

Pride and Prejudice

Introduction & Chaps 1-12

"Mrs. Bennet and her two youngest girls":
an illustration by Hugh Thompson,





Outline

- Jane Austen
- Social Background
- Main Issues
- Chaps 1-6
- Chaps 7-12

Jane Austen

(December 16, 1775-July 18, 1817)

- An uneventful life limited to family and close friends
- Her novels focused on the upper-middle class world in UK. –Austen describes her novels as "**The little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which** I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour".
- The family—in the center; marriage all-important, “because matrimony supplies stability, along with social and economic continuity.”

“In her books, there is little connection between this upper-middle class world and the strata above or below it, or consciousness of events external to it.”

([source](#))

However there are always seeds of change that





Social Background

The novel written and revised over the period of 1797 to 1813

1. **The French Revolution** (1789)
2. **Class Structure of the British Society:**
 - Landed Gentry: Aristocrats who draw their income from inheritance or property (the lands they own); e.g. Lady Catherine; Darcy (10,000 a year)
 - New Gentry: merchants and manufacturers; e.g. Bingley (4-5000 a year)



Social Background (2)

3. Country vs. London:

- Country -- simple, centered around the church and activities such as dance, fair and sports. Darcy: "the country ... can in general supply but few subjects for such a study [of amusement]. In a country neighborhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society" (textbook pp. 31-32).
- London – busy, fashionable and polluted; e.g. parties, theatres, grog (liquor) shops



Social Background (3)

4. Women's Education & Positions

- Boys -- taught at school; subjects: Latin, mathematics, and science
- Girls --
 - 1) taught at home by governesses or by “masters” in town. (text XXVI “your mother should have taken you to town every spring for the benefit of masters.”)
 - 2) Subjects: “accomplishments” that would lead to the maintenance of good homes and social contacts. e.g music, singing, drawing, and sewing, along with reading and writing.
- Professions, universities or politics were not open to women.



Social Background (4)

5. Marriage and Money:

- Inheritance: Any property that a woman possessed before her marriage automatically becomes her husband's, unless it is "settled" on her;
- → the "fortune-hunter" phenomenon (men who marry a woman only for the sake of the woman's fortune); forced marriage of heiress
- e.g. Charlotte Lucas age 27 without portion



Social Background (5)

5. Inheritance and Entails:

- → entails (限定繼承)--was a legal device used to prevent a landed property from being broken up, and/or from descending in a female line.
- This is a logical extension of the then-prevalent practice of leaving the bulk of one's wealth (particularly real estate) to one's eldest son or "heir."
 - e.g. Darcy -- an income of £10,000 a year, representing a wealth of about £200,000;
 - his sister -- £30,000;
 - Bingley -- £100,000;
 - his two sisters £20,000 apiece. (source)



The Novel –Plot of Education and Marriage

- Volume I
 - (1-6) The arrival of a new neighbor and the ball; first invitation by Darcy
 - (7-12) **Jane**'s illness; 2nd invitation by Darcy
 - **COLLINS'** GETTING A BRIDE [NETHERFIELD BALL IN MIDDLE]
- Volume II
 - CONCLUSION TO COLLINS EPISODE
 - (2 months later) VISIT TO **CHARLOTTE** WITH PROPOSAL OF **DARCY** IN THE MIDDLE (letter) **Eliza's reflections**
 - **LYDIA** EPISODE (beginning)
- Volume III
 - (June) **Eliza's** Visit to Pemberley and reflections
 - Lydia's elopement and return
 - Bingley's return
 - Confrontation with Lady Catherine and then Darcy

The Novel --Places:

- Hertfordshire

- village of Longbourn, Meryton,
Netherfield Park,

- Derbyshire

- Pemberley

(more here: <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/ppjalmap.html>)

Map

([source](#))

1. Hertfordshire:

Longbourn
(Bennets),
Netherfield
Park (the
Bingleys),
Lucas
Lodge(the
[Lucases](#)), and
the village of
Meryton,

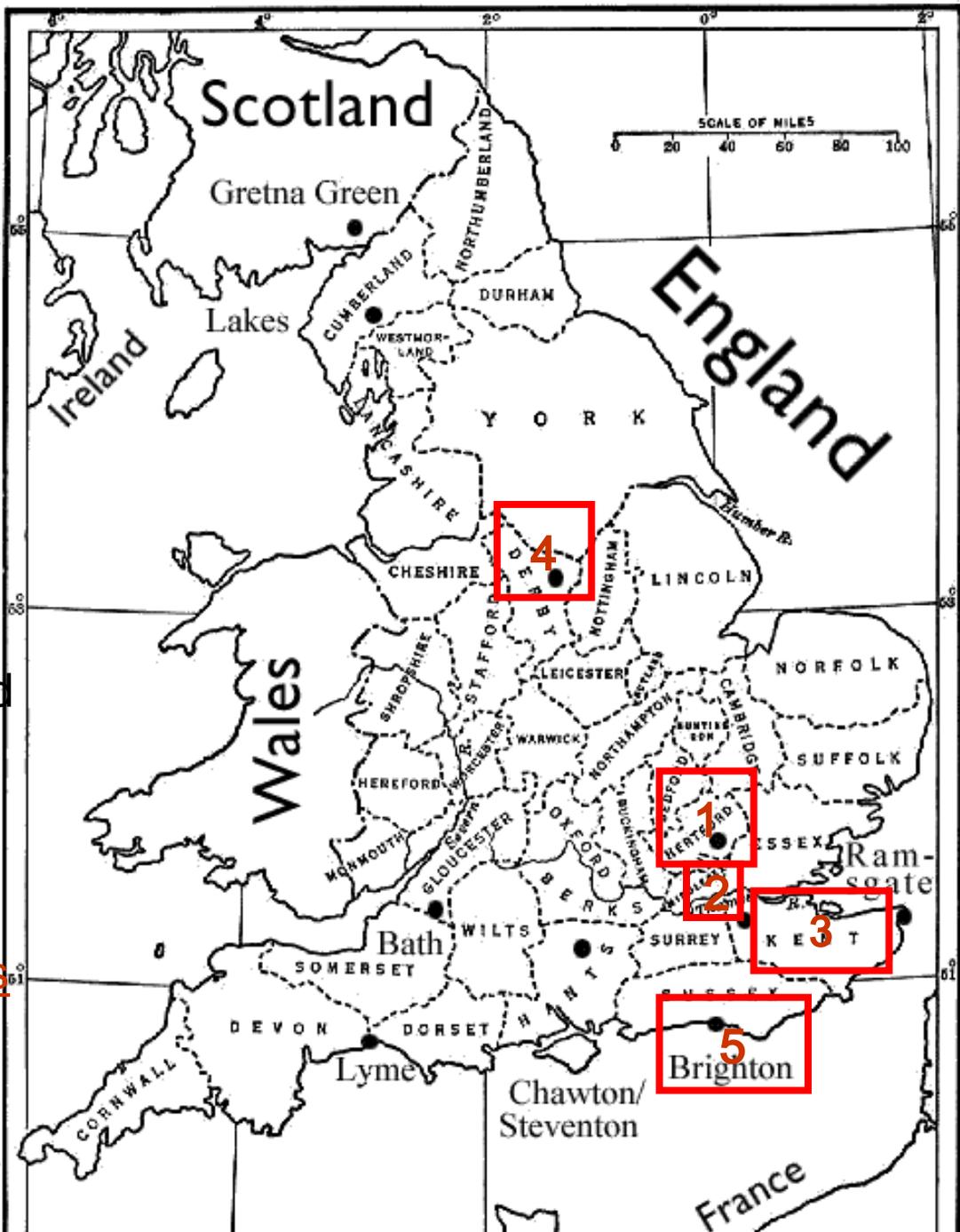
2. London:

Gardiners

3. [Kent](#): [Rosings](#)

([Lady
Catherine](#))
and [Hunsford](#)

4. Derbyshire:





Chaps 1-6

1. Anything difficult?
2. Characters and their perspectives:
 - Mr. and Mrs. Bennet; (chaps 1-2; end of chap 3)
 - Jane and Elizabeth (chap 4)
 - Mary vs. Catherine (Kitty) & Lydia
 - Charles Bingley vs. Darcy (chap 4)
 - Mrs. Hurst and Ms. Bingley
3. Views of Marriage & Love? (pp. 1; VI: 15-16)
4. Views of “pride”? (V p. 13) Do you agree with Charlotte or Mary? (more in chap 11)
5. Elements of humor?



Language

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

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, **this truth is so** well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, **that** he is considered as **the rightful property** of some one or other of their daughters.



Mr. and Mrs. Bennet

Mr. Bennet

- Witty –e.g. his wife’s nerves as his friend
- Not communicative to his wife
- Loves Lizzy more than the others
- Still cares about their marriage.
- “they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.”

- Mrs. Bennet
- Talkative, narrow-minded
- “Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.”



Darcy vs. Bingley

Darcy pp. 6-7; 11

- With fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien

- Proud, having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance

- ten thousand a year

- Judgmental

-- Jane as “the only handsome one”; laughs too much

-- “Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand

Bingley

- lively and unreserved,
- danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early,
- talked of giving one himself at Netherfield.
- Amiable

“I never met with so many

pleasant girls in my life, as I have this evening”



Jane and Elizabeth

Jane 9-10

- Modest, surprised by compliment
- “honestly blind to follies.”
- P. 14 composed

Elizabeth

- Confident
- Hasty in her judgment



Darcy and Pride (chap 5)

- Jane's view of Darcy 13
- Pride
 - Ms. Lucas: he has the right to be proud.
 - Mary's view:
“Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us.”
 - It depends on whether one's pride is inner directed or outer directed.



Love and Marriage

- “There is so much of gratitude or vanity in almost every attachment, that it is not safe to leave any to itself. ...there are very few of us who have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement. ” (15) → **unrequited love is not really possible.**
- “Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. . . . it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life.” → **a matter of chance and choice, though the chancy elements are indeed hard to control.**



Darcy and Eliza

- P. 16—judging by appearance and according to contemporary standard
- P. 17 **Lucas' party:**
- Eliza – aware of being gazed at,
-- defensive with her wits
(e.g. a. “Keep your breath to cool your porridge-- and I shall keep mine to swell my song.”
b. Turns down the dance invitation.)
- Ms. Bingley’s response p. 19 –treats admiration as “love” (a jealous woman)

Chaps 7-12

More work on getting married:

1. Lydia and Kitty's pp. 20-21
2. Jane's sickness – Mrs. Bennet's response and Eliza's? Kitty and Lydia -- p. 23
3. Ms. Bingley IX, X, XI
4. Mrs. Bennet's efforts – IX

Judgment, Prejudice and Social Discrimination:

1. the Bingley sisters' VIII: p. 25-26; XI
2. Mrs. Bennet: IX
3. Elizabeth's vs. Darcy's: on the issue of accomplishments of women. p. 29 → Which do you agree with more?



Efforts in Getting Married

- For Mrs. Bennet, Lydia and Kitty, it is more important than Jane's health. (clues: Kitty's coughing)
- For Mrs. Bennet, it involves her lack of scruples in keeping Jane at Netherfield, and in talking about her past (33).
- For Ms. Bingley, it means attempting all the time to criticize Elizabeth, to attract Darcy's attention, and rush into an assumption of Darcy's wanting to marry Eliza (e.g. 19, 39).

Prejudice and Social Discrimination

- Mrs. Bennet on what a gentleman should be like; p. 32;
- Ms. Bingley: on Elizabeth's walking p. 25-26





Elizabeth vs. Darcy

Irony vs. Discrimination

Darcy: Discriminatory --

- Country vs. City 32

Elizabeth: uses irony and witticism to hide her embarrassment

- Jokes about being rejected.
- Poetry and love 33
- Darcy's 2nd dance invitation 38

Different perspectives: which do you agree with more?

- on Bingley's humility & pride, and changefulness and consideration of friendship. Pp.35-36;
- XI: Next evening's conversation. on pride & misunderstanding 39-40; 42-43



The Characters

- Judgmental & Playful: Elizabeth → Mr. Bennet → Mary locked up in her world of music and books
- Wayward: Lydia and Kitty → Mrs. Bennet
- In between: Jane lack of judgment but kind
- Judgmental and serious: Darcy
- Snobbish -- Ms. Bingley → Lady Catherine
- Charles Bingley

Collins -- mannerism

Wickham -- appearance + wantonness?



Clues to the plot development

- Darcy -- Danger perceived 38, 44;
- Bingley's snobbishness → Collins