasising on the unfairness of the laws on women and mocking it with the seemingly harmless and comedic narrative.

“When she remembered the style of his address, she was still full of indignation; but when she considered how unjustly she had condemned...nor could she for a moment repent her refusal, or feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again.” (165)

This narrative extract portrayed Elizabeth's emotions as she recalled the letter that she read, dissatisfied at first with his manner of writing, but feeling sympathetic and sorry

for how she had reacted earlier to Mr Darcy's proposal. The reader would expect Elizabeth's sympathy to lead to her regret of rejecting Mr Darcy's proposal as it was a valuable offer in the mind of the reader, but the irony of the situation came from the following statement, as Elizabeth considered that she could not feel sorry for her rejection of Mr Darcy, nor did she regret it, betraying the reader's expectations.

As the narration created a mood that the reader would interpret as a moment of Elizabeth's weakness and surrender to her feelings of sympathy to Mr Darcy, their expectations were betrayed as the atmosphere created by the narrative sharply turned to Elizabeth's honest feelings that she did not regret a single thing that she did, allowing the reader to appreciate the ironic twist as Elizabeth stayed true to her firm personality. This reaction from Elizabeth is feminist in nature as she understood that despite the sympathy she felt for Mr Darcy, she could not regret her decision of rejecting Mr Darcy as she understood as well that Mr Darcy did not consider her an equal, a matter which she took to heart.

“Her father, captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak understanding...all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown.” (183)

This narrative explored the circumstances of Mr Bennet's marriage, detailing the consequences of his poor choice in his life partner. The irony of this narrative is that Mr Bennet, despite his intelligence, chose for his wife someone most unsuitable to his personality, Mrs Bennet, who was both shallow and insipid, which should be a matter of great misfortune, but the narrative expressed it as if it was a trifle matter, which, when the issue was given a closer look, was about as insignificant as it should be, as men had

freedom in the selection of a wife and it was just Mr Bennet's folly that he made a wrong choice. The feminism therefore, laid in the fact that Mr Bennet found his domestic happiness ruined from a marriage to a woman who could not be his equal or at least possess the same common sense as he did, which implied that due to the inferior view of women, they could not develop as they could have, and the consequence was that someone like Mr Bennet, despite his brilliance of mind, suffered from his unequal marriage, which further stressed the feminist opinion that women should be given equal opportunities and rights as men for them to develop as it would benefit both themselves and men.

4.2.2 Theme Analysis

““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 gentlemanlike manner.” She saw him start...” (150)

This statement originated from Elizabeth, who boldly explained to Mr Darcy as to why she would have the courage to reject his proposal, which is related to the central theme of the text, pride and prejudice. In this extract, Elizabeth had clearly defined that Mr Darcy had not acted as a proper gentleman would have, implying that Mr Darcy did not even treat her equally to other women that he had interacted with in the text, especially in an occasion so important as a proposal, and the narration which followed allowed the reader to experience the irony as Mr Darcy's reaction to Elizabeth's statement clearly showed that he was unaware of his manners which were likely to be the way it was due to his pride in his status and his prejudice towards Elizabeth's familial connections.

It was understood that his possession of pride and prejudice had been the main cause of the ironic reaction, and Elizabeth's severe reproof had called Mr Darcy's consciousness to it, finally allowing him to be aware of his failings as a gentleman, especially towards the woman he claimed to love. The feminism in this extract is that it was unacceptable for women to be viewed as inferior to men, and for men to act as if women were inferior, no matter of what status they are, and Austen utilised this instance of irony to ridicule the segregation of men and women.

“He expressed no regret for what he had done which satisfied her; his style was not penitent, but haughty. It was all pride and insolence...Astonishment, apprehension, and even horror, oppressed her.” (159)

““How despicably I have acted!” she cried; “I, who have prided myself on my discernment! I, who have valued myself on my abilities! Who have often...Till this moment, I never knew myself.” (162)

These two extracts built up to the development of Elizabeth's relationship to the theme of the text, which has been so far overshadowed by her own ignorance and the effect of Mr Darcy's proposal. The first extract depicted that Elizabeth still held contempt for Mr Darcy's personality as his letter still reflected a sense of pride, but those feelings were erased as she was made to understand the reasons behind it, especially as the letter from Mr Darcy had rationalised his contempt for her relations and his dark history concerning Mr Wickham. The second extract now showed Elizabeth's reaction upon the realisation that she was guilty of the same faults that she had accused Mr Darcy of, that she too was prideful in her own judgements and had unconsciously developed a prejudice towards Mr Darcy based on the opinions of others about him.

The development of her remorse stemmed from the effect of her character coming in touch with the central theme which produced the ironic effect, after several occasions in which Elizabeth reaffirmed that she could neither be moved to accept Mr Darcy nor feel regret for what she had done to him, the fact that she expressed her remorse vexingly would truly catch the reader off guard, but it was a reasonable twist in the plot as a reaction to the theme of pride and prejudice, as Elizabeth's character underwent a change that allowed her to express remorse over her actions.

At a glance, there seemed to be no implicit feminism in these extracts, but if one was to critically consider the concept of feminism, which exhorted equality between genders, one must also see that men ought to be seen as equals by their female counterparts, in which this case, Elizabeth, who had seen herself as an equal to Mr Darcy, had unconsciously lowered Mr Darcy beneath herself due to her prejudice, and feminism was implied as she was rudely awakened to her prejudice and realised her errors, thus allowing Elizabeth to repent her mistakes and see Mr Darcy as a proper equal once more.

“They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance that it was impossible to avoid his sight...advanced towards the party, and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility.” (192)

““My object *then*,” replied Darcy, “was to shew you, by every civility in my power...by letting you see your reproofs had been attended to...”” (285)

These two extracts showed the change in Mr Darcy's personality after his revelation concerning his pride. In the first extract, the irony was shown as Elizabeth, who expected Mr Darcy to ignore her, or perhaps even act condescending towards her, was

shocked to discover that Mr Darcy had civilly addressed her and maintained a perfectly polite manner.

The reader, who anticipated the same reaction as Elizabeth did, would be caught off-guard by this ironic twist, and would not understand the reason behind it until the second extract, which explained that Mr Darcy's behaviour towards Elizabeth had changed because of her reprimand when she had rejected his proposal, which had made him aware to his pride and prejudice. The feminism implied here was found in Mr Darcy's actions, who sought to make himself an equal to Elizabeth, by changing his behaviour and the way he treated her, which echoed with the concept of feminism. It was by Mr Darcy's exposure to the central theme of the novel which made it possible for the change in himself, which in turn allowed for the expression of feminism.

4.2.3 Character Analysis

In this section, characters of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* were analysed. Character analysis was divided into two sections, character behaviour, and character thoughts and actions. Overall, this section analysed the characters and how they were utilised as a vehicle for satire to express feminism.

4.2.3.1 Character Behaviour

The section for character behaviour was to analyse how the behaviour of certain characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* displayed satire, or how their personalities clash with the intentions of other which produced an ironical effect, in relation to the feminism which was found in the extracts. The characters that were analysed are Elizabeth's youngest sister, Lydia Bennet, Elizabeth's best friend, Charlotte Lucas, and the

man which Elizabeth first had interest in, Mr Wickham, who was also an antagonist in terms of his relation to Mr Darcy.

4.2.3.1.1 Lydia Bennet

“Mr Collins readily assented, and a book was produced...Other books were produced, and after some deliberation he chose Fordyce's Sermons. Lydia gaped as he opened the volume...she interrupted him with-” (56)

The irony of this statement laid in the fact it was not the dynamic character who acted out in disagreement; it was the static character who represented the culture of women as the inferior, Lydia. Lydia's character was meant to be one of the avatars of the culture that Austen mocked, women who marry because they have to without any basis of equality between genders. Her rejection of Fordyce was a symbolic of feminism, as Fordyce's Sermons was an actual published work which prescribed on the manners in which young ladies were supposed to act. It was likely that Austen disagreed with the oppression of women through the use of literature which insisted that women ought to be 'tame', and formulated her protest by creating this scene, having Lydia interrupt Mr Collins from reading Fordyce's Sermons which to a feminist, is a rejection of the gender roles that Fordyce is convinced women should maintain.

4.2.3.1.2 Charlotte Lucas

““Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance...it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person whom you are to pass your life.” “You make me laugh, Charlotte; but it is not sound. You know it is not sound, and that you would never act this way yourself.”” (20)

““Engaged to Mr Collins! My dear Charlotte,-impossible!”” (100)

“Poor Charlotte! It was melancholy to leave her to such society! But she had chosen it with...Her house and her housekeeping, her parish and her poultry, and all their dependent concerns, had not yet lost their charms.” (168)

These extracts from different points of the novel were all inter-related, as they were all concerned with one of the characters of *Pride and Prejudice*, Charlotte Lucas. To fully appreciate the irony and the message of feminism behind this character and her actions, these extracts were analysed as a series of linked events. In the first extract, Elizabeth and Charlotte were discussing about marriage, and Charlotte viewed marriage as a necessity for women; there was no need for love or affection between two individuals who marry, as it could be discovered after they are married. Elizabeth took this as a jest, assured that Charlotte would not think this way as it is not sensible. From this extract, it is understood that the heroine takes comfort from the fact that her best friend is as sensible as she is in terms of marriage, the reader saw Charlotte as an ally to Elizabeth in the opinion of marriage.

However, the next extract expressed the shock of Elizabeth at Charlotte for having accepted the proposal of Mr Collins, who was a most insensible man. At this point, readers must have felt what Elizabeth felt, a sense of betrayal. Charlotte, who was believed to be an ally, or even an equal to Elizabeth in the opinion of sensibility, had gone past her sensibility to accept the offer of marriage from Mr Collins, who is portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice* as being a man with a comfortable income and home, but unfortunately lacking in terms of sensibility.

A divergence was observed at this point, Elizabeth's sensibility caused her to reject Mr Collins whereas Charlotte's sensibility prompted her to accept Mr Collins proposal, as she was no longer a young lady, being twenty-seven years old, and she would rather be settled with a secured marriage than be left without future prospects. The following extract finally allowed us to see the consequences of her actions. Charlotte could not avoid the evils of her choice as it was done out of her own volition, and what she had gained had not lost its charms 'yet', which implied that Charlotte would be unhappy as time passes.

Now the irony in the character of Charlotte Lucas was first and foremost, her acceptance of Mr Collins proposal despite the implications of her being as sensible as the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet. However, the irony was turned upon the readers as it was unveiled that the sensibility of Charlotte was the sensibility of the values that were existent in Austen's society, that women were dependent on a prudent marriage for their future livelihood, not the type of sensibility that Elizabeth Bennet possessed.

Lastly, despite the fact that it was a prudent marriage, the only predictable end for Charlotte was a miserable life once the attractions of her marriage wear out. It is in this sense that Austen argues the values of feminism. Charlotte, who acted in accordance of the values of the pro-patriarchal society would only end up being unhappy, deliberately accepting an offer for the sake of marriage than exclusively expressing her own choice as Elizabeth did, reflecting Austen's opinion that society's segregation of women would only lead women to a life of misery as opposed to women who were able to make their own decisions and be accepted on equal grounds, as portrayed by Elizabeth further in the story.

4.2.3.1.3 Mr Wickham

““Last Christmas you were afraid of his marrying me, because it would be imprudent; and now, because he is trying to get a girl with only ten thousand pounds, you want to find out that he is mercenary.”” (120)

““He is as fine a fellow,” said Mr Bennet...He simpers, and smirks, and makes love to us all. I am prodigiously proud of him. I defy even Sir William Lucas himself to produce a more valuable son-in-law.”” (254)

Mr Wickham, who could be possibly perceived as the most antagonistic character in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, did not reveal much of his own character, which was only understood through the reactions of other characters in regards to himself. In the text, Mr Wickham could be said as a character whose role is a comparison to Mr Darcy, especially when one takes into consideration the feminist angle following the marriages they each had achieved. In the first extract, from Elizabeth’s comment from her conversation with her aunt, it could be seen that Mr Wickham still had the leisure to select a wife which he deemed suitable for him, despite the fact that he did not have anything to boast of other than a job in the militia. In the second extract, it is by Mr Bennet’s comment that the irony of Mr Wickham’s character is implied.

Although Mr Bennet claimed that Mr Wickham is a fine son-in-law, the reader who would be acquainted with Mr Bennet’s nature by now would understand that Mr Bennet was being sarcastic, proven when he further added that he had a better son-in-law than Sir William Lucas, whose son-in-law was actually Mr Collins, which made the irony even more obvious as Mr Bennet was known to possess little respect for the character of Mr Collins, proven when he rejoiced in Elizabeth’s rejection of Mr Collins’ proposal. Another irony was observed here in which Mr Bennet and Mr Wickham committed the same

mistake, they both married women whom they could not live with equally, which could also be interpreted as another reason of Mr Bennet's sarcasm in regards to Mr Wickham, as he was aware that they committed the same mistake.

The feminism implied here would be the aftermath of Mr Wickham, that despite there being nothing to contribute to his character, with no status and good income, he still thought that he possessed the ability to choose a wife as he pleased, and as a result of his arrogance in thinking so, he was instead married to Lydia, who had little fortune, and was not the sort of woman he would have liked to be married to. Austen used this as a comparison to Mr Darcy and his marriage to Elizabeth to prove a point; men who truly esteemed and treated women as their equals would be better off than men who didn't, as Mr Wickham had to live with being married to Lydia, whose only charms were youth and humour, whereas Mr Darcy truly rejoiced in his marriage to a woman who was both intelligent and equally charming, Elizabeth, whom he could truly appreciate as an equal, symbolising the victory of feminism over traditional concept of women being the inferior gender.

4.2.3.2 Character Thoughts and Actions

In this section, the thoughts and actions of characters were analysed to investigate the use of satire and the expression of feminism in the extracts. To better articulate the effects of the satire, the extracts given and the characters were analysed in pairs. The first pair which were analysed were Mr Collins and Mr Darcy, where both characters were men who proposed to Elizabeth, and their proposal was analysed. The second pair which were analysed were Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, who were the best examples given their positions as hero and heroine in the novel.

4.2.3.2.1 Mr Collins and Mr Darcy

““...Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am runaway with feelings on this subject...with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.”” (85)

““In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.”” (147)

This character analysis focused on two different characters, but with utterances which contained the same purpose. The first utterance belonged to Mr Collins, when he proposed to Elizabeth whereas the second utterance originated from Mr Darcy, which was the sentence that started his proposal. What could be observed between these two utterances was the unfailing sense of similarity, in which both utterances proclaimed affection for Elizabeth and desire to marry her. The irony was found in this similarity, once it was related to the difference in the characters who uttered the sentences. Mr Collins, who was an avatar of static characters that represented the typical social views on women, was described to be most insensible, a man with obvious faults despite his rather comfortable job and position in society. On the other hand, Mr Darcy, as the hero of the novel, was most accomplished in nearly all aspects except when it concerned his temper and pride, which however was justified due to his high status in society.

Despite the glaring differences in the characteristics of these two men, their mode of proposal was utterly the same. The irony of the extracts laid in this aspect, as they both proclaimed to have irrepressible feelings for Elizabeth and was most reassured that she would accept their proposal, which led to the implicit feminism contained in these extracts following the reaction of Elizabeth, who obviously rejected them both. In Mr Collins' case,

Elizabeth could not stand to marry a man whose intelligence could not match her lively spirit, while Mr Darcy's proposal was utterly arrogant in its assurance that Elizabeth would accept it, prompting a disgusted reaction from Elizabeth. Thus, it could be summarised into one point, that men view women as the weaker gender who should depend on them and it was only obvious for a women to accept a marriage proposal, because they need marriage to secure their financial and social status. Elizabeth's rejection of them both was a symbolic gesture of feminism as it was typically a rejection of the social stereotypes placed upon women generally.

4.2.3.2.2 Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet

“She tried, however, to compose herself to answer him with patience, when he should have done...He *spoke* of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real security. Such a circumstance could only exasperate farther, and, when he ceased, the colour rose into her cheeks, and she said-” (148)

“Elizabeth, feeling all the more than common awkwardness and anxiety of his situation, now forced herself to speak; and immediately...as to make her receive with gratitude and pleasure his present assurances.” (282)

These two extracts were Elizabeth's reactions to Mr Darcy's proposal on different occasions. The first extract was the first proposal which occurred in Kent, which Elizabeth had rejected almost cruelly. The second extract was the second proposal which happened in Longbourn, which Elizabeth had accepted. The irony would have first, been the fact that Mr Darcy had proposed to Elizabeth a second time, when in the society that Austen had filled her novel with, it was simply unexpected and unthought-of. Considering Mr Darcy's personality, it would have been hard for the reader to imagine that he would even risk injuring his pride by proposing to the same woman twice.

Elizabeth's reaction was not as ironic as it would be, considering that the events which led up to the second proposal had clearly depicted her changing emotions towards Mr Darcy, which the reader could easily interpret that she would be willing to accept a proposal from Mr Darcy should it ever occur. This fact was often criticised for it was believed that Elizabeth's character and feminist implications were severely weakened to that of a static character's, diminishing Elizabeth as simply 'another girl' in *Pride and Prejudice*, but this scene was actually one of the strongest feminist implications to be found in the novel.

The feminism which was implied in this situation could be observed if one is to compare the setting and personalities of the characters in each proposal. In the first proposal, it had been made clear that Mr Darcy clearly did not see Elizabeth as his equal especially from his form of proposal, which made it seem that he thought the Elizabeth should feel glad that one of his status would even consider her as a suitable bride despite her shortcomings, and in true feminist pride Elizabeth rejected him as she was aware of the manner in which Mr Darcy considered her. However, in the second proposal, Elizabeth's gratitude at being proposed to a second time and her acceptance of it seemed to have weakened the feminism she symbolised, but one must consider the state of mind both the characters were in during the second proposal.

In the second proposal, it should be realised that at last, both characters had truly esteemed the other as an equal. Elizabeth's rejection of Mr Darcy in the first proposal was acceptable as he did not view her as equal then, but in the second proposal Mr Darcy had expressed himself in a manner which allowed the reader to notice that he saw Elizabeth as

his equal, and Elizabeth, having understood that Mr Darcy saw her equal, and knowing herself to see Mr Darcy as her equal, could now accept Mr Darcy's proposal.

By viewing it from this angle, the success of the second proposal was due to the fact that the concept of feminism, equality between genders, had been applied, and thus approved. While some argued that Elizabeth's acceptance symbolised her submission to Mr Darcy, and on a more general scale, the submission of women to the pro-patriarchal society, one must not neglect the effect of time and the theme of the novel had on the characters. Mr Darcy, once he realised the flaws of his personality caused by pride and prejudice, sought to change himself to make himself an equal to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth too, once she was aware that her pride and prejudice had caused her to commit such a gross error as to accuse Mr Darcy of the very thing she was guilty of, had to re-evaluate herself, and given time, Elizabeth was able to clear herself of her pride and her prejudice and reassess Mr Darcy, whom she could now consider her equal as his character was revealed to be better than she thought it was. Through the emotional and character changes both Mr Darcy and Elizabeth underwent, it could be seen that this gradual transformation led to their view of the other as an equal, and only strengthened the feminism found in this action.

4.2.3.3 Conclusion to Character Analysis

Overall, the characters played a great part in the utility of irony to express feminism, regardless of whether they were the main characters or the minor characters. It was observed that the main characters carried the implications of feminism more than the minor characters, and they were often the representative of the victory of feminism,

whether it be Elizabeth, who is the most ideal feminist in *Pride and Prejudice*, who married Mr Darcy, the most eligible bachelor in the novel, because she was intelligent and independent, demanding equality from her partner, and Mr Darcy, who found genial happiness in his marriage as he could truly view his wife, Elizabeth, as his equal.

The minor characters, such as Lydia, Charlotte and Mr Wickham, illustrated different instances of feminism, and the irony that was portrayed by their characters often resulted in endings that only disappointed themselves, an end that Austen made as a mockery of the view that the pro-patriarchal society had, that women were inferior, and such miserable ends for the minor characters who adhered faithfully to that view were made in comparison to the characters who had achieved true happiness by giving each other the equality that they deserved, highlighting Austen's emphasis on the values of feminism.

4.2.4 Settings Analysis

“The next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr Collins made his declaration in form.” (84)

“She could not think of Darcy's leaving without remembering that his cousin was to go with him; but Colonel Fitzwilliam had made it clear that he had no intentions at all, and agreeable as he was, she did not mean to be unhappy about him.” (147)

These two settings were the places that Elizabeth had been in when she was proposed to by Mr Collins and Mr Darcy on different occasions. The subtle reminder of the place which Elizabeth was in before the proposal took place in the text was a device which was used to strengthen the gravity of Elizabeth's reaction and the irony that came

with it. As Mr Collins proposed to Elizabeth in Longbourn, the reader would understand that Elizabeth, should she accept the proposal, would stand to gain more than what Longbourn possessed, as Mr Collins held a greater fortune and status than her family did at Longbourn. The same situation applied to Mr Darcy's proposal, that it happened in Kent, more specifically the Parsonage which was Mr Collins' home, was an implicit intention of telling the reader that Elizabeth's fortune would be greater than what she saw and experienced in Kent as Mr Darcy's status and wealth far outstripped that of Mr Collins'.

This comparison of the setting with the possible future setting that Elizabeth could have gained should she accept the proposal became an irony, as she boldly rejected both proposals, despite how her environment subtly implied the change of fortune she could have gained from marriage. In this ironic act the feminism implied was that women could make choices of their own without depending on the fortunes of men or opportunities that marriage give them, an outright defiance of the concept commonly accepted by the society of Austen's era, that women could not be fortunate without a marriage to secure her financial and social status, as they had viewed Austen similarly due to the fact that she was a spinster.

4.3 Discussion

After analysing the text, there were several matters to be discussed, including the use of irony, the strength of the satire in the novel, and the level of feminism which was expressed, which would answer the second research question, whether feminism could be successfully conveyed without the use of satire in *Pride and Prejudice* or not. Firstly, the use of irony in Austen's novel was widespread. As the research focused on instances of irony which expressed feminism, there were several other extracts that had to be

eliminated as they were merely ironic or satirical statements that did not particularly express feminism. Austen, famous for her use of irony, utilised her skills particularly well in several areas of the novel which were listed in the content analysis.

As she was rather famous for her narrative style, it was also crucial to observe how she combined her narratives with the use of irony in order to express the feminism of the statement. As the analysis was conducted, it could be seen that the narrative examples in *Pride and Prejudice* which implied feminism for most parts, used character interactions as basis for the narration. At a glance, it seemed to be the characters' personalities which should be the focus, but a closer examination gave way to the realisation that the narrative style, the manner in which each character's actions, thoughts, or even the general situation was described and portrayed, is the key to defining the irony that was at work at that certain point, and the feminism which was implied.

Austen's narrative style enabled her to express the emotions and situations in a way that set the appropriate mood for her reader to follow, which would allow them to appreciate the irony that she used. Furthermore, her narrative style had been subtly guiding the reader through the figurative path that Austen wanted her reader to experience; the feminism that she implied was not merely in the characters' personalities or the narration, but also in the invisible narrator which would be Austen herself, who utilised the narrative style to assist her reader in noticing matters that the other characters were not aware of, but the reader exclusively knew and understood matters which allowed anticipation and further opportunities of irony in the novel.

Though the setting analysis was brief, it brought a deep impact to the reader, especially if one was to consider the society that Austen had written the novel in, and the society that populated *Pride and Prejudice*. When the setting was compared to the cultural and social setting of the real life it was based on, then the reader must have acutely felt the advantages of the choice and the indignant feel of having such an offer rejected. Precisely because of such reactions, Austen had stressed the evils of such limitations of a woman's rights and choices, bringing the impact of irony to its fullest with the portrayal of her rejection towards the inequality of genders using the novel characters, allowing the women of her novel a sense of freedom in choice that was rare in the society that Austen lived in.

The theme analysis also uncovered several important discoveries in regards to the use of irony and the implication of feminism in *Pride and Prejudice*. As its name stated, the central theme of the novel is pride and prejudice, which actually became a vehicle for the issue of feminism to be addressed subtly through the use of irony. After completing the theme analysis, it was obvious that the theme was utilised by the characters as the medium of translating the differences of their gender and social status, giving each the opportunity to see the other's flaws, at the same time using irony to highlight the existence of equal flaws in themselves. By using the theme to carry the divide between the hero and heroine, the irony allowed the reader to understand the feminism implied by the theme; Austen using it to gently prod her reader into becoming aware of the segregation of genders, and how equality between them could be achieved.

Character analysis was crucial as the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* were one of the most important factors of the novel. The characters' behaviours, thoughts and actions, were the motions that developed the plot, so it was only natural that much irony and

feminism could be found within them. From the major characters to the minor characters, each played a part which was important in contributing to the novel as a whole. It was noticed that the minor characters represented the opinion of society that women were the inferior gender whereas the main characters represented the feminist ideal that men and women were equals. The differences in the characters often generated comparison, and it was by such comparison that the irony of the characters became an indicator of feminism, emphasising the differences and the disadvantages of maintaining the traditional concept, also illustrating Austen's opinion of feminism, as she always represented implied feminism with symbolic victory, whether it be with a truly happy marriage, or that the heroine was able to achieve a genial marriage to a man who has the status and wealth.

After observing the use of irony, the strength of the satire in *Pride and Prejudice* should be considered as well. Overall, *Pride and Prejudice* was satirical in a sense that it continually took society's view of women being the inferior gender and countered it with irony or ridicule or even examples of feminism throughout the whole novel, in which feminism was most often depicted as having the better end than the society's principles concerning women. The satire which mocked the traditional constitutions of the social community of the Romantic Era subtly underlined the feminist opinion of the unfairness in the gender inequality, which was expressed by Austen through her use of irony. However, as satires were often considered to be more vivid and oppressive in its effects, it could be said that *Pride and Prejudice* did not fully exhort its value as a satirical work.

Instead, the skilful manipulation of irony and narrative style, along with the characters and their personalities, had managed to soften the tone of satire in *Pride and Prejudice*, giving it a more comedic feel to lighten the supposedly heavy atmosphere of

satire. The almost-fantasy like ending for the heroine was a clear indication of that; the instances of irony did have its moments where it threatened the heroine's status, and for a moment the vivid reality of satire would set in, but as the heroine escaped without really damaging consequences, the impact of satire is lessened. In a nutshell, though satire permeated throughout the novel, it was masked very well by comedic overtures, likely to soften the mockery that Austen was directing at society.

The level of feminism expressed would be quite high, and unsurprisingly so. Though many claimed that Austen's other works contained more feminism than *Pride and Prejudice* did, one cannot deny that at the point that the character of Elizabeth Bennet was introduced in the novel, it was almost certain that feminism is existent in the novel. The difference in opinion may be due to the difference in era and mode of thought, but feminism in its fundamental had not altered much from its beginnings, which was not so far from when Austen began writing, only more refined. In this case, it was only proper to consider that when the use of irony conveyed a will that extolled the equality between genders, or praised the virtue of doing so, and disapproved of the treatment of women as inferiors, it was feminist in nature.

As feminism during Austen's era was more focused on the rights of women, particularly in the education of women and their right to have the horizons of their mind broadened, this sense of feminism becomes strong even without the use of irony as Austen depicted the misery of uneducated women with her characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, often ending up in poor marriages, unable to attain a state of happiness that a liberal-minded woman could, as illustrated by her characters, which only served to highlight the

importance of education and equal rights for women. In short, the level of feminism in *Pride and Prejudice* was undeniably, despite subtle portrayals.

As to whether feminism could be expressed without the use of satire, particularly through the use of irony, it was possible. A clear example was Elizabeth Bennet, the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*. She is a girl who is intelligent, strong-willed and independent; despite no utility of irony, her character itself is a reflection of feminism. However, without satire and its tool of irony, feminism could not be as effectively expressed or as appreciated as it is now. This was logical considering the foundation of *Pride and Prejudice*, its very first statement, was ironic and satirical in nature.

This irony would continue to resonate throughout the novel, which would only remind the reader that the novel made so much sense as it was owing to the use of irony. Even certain reactions prompted from the reader could be fully appreciated only when they understood the irony of it. Though the effect of satire was not as strong as expected in *Pride and Prejudice*, its presence was certainly felt, and it was a genre that suited the task of expressing feminism well, mocking the old traditions which were to Austen unacceptable. In short, though feminism could be expressed without satire, it would not be expressed as well as it was without satire.

4.4 Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, it was important to analyse the contents thoroughly as this chapter would be the backbone of the research. After the content analysis, a discussion was performed to further analyse the findings, and the second research question was answered in which there was a possibility for feminism to be expressed without using

satire or irony, but the end effect would not have been as effectively portrayed or appreciated as it was now.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

After completing the research, it was clear that the novel *Pride and Prejudice* still had a lot of gaps left unexplored. Despite seeming like a simply love novel on the surface, *Pride and Prejudice* actually contained a lot of complex messages that were subtly left within to its readers. This could be contributed to the influence of Austen's life over her works, as her liberal manner of living a life of spinsterhood and writing to support herself had been said to be mannerisms close to that of a feminist, which were emulated by her heroines, particularly her favourite, Elizabeth Bennet, who had been said to be most alike to herself. The Romantic Era in which *Pride and Prejudice* was published also played a role in the elements that existed in the novel, particularly feminism and satire, both which have received unique attention during the Romantic Era.

From the completion of chapter two, it could be seen that Austen lived in an era which brought many changes, from the French Revolution, to the active introduction of feminism, and that it was unlikely that Austen was not influenced in some ways. Previous studies of *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of satire and feminism had proven that this research into the use of satire to express feminism was not in vain, as it had explored the gap where the function of satire in expressing feminism was researched, and the results were that satire played an important role in the expression of feminism which despite the fact that it was possible for feminism to be expressed without the use of irony or satire, it remained a fact that without it, feminism could not be as effectively expressed or be fully appreciated as it was now.

It was difficult to analyse the novel while overlapping the dimensions of the author's past, the satire and use of irony, and various areas within the novel which included the theme and setting. However, the research focused on ironic or satirical extracts that expressed feminism, thus it was not restricted to any particular angle, which led to the breakdown of the content analysis into its respective areas before a discussion to analyse it overall. Though it was performed on a general basis, there were substantial results which sufficiently answered the research questions that were outlined by the research. There were several examples of the necessary extracts to be analysed, and from the content analysis, it was discovered that feminism could be expressed without the use of satire, particularly the utility of irony. However, it was also determined that feminism would neither be expressed efficiently nor be as fully appreciated as it was now if satire was not utilised.

As to the research in overall, it achieved all its objectives, and complied with the guidelines set by the research design and research questions. The literature review was detailed and able to provide ample information and become a foundation to the research. In the end, the analysis had answered all the research questions satisfactorily, using the prior information gained from the literature review and the researcher's own judgements in the reasoning and justification of the results of the analysis.

5.2 Recommendations

For recommendations, any researcher who wished to replicate this study should try to strengthen the literature review chapter with more recent publications or studies, as the ones used in this research were mostly unfortunately quite outdated when used as academic research material. As for researchers who would like to use this study as a

foundation of their own research, it would be recommended that their research be directed into a more in-depth take on any one of the areas which was covered in the content analysis, as it could possibly reveal more of Austen's writing style, or even Austen's writing habits. For a last recommendation, any researchers who were to utilise this study should be prepared to put aside ample research fund to access external sources of information should their own library or online databases prove inadequate.

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