

Parental Responsibility in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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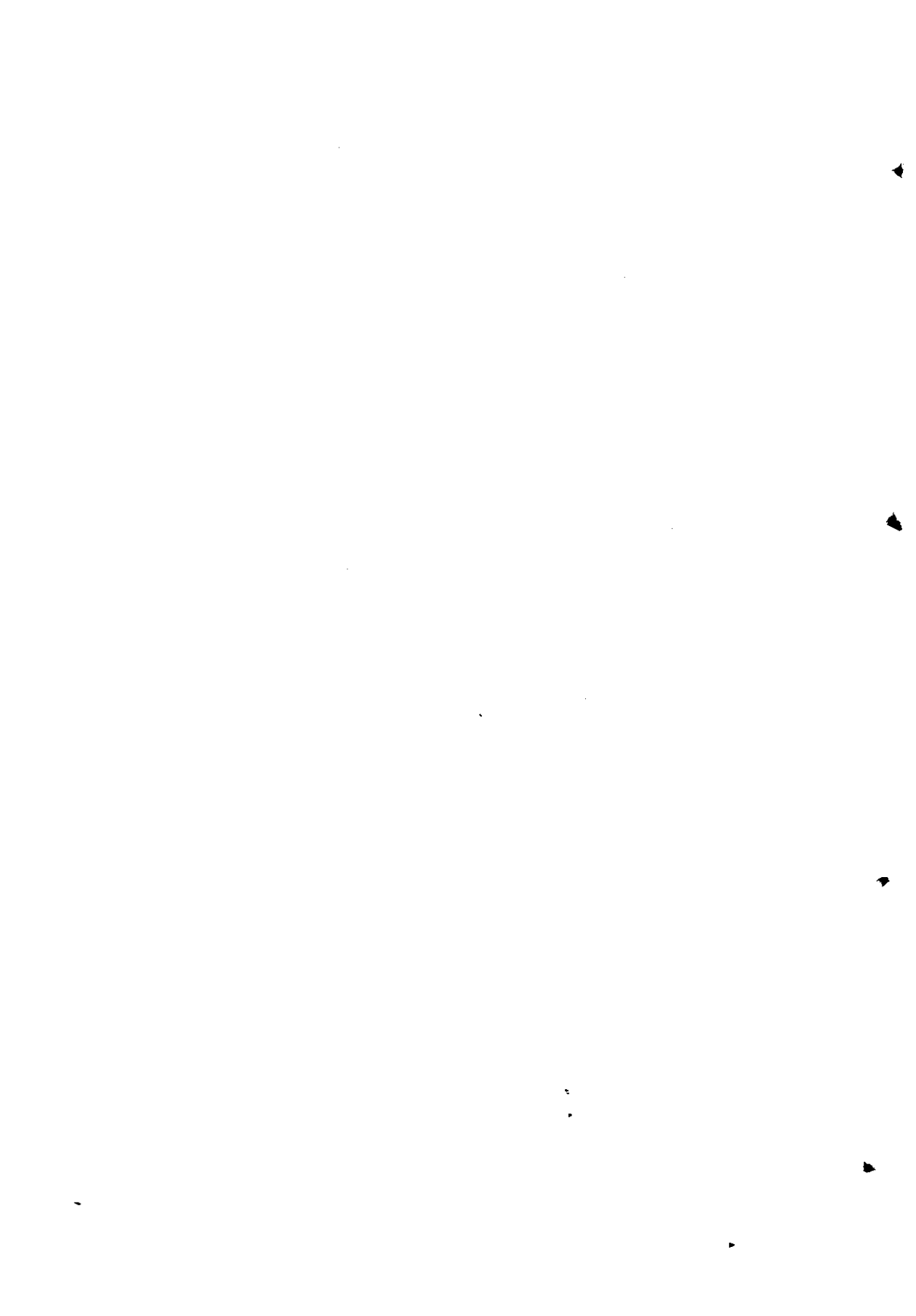
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Abstract

Parental Responsibility in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Although Jane Austen's novels deal with the primary theme of marriage, *Pride and Prejudice* in various incidents explores parental responsibility. This paper aims to examine situations where parents are irresponsible and explore the Bennets' respective degrees of awareness and their success as parents. There are two occasions in which Mr. Bennet shows great concern; the first is when warnings prove to be true and Lydia elopes with Wickham and the second is when Darcy tells about his intention to marry Elizabeth. Mrs. Bennet's role as a mother is to have her daughters educated, protected and well-married. More importantly, the Bennets' daughters are receiving education in manners and are being prepared for their role as possessors of morals.

ملخص

مسئولية الوالدين في رواية "الاعتزاز والتحامل" للكاتبة جين أوستين

على الرغم من أن روايات جين أوستن تعالج موضوعاً رئيسياً، الزواج فإن روايتها "الاعتزاز والتحامل" توضح مسؤولية الوالدين في أحداث متعددة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة المواقف التي تبين موقف السيد "بينت" وزوجته اللامسئولة كوالدين. وتوضح احساسهم بالمسئولية ومدى نجاحهما. هنالك موقفين في الرواية يظهران مدى احساس السيد "بينت" بمسئوليته كأب. يحدث الموقف الأول عندما تتأكد صحة التحذيرات بإمكانية هروب ابنة "أل بينت"، ليديا، مع السيد "ويكهام" ويحدث الموقف الثاني حين يفصح السيد "دارسي" عن نيته في الزواج من الانسة "اليزابيث". ينصب جل اهتمام السيدة "بينت" على تأمين التعليم المناسب والحماية والزواج الذي يؤمن الرفاهية المادية لبناتها. الاهم من ذلك كله، تتلقى بنات آل بينت تعليماً في السلوك وتتم تهيأتهن لادوارهن كزوجات يتمثلن الأخلاقيات.

Parental Responsibility in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen, who educates herself at home with extensive reading, believes that intellectual abilities are desirable in the man as in the woman.¹ Austen's theme of marriage is basic to all her fiction. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen portrays typical middle class of the early nineteenth century England.² Moreover, the novel explores situations where parents really feel their responsibility and other situations where the quality of indifference prevails. Although both parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet embody comprehensive examples of parental irresponsibility _their deficiencies (which are generally recognized) _they present examples of their respective degrees of awareness and their (albeit limited) success as parents.

According to Morgan (1987), "The absence of sex in Austen's work³ represents neither a moral absolutism nor an historical conservatism nor a psychological limitation", but it is a "literary innovation" (356). Austen's art, says Baley(1991),"depends on some characters within the family unit being understanders and some not"(24). Austen criticizes marriage as well as other institutions in her society. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet represent parental passivity, which is explored and embodied in their behavior and treatment of their children in various situations.. From the opening of the novel, one can find that Mr. Bennet has made a grave mistake by marrying a woman who had nothing whatever to commend her except a pretty face. Mrs. Bennet is introduced through her excitement by the news that Mr. Bingley, a bachelor, is moving into the

neighborhood. Her mind is preoccupied with finding husbands for her five unmarried daughters.

'My dear Mr Bennet,' said his lady to him one day, 'Have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?'

Mr Bennet replied that he had not.

'But it is,' returned she, 'for two Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.'

Mr Bennet made no answer. . .

'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!'

'How so? how can it affect them?'

'My dear Mr Bennet,' replied his wife, 'how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.'⁴

From this dialogue, it is obvious that Mrs Bennet is an empty-headed hypochondrine. For her, Mr. Bingley would clearly be an excellent 'catch'. Another conclusion from the manner of this conversation shows a sharp contrast between the father, Mr.

Bennet, and the mother, Mrs. Bennet. Mrs. Bennet just bubbles on the subject whereas Mr. Bennet is more reserved in phrasing his sarcastic statements. He also is no less obviously a tease, especially at his wife's expense. Although both parents have two different personalities, they are irresponsible and assume that marriage be necessary for their daughters. It seems that Mrs. Bennet tries to compensate for the lack of money in the family by husband-hunting for her daughters with little thought for her daughters' future happiness. So she manipulates Jane, fails to realize the tragedy of Lydia's elopement and pressures Elizabeth over Collins's proposal.

Austen is admired for her creation of living characters who are representations of characteristics typical of particular groups of human beings (Hawthorn, 1994, 88). It is remarked how Mrs. Bennet's lack of tact and her sense of personal triumph nearly ruin Jane's relationship with Bingley and seem to threaten Elizabeth's with Darcy. However, Mrs. Bennet attempts to save her daughters. She is curious. When a note comes from Miss Bingley at Netherfield to Jane, Mrs Bennet is impatient to know about its contents: "Well, Jane, who is it from? What is it about? What does he say? Well, Jane, make haste and tell us, make haste, my love" (p. 77).

Mrs. Bennet is seen in a most unfavorable light. Her unawareness of financial reality, paralleled by her husband's, causes real problems. At one of the balls at Netherfield, she talks too loud and too long and makes disparaging comments about Mr. Darcy within his hearing whereas Mr. Bennet, with his bemused irresponsibility, enjoys the panorama of a world view.

In vain did Elizabeth endeavour to check the rapidity of her mother's words, or persuade her to describe her felicity in a less audible whisper; for to her inexpressible vexation, she could perceive that the chief of it was overheard by Mr Darcy, who sat opposite to them. Her mother only scolded her being nonsensical (p. 141).

It seems that real communication between men and women is rare in the society. Mrs. Bennet also remarks that she should not be afraid of Mr. Darcy because, according to her, the Bennets owe him "no such particular civility as to be obliged to say nothing he may not like to her" (p. 141). This behaviour of Mrs. Bennet results in driving Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley from Netherfield. Moreover, Mrs Bennet arranges to be the last one to leave the ball.

During this party, it should be noted that the whole Bennets' family with the exception of Elizabeth have behaved in a very dreadful unfavourable way. For example, Mary embarrasses Elizabeth by singing too long and boring the entire group. Mrs. Bennet's scheme is to ensure that she is the last to leave instead of assuming her parental responsibility. In this irresponsible behavior, Mrs. Bennet does not realize how someone of Mr. Darcy's position could be adversely affected by the situation.

On another occasion, when Mr Bingley attended a ball at Merryton, Mrs. Bennet took her daughters there. For her, Bingley was every thing he ought to be, handsome, easy in manner and likeable. As a father, Mr. Bennet seemed to be unconcerned about the situation. Elizabeth was the only member of the family who was aware of all the happenings around her. In fact, Elizabeth seemed so fitted for a family role.

. . . Mary's powers were by no means fitted for such a display; her voice was weak, and her manner affected. Elizabeth was in agonies. She looked at Jane to see how she bore it; but Jane was very composed talking to Bingley. She looked at his two sisters, and saw them making signs of derision at each other, and

at Darcy, who continued however impenetrably grave. She looked at her father to entreat his interference, lest Mary should be singing all right. He took the hint, and when Mary had finished her second song, said aloud, 'That will do extremely well, child. You have delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit (p. 142).

Elizabeth seems to have her father's wit and she is quick at interpreting appearances and articulating her judgements. She feels ashamed of her sister's unjustifiable display of inferior talents and of her mother's boasting at the ball. Moreover, Mr. Darcy is placed sufficiently close to Mrs. Bennet to her boast openly of Jane's being soon married to Bingley. Spack (1981) emphasizes that "People_especially young people_learn by exploring possibilities never realized in actuality, by attending to their inner life, and by rigorous investigation of the relation of inner outer." In all respects, Austen appears to believe that "the young prove more educable than the old and they are often possessed of more accurate intuition" (177, 178).

Austen, like many eighteenth century critics, associated women's writing with the artlessness and with the identification

of domestic subject matter (Thomson,1986)..⁵ One method of characterization is bringing together characters in contrast. One significant event reveals contrast between Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet is the parents' reaction to Elizabeth's rejection of Mr Collins. Mr. Bennet supports Elizabeth's refusal to marry Mr. Collins. He places her before what he playfully calls "an unhappy alternate"(p. 152); that her mother will never see her again if she does not marry Collins, while he will never see her again if she does. Mr. Bennet shows a "calm concern" in the face of his wife's extreme agitation and playfully sides with Elizabeth, his favorite daughter.

'Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not marry her.'

Mr. Bennet raised his eyes from his book as she entered, and fixed them on her face with a calm unconcern which was not in the least altered by her communication (p. 152).

Mrs. Bennet demanded that her husband would use a father's authority to bring Elizabeth into acceptance. In fact, Elizabeth continued to be harassed by her mother.⁶ Mrs. Bennet wanted the marriage partly because she did not care as much for Elizabeth as she did for the other children and because she wanted to get all the girls married. Elizabeth rejected the more confined social world her mother occupied to challenge the expectations of her father and sisters.

Mrs Bennet had little influence over her "domestic realm" and she was absent from her daughters scenes of self-discovery and confession. Elizabeth could "hardly help smiling" at Lady Catherine de Borough's concern that Mrs. Bennet has been "quite a slave to your education" (p. 199). Mrs. Bennet evoked a strong criticism whether from her husband or from her daughters. How did she feel about herself when she considered Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Collins: ". . . nobody on my side, nobody takes part with me, I am cruelly used, nobody feels for my poor nerves" (p. 153). Moreover, Lizzie shared her mother's reaction at Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins, although she "reclected herself in time to address her friend with politeness."⁷

Obviously Mr. Bennet, "the immortal hero", is superficially attractive and amusing (Trollope, 25). His marriage, based on sexual attraction, has proved disastrous and he takes no care to conceal from his children or anyone else the contempt he feels for his vulgarly stupid wife.

To his wife, he was very little otherwise indebted, than as her ignorance and folly had contributed to his amusement. This is not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to owe to his wife; but where other powers of entertainment are wanting, the true philosopher will derive benefit from such as are given (p. 262).

In fact, there is no spontaneity and recognition of trust between Mr. Bennet and his wife. Mr. Bennet cannot be happy with his wife because he does not respect her. Therefore there is no mutual cooperation between the parents in assuming their responsibility towards their children. Mr Bennet retreats from the ridiculousness of much of his family into sarcasm and carelessness. As a result, the reader of the novel feels pleasure and entertainment. Moreover, instead of accepting his mistake, (by marrying Mrs. Bennet), and making the best of it by giving

support to his daughters who need it in view of their mother's ignorance, Mr. Bennet has withdrawn himself physically and psychologically from wife and family alike.⁸ Like Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Bennet shows his fracture as parent. One major exposition of the fracture of both parents is when Lydia went to Brighton. Lydia is invited to Brighton and her mother is delighted and in fact envious. In reaction to this, Elizabeth seeks out her father and represents to him "all the improprieties of Lydia's general behaviour"(p.258)and the imprudence, in particular, of allowing her to be exposed, with so little protection, to all the temptations of Brighton.

If you, my dear father, will not take the trouble checking [Lydia's] 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 (258).

Elizabeth's reference to Lydia's "exuberant spirits" and "the most determined flirt" reveal that she is the one who assesses all too accurately showing how destructive her father's passive

rejection of this role is to her. Her father falls back on his wit to justify taking the easiest course: "Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with no little expense or inconvenience to her family as under the present circumstances" (p. 257). However, earlier Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy enhances her failure to discriminate between truth and reality in Wickham's tale of his persecution of Darcy. Duffy (1976) relates this to Elizabeth's attempt to be rigid and personal in her view of character and conduct (14-15). Trying to confront the complex and unexpected in human affairs, Elizabeth can not rely on the example of parents to guide her.

Again Elizabeth points to the "the very great advantage to us all", to all the Bennets, suffering from Lydia's behaviour. Although she does not openly state that Jane's chances with Bingley have been raised because of Lydia's and Kitty's imprudence, she warns her father that their behavior reflects badly on herself and Jane. Of course, this is ironic because one must notice the reversal of roles. Elizabeth attempts to persuade her father to act decisively and as a good parent for once. Mr. Bennet refuses to take any real responsibility for his children, thinking that if he lets them work out their own salvation, every thing will be for the best. This twenty-year-old girl is having to

speak like a parent to her father, while childishly abandons all responsibility and treats her warnings as an occasion of self-indulgent amusement.

'Already risen!' repeated Mrs. Bennet. What has she frightened away some of your lovers? Poor little Lizzy! But do not be cast down. Such squearmish youth is as cannot bear to be connected with a little absurdity, are not worth a regret . . .' (pp. 257-58).

Mr. Bennet concedes that Elizabeth has "three silly sisters", but without accepting the least responsibility for them; and having insisted that there will be "no peace" if Lydia cannot grow many degrees coarse, without authorising us to lock her up for the rest of her life" (p. 258). This is an early indication of Lydia's acting later by her elopement with Wickham. Mr. Bennet is well aware about Lydia's conduct but, as a parent, he has done nothing towards improving the situation and taking precautions before something bad would happen.

Obviously Elizabeth puts herself in her father's shoes, serving both his surrogate son and his daughter. She shares Mr. Bennet's impatience with the follies and frivolities that

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characterize Mrs. Bennet's behavior and her younger daughters. Even more than he, Elizabeth struggles to keep the Bennet girls in line. Jan and Elizabeth are referred to as older children in "dysfunctional family" who gravitated naturally to the parental roles their mother and father have abandoned, achieving early nutrient as a result (Bennet, 1993, 134-35). In fact, Elizabeth sometimes resembles her "morally" anarchic father who does discriminate objects of his wit, while confronting the crowd of human follies in the community around him (Duffy, 25-26). Mr. Bennet sees no meaning beyond this extravagant discord: "For what do we live, but to make sport of our neighbors, and laugh them in our turn?" (p. 261)

Later in the novel, Mr. Bennet tells Elizabeth that he only himself should suffer because it has been his own doing and he has to feel it. He confides to Elizabeth that he deserves to suffer for his irresponsibility, but even here, in the act of acknowledging he is at fault; he is aware of his strictly limited capacity to face up to his own guilt. Like Mrs. Bennet, he reveals his irresponsibility by saying to Elizabeth that the impression "will pass away": ". . . No, Lizzy, let me once in my life feel how much I have been to blame. I am not afraid of being overpowered by the impression. It will pass away soon enough" (p. 314). And indeed it does. As her father's favorite, Elizabeth

has flourished under natural parenting, joining Mr. Bennet in the library. This is one of the responsibilities that the father takes in bringing up his daughter. Bennet's affection is devoted to Elizabeth and Jane whereas Lydia seems very far from his method of child rearing.

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, there are only two occasions in which Mr. Bennet shows parental responsibility. The first is when Elizabeth's warnings prove all too true and Lydia elopes with Wickham. Mr. Bennet becomes panic. His efforts, for once shaken into customary action, are, as one might expect, wholly futile. The following is an excerpt from Jane's letter bringing the news.

. . . My father is going to London with Colonel Forster instantly, to try to discover her [Lydia]. What he means to do, I am sure I know not; but this excessive distress will not allow him to pressure any measure in the best and safest way, and Colonel Forster obliged to be at Brighton again tomorrow evening. In such an exigence my uncle's advice and assistance would be every thing in the world; he will immediately comprehend what I

must feel, and rely upon his
goodness (p. 293).

Elizabeth, hearing the news, becomes in a state of agitation. The news about her sister is exceptionally shocking and disgraceful, and furthermore it proves that her family is open to criticism. Of all the effects of the elopement, Darcy is directly involved in the problem of the Bennets. He is alone able to provide some surface responsibility to the attachment between Lydia and Wickham — a result Mr. Bennet can not achieve.

According to Mukherjee (1991), there is in Jane Austen's novels "a constant tension between a woman's need to exercise choice in order to define herself as an individual and society's demand that she should conform" (42). Lydia's elopement, in an age much more formal than our own, is thought to be scandalous in the extreme and a disgrace to entire family. But Mrs. Bennet's reaction is to find excuses and justifications for her daughter's behaviour. According to her, Lydia needs to have someone taking care of her. This rationalization and defending of Lydia, particularly blaming others, reveals Mrs. Bennets' irresponsibility. It is Mrs. Bennet who is obsessed with marrying her daughters. Therefore, when Lydia finds a chance to elope with Wickham, she seizes this opportunity.

Earlier Mrs. Bennet's competitive desire to corner young men for her daughters makes Elizabeth reject Collins and Darcy. Her schemes affect the suitors negatively since both Bingley and Darcy show their disapproval of Mrs. Bennet. McDonald (1980) notes that Mrs. Bennet "goaded Elizabeth and Jane into exemplary behavior so as to differentiate themselves from her, and in so doing she helped daughters to mature . . ." (65) She is successful in a way that her power lies not when she replicates herself, as with Lydia, but when physical and/or psychological separation forces her daughters into independence from her. McDonald emphasizes that even when the daughter rebels against her mother, she may be doing no more than achieving the goals she has set for her (65). Mrs. Bennet is denied "the prerogatives of a comic literary tradition. She does not win pleasure for her comic scenes, forgiveness for her follies, or credit for her effect on the social world (Carr, 1991, 70)." She is criticized for the serious effects she does not achieve. She marks "a lack of sful feminism power which is felt by her daughters whom she is to protect and educate (71)."

In fact, Mrs. Bennet becomes hysterical and very depressed when Elizabeth and the Gardiners arrive at Longbourn: "And now here's Mr. Bennet gone away, and I know he will fight

Wickham, whenever he meets him, and then he will be killed, and what is to become of us all" (p. 304). For some days, the eloped pair are not located. What has Mr. Bennet done? He returns home, leaving the whole matter in Mr. Gardiner's hands. Mr. Bennet suspects that Mr. Gardiner must have laid down a great deal of his own money to get Lydia married and he is grateful for his help and ashamed that it had to be given. Mr. Bennet is hardly better than his superficial and mindless wife in accepting that others should make a settlement and resolve the scandal of the elopement for him; and far from feeling shame that others should pay for his mistakes, when every thing is finally revealed all he can do: "So much the better, It will save me a world of trouble and economy" (p. 285).

Moreover, when Mr. Bennet shows Elizabeth a letter he received from Collins, he disconcerts Elizabeth by assuming the rumour concerning herself and Darcy to be "delightfully absurd" (p. 372). This is perhaps justified particularly if one knows about Elizabeth's uncertainty about Darcy's intentions. Mr. Bennet treats what Collins has to say as an absurd joke. ". . . But, Lizzy, you look as if you did not enjoy it. You are not going to be Missih, I hope, and pretend to be affronted at an idle report. For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?" (p. 372).

Of course, Elizabeth is different from her father. She is very concerned over the decorum of her family whereas Mr. Bennet sees the actions of humans only as an illustration of their foibles and incongruities. Mr. Bennet proves to be mistaken about Elizabeth's feelings when he says that his "perfect indifference and your pointed dislike make it so delightfully absurd!" (p. 372). He has cruelly mortified her by what he says of Darcy's indifference.

On another occasion, Mr. Bennet shows parental responsibility when Darcy tells about his intention to marry Elizabeth. He thinks Elizabeth can only accept him from worldly considerations, and he begs her not to marry someone she can not respect _ his main mistake in life. Elizabeth explains to her father her gradual change of heart and she begins to like Mr. Darcy. Eventually Mr. Bennet gives his consent.

'Lizzy,' said her father, 'I have given him my consent. He is the kind of man, indeed, to whom I never dare refuse any of it. I know your disposition . Lizzy, I know what you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you

looked up to him as a superior . . .'

(p. 385).

In fact, Mr. Bennet shows concern for his daughter and takes some convincing that Elizabeth knows what she is doing. This concern for his favorite refers to his insistence that she should marry someone she can respect and so avoid—as he himself failed to avoid—an "unequal marriage." When Elizabeth also explains Darcy's part in settling with Wickham, Mr. Bennet reacts with practical cynicism that does him little credit: "If any young men come for Mary and Kitty, send them in, for I am quite at leisure" (p. 386). On this occasion, Mrs. Bennet shows irresponsibility. She views Darcy as "disagreeable" when Elizabeth has told her about the possible match between her and Darcy.

'Good Gracious!' Cried Mrs. Bennet, as she stood at a window the next morning, 'if that disagreeable Mr. Darcy is not coming here again with our dear Bingley!' What can he mean by being so tiresome to be always coming here? I had no notion but he would go shooting, or something or other, and not disturb us with his company' (p. 383).

Once Darcy is engaged to Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet reversed her view immediately about him. She expresses her admiration of him and likes her daughters accompany Darcy in their walk to Oakham Mount. Obviously Mrs. Bennet is offensively delighted at the material advantages of the match. In her eyes, Darcy instantly changes from disagreeable man to a fine and handsome son-in-law. She also does not pain him with officious civility which she showed Bingley. Mrs. Bennet's changing view of Darcy relates to a wholly false set of values. Marriage has no meaning for her beyond pin-money, jewels and carriages: "Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! . . . I am so pleased_ so happy!" (p. 386). This is Mrs. Bennet at the end of the novel. This superficial mother does not change or feel any parental responsibility towards her daughters. It is the same Mrs. Bennet whom the reader encounters at the opening of the story.

To conclude, both parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are not sensible when they fail to guide their family. They have no sense of responsibility. This responsibility involves a consideration for the feelings of other people which silly characters like Mr. Collins, Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lydia conspicuously lack. Mr. Bennet's resolve not to admit Lydia and Wickham to

his home is not kept. There is no evidence to show that either he or his wife is aware that their children are in a way victims of a disastrous marriage though Mrs. Bennet is too stupid to see her marriage is disastrous. However, there are situations where the parents, Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, reveal their responsibility. Mr. Bennet shows his concern when Elizabeth's warnings about the elopement of Lydia with Wickham prove to be true. Moreover, he reacts in a very-touched manner to Darcy's intention to marry Elizabeth. Mrs. Bennet also proves her responsibility in her worries over her daughters' education in manners and their preparation to play their roles as possessors of morals. Although the major theme of Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, is marriage, she succeeds in her characterization to deal with specific issues as parental responsibility.

Notes

1. On Austen's life, see Fergus (1991); Tucker (1983); Turner (1986); and Honan (1987).
2. Austen was impressed and interested in female reading. For a detailed study of female reading, see Uphaus (1987) and Lovell (1987).
3. On the subject of sex in the eighteenth century British and French novels, see Miller (1980), who points that "the heroine's text is the text of an ideology that codes femininity in the paradigms of sexual vulnerability (p. xi)."
4. *Pride and Prejudice* (1987), p. 51. All subsequent quotations from this edition will appear in parentheses.
5. Hunter (1990) provides a mass of extremely useful information about early novels and the social, cultural and historical contexts from which they emerged.
6. Carr (1991) points that in some ways Elizabeth is allied with her mother in a struggle with patriarchal powers. But Lizzie does not willingly admit this allegiance. In her argument with Darcy, Elizabeth loses her "confidence" When she "thought of her mother" (219).
7. In her essay on Charlotte's prospects, Robinson (1987) discusses Lady Catherine's harsh reminder that although Lizzie's father is a gentleman, she is not "the daughter of a gentleman as well" (182-93); See also Bennett (1993): 135-139.
8. Spack (1981) writes: "The action of Austen's novels, the aptterns of aspiration, conflict, reward and nemesis, reiterate the value of capacity to learn through experience. The middle-aged, in those books, [her novel,] seldom possesses it: If Mr. Bennet sees the error of his ways, he does not change his life as a result" (117).

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