



*The Feminist
Outreach*

July 2011

The Feminist Outreach

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AND SPECIAL THANKS TO THE WOMEN WHO INSPIRED THIS PUBLICATION:

Jane Austen

Charlotte Bronte

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Emily Bronte



MISSION STATEMENT:

The driving purpose behind *The Feminist Outreach* is to show present-day humanity that the women writers of the British Romantic period have influenced, and still influence to this day, modern society. We desire works that show how themes, styles, and ideas from female authors of this movement can be found both in the literature of contemporary women writers and in the everyday lives of people worldwide. These essays will discuss these authors individually, rather than collectively.

The works we publish will be logical, well-organized, and use quotations and facts to build convincing arguments, but each essay will also have its own unique voice and present new and interesting insights on these women writers. It is the goal of *The Feminist Outreach* to showcase essays that reach out to the common men and women of the world and help them both understand and appreciate the influence the female authors of British Romanticism have had on the world.

PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

The Feminist Outreach looks for an appropriately scholarly tone in submissions, being a scholarly journal. However, the editorial board also desires a simultaneous light and open tone. The target audience of this journal is the general public, and so we expect writers to balance between writing professionally and making their papers interesting and enjoyable to read. The writer's voice should come through clearly in their writing, and essays should be well-crafted both in organization and content, meaning they are easy to follow and understand. We expect writers to include accurate information from credible sources and to clearly indicate the purpose of their essay both in a creative title and in their introduction.



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Formalist Analysis:

An Austen Femininity.....Page 1
HANNAH NELSON

Anne Elliot vs. Mary Musgrove: Who is the Real “Ideal Woman”?.....Page 8
LAINA PHELPS

Feminist Analysis:

Women’s Strength in Life.....Page 15
ALYSSA PERRY

Psychoanalytical Analysis:

Releasing the Monster Inside.....Page 22
RACHEL LEFOLL

Research:

Jane Austen’s Art of Feministic Beauty.....Page 30
MOLLIE PACKER

Jane Austen: Initiating Feminism One Novel at a Time.....Page 42
LESLIE ARMSTRONG

Bronte versus Austen: Femininity for Our Day.....Page 57
MARY WINFIELD



AN AUSTEN FEMININITY

Hannah Nelson—English 314

When the name Jane Austen is spoken, it can be sure that multiple things will jump to the mind of those around. Memories of the masculine Mr. Darcy saying the words that every hopeless romantic wants to hear, “You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you” (Austen 132), Mr. Knightly secretly loving the heroine for years, beautiful landscapes where picture perfect proposals take place, and many more. These scenes have become the epitome of romance, the classic model of a timeless desire. The name of Jane Austen, author and creator of these timeless memories, has become, since the eighteenth century, synonymous with love. Falling in love, however, is not the only topic Austen’s emotional stories contain. Each of her stories contains a heroine who displays characteristics different from the common woman of Austen’s time. Austen uses a unique writing style in which she implements devices like sarcasm, wit, and diction to characterize the women in each of her stories, specifically *Pride and Prejudice*, to show what she believed women should and should not be and to refute the nineteenth century idea of the weak and dependent woman.

From the first line in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen endeavors to introduce the ridiculousness of the view of women and marriage of the time by starting the story off with sarcasm: “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (Austen 1). If read aloud, the emphasis falls on the words “must” and “universally,” the two words

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Marriage, for a woman in Austen's time, was made to seem the only option.

whose connotation from Austen's pen are different than their actual denotation. Austen, by using these words, is making the point that, although some are so wrapped up that they felt this way, the idea of marriage was not, in fact, the only thing on every person's mind. Marriage, for a woman in Austen's time, was made to seem the only option. Even in the story, the women have limited rights and could not own property, and those two things forced women into situations they would not have otherwise entered into. To contrast these ideas, Austen created Elizabeth Bennett. Her sarcastic personality and determined attitude to have no less than what she deserves proves the feminist stand-point in *Pride and Prejudice*. As dramatic events twirl around Elizabeth from all avenues—her mother's antics, her sister's submissive attitude, her own love life—Elizabeth stands as a voice of reason to even her parents. At one point, she talks to her father about her youngest sister, Lydia:

If you, my dear father, will not take the trouble of checking her exuberant spirits, and of teaching her that her present pursuits are not to be the business of her life, she will soon be beyond amendment. Her character will be fixed, and she will, at sixteen, be the most determined flirt that ever made herself and her family ridiculous. (Austen 160)

Elizabeth is bold, and although that boldness creates some mistakes in her actions, they end up bringing her the happiness she desired, proving how nonsensical Elizabeth, and her creator, believed the ideas of her time to be. Elizabeth is Austen's feminist feelings personified.

In contrast with Elizabeth, Austen's whole character of Elizabeth's mother, Mrs. Bennet, is a sarcastic statement of how Jane



Austen viewed the womanly clichés of her time. Although, Mrs. Bennet, the character, is not a sarcastic person herself, Austen is being sarcastic in that everything the mother does is the opposite of what Jane Austen believes true womanhood is. For example, when the youngest Bennet daughter runs off, scaring her family, and ends up in an unhappy and young marriage, Elizabeth and her mother's reactions are completely opposite. Mrs. Bennet, in her usual style, "could hardly contain herself... her joy burst forth, and every following sentence added to its exuberance... she was disturbed by no fear for her felicity, nor humbled by any remembrance of her misconduct" (Austen 209-210). In contrast, "Elizabeth received her congratulations amongst the rest, and then, sick of this folly, took refuge in her own room, that she might think with freedom" (Austen 211). The description of Mrs. Bennet's reaction is a one and a half page melodrama, whereas Elizabeth's is only three sentences long, and she is the only one that accomplishes anything of importance in the situation. Mrs. Bennet is a woman consumed with both image and status; she takes all her goals and plans to the outrageous extreme. Her constant fussing over her daughters, complaining to her husband, and bragging to her friends all center around one goal in life: to find her daughters husbands. Although she is motivated by love of her daughters and a desire for their security and happiness, Austen's statement through the creation of this character is that women have more strength and more options to find happiness than in Mrs. Bennett's perception.

Elizabeth's younger sister, Lydia, who takes after her mother's influence, exclaims, "how ashamed I should be of not being married before three and twenty" (Austen 152). This statement is using Mrs. Bennet and Lydia as an image of the extremes people went to when women were thought of as helpless creatures, dependent on men,

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creating problems in self-esteem, happiness, and quality of life for these women. As Mrs. Bennet and the younger sister are fixed on finding marriage at any cost, Lydia does in fact find a man. The situation of her matrimony, however, begins in secrets and shame and ends in faux excitement. A sense of unease is left with the reader about this marriage as “neither rational happiness nor worldly prosperity could be justly expected for her sister” (Austen 211). As Lydia’s character progresses in the text, her mother’s antics can be seen as a direct reflection of Lydia’s own superficial desires and eventual actions. The very definition of cliché is “anything that has become trite or commonplace through overuse” (Dictionary.com). Austen’s characters are the cliché representation of the faulty feminine behavior and thought process that she saw all around her and obviously believed should not be. As wisely spoken by one of the older Bennet daughters (an example of someone less taken with the cliché), “Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us” (Austen 13). Whether these women began vain and prideful or were taught to be, Austen clearly shows that, with statements like this, those character flaws are the outcome of actions like Lydia and Mrs. Bennet’s.

The situation of Lydia’s matrimony, however, begins in secrets and shame and ends in faux excitement.

Austen wrote, “The more I know of the world, the more I am convinced that I shall never see a man whom I can really love” (Austen). Austen did not mean she did not want to find love. Austen’s strong characters like Elizabeth Bennet do find love, but they find it in equality and partnership. Austen had a more modern view than most at her time about women, which she portrayed through characters like Elizabeth Bennet. She understood the possibilities that life and



marriage truly offer and wrote to express those opinions in the only way her society allowed her. Austen's read-between-the-lines witty writing style, diction, and sarcasm that fills *Pride and Prejudice* is so obviously affective in just the fact that her eighteenth-century characters remain beloved symbols of womanhood, strength, and true love to this day.

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Dictionary.com. 2011. 13 May 2011 <www.dictionary.com>.

She understood the possibilities that life and marriage truly offer and wrote to express those opinions in the only way her society allowed her.



May 20, 2011

Dear Hannah Nelson:

Congratulations! Your manuscript, entitled “An Austen Femininity” has been accepted for publication in our journal *The Feminist Outreach*.

This decision has been made with a general consensus from our editors. We feel that you have made good strides during this editing process and have attempted to fit your article to our requirements and mission statement. We do find your formalist style of writing focuses somewhat on the author of Austen rather than solely on the text, but we feel that you have adequate analysis in your article to be published in our journal.

We will be informing our publication department chair, Susan Grover, of our decision. If you have questions or would like to dispute our decision, please contact our Formalist Literary Analysis Editor, Karen Manthey, at karenmanthey1@gmail.com, or our Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com.

We have enjoyed working with you in this publication process. Thank you for your submission.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



ANNE ELLIOT VS. MARY MUSGROVE:

Who is the Real “Ideal Woman”?

Laina Phelps—English 314

What makes an ideal woman? This question has been disputed throughout the ages. Every generation has a different perspective of what the “ideal woman” is. Some would say an ideal woman waits on her husband hand and foot and is someone who does what they are told without asking “Why?” She devotes her life to her husband, children, and the lives she comes in contact with. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some say an ideal woman answers only to herself and is someone with strong opinions who would never be caught tied to another person. She stands alone and does not worry about making anyone around her happy, only herself. With so many differing views, which opinion is the right one? That is something that has to be decided by oneself. However, it would be worth it to examine the opinion of one of the world’s most renowned female authors: Jane Austen. There is a great contrast between the characters of Mary Musgrove and Anne Elliot in her novel *Persuasion*, and through that contrast and irony, readers find that Austen’s opinion of an “ideal woman” is exemplified in her character Anne Elliot.

Although Mary and Anne are sisters, they are different in almost every way.

Although Mary and Anne are sisters, they are different in almost every way. Mary is younger, Anne is older. Mary is married, Anne is not. Mary has children, Anne does not. On the surface, it seems that Mary has it all: a husband, children, and a household to run. Upon further examination into each woman’s character, it is



found that this is not the case. The first indication readers have that Anne Elliot portrays Austen's "ideal woman" comes in chapter four. As Anne is lamenting the loss of her first love, Captain Wentworth, readers find out that she had a second proposal three years later by a Charles Musgrove. Musgrove was considered a very suitable match. He "was the eldest son of a man, whose landed property and general importance, were second, in that country, only to Sir Walter's, and of good character and appearance" (28). He was a good man with a good standing in the area, but Anne exhibited good sense in refusing him. He was not a "thoroughly natural, happy, and sufficient cure" (28) to her broken heart. She would not marry one man while thinking of another. She was saving herself and Charles from a loveless, unhappy marriage. Anne is thoughtful of her own wishes and conscientious of the impact her decision will make on others. Austen is thus declaring Anne as an "ideal woman" because she is so thoughtful in her decision-making.

In contrast to Anne's decision not to marry Charles Musgrove, Austen states he "found a more willing mind in her younger sister" (28). This younger sister is, of course, Mary. The wording Austen uses connotes that Mary was more desperate than her sister. It creates the image that Mary hastily accepted Charles without thinking through the decision. This is in stark contrast to Anne's more thoughtful refusal of Charles Musgrove. Austen paints a better exemplar in Anne of what a woman should be, thoughtful, than in Mary, who hastily jumped into a marriage.

Another indication that Anne portrays a sensible woman comes later in the story. When Mary's son dislocates his shoulder, Mary is very distressed that Charles could be so "unfeeling" (58) by attending a party instead of staying by his child's side. At the thought

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that she would be left behind, Mary proclaims, "I am sure, I am more unfit than any body else to be about the child" (58). Anne replies with, "I cannot wonder at your husband. Nursing does not belong to a man, it is not his province. A sick child is always the mother's property, her own feelings generally make it so...could you be comfortable yourself, to be spending the whole evening away from the poor boy?" (58). There is great irony in this exchange. Mary, not Anne, is a mother with two children, but does not seem to know what a mother's role is. Anne, who is not the mother, has more insight into what a mother should be than her sister. This irony sheds a very bad light on Mary. She claims the title "mother," but does not claim the responsibilities. It instead sheds a warm light on Anne. Not only does she know what the responsibilities of a mother are, she takes upon herself the responsibilities her sister lacks, so her nephews can get the care they need. Austen is again setting her stamp on Anne as a mold for the "ideal woman" because she goes above and beyond her own responsibilities.

Not only does Mary not understand her role as a mother, but she cannot take control of her children. She describes them as "unmanageable" (38) and her mother-in-law complains that they are very wild and have to be bribed to behave nicely. While Mary complains that her children never mind a single word she says and always sends them away because of the headaches they cause, Anne has a very different perspective on the children. From her perspective, readers see, "in the children, who loved her nearly as well, and respected her a great deal more than their mother, she had an object of interest, amusement, and wholesome exertion" (43). Again, there is great irony here. This statement connotes that Anne is more approachable and is more of an authoritative figure in these



children's lives. Mary is the mother, but does not take on the responsibility. Anne has to pick up Mary's pieces and become the mother figure in her nephews' lives. Again, Austen has set the stage that Anne is the better woman because she takes on responsibilities that are not hers.

As has already been shown, Anne is a great example of selflessness. She makes up for the lack of character in her sister and takes care of her nephews. There are even more examples where Anne steps in to care for someone else, but Mary does not. When Anne goes to stay with her sister, Mary, she sits and listens respectfully as Mary complains about her ailments. She does not once ask after Anne. Mary is described as being "often a little unwell, and always thinking a great deal of her own complaints" (page 33). This suggests that she is not someone that anyone would not like to rely on. She is lazy and worries so much about herself that she is not even able to see anyone else's problems. In stark contrast to that, Anne is "glad to be thought of some use, glad to have any thing marked out as a duty" (33). She is happy to go about doing. She is happiest when she has something that needs to be done. And she happily goes about completing that task. She jumps right in when crisis arises. She makes sure everything is taken care of when her nephew dislocates his collarbone, while Mary is busy going into hysterics. And again, when Louisa falls in Lyme, Anne jumps right in:

Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to comfort Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions. (118)

Austen has set the stage that Anne is the better woman because she takes on responsibilities that are not hers.



Because Jane Austen painted such a contrast in these characters, readers see what her opinion of an “ideal woman” is.

Anne takes initiative, something that Mary severely lacks, to the inconvenience of those around her. Austen again makes Anne the “ideal woman” because she can jump in during times of chaos and get those injured the care they need. She is bettering the lives of those around her.

On the surface, it would seem that Mary Musgrove has it all. She has a husband, children, and a household to manage. She accomplished all the things of importance during her time. However, though she may have it all, she does not take care of it. She does not take responsibility for it. She does not do the work to better herself or those around her. Mary Musgrove is the complete opposite of Anne Elliot. Anne Elliot has none of those things. She is still single with no prospect of marriage. On the surface, she has nothing, but upon further examination, readers find that she really has it all. She has all the things that her sister lacks: thoughtfulness, sense, selflessness, reliability, motivation, mothering instincts, and genuine compassion for those in her company. Because Jane Austen painted such a contrast in these characters, readers see what her opinion of an “ideal woman” is. Anne offers so much to those around her, while her sister offers very little. Anne brings light wherever she goes. She brings sense and caring to every situation. She gains respect from everyone she comes in contact with. She betters the lives of everyone she touches. And therefore, she embodies Austen’s characteristics for an “ideal woman.”

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May 20, 2011

Dear Laina Phelps:

The editorial board of *The Feminist Outreach* would like to thank you for your submitted essay “Anne Elliot vs. Mary Musgrove: Who is the Real ‘Ideal Woman?’” We commend you for your efforts in revising your work and the consideration you have taken in incorporating the feedback you have received. We are very pleased with your work and will be accepting your essay for publication in our journal.

You have many excellent qualities in your writing. Specifically, the voice in your writing is professional, yet also easy to read and understand, which makes your essay a very enjoyable read overall. You also clearly support all of your arguments with well-placed, correctly documented evidence from *Persuasion*, which you smoothly incorporate into your essay. And most of all, we appreciate how you were mindful of the goals of our journal, hinting at a discussion on modern women in your definition of what an “ideal woman” is, but also wrote an essay that used purely formalist analysis without straying into historical analysis. For these reasons, we find your essay a more than worthy candidate for acceptance into *The Feminist Outreach*.

We will be holding your piece until the time comes for the publication of our journal. Until then, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Formalist Literary Editor, Karen Manthey, at karenmanthey1@gmail.com, or the Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com. Once again, we thank you for your submission and express our warm congratulations on your acceptance.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



WOMEN'S STRENGTH IN LIFE

Alyssa Perry—English 314

The feminist movement was something many were for and others were against. Many men were unwilling to accept that women were capable of doing more than just staying in the home. In fact, Napoleon Bonaparte said, "Nature intended women to be our slaves...They are our property...What a mad idea to demand equality for women!" (Bressler 169). In Charlotte Bronte's life, she went against these ideas. She wrote literature to prove the worth of a woman can be just as great as the worth of a man. It is important to recognize that cultural feminism "asserts that personality and biological differences exist between men and women" (Bressler 181) as it applies very well to Charlotte Bronte's writings. These biological differences include a woman being gentle, kind, and able to connect deeply with pain. In Charlotte Bronte's poem "Life," she shows through imagery, symbolism, and diction that women are not only able to make it through the toughest of life's challenges, but that women are also able to bear more burdens during those situations because of their biological nature.

Charlotte Bronte explains with imagery that life is a great and wonderful thing so readers understand why life is worth the burdens and enduring through them. She says, "Oft a little morning rain foretells a pleasant day" (Bronte 3-4). This is very strong imagery. At the beginning, a woman may think it will end up being a rough day, but it ends up being a wonderful day. Just like the well-known saying, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger," Bronte knows that the

Charlotte Bronte wrote literature to prove the worth of a woman can be just as great as the worth of a man.



little struggles that happen every day are likely to help human beings and brighten up the future. Women are able to recognize these little things. Bronte says, “life’s sunny hours flit by... enjoy them as they fly” (Bronte 10-12) to clarify this even further. Bronte makes it clear that women are sensitive enough to know what is going on and are able to enjoy the little moments in everyday life.

Charlotte Bronte spends the first four lines of the poem using imagery to show how wonderful life is and that women are able to appreciate life based on their nature. Bronte says, “Life’s sunny hours flit by, gratefully, cheerfully, enjoy them as they fly!” (Bronte 10-12). The imagery of these sunbeams dancing shows how playful they can be. With the kind and gentle ways of a woman, she can sense these great things very clearly. Unfortunately, there is more to life than just the wonderful sunbeams that pass by every day. There is more to life than the little, hard things that might indicate great things in the future as well.

Women are not
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Bronte proceeds with symbolism to talk about how women may seem weak, but are really just showing a feature women have that is wonderful and helpful. She explains that there are temporary “clouds of gloom” that come, but women should not be sad because they are only “transient” (Bronte 5-8). As women are so emotional and connected, they may feel pain even when someone else has the problem. Rather than being sad about them, women are able to remember that these things will end and make a woman stronger. Bronte knows that only the end result will matter. This sadness is not a fault in women, Bronte shows. She says that women are “unconquered, though she fell” (Bronte 18). This shows how women, although they may seem fallen or hurt, are not. They are not “conquered” by weakness, even though it may appear that way.



Women are able to bear up these problems, not matter how hard they are.

Later, symbolism of death is mentioned by Bronte as the ultimate trial to continue the idea that women are weak when it comes to sorrow, but this is ultimately a gift. Bronte says that “Death at times steps in, and calls our Best away” (Bronte 13-14). What is interesting about this is the fact that Bronte uses the word *Best* to refer to those who have died. The word *Best* implies that only great and wonderful people are taken from the earth rather than those who are not cared for. In Bronte’s own life, she had two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, who became ill and died after she had been away at school with them (Cody), but was able to make it through life still with strength as the example she is. When she says *Best*, this is who she is referring to within her own life. The Best in her life is the women that taught her how wonderful her qualities were as a woman. The Best in any other person’s life will be someone that is influential and wonderful. This helps the reader consider the Best in their life and the sorrow that would come from losing these people. It is clear that there is pain with loss when she says in the poem, “sorrow seems to win, o’er hope, a heavy sway” (Bronte 15-16). After losing the Best, sorrow becomes almost too much for women. Sorrow is the one thing that comes close to breaking a woman because women often feel very deeply. A woman can feel sorrow so greatly that it seems to take over. Because of it, though, women are able to grow stronger and overcome. Women may lose everyone dear to them, but can be stronger because of it.

Bronte shows through diction that women are also able to bear the trial of death as easily, if not easier, than men. She says that women are able to “manfully” bear up the “day of trial” that will come

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(Bronte 21-22). It is important to note the use of the word *manfully* within the poem. Doing something manfully means you are doing it with qualities thought to be held by men. These manly qualities include being physically strong. Bronte is pointing out that women can be just as physically strong as men while bearing trials. They can hold those trials on their shoulders and will be okay. Not only will they be okay, but women are able to “gloriously” and “victoriously” work to “quell despair” (Bronte 23-24). Women are able to get through the trial of death, a permanent trial, with strength and power, which are often considered manly qualities. This proves that women are just as strong, if not stronger, than men.

The divine qualities
of a woman are what
make her strong.

Charlotte Bronte knows the strength of a woman. She knows that women are able to bear a lot of affliction and even bear it up strongly. She knows that a woman can keep her “golden wings” up no matter what happens (Bronte 19). Women sometimes seem weak, especially when death or other grievances come upon them, but this is not true. These wonderful qualities are actually what make women stronger. Women are able to be strong and powerful, and women are able to bear everything thrown their way. The divine qualities of a woman are what make her strong. Women can stand up to even the hardest thing of all: death. She uses natural abilities to withstand the pain and trials thrown her way. Bronte became an example to women to show that women are able to bear up any trial or problem thrown in their direction because of women’s biological nature.



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June 20, 2011

Dear Alyssa Perry:

Congratulations! Your manuscript, entitled “Women’s Strength in Life” has been accepted for publication in our journal *The Feminist Outreach*.

This decision has been made with a general consensus from our editors. We feel that you have made good strides during this editing process and have attempted to fit your article to our requirements and mission statement. We feel that you took our stringent editing process to heart and worked hard to polish your paper for the final submission. Your theory-based analysis of Charlotte Bronte’s poem “Life” captured our interest. You brought to light some well thought out analysis and we commend you for it.

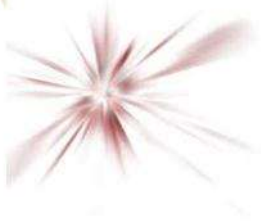
We will be informing our publication department chair, Susan Grover, of our decision. If you have questions or would like to dispute our decision, please contact our Theory-based Analysis Editor, Lacey Brewer, at [laceybrewer@gmail.com](mailto:lanceybrewer@gmail.com), or our Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com.

We have enjoyed working with you during this publication process. Thank you for your submission.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



RELEASING THE MONSTER INSIDE

Rachel LeFoll—English 314

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* at the age of twenty, making a name for herself as one of the greatest writers in British Romantic literary history. Her novel continues to influence science fiction novels and thrillers today. Through Dr. Frankenstein, Shelley undertook an examination of man's basic reactions and the humanistic ability to cope with emotions. Frankenstein's preoccupation with death causes him to sublimate his fears, which ultimately leads to his downfall. Sublimation is a term used to identify certain defense mechanisms within the human mind. This psychological, subconscious process reveals much about the way humans deal with confusing trials and conflicting emotions. Shelley's usage of characterization and incredible employment of imagery was the vehicle for this theory.

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Death is a common theme throughout *Frankenstein*, continually reshaping both the plot and the characters. Interestingly enough, Victor Frankenstein was never exposed to death or depression during his childhood years. He states, "In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors" (Shelly 37). As a boy, he developed a fascination with science and ancient stories of an elixir of life that had the ability to avert death. Since many psychologists believe that human reactions are based upon previous influences, this strange obsession became a motivation for his future choices. Reaching adulthood, he had his first personal encounter with death.



His mother passed away after a battle with scarlet fever. He recalled, “My mother was dead, but we still had duties which we ought to perform” (Shelley 28). As a man, he was expected to control and ignore his feelings of sadness and his melancholy attitude since these emotions were considered feminine and unbecoming for a man. Due to these pressures from the time period, Frankenstein was given very little time to grieve and was quickly ushered off to school, making it impossible for him to fully comprehend death and its meaning. It is possible that this forced emotional control caused mental repression. Repression is a term implemented by Sigmund Freud, a distinguished psychologist, to explain the “mental process by which distressing thoughts, memories, or impulses that may give rise to anxiety are excluded from consciousness and left to operate in the unconscious” (“Repression” def. 2a). Frankenstein claimed to believe that grief itself was merely an “indulgence” (Shelley 28) in order to explain to himself why he was given this inadequate time.

From this point on, Victor Frankenstein became dominated by his subconscious where, because he was not able to process his interaction with death, his mind became preoccupied with his desire to understand it. His classes only fed into this as he “was led to examine the progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses” (Shelley 37). Shelley paints a picture of the disgusting and decomposing world in which he now lives, collecting bones and sleeping in morgues. Looking past the text itself to Shelley’s characterization of Frankenstein, there is a clear change in his attitude. His ignorance of everything in the world around him suggests complete absorption into an exploration of death. His mind reveals the depth of his fascination completely when he falls asleep the night of his creation. Frankenstein remembers, “As I

His ignorance of everything in the world around him suggests complete absorption into an exploration of death.



Frankenstein sought to channel his seemingly inappropriate tendencies into socially acceptable practices.

imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death...I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of her flannel” (Shelley 44). This violent dream of Elizabeth, whom he loves, suggests a deeply-seeded fear that death will destroy all that is important to him. Freud often stated his belief that subconscious fears and desires are manifested in dreams. In Shelley’s view, uncontrolled fears can dominate a person’s actions and decisions.

Frankenstein’s fixation with morbidity was clearly unnatural. Nevertheless, he was able to recognize the inappropriateness of this behavior. As a psychological defense mechanism, he attempted to sublimate his fears. The actual meaning of sublimation is, “The appreciation or creation of ideal beauty... rooted in primitive...urges that are transfigured in culturally elevating ways” (“Sigmund Freud”). Essentially, Frankenstein sought to channel his seemingly inappropriate tendencies into socially acceptable practices. While attempting to reenergize a deceased human body might not seem like an appropriate relief of psychological stresses, Frankenstein recalled that, “Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world” (Shelley 39-40). He was able to justify this action by claiming it as a scientific advancement—merely a fascinating extension of his studies. He hoped that this discovery would help to bring joy to the world by the illumination of death.

Frankenstein believed he could create life himself. An attempt to control life is a natural reaction to the helplessness of death. He reminisced, “I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse the spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet”



(Shelley 43). However, because the body he pieced together was dead, there was no life—no soul—to restore to it. As Victor channeled his fears and strange desires into the creation of the monster, they were also channeled into the monster himself, thereby inserting a portion of his own soul into his creation. For the length of time leading up to the monster’s awakening, they were one. He recalled, “I did not watch the blossom or expanding leaves—sights which before always yielded me supreme delight—so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation” (Shelley 42). He was mentally giving up so much of himself to his creation that he became sick every night, and later fell into a seizure. Through this, Shelley explains the mysterious process by which life is transferred from man to monster.

When the monster awoke, it became its own separate entity, a moving and breathing piece of the Doctor himself. He was an active corpse and a living personification of Frankenstein’s greatest fear: death. The fact that the monster was purposefully oversized, “about eight feet in height” (Shelley 39), suggests the immensity of Frankenstein’s fear. It was clearly too large for him to handle and had to be removed from him. The monster became an extension of the Doctor, a tool for him to deal with his mental inadequacies. He confessed, “Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of my room, and continued a long time transversing in my bedchamber” (Shelley 44). The fact that the monster symbolizes the transference of his fears is solidified as Victor runs at the sight of him. Later, while visiting Justine, a friend who had been convicted of the monster’s crimes, he described, “I had retired to a corner of the prison room, where I could conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me” (Shelley 81). In his cowardice, he could not even stand to see the effects that his mind would have on his loved ones, allowing the

The monster was an active corpse and a living personification of Frankenstein’s greatest fear: death.



monster to become the stronger part of him.

Though the man and monster separated, they remained connected. The corpse became a vehicle through which the doctor reveals his greatest thoughts and deepest desires: an exploration of death. While the monster committed the physical crimes, Victor paid for them mentally with inconsolable grief and constant pangs of guilt. He realized, "I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; had he not murdered my brother?" (Shelley 68). However, it is odd that his brother's death came just as he was growing out of his awkward, sickly years. William was becoming handsome and received much attention from Elizabeth, which Shelley used as a foreshadowing of coming events and a parallel for Victor's change. Subconsciously, it is possible that Victor might have felt jealousy towards his progressing brother, and might have wished his threatening presence removed. In this way, the monster becomes Frankenstein's "id." In Freud's psychoanalytical approach to the human mind, he felt that the id was the part of the brain that held all unconscious desires and urges. This was controlled by the ego, or the part of the brain that adapts to what is socially acceptable. While Victor's ego would never allow him to murder his own brother, his unfettered id, personified by an eight foot tall, reanimated corpse, could easily accomplish the evil task.

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exploration of death.

Frankenstein becomes subjugated by his guilt as it carries out his darkest desires. He becomes the monster that he so feared, embracing death and its mysteries throughout the rest of the novel. He first succumbs to mental death and decay. He said, "When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became enflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed" (Shelley 85). He is digressing to a primitive and animalistic



form to express his emotions, not unlike the monster himself. Finally, after retelling the entire story, Frankenstein is able to embrace death in a fully physical form. Believing himself to be a pathetic addition to mankind, he woefully jumps from the narrator's ship and is "borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance" (Shelley 240). By suppressing, or holding back, his natural curiosity towards death, Frankenstein was forced to surrender to his greatest fears.

Though frightening, the struggles of Frankenstein's character are not uncommon. Even today, social restrictions often require the sublimation of unacceptable fascinations or beliefs in order to be accepted by the world. This can easily mean the repression of desires and emotions as well. While this presents a temporary solution, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley suggests that this is not the appropriate way to handle these psychological issues. Her fantastic rendering of this struggle within the human mind insinuates that repression and sublimation will eventually cause damaging, mental side effects. Those secret desires caged in the mind will become the monster that will surely bring about eventual destruction.

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"Repression." *Merriam-Webster.com*. 2011. Web. 9 June 2011. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com>>.

Mary Shelley's fantastic rendering of this struggle within the human mind insinuates that repression and sublimation will eventually cause damaging, mental side effects.



June 20, 2011

Dear Rachel Lefoll:

Congratulations! Your manuscript, entitled “Releasing the Monster Inside” has been accepted for publication in our journal *The Feminist Outreach*.

This decision has been made with a general consensus from our editors. We feel that you have made good strides during this editing process and have attempted to fit your article to our requirements and mission statement. We feel that you took our stringent editing process to heart and worked hard to polish your paper for the final submission. Your theory-based analysis of Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* captured our interest. You brought to light some well thought out analysis and we commend you for it. We particularly enjoyed your use of quotes in supporting your analysis of the work. Your outside uses of resources exhibited a clear knowledge of the topic and enhanced the essay’s accuracy.

We will be informing our publication department chair, Susan Grover, of our decision. If you have questions or would like to dispute our decision, please contact our Theory-based Analysis Editor, Lacey Brewer, at [laceybrewer@gmail.com](mailto:lanceybrewer@gmail.com), or our Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com.

We have enjoyed working with you during this publication process. Thank you for your submission.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



JANE AUSTEN'S ART OF FEMINISTIC BEAUTY

Mollie Packer—English 314

Throughout history, authors have contributed to some of the greatest pieces of literature the world has ever seen. These authors had the ability to take a pen and create masterpieces that touch people's hearts and impact their lives. They cover topics that matter to people. When it comes to the topics of feminism, love, marriage, and life, one of the authors that stands out is Jane Austen. By using her gift of creating love stories and the characters within them, she has inspired women through all walks of life to make their own works, have a sense of independence, and continue the chain of inspiration. Many have been able to enjoy Austen's form of writing due to the way she uses humor and intelligence to tell a story. Austen has made it possible through her own experiences and creativity to have the characters in her books make a social and domestic influence on everyday women and authors.

Austen was born on December 16, 1775 in England in Steventon, Hampshire, to Reverend George and Cassandra Austen. She had six brothers and one sister and was particularly close to her sister Cassandra. Austen began writing at a young age, and she loved to read novels. Her father had hundreds of books as well. She was the ripe age of fourteen when she wrote her first book titled *Love and Friendship*. Austen wrote during the British Romantic era. She is mostly known for her novels *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Persuasion*.

Though in her novels Austen discusses marriage and love, she was never married. Some may believe that she would lose some

By using her gift of creating love stories and the characters within them, she has inspired women through all walks of life to make their own works, have a sense of independence, and continue the chain of inspiration.



credibility because of this; however, that is not true. She experienced love during her life and was once engaged, but she had her own ideas about marriage and motherhood that were not the norm. Because of this, Austen would have been able to identify with the women of today, and perhaps even be envious of this culture where women are not necessarily expected to just be wives and mothers.

Author Mary Wollstonecraft helped open the door for Austen just as Austen would do for modern day female authors. Wollstonecraft and Austen had similar ideas of marriage. Writer Lloyd Brown, who has researched Austen, discusses that Austen's treatment of marriage in her novels comes from "her skeptics about male definitions of female emotions, sexuality, education, and modesty" (Brown 336). In addition to this, he states that "Austen seemed a little concerned with marriage as a socially sanctified self-justifying goal" (Brown 336). This gives a major glimpse into the lack of female individuality that Austen believed some women had. It was important for Austen that women came together with a sense of identity. Author Margaret Kaplan states, "Austen made efforts to represent not only these same-sex relationships but also their culture's depictions of a bolder, more independent female identity" (Kaplan 12). This suggests that there were women who did have great independence and she wanted to show that. She wanted to make it a point that independent women be represented.

While love and marriage were major themes in Austen books, she was also able to help bring attention to equality for women. Author Margaret Kirkham discusses Austen's novels as a development of fiction "that deserves to be called *feminism* since it was concerned with establishing the moral equality of men and women and the

Austen wanted to make it a point that independent women be represented.



proper status of individual women as accountable beings” (Kirkham 3). Wollstonecraft and Austen were major players in this movement.

One of the qualities that makes Jane Austen admirable is her humility. Author Charles Hogan, who has studied Austen, explains that she was “more interested in writing a good book than in enjoying good publicity” (Hogan 39). She truly loved being creative, but only those who were close to her knew that she was the author of her books. In fact, Austen asked her publisher to state “By a Lady” in her books where it would normally have the author’s name. In contrast, authors today will often be seen going on promotional tours, visiting cities, and signing books for readers. They are more accessible than Austen was.

She truly loved being creative, but only those who were close to her knew that she was the author of her books.

In addition to her humility, Austen was also an intelligent woman, and it showed in her novels. When describing Austen’s works, Kirkham calls Austen “a literary artist and innovator to her declared position as feminist moralist and critic of fictional tradition” (Kirkham xxvii). She then goes on to compliment Austen on her intelligence. Austen was full of ideas, and at the time of her death, she was creating a new story, but it unfortunately has never seen the light of day. Austen had the ability to use everyday topics such as marriage and love turn them into beautiful works of literature.

While all of her novels are known through the world, her most famous work is *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813. Throughout all of her novels, Austen does put an emphasis on marriage. Former University of Southern California Professor Lloyd W. Brown discusses the conflicts in the book:

It is in *Pride and Prejudice* that we are most aware of a conscious, and extended, preoccupation with conflicting



concepts of education for women—and the relationship between that education and marriage. The conflicts are explicit in the differences between the Bennet sisters, in the parents' incompatible attitudes towards their own roles as mother and father, and in the spirited debate on female accomplishment. (Brown 328)

This suggests the roles of women are up for debate on what is expected of them. However, with *Pride and Prejudice* and Austen's other novels, she makes it a point that women are strong and have opinions on matters such as education and marriage.

Each of Austen's novels has females that are characterized as "heroines." These women are a big part of why so many women are inspired by her work due to their various qualities and the obstacles they overcome. In *Pride and Prejudice*, there is the character of Elizabeth who has independence that women in Austen's time would have been shocked by. Elizabeth also shows a quality of honesty that many admire. This is apparent when she states, "I would not wish to be hasty in censuring anyone; but I always speak what I think" (Austen 14). She is a character that was trying to find her identity. Women can identify with her because most go through a stage where they are trying to discover who they are and what they want to do with their lives. Myers explains, "Elizabeth's struggle has been to reaffirm her integrity. She is determined not to make a mistake which will echo the pattern of her parents' marriage" (Myers 228). She wants to make better decisions and learn from others mistakes.

In *Mansfield Park*, published in 1814, Austen portrays Fanny as an outsider in her element who is struggling with social issues. Myers explains how "Fanny's lack of place in her home in Portsmouth, and

Women can identify with Elizabeth because most go through a stage where they are trying to discover who they are and what they want to do with their lives.



While it is true that Emma is spoiled and does not always make the best decisions, she has a mind of her own and she does not let anyone tell her what to do.

her cramped quarters at Mansfield Park reflect the danger that her inner potential will never be fulfilled” (Myers 229). In Austen’s time, young women tended to have their lives planned out by their parents or those close to them. Fanny was different because she decided to live her own life after developing a sense of a self-esteem that women often lacked in that time period. McMaster discusses in her article that even women like Fanny who seemed to not have many opportunities to shine or who tended to be quiet “had virtues too” (McMaster 731). With this type of creativity and thinking, it gives women the opportunity to see that, even if they may be different than those around them or their self-esteem is not quite as strong as it could be, every woman has the ability to choose their own path and create their own legacy.

In the novel *Emma*, the character of Emma has stubbornness and bullheadedness, but this can sometimes be a good thing. While it is true that Emma is spoiled and does not always make the best decisions, she has a mind of her own and she does not let anyone tell her what to do. In the book, she is described as being “spoiled by being the cleverest of her family” (Austen 31). Emma is aware of her social status; however, she is thoughtful to those of the lower class. Emma was so relatable to modern girls that the main character in movie *Clueless* that came out in 1996 was inspired by her. Like Emma, the young girl, Cher, was extremely spoiled, thought the boys around her were not the type of men she wanted to be around, and she was not going to “settle.” There were, however, a few things that the movie lacked when it came to Emma. Journal contributor Anna Despotopoulou argues that the movie “ignores the feministic force in Emma’s resistance to marriage” (Despotopoulou 120). This is one of the things that Emma is known for and why people relate to her.

Emma was not interested in getting married, which is something that is different from the rest of Austen's books. She did not think a woman should accept a marriage proposal just because someone was asking them. When talking with Harriet in the book about Harriet possibly marrying Mr. Martin, Emma states, "I lay it down as a general rule, Harriet, that if a woman doubts as to whether she should accept a man or not, she certainly ought to refuse him (Austen 45). In addition to Emma's views on marriage, another thing that is important to keep in mind about her character is that she was able to start seeing things in different ways, and so she became less selfish:

As Emma becomes a more thoughtful, less selfish person, she and her friends are able to achieve happiness. She learns the lesson of avoiding gratuitous cruelty and teasing when Mr. Knightly reprimands her for her callous treatment of Miss Bates; she is also forced to deal with Frank Churchill's duplicity and her own connivance in it at the expense of Jane Fairfax, who herself learns a lesson in responsibility. (Fritzer 399)

This shows how Jane Austen's work has depth and how she touches on not just love and marriage, but social issues as well.

Between all of Austen's characters, there is one that shows heartbreak and loyalty like none of the rest. In *Persuasion*, the last novel Austen completed, there is a character named Anne Elliot. Anne had once been in love with a man named Wentworth at an early age, but they ended up breaking up. However, in the end of the novel, Anne and Wentworth end up with the possibility of having a second chance. Wentworth writes a letter to Anne that states his feelings:

Emma did not think a woman should accept a marriage proposal just because someone was asking them.



You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone forever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight and a half years ago. Dare not say that a man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. (Austen 345)

There are women that can relate to this story because they have experienced similar situations. It is hard for them to get over their true love, and some of them may never move on or get a second chance like Anne and Wentworth did. Pinch states, when referring to the love that Anne and Wentworth shared, “the realm of feelings is the realm of repetitions, of things happening within a strong context of memory” (Pinch 104). While they were apart for some time, they still had that love in their hearts.

Austen ended up becoming one of the greatest authors of all time and has influenced many women over time.

Persuasion bears resemblance to Austen’s own personal life. Austen had a love by the name of Tom Lefroy. Professor at Vanderbilt University John Halperin discusses how, from Austen’s letters to her sister, Austen was devastated and broken hearted when Tom was sent away by his aunt because of the attachment between the two. He eventually became a well-known lawyer and married a wealthy woman. He later had a conversation with his nephew and talked about how he had loved Austen, describing it as a “boyish love.” For Austen, no one seemed to measure up to Tom (Halperin 722). Austen, however, did not sit and do nothing with her life and live in complete misery over this man. She ended up becoming one of the greatest authors of all time and has influenced many women over time.

Some modern female authors have cited Jane Austen as an influence and have commented on her great work and the person Austen was. The extremely popular book *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer was actually inspired by Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. When asked by *Entertainment Weekly* who her favorite author was, Meyer states, "my favorite-favorite is probably Jane Austen" (Kirschling). Author J.K. Rowling of the massively successful *Harry Potter* series also admires Austen:

I never wanted to be famous, and I never dreamt I would be famous...I imagined being a famous writer would be like being like Jane Austen. Being able to sit at home in the parsonage and your books would be very famous and occasionally you would correspond with the Prince of Wales's secretary. (Adams & Grillon 14)

Author Patrice Hannon said it best when discussing Austen's works:

Has any writer ever painted a truer picture of the thoughts, perceptions, motives (conscious and unconscious), speech, and behavior of men and women in everyday life, or one more entertaining, or more subtly shaded, or finely drawn, then we find on every page in the novels of Jane Austen? (Adams & Grillon 19)

Adams and Grillon discuss that not everyone is a fan of Austen's books, and some people may believe that her books are simple and not much happens. It is true that Austen's books do not have a lot of action; however, Adams states that, when it comes to her novels, "Everything happens in Jane Austen. At least everything that matters" (9).

It is true that Austen's books do not have a lot of action; however, Adams states that, when it comes to her novels, "Everything happens in Jane Austen. At least everything that matters" (9).



Even so long after her death in 1817, Austen continues to inspire everyday women and fellow authors through the characters of her masterpieces.

Another theme that women can relate to is motherhood. In *Emma*, Emma has a desire for those female roles that include motherhood. Brown discusses how there was a psychoanalytical study done by author Helen Storm Corsa who determined that Emma has “womanly instinctual needs, her desire for love, for marriage, for motherhood are all obvious in her role as matchmaker” (Brown 323). The way that Emma feels about motherhood and marriage is in contrast to Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. Emma has the desire to one day to be married, but is in no rush. Mrs. Bennet is described in this way: “the business of Mrs. Bennet’s life is to get her daughter’s married” (Austen 3). Mrs. Bennet is worried her daughters will not find a man, which is what she wants for them.

Jane Austen will continue to live on as one of the great feminist authors in history. Even so long after her death in 1817, she continues to inspire everyday women and fellow authors through the characters of her masterpieces. In his book, McMaster comments on Austen’s independence:

[T]he whole canon of the novels shows her as one determined to keep her balance and maintain discrimination in a current that overbore others: steadily asserting that neither passion nor reason, neither the individual nor society, should dominate at the expense of the other. (McMaster 739)

A lot can be learned from the great works of Jane Austen. Through her characters, and with her domestic and social themes of her novels, women everywhere have an inspirational influence of an independent artist of literature.

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July 22, 2011

Dear Mollie Packer:

The editorial board of *The Feminist Outreach* would like to thank you for your submission of your essay “Jane Austen’s Art of Feministic Beauty.” We appreciate your commitment and the time you have put into taking our advice and applying the changes we suggested. Because of your dedication, we are pleased to inform you that your letter has now been accepted into our journal.

Your ability to work fast and tactfully has shown that you have a strong desire for your paper to be pristine. We appreciate your acknowledgement of our advice and the changes you have made. Your thesis is much more prominent throughout the paper, and as readers, we are able to see the points you are trying to get across. With stronger sources and more background work, readers are now able to trust your arguments in your paper more as well. We did, however, make some minor changes to your paper for the purposes of grammar, conventions, and clarity, but these changes will not impact or detract from your essay in any way.

You have made leaps with this paper, and we appreciate your efforts. We are proud of the progress you have made, and it is a pleasure to have you published in *The Feminist Outreach*. Thank you for your time and hard work.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



JANE AUSTEN:

Initiating Feminism One Novel at a Time

Leslie Armstrong—English 314

Jane Austen's birth in the late 18th century occurred during an intellectual movement most notably known as the Age of Reason or Enlightenment. The French Revolution was in full force in an attempt to change the irrational economic, political, and social traditions that were plaguing society. The year 1789 ended the French Revolution as well as the Age of Enlightenment, and the 1800s began what was known as the Romantic Period, a time when society began to focus more on emotion rather than reason. This was a period of time when people started thinking for themselves instead of being told how and what they should feel. Jane Austen was reared during this time where her feminist ideas contributed to the ever-changing world around her. Her perspective and ideas on the moral nature of women, marriage, and their societal roles established a foundation in feminism for the women of the next century, and even in death her work continues to accentuate feminism upon the women of the 21st century.

The Romantic Period was a period of time when people started thinking for themselves instead of being told how and what they should feel.

Jane Austen had the advantage of being reared during a time when feminist writers had already begun forging the way for women. Mary Wollstonecraft, an early 18th century feminist writer, raised awareness on the importance of an educated woman and that a lack of education for women led to their imperfections, not a lack of reason (Frost 257). Cy Frost, who researched issues of propriety and economics in Wollstonecraft's work, notes, "Wollstonecraft seeks to



uncover the distinction between fatuous, frivolous, simple minded ‘manners’ which qualify as proper behavior and ‘morals’ which result from education” (257). Morals are what women needed in order to strengthen the feminist role in society, and Wollstonecraft firmly believed that women should not only be able to fulfill their moral responsibilities of being a wife and mother, but that they should be educated in order to contribute to society. She cites in the introduction of her book, “Strength of body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves, the only way women can rise in the world— by marriage” (Wollstonecraft 9). Wollstonecraft authored her book *A Vindication on the Rights of Women* as a means of justifying her opinion, that marriage for economic viability would destroy the marriage (260-261).

Jane Austen was at the height of womanhood at sixteen years old when Wollstonecraft’s book was published. Austen’s novels were written on the basis of courtship and marriage and share Wollstonecraft’s perception of the women’s lack of development in their individual mind and character, making them comparable to that of a dying flower:

The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers that are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after pleasing a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity (Wollstonecraft 6).

Austen, like Wollstonecraft, believed that the culture of the 19th

Wollstonecraft firmly believed that women should not only be able to fulfill their moral responsibilities of being a wife and mother, but that they should be educated in order to contribute to society.



century was keeping women from obtaining reason (261).

Jane Austen's portrayal of feminist traditions was not so political or as sensationalized as Wollstonecraft's, but her works definitely placed the woman as having significance in society. Austen was not as outspoken on the role of women or feminist traditions as her predecessor. However, she did not have to be. Austen was able to use her voice through pen to represent her personal ideals on women. Margaret Kirkham, author of *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction* shares her insights on how the novel was a concept in Jane's time. She declares, "The moral nature of Woman, and the rights and duties of individual woman were not subjects much attended to in the philosophic treatise, but they could not be avoided in the novel" (14). The novel was an excellent way to position the author as a participant in their own book and contribute to the moral debates of the time (Kirkham 14). Austen's four main novels portray the significance of womanhood by involving "heroines that are able to expand their degree of self-knowledge, reaffirm their integrity, and demonstrate their capacity for individual thought and action" (Myers 228). Jane Austen's ability to express her views on the moral nature of the woman and their rights was accomplished through her novels.

Austen was able to use her voice through pen to represent her personal ideals on women.

Austen's novels have a fascination with the woman finding love, a theme that she began writing about as an adolescent, which enabled her to express her views on the feminist tradition. Her father, George Austen, established an environment of learning in his home and tutored Austen during her youth, instilling in her a great love for writing her own poetry and plays. At the age of fourteen, she authored the work *Love and Friendship*, one of her first satire's written as a novel through the form of letters. The students, including the narrator Laura, are portrayed as worldly women with free spirits



who let their emotions rule their morals, and when any misfortune comes their way, they are too involved in their emotions to care. (Norton 515). Austen, even before Wollstonecraft's book was published, shared Wollstonecraft's views that, "culture makes women slaves to their emotions...blown about by every momentary gust of feeling" (515).

Marriage in the 19th century eliminated the human rights of women and allowed the patriarchy of men to use women to their advantage (Newman 694). Kate Millet, a 20th century feminist writer, affirms, "A woman underwent 'civil death' upon marriage, forfeiting what amounted to every human right...Her husband owned both her person and her services...All that the woman acquired by her labor, service, or act during 'coverture' became the legal property of the male" (qtd. in Frost 256). Charlotte Perkins Gillman, author of *Women and Economics*, contends that women must marry in order to avoid the life of spinsterhood and benefit from economic independence:

The pressure under this one was an economic one. The girl must marry, how else live? The prospective husband prefers the girl who knows nothing. He is the market, the demand. She is the supply. And with the best intentions the mother serves her child's economic advantage by preparing her for the market (qtd. in Frost 263).

Mrs. Bennett, in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, is a perfect example of a mother who has prepared her daughters for the market. She is anxious for her daughters to marry so that they will enjoy the status, protection, and support that a marriage provides (263). Mrs. Bennett must have feared for Elizabeth's status when she rejected Mr. Darcy, which would have resulted in Elizabeth facing a life of poverty

Marriage in the 19th century eliminated the human rights of women and allowed the patriarchy of men to use women to their advantage (Newman 694).



Austen knew that she could not be considered both a writer and a wife.

because she defied the role of the woman by declining the offer of marriage.

A wife in the early 19th century was dependent upon the man and was not allowed to have any occupation other than being a wife. In the 18th century, once a woman was married, she was independent of her father, but then dependent upon her husband. However, the change was considered to be a step up in society: "The relative independence of a wife, as the 'mistress of the family,' is the highest situation that a woman can aspire to...for women have no means, other than marriage to establish themselves" (Handler 694). Austen knew that she could not be considered both a writer and a wife. Frost's article asserts that the woman writer's cultural disposition in becoming a wife no longer gives them the liberty to make their own decisions, let alone work outside the home. He further claims, "Patriarchal society regarded her manifestation-of-self through writing as an attempt to vitiate the domestic sphere, the married woman's 'proper territory'" (256). In Austen's case, working inside the home as an author already gave her an inferior sense of being a female and a writer. This led her to keep her name from being printed on her first published works. She instead had her works published under, "a lady".

Austen's novel *Emma* portrays a very different role in marriage and in the personality of her female character. Emma, financially well-off, has no need to marry in order to gain financial security, unlike past submissive characters of Austen's. Emma is a misbehaving woman who makes it well-known that she has no need for marriage or for love: "I have never been in love; it is not my way, or my nature" (Goodheart 602). Feminist author Eugene Goodheart wrote an article that describes Emma as Austen's errant heroine since



Emma marries anyway and "happily ever after" is believed to be the ending for the couple. Goodheart concludes, "The community at the end is ideally organized or reorganized in a way that makes for happiness" (602). Feminist critics have shown hostility toward the institution of marriage that may confuse the issue of whether Emma's marriage at the end is self-fulfillment or self-betrayal (Goodheart 602). Emma's character fit the life of Austen and her perception of marriage; however, 21st century feminist critic Carolyn Heilbrun argues, "Jane Austen cannot allow her heroines her own unmarried, highly accomplished destiny" (49). Austen believed in happy endings in her novels and she allowed Emma to be happy through marriage.

Jane Austen had good reason to have concerns with motherhood, having been placed in a foster home in infancy and spending five childhood years in boarding schools. Austen, the seventh of eight children, was like the rest of her brothers and sisters who were also placed in a foster home until their mother felt she could take care of them. Austen was also sent to several different boarding schools beginning at the age of six with her eight-year-old sister Cassandra. Austen and Cassandra were inseparable as girls, and their mother believed that sending them to school together would be in their best interest. She shared a close relationship with her sister, which permitted her to share more confidences and secrets with her sister than her mother.

Austen lacked her mother's stabilizing presence and allowed her own conscious to make her decisions against marriage and motherhood. Austen's novels end at marriage instead of continuing into the setting of married life or motherhood. Margaret Moore, feminist critic, sees Austen as "a 'cynical' misogynist who hates being dependent on love and sex (due to a poor relationship with her

Austen lacked her mother's stabilizing presence and allowed her own conscious to make her decisions against marriage and motherhood.



Austen created her female protagonists as women who owe their first duty to themselves with personalities that are independent of others' decisions.

mother) and who dislikes children because (envy of the maternal role is to be expected in a childless woman)” (qtd. in Brown 323). A lack of an emotional attachment to her mother contributed to her avoidance of motherhood and enabled a close companionship with her sister that caused neither of them to marry.

Austen, through her novels, had a strong desire to define her own social status as independent of men. She wanted to do what she felt was important and made her happy instead of what society felt was important. Austen was living independently the way Mary Wollstonecraft defined independence: “Independence ought to stem from reason rather than property and that woman, like all humans irrespective of their rank in the current society owe their first duty to themselves as rational creatures” (qtd. in Handler 703). Austen created her female protagonists as women who owe their first duty to themselves with personalities that are independent of others' decisions. Richard Handler defines what it means to be independent, claiming, “To be independent is to be governed by one's own will...to have power to make choices and to be governed by those choices alone” (692). In Austen's texts, a dependent woman is portrayed as being reliant upon superior beings, usually the male. Handler defines a dependent person this way: “A person dependent upon another...is not fully a person in his or her own right, in this sense, to be 'dependent' is to be incomplete” (692). Austen wanted her female characters to be independent in order to maintain social hierarchy. Her women were subject to a patriarchal definition of womanhood and had to reinvent that definition for themselves so that it includes such qualities as independence, assertiveness, ambition, and achievement. (Heilbrun 33). Heilbrun characterizes both Emma in *Emma* and Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, as “women who do



not need men for their self-identification and who hold their own in dialogues with men” (33). Austen defied the culture norms and made it known that social order did not govern her character’s actions.

Jane Austen’s novels empowered women in the next century to continue to write for the social equality of women. Virginia Woolf, born in 1882 at the end of the Romantic period, studied the works of 18th century authors in-depth and was well-aware of Jane Austen and her novels that emphasize womanhood, declaring, “Jane Austen is thus a mistress of much deeper emotion than appears on the surface.... Think away the surface animation, the likeness to life, and there remains to provide a deeper pleasure, an exquisite determination of human values” (Lambdin 44). Woolf’s novel, *A Room of One’s Own*, focuses on the female literary traditions and expresses her views that a woman needs a room of their own in order to write whatever she pleases. Her novel speaks in behalf of Austen who had to write in a one-room setting and hide her works when company came. Woolf, understanding Austen’s patriarchal culture, acknowledges, “Without boasting or giving pain to the opposite sex, one may say that *Pride and Prejudice* is a good book. At any rate, one would not have been ashamed to have been caught in the act of writing *Pride and Prejudice*” (Lambdin 80).

Not all 19th century feminist authors accepted Austen’s work, such as Charlotte Bronte, who felt that she had more differences than similarities to Austen. After reluctantly reading *Pride and Prejudice*, she critiqued Austen’s work as “a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck” (Weiser 94). She sees romantic structure, but without the full, heart throbbing, blood flowing passion. However, George

Austen defied the culture norms and made it known that social order did not govern her character’s actions.



Lewes defends Austen for her attempt to present feminism during such a rebellious movement:

There are heights and depths in human nature Miss Austen never scaled or fathomed, there are worlds of passionate existence into which she has never set foot; but...she has risked no failures by attempting to delineate that which she has not seen. Her circle may be restricted, but it is complete. (Sentiment)

Austen's work was simplistic in nature, but deep in emotion, which allows the reader to find passion in their own way. Her work, in a sense, was complete because her novels possessed the feminism qualities that women needed to in order to create change in their society.

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Austen's final novel entitled *Persuasion* was written just before her death in 1817 when her culture was just beginning to experience the changes of the Romantic Period and society was letting their emotions overrule reason. Reason is portrayed through Anne's parents' selection and approval of Mr. Wentworth as a husband, and emotion is portrayed through her rejection of him. In this novel, Austen powerfully incorporates her strong feminist beliefs through Anne Elliott's character. Anne forms her own opinions in making her decision based on her emotions and some encouragement from a friend rather than her own reasoning. However, Anne's rejection causes her some profound feelings of regret. Eventually, Anne determines for herself, "it is only good or bad as the event decides—that is in retrospect she was right in yielding (Rohrbach 743). Austen presents Anne with the ability, through her own conscious, to determine that she was right to wait.



Austen's work was buried with her death, and it was not until decades later that her works were revisited and realized to be relevant to the female women writers of the 20th century. Female women and authors today agree with Joanne Wilkes when she quotes Anne Thackeray: "Her humor flows gentle and spontaneous, it is no elaborate mechanism, nor artificial fountain, but a bright natural little stream, rippling and trickling and sparkling every here and there in sunshine" (Wilkes 44). Austen's work was filled with her humorous irony, but contained nothing artificial. Critics today have portrayed her as more than a little stream in the sunshine and have paid her with the greatest tribute of womanhood:

She has left to all time, not only her books, but a picture of what a female author and artist should be: true to home duties, while she is true to her genius; delicate and brilliant in her work, yet without a word having ever dropped from her pen that can offend the blush of modesty. (Wilkes 44).

Jane Austen, as both a woman and a writer, represented feminism in a time when women's creative and intellectual influence was being challenged. She created her characters carefully with morals and manners and did not allow either the individual or society to dominate at the expense of another (McMaster 739).

Austen's novels integrate feminism and esteem to improve the social identity of women in an effort to take the patriarchal ownership out of the marriage. Through her love of writing, she fulfilled her purpose by beautifully portraying the woman as having a role in courtship and marriage. Mary Poovey, a feminist writer, describes Austen as completing the difficult in a difficult time as she explains, "Through her irony and skillful manipulation of point of view, Jane

Jane Austen, as both a woman and a writer, represented feminism in a time when women's creative and intellectual influence was being challenged.



In her effort to portray women as “female,” Austen empowered feminist authors into the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as today.

Austen developed artistic strategies that ‘resolved’ some of the most debilitating ideological contradictions of this period of chaotic change” (xvii). In her effort to portray women as “female,” she empowered feminist authors into the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as today.

Austen’s novels inspire readers today with a “well-established reputation as the most widely read and loved of all the classic novelists of English literature” (qtd in Langland 44). Her novels have been modernized into award-winning movies and mini-series, and today’s authors have made every effort to create sequels in an attempt to carry on her work. Women of the 21st century are the beneficiaries of Austen’s feminine ideals. Her work contributed to the empowerment of female writers who have brought feminist traditions to today’s society. When modern readers sit down to enjoy *Pride and Prejudice*, they ought to be grateful for women like Jane Austen.

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July 19th, 2011

Dear Leslie Armstrong:

The editorial board of *The Feminist Outreach* would like to thank you for your submitted essay “Jane Austen: Initiating Feminism One Novel at a Time.” We believe your essay to be very well thought out and credible given the numerous sources you used.

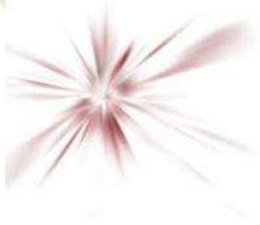
We did notice, however, a few grammatical mistakes such as punctuation and a missed word or two. We will be fixing these for the publication of our journal. It is important to note that these changes will not impact or detract from your essay in any way. We believe that your essay has followed the mission statement of our journal, and for these reasons, we find your essay a more than worthy candidate for acceptance into *The Feminist Outreach*.

We will be holding your piece until the time comes for the publication of our journal. Until then, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Research Editor, Denae Dworshak, at dwo08001@byui.edu, or the Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com. Once again, we thank you for your submission and express our warm congratulations on your acceptance.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England



BRONTE VERSUS AUSTEN:

Feminism for Our Day

Mary Winfield—English 314

Emily Bronte and Jane Austen are two of the most well-known female authors from the British Romantic Era. They are often seen as two very different and unrelated authors, but they are actually more connected than most people think. Both writers come from the British Romantic period and have influenced the media and the feminist movement into today, not only in their works, but also with their lives. In Bronte's novel, *Wuthering Heights*, and in Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, these authors' similarities and differences in writing style and message are magnified. These two specific novels show how the combined efforts of these women have changed the feminist outlook in their time period and in today's.

THE BRITISH ROMANTIC PERIOD

In order to understand the impact these writers have had on today, it is important to understand their day. Romanticism took place in the latter half of the 18th century and focused on many themes regarding nature, the aesthetic value of things, and was a response to the Industrial Revolution that encouraged rationalization and scientific reasoning (Foe 34). During this time, feminism was just starting to take shape. Women were still expected to marry well and spend their time polishing talents used for entertainment, such as needlework, art, and musical instruments (Lane 48-55). Marrying for

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These two women lived in a time when a woman's life was laid out for them, and both of these women lived in a way that was different than what was expected.

financial well-being and temporal security was the logical thing to do, and this period questioned that by putting a stronger focus on love and independence (Foe 342). Several things about both Austen and Bronte's life show their support of the feminist movement, like how both women remained unmarried in a world which demanded it and were published writers, something almost unheard of in their day.

THE STORIES BEHIND THEIR STORIES

Not only were Bronte and Austen's books impactful on feminism, but also the way they lived their lives was as well. These two women lived in a time when a woman's life was laid out for them, and both of these women lived in a way that was different than what was expected. Their lives are very important to understanding their novels and their stances on feminism in their works.

Jane Austen had six brothers and one sister, Cassandra, whom she was very close with (Lane 12). She first started reading in order to amuse her family and would often read to them at family gatherings. Lane, an biographer who focuses on Jane Austen, says, "Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four, when most young ladies would have been preoccupied with courtship and marriage, Jane Austen had written three major novels, one of them twice over" (14). When she was twenty years old, she sold her first novel for 10 pounds, but it was not until ten years later that a publisher took real interest in her work. She made around 630 pounds in her lifetime, but saved most of it, which went to Cassandra after Austen's death (Lane 14-15). These facts show that Austen was more concerned with furthering her own career than she was with fitting the social norm. It also shows that she was not concerned about living a life of luxury as she did not spend



very much of her money while alive, but rather for making sure her sister and herself were taken care of all the time.

Not much is known about Emily Bronte because her family lived in the small town of Haworth, which was far away from London, and also because Emily Bronte was something of a recluse. The unpopularity of *Wuthering Heights* during Emily Bronte's life also added to the lack of information about her life since the world was more focused on her older sister, Charlotte. She never had any romantic relationships with anyone, and neither did her sisters. Even though she led a secluded life, she had ample examples of tragedy around her. Her mother died when she was three years old, and two years later, her sisters Maria and Elizabeth died from typhus. Two months after Emily Bronte's poetry started to be distributed, her brother died, and she caught the cold that would kill her at his funeral. She died at the age of thirty years old not knowing that someday her only novel would be famous (McCarthy 1-3). In the eyes of the people in her world, she died a failure as she remained unmarried, but it is her life that showed other women a different kind of life.

CONTRASTING STYLES

These writers have distinct styles that are very different from each other. Emily Bronte's book was not widely accepted at first because the public was expecting a "lighthearted and happy" book like those of Austen (Paddock 34). Emily Bronte's sister, Charlotte, even said that Austen's works were "shrewd and observant, but lacking in poetry" (Lane 133). Clearly, they both had different views about what made good writing, and it is likely they would not have liked each other if they had met. Emily Bronte's younger sister, Anne, was often

Clearly, they both had different views about what made good writing, and it is likely they would not have liked each other if they had met.



compared to Jane Austen, but it was said that she was “found wanting in so far as she lacked Austen’s keen wit and comic gift” (Paddock 10). Even with these differences, Austen surely paved the way for the Bronte sisters, and they work together with the feminist movement by the lives they lived and the novels they wrote.

Despite all these differences, there are very important similarities that most people overlook. These women lived in the same time and faced a lot of the same problems that all women had to face. As a result, their books, though different in style, have very similar themes and undertones.

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WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Wuthering Heights is a gothic novel filled with feminist undertones. In feminism, a major obstacle in a woman’s way to independent life is the family. Hoeveler says, “The dream that motivates much of *Wuthering Heights* is that families will ultimately self-destruct, allowing women to live and function as individuals” (434). Bronte novel does indeed discuss these problems facing women.

The main female character in *Wuthering Heights* is Catherine, and it is through her that Bronte’s feminist themes are portrayed. Catherine is a rowdy young child, and Nelly Dean says about her, “she never was happier than when she was defying us with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words” (Bronte 55). Later in the book, when her father is lying on his deathbed, Charlotte comes to talk to him, and he observes that she is being quiet and submissive and remarks, “Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?” to which Catherine



replies, "Why cannot you always be a good man, Father?" (56). This clearly shows her irreverence for the patriarchal family unit even as her father lies dying.

Later, as Catherine becomes an adolescent, the Lintons bring Catherine into their house and begin treating her like the lady they think she should be by washing her feet, feeding her cakes, and brushing her hair. This is a big difference from the way Catherine is used to living and contrasts her desire to be free of the obligations forced on women: "It is here that Catherine is taught the social disease of lady hood, and separated from her resistant double, Heathcliff, permanently falls into patriarchy, madness, anxiety, starvation, and ultimately death by way of childbirth, as if Bronte meant to reinforce the destructive nature of Catherine's sexuality. (Armstrong 2). Hoeveler comments that, "Unable to transform her natural and wild spirit, nor to accept completely the imposed politeness and repression of the Lintons, Catherine is torn between Heathcliff and Linton, passion and denial" (437), and readers begin to see her double personality. She is a sophisticated young woman in some aspects of her life, but because it is not the life she wants, she is wild and unpolished in other aspects.

Heathcliff remains her idea of an ideal life. He represents having to not be subject to traditional conventions of marriage, family, and responsibility, but in this new world she has, she sees that "human beings, particularly women, do not exist apart from the men who can provide them with names and status" (Hoeveler 437). Denied by Catherine, Heathcliff marries Isabella and retreats further in his "heathenism" (Bronte 72). Isabella is used as Catherine's foil and is seen as "a class-based critique of Catherine's more natural and wild temperament" (Hoeveler 439). Hoeveler suggests that, "The episode

Catherine is a sophisticated young woman in some aspects of her life, but because it is not the life she wants, she is wild and unpolished in other aspects.



Women today are still plagued by the same problems Catherine is facing in the novel.

also seems to suggest that for Bronte marriage is a form of institutionalized torture and sexual depravity for women” (439). Isabella is living the life that society deems perfect. She is married to a respectable man with decent provisions for living, but instead of the happiness society promised her, she is left with this resentful and angry man and a loveless, unhappy marriage.

Another interesting detail Bronte adds to the book is that Catherine dies from complications due to anorexia and pregnancy. These two reasons for death are important because women were often under pressure to look a certain way, to be perfect. Bronte is suggesting that the stress women put themselves under to be what everyone else wants them to be is very dangerous to their health. In society today, women “are fixating on their flaws, causing them to belittle themselves and even take destructive action” (Hareyan 1). Women today are still plagued by the same problems Catherine is facing in the novel. They are still destroying their lives and bodies in order to fit into society’s expectations for them. It is also interesting that Catherine dies in childbirth since that is the most womanly thing there is in this world. Today’s society is starting to associate women with things other than child rearing, and even women today are not getting married and not having children. This way of life is slowly becoming the normal and independent thing to do. Catherine desires to be free from family bonds, and the lack of that freedom, in this situation giving birth to a child, is what finally kills her after the pressures of men have made her weak.

Even after death, however, Catherine is not happy. She not only wants freedom from family ties (which she would have after death and separation from Linton and her daughter), but also the passion and respectability she feels she would have had with Heathcliff.



Hoeveler says, “Her unhappiness in a heaven without Heathcliff is as inevitable as her unhappiness in a union with Linton” (444). Bronte’s gloomy outlook on the problem of feminism is starkly contrasted with Austen’s witty and lighthearted approach to addressing the issue.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Similar to *Wuthering Heights*, Austen explores this idea of marriage and family as a hindrance to female success in *Pride and Prejudice*. Austen opens her book by explaining the situation of the Bennet family. Roe explains that, “the Bennets are members of the landed gentry, the upper middle classes. But the Bennet girls receive no useful education—Elizabeth is confined to what she can read in her father’s library or glean from conversations with him” (193). In the novel, there is a scene where Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy, and Miss Bingley are talking about what makes a woman “accomplished,” and Mr. Darcy says, “I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen, in the whole range of my acquaintance, that are really accomplished” (Austen 136). Beth Kendrick explains this scene in her own words by saying, “Miss Bingley jumps in and says no lady can be deemed accomplished unless she can: dance, sing, draw, converse fluently in the modern languages, net purses, cover screens and also possess a certain *je ne sais quoi* that announces to the world her inherent fabulousness...Darcy declares that on top of all that, an accomplished woman must also be well-learned and love to read” (Crusie 7). This shows the way women were viewed in Austen’s time. Elizabeth Bennet’s response of, “I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any...I never saw such a woman. I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as

“Her unhappiness in a heaven without Heathcliff is as inevitable as her unhappiness in a union with Linton” (Hoeveler 444).



you describe, united” (Austen 153) shows Austen’s condemnation of the world’s views of what a woman should be. Like Bronte, she viewed the expectations of women as far out of anyone’s reach, but addressed the matter in a more jovial way than Bronte.

Like Bronte, Austen viewed the expectations of women as far out of anyone’s reach, but addressed the matter in a more jovial way than Bronte.

Another interesting aspect of *Pride and Prejudice* is the inheritance of Mr. Bennet’s assets to his daughters’ cousin, Mr. Collins. In a letter to her sister, Cassandra, Austen writes, “Single women have a dreadful propensity for being Poor” (Roe 193). She did not like that a woman could not support herself, but instead had to be dependent on a husband. This view is seen reflected not only in her own life, as she never married and earned her own living, but also in the awful situation Elizabeth has in being pressured to marry Mr. Collins in order to secure a place to live after her father’s death.

All of the men in *Pride and Prejudice* have a way of earning their living: Mr. Collins is a pastor, Wickham is in the army, and Bingley inherited his fortune; they “are free to enter a neighborhood or leave it as they will. Women in contrast are confined to the home where they are put on display to potential suitors” (Roe 193). Mr. Bingley leaves the country and goes back to London, and Jane has no choice but to lament his loss and move on with her life as she is a woman and is kept at home. The men have all the power in a relationship, or the pursuit of one, and women are forced to wait for the men to hand them their happiness instead of being able to get it for themselves.

Austen’s famous opening line of, “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a fortune, must be in want of a wife” (1) is seeping with irony because it is not men who need a wife, but rather women with no fortune that are in desperate

need of a good marriage (Roe 193-94). Charlotte Lucas is an excellent example of the necessity of marriage for a woman. Charlotte is only twenty seven, but because she is considered an old maid and has no prospects, she marries Mr. Collins even though she finds him ridiculous and holds no tender feelings or respect for him at all. Austen says in her novel, “her home and her housekeeping, her parish and her poultry, and all their dependent concerns, had not *yet* lost their charms” (189 italics added). Austen’s ironic use of the word *yet* tells us that eventually all of those things will in fact lose their charms, and Charlotte will be trapped in an unhappy marriage. This marriage does not provide happiness and emotional connection, but she will be taken care of, and she will know it was her only option.

Elizabeth is the feminist hero of the novel because of her rebellious nature in situations that call for a certain action. Readers see her rebellion in her conversation with Lady Catherine de Bourgh about Mr. Darcy’s marriage proposal, rejecting Mr. Collins’s proposal of marriage, and even in her refusing Mr. Darcy’s first proposal even though he was in possession of a great deal of money, she would have been able to live comfortably for the rest of her life, and she could have provided for her family. Readers see Austen’s desire to have more feminist-thinking women by her portrayal of Elizabeth, but even though Elizabeth is seen as extremely feministic in the novel, she still becomes dependent on her husband for her support. For Austen, the possession of money was the great equalizer between men and women, so it is interesting to note that she does not give that equality to Elizabeth Bennet. Elizabeth does not share Mr. Darcy’s wealth, but is instead given an allowance to do with what she wants and only after “economy in her own private expenses” is she able to send money to help her sister, Lydia (Austen 311). Through this, Austen shows that

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even the happiest of endings available in her time is still unfair to the women involved.

WORKING TOGETHER

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Bronte and Austen both used their writing as a way to comment on social reform. Campbell said, “They were the pioneers in propagating feminism and spreading the awareness of women's rights through their deft skills in fiction writing” (1). Since change happens when an idea grows, people today owe a lot of change to people like these writers.

Misconceptions about Austen would lead the reader to believe that she is condoning the woman’s role, but “instead of exalting the value of tradition and virtue in her prose, Austen defied it and made a case for feminine rights. While most of Austen's characters did want to marry, they always wanted to choose their own suitors and marry for love which is something that was unheard of during Austen's lifetime” (Gleason 3). All of Austen’s novels are about the domestic lives of women in the nineteenth century, and “Austen is often criticized for depicting docile female protagonists. But a close reading of *Pride and Prejudice* will prove that [Austen] in her own times was addressing the matter of a woman's preference in marriage and her rights to determine the course of her life” (Campbell 1). This makes her book appeal to both feminists and non-feminists alike.

Bronte takes a different approach: “She presents a strong female protagonist and pits her against an even stronger male hero. As a nineteenth century English novel, *Wuthering Heights* was quite bold in depicting male-female bonding in such strong terms. Female



passion comes across very poignantly in this classic feminist fiction book” (Campbell 3). Austen paved the way by giving her heroines independent thought, and Bronte followed up by giving her heroine passion and determination.

Feminism today has been shaped by the feminism Austen and Bronte lived every day. Modern-day humanity can see the impact they left on the world by the strong push for women’s equality, from women’s suffrage to present-day companies who have female CEOs. It is because of the hard lives of women like Emily Bronte and Jane Austen that women today can strike out on their own and do with their lives what they want. These authors may be different in many different ways, but underneath it all, they are both feminists who changed the world and made it possible for women to attend college and write research papers. Mankind owes more than it thinks to these two feminists and their novels.

Austen paved the way by giving her heroines independent thought, and Bronte followed up by giving her heroine passion and determination.

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The Feminist Outreach

July 19th, 2011

Dear Mary Winfield:

The editorial board of *The Feminist Outreach* would like to thank you for your submitted essay “Bronte versus Austen: Feminism for Our Day.” We commend you for your efforts in revising your work and the consideration you have taken in incorporating the feedback you have received. We are pleased with your work and will be accepting your essay for publication in our journal.

You have many excellent qualities in your writing. We noticed, however, some grammatical and sentence structure errors in your work. For the publication of this work, and with your permission, we would like to make some small corrections as needed for the final publication of this paper into our scholarly literary journal. None of the corrections we make will change the voice of your paper, but will only smooth out some of the sentence structure.

Overall, the expression in your writing is professional, and it is easy to read and understand, which makes your essay a very enjoyable read overall. You support your arguments of the similarities between Bronte and Austen with well-placed, documented evidence from *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights*, which you smoothly incorporate into your essay. Lastly, we appreciate how you were mindful of the goals of our journal, focusing on two female authors from the British Romantic Era and using a feminism viewpoint to portray their contribution to the literature and society in our day. For these reasons, we find your essay a more than worthy candidate for acceptance into *The Feminist Outreach*.

We will be holding your piece until the time comes for the publication of our journal. Until then, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Research Editor, Denae Dworshak, at dwo08001@byui.edu, or the Editor-in-chief, Jessica DeLand, at kjspontaneity@gmail.com. Once again, we thank you for your submission and express our warm congratulations on your acceptance.

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board
The Feminist Outreach

345 Jane Austen Lane
London, England

