

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE EDUCATION PACK



written by Mark Palmer

**REGENT'S
PARK** THEATRE
LONDON

CONTENTS

Introduction

3

About the Show

The story, the background and the context of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

4

Creative Insight

The creative talents behind the touring production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE share their vision for the work and for their individual contribution to a production that “*has such CHARM and ELEGANCE*” (Evening Standard)

16

Activities

A variety of classroom ideas, activities and starting points to broaden and enrich your visit to see PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

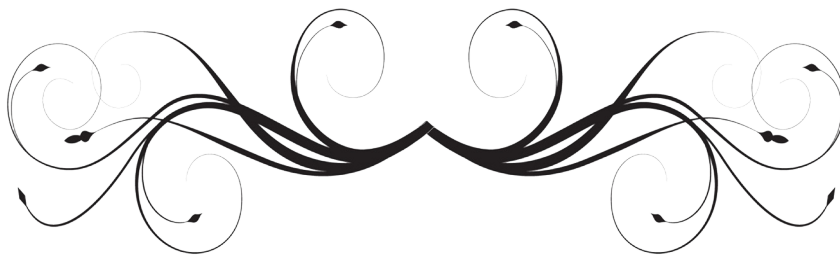
27

Resources & Links

Ideas for reading, viewing and listening to further support your study of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

42

Please note that the contents of this pack may be copied for internal purposes only but may not be altered in any way without the express permission of both the author and of Regent’s Park Theatre.



INTRODUCTION

In her unique tongue-in-cheek way, following the 1813 publication of her novel PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra, expressing her opinion that:

“Upon the whole... I am well satisfied enough. The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story: an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparté, or anything that would form a contrast and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and general epigrammatism of the general style.”

She would doubtless be pleased to know that, 190 years later in 2003, her tale of rural gentility, of misunderstandings and enlightenment, would come second in a BBC poll to find the ‘UK’s Best-Loved Book’ (Lord of the Rings came first).

200 years after the first publication of Austen’s most celebrated work, the Regent’s Park Theatre launched its own theatrical version of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, in an adaptation by Simon Reade, to great acclaim: the Daily Mail observed that it was *“a perfect PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: skittish, comical, easy on the eye and moving.”*

And now, *“Jane Austen’s most beloved novel re-born”* (The Times) is being brought to a wider audience as it tours the country right into 2017, the year of the 200th anniversary of the death of the woman who called PRIDE AND PREJUDICE *“my own darling child”*.

It begins with the imminent arrival of an eligible bachelor to Netherfield Park, a significant event in the lives of the Bennet sisters, at least as far as their slightly overbearing mother is concerned. Quickly, Austen introduces one of her most popular characters in Elizabeth Bennet, along with the wealthy and attractive Fitzwilliam Darcy. Following their unlikely courtship, Elizabeth’s pride and Darcy’s prejudice are tested and their first impressions of each other (First Impressions was Austen’s original title for the work) are found to be wanting.

As playwright Simon Reade says of this touring production of his adaptation of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE:

“I hope that students will be inspired to have another go at reading Jane Austen (her letters are a brilliant place to start), to see that theatre can be a richly rewarding job in all respects, and perhaps to become the poets of the future. I would love students to be inspired by the story and by the play that when they head into the world with a desire to change it, they will have additional fuel to think and act with even greater passion and feminism and a sense of fun.”

This Education Pack offers background information, insight and activities to support your visit to PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Information and activities in the pack cover a range of subject areas, including drama, performing arts, English, PSHE, music, art & design and media studies.

Enjoy the show!

Mark Palmer
2016

SYNOPSIS

Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Lydia, the five unmarried daughters of Mr and Mrs Bennet of Longbourn, Hertfordshire, receive news that a wealthy bachelor named Charles Bingley, has rented the manor at Netherfield Park nearby. As the laws of inheritance do not allow daughters to inherit a father's estate, Mrs Bennet is determined to see her daughters well married to safeguard their futures, and sees Mr Bingley as a prime candidate for one of them.

At Mrs Bennet's bidding, her husband pays a social visit to Mr Bingley, after which mother and daughters attend a ball at Meryton, where Bingley spends much of the evening dancing with Jane.

Meanwhile, Bingley's friend Fitzwilliam Darcy is rude to Elizabeth, refusing to dance with her and making derogatory remarks about her and her family.

"She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me."
Fitzwilliam Darcy about Elizabeth, Chapter 3, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

"I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine."
Elizabeth Bennet about Darcy, Chapter 5, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Over the next few weeks, the two households meet again several times, and Darcy finds himself more and more attracted to Elizabeth, but due to his behaviour at the ball, this is not reciprocated. Jane's relationship with Bingley also develops and, delighted by an invitation to Netherfield, she is caught in a downpour, taken ill, and forced to stay for several days. To the horror of Bingley's two snobbish sisters, Elizabeth trudges through muddy fields to Netherfield to tend to her sister and arrives with a mud-splattered dress. Caroline Bingley's horror increases as she realises that Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth when she had designs on him herself.

Back home, Jane and Elizabeth find Mr Collins visiting. Collins is a pompous clergyman who is the heir to the Bennet estate and has every intention of marrying one of the five Bennet girls. He proposes to Elizabeth, who dents his pride by turning him down. Meanwhile, at Meryton, Elizabeth, Kitty and Lydia meet George Wickham, a young, handsome soldier who has stories to tell Elizabeth about Darcy's cruelty in cheating him out of an inheritance. Back at Longbourn, Mr Collins proposes to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend. Although she doesn't love Collins, Charlotte believes in the importance of security and accepts.

As winter approaches, the Bingleys and Darcy return to London. Upset by this news, Jane receives correspondence from Caroline Bingley, making it clear that the family do not plan to return to Netherfield. Jane journeys to London to visit friends and hopes to see Bingley, but receives only rudeness from his sisters and does not see him at all. Elizabeth is angry, believing that there is genuine fondness between Bingley and Jane, but that he is too weak to stand up to his sisters and Darcy who want him to make a more strategic marriage.

"If I were not afraid of judging harshly, I should be almost tempted to say that there is a strong appearance of duplicity in all this."

Jane Bennet, letter to Elizabeth, Chapter 26, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Charlotte Lucas and William Collins are married and Elizabeth is invited to visit them at the Parsonage at Hunsford in Kent. Within a few days, they are invited to dine with Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Darcy's proud aunt, and her daughter Anne, whom Elizabeth has been told is likely to become Darcy's wife. Lady Catherine herself is rude, critical and interferes in everybody's business.

Later, it becomes clear that Darcy is to visit his aunt. The day after his arrival, he and his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, call at the parsonage. It is Charlotte's view that Elizabeth is the attraction, and this is borne out as Darcy looks for occasions to speak to Elizabeth, particularly when she is out taking walks alone.

Elizabeth discovers from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Mr Bingley has been put off marrying Jane by Darcy, who has told him that the union is unsuitable, and Elizabeth realises that it is Darcy who is responsible for Jane's unhappiness.

Darcy visits Elizabeth in an agitated mood, and, without warning, proposes to her. Telling her that he is prepared to set aside the unsuitability of a marriage between them because he loves her, Elizabeth refuses, citing his treatment of Jane and Wickham as reasons for saying no. Darcy leaves angrily, but soon after delivers a letter to Elizabeth, putting his side of the two stories which Elizabeth realises is the truth and she re-evaluates Darcy. Upon returning home, however, she discovers that Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam have left. She resolves to return to Meryton.

The younger Bennet girls, Lydia and Kitty, are full of news that Mr Wickham's regiment are to be moved from Meryton to Brighton and Lydia resolves to follow him there, despite Elizabeth's reservations about the effectiveness of her chaperone. However, Mr Bennet lets her go.

"We shall have no peace at Longbourn if Lydia does not go to Brighton."

Mr Bennet to Elizabeth, Chapter 41, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Meanwhile, Elizabeth prepares to visit her uncle and aunt in the Lake District, but the plan is changed and a tour is planned to Derbyshire, taking in a visit to Darcy's country house at Pemberley, much to Elizabeth's discomfort.

This discomfort is eased somewhat when Elizabeth discovers that Darcy is not at Pemberley, so she allows herself to enjoy the visit. She hears from servants on the estate that Darcy is a generous master, and she begins to think more kindly towards him. To her horror, however, Darcy returns home unexpectedly and she comes face to face with him. Not mentioning his earlier proposal, he is cordial and well mannered, having apparently learned from Elizabeth's earlier criticisms of his attitude. Elizabeth learns that when Wickham left Derbyshire, he owed money to a large number of people, and it is well known in the area that Darcy paid all of his bills. Darcy confides in Caroline Bingley of his increasing attraction towards Elizabeth.

"It is many months since I have considered her one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance."

Darcy to Caroline Bingley, Chapter 45, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Two letters arrive from Jane and it becomes clear that Lydia and Wickham have eloped. Elizabeth confides in Darcy, but is concerned that his response betrays a disapproval of her family as a result of Lydia's actions. However, it is concern for Elizabeth, not disapproval of Lydia, that has actually caused his silence.

The lovers are found and arrangements are quickly put in place for them to marry. Elizabeth considers that Lydia's actions have brought to an end her chances of a relationship with Darcy, and reflects that he could have been the perfect match for her. Visiting Longbourn following her marriage, however, Lydia reveals that Darcy had been at her wedding, a fact that she was supposed to have kept secret. It transpires that, in fact, it was Darcy who had brokered the marriage agreement with Wickham in order to protect Lydia's reputation, and paid off his latest gambling debts in Brighton. He had also bought a commission in the army for Wickham, ensuring that he and Lydia would have an income.

Mrs Bennet is saddened as Lydia and Wickham leave for Newcastle, but cheers up when she learns that Mr Bingley is returning to Netherfield. It is only a few days before Bingley and Darcy visit the Bennets, but both Elizabeth and Jane find conversations difficult. Darcy soon leaves for London, but Bingley remains and his courtship with Jane is reignited, this time with his friend's blessing. Bingley proposes and Jane accepts.

"On opening the door, she perceived her sister and Bingley standing together over the hearth, as if engaged in earnest conversation; and had this led to no suspicion, the faces of both as they hastily turned round, and moved away from each other, would have told it all."

Mr Bingley proposing to Jane, Chapter 55, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Lady Catherine de Bourgh visits Longbourn. She has heard the news about Jane and Bingley and also a rumour that a similar situation may be on the cards for Elizabeth and Darcy. Furious that her daughter may miss out on marrying Darcy, she tries to force Elizabeth to promise not to agree to an engagement. Elizabeth refuses, whilst remaining painfully aware of the social gulf between her and Darcy.

On a country walk, Elizabeth finds herself alone with Darcy and is able, finally, to thank him for helping Lydia. Darcy explains that he did it for Elizabeth, and that his feelings for her have remained unaltered since the spring. Lady Catherine de Bourgh's interference has, in fact, given him hope that, by not agreeing to her demands, Elizabeth's feelings may have changed. They have.

Mrs Bennet is the last to hear the news, after Darcy has asked her husband for permission to marry his daughter and Elizabeth has convinced her father of her love for Darcy. Her mother has disliked Darcy, finding him rude and obnoxious, but is able to rapidly overcome her feelings when she remembers his wealth.

"Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be!...I am so pleased - o happy. Such a charming man! - so handsome! so tall! Oh, my dear Lizzy! pray apologise for my having disliked him so much before. I hope he will overlook it. Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord!"

Mrs Bennet to Elizabeth, Chapter 59, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE



CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

This character breakdown has been laid out as a card sort. Try printing it out, cutting up the cards, and testing your students' understanding of the characters in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

Mrs. Bennet

Determined to make good marriages for her four daughters, she is the melodramatic matriarch of the Bennet family. Her primary motivation is to secure her own future, which due to the nature of her husband's estate when he dies, will be uncertain if a suitable match for her daughters is not found, and without delay!

Mr. Bennet

Father to the four Bennet girls and long suffering husband of a socially inferior wife, he is sensible and protective of his daughters, whilst unquestionably wanting them to be happy. Although a country gentleman, Longbourn is unable to provide effectively for his family.

Jane Bennet

The most attractive of the Bennet sisters, she is also the eldest. She believes in marrying for love, an opinion shared with her sister Lizzie, with whom she is particularly close. Her romantic dreams are fulfilled when she marries Mr Bingley.

Elizabeth Bennet

Sometimes called by a shortened version of her name, she is the main protagonist in the story. She is second in the Bennet family line, is outspoken and quick-witted. Believing in the principle of marrying for love, she refuses a proposal from Mr Collins, whom she does not love, to the dismay of her mother. Her pride does get in the way of her judgements at times, but she is ultimately able to find true love with Mr Darcy.

Mary Bennet

A reader and a pianist, she is the least attractive of the Bennet sisters. Unable to show herself off to her advantage, she has *neither genius nor taste*, maintaining to her sister Lydia that she would *“infinitely prefer a book”*.

Kitty Bennet

Fourth of the Bennet girls, she and her younger sister Lydia are inseparable. Easily led by her impulsive sister, she and Lydia are described as *“ignorant, idle and vain”*. However, following the marriages of her two older sisters, she is able to visit them and benefit from their influence, finishing the story as *“less irritable, less ignorant, and less insipid”*.

Lydia Bennet

Allowed into society far earlier than is appropriate, she has been spoiled by her mother and not raised properly by her father, she is bold, self-absorbed and reckless. With a particular liking for military men, she does not think of the consequences of her actions when she elopes with Wickham. It is only Darcy’s intervention that stops her bringing shame on the Bennet family and destroying their reputation.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner

Educated and cultured, they are faultless, intelligent and mannered, despite their lower social class when compared to the likes of Darcy. In the story, they bring Jane to London and accompany Elizabeth to Pemberley, which is near to where she grew up. He is Mrs Bennet’s brother.

William Collins

A comic fool, he is the nearest male relative to Mr Bennet and therefore stands to inherit Longbourn. He is self-important and pompous, admiring those of a higher social class and doing everything that he can to ingratiate himself with them, particularly his patron, Lady Catherine. Rejected by Elizabeth, he proposes to and is accepted by Charlotte Lucas.

Charles Bingley

Handsome and charming, as well as rich, his friend Fitzwilliam Darcy initially persuades him not to marry Jane Bennet, despite the two being deeply in love. He sees the good in everyone and trusts Darcy's judgement over his own, this lack of self-confidence limiting his capacity for self-improvement. Believing that Jane is "the most beautiful creature I ever beheld", the two eventually marry.

Caroline Bingley and Louisa Hurst

Snobby sisters of Mr Bingley, they are untrustworthy and ill-mannered. Ill-educated and dislikeable, they may be fashionable and have good social standing, but their negativity serves to highlight the positive qualities of Jane and Elizabeth Bennet.

Fitzwilliam Darcy

Rich, serious and proud, he is well bred and well educated. He is judgemental of people from a lower social class than he is, which annoys Elizabeth and leads to her refusing his invitation to dance. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that he is morally impeccable and generous, helping the Bennets when Lydia runs away with Wickham, and bribes him into marrying her, thus ensuring Elizabeth's respect and love.

Georgiana Darcy

A real lady, in contrast to the Bingley sisters, she is sweet and innocent, despite possessing a great fortune. She is targeted by Wickham, but saved by her competent, caring family, in contrast to the ineffective Bennets who are not able to achieve the same thing with Lydia.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh

Darcy's aunt, she is of high social rank, but consumed by her own self-importance. She is obsessed with social status and determined that her nephew will not marry Elizabeth Bennet. She is, in fact, planning for her own daughter, Anne, to marry Darcy, pinning her hopes and dreams on this liaison in order to continue the family line.

Colonel Fitzwilliam Darcy

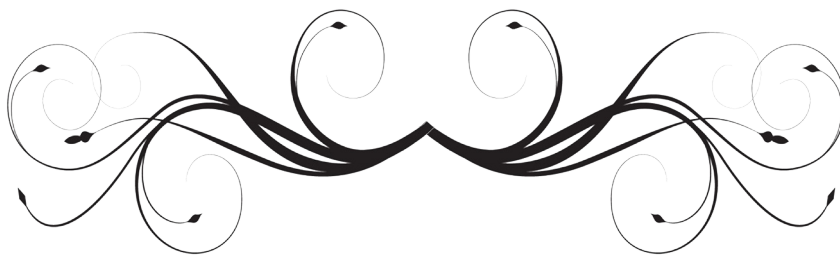
Is everything that his cousin is not, good company, intelligent, polite and good to talk to. In direct contrast to Darcy, and as a younger son, he does not stand to inherit a fortune, so making the right marriage for him is going to be crucial.

Charlotte Lucas

Elizabeth's best friend, and a sensible, mature and level headed 27 year old. She agrees to marry Mr Collins, much to Elizabeth's distain, after she has rejected him. She does so, not through love, but by being pragmatic and not wanting to be a financial burden to her family if she is unable to secure an alternative. She does not want to be a lonely old maid.

George Wickham

Good looking and charming, he is also clever and deceitful. He successfully puts Elizabeth off Darcy by embroidering and manipulating a story about Darcy's past for his own benefit. Without access to an inheritance, he is determined to gain wealth through marriage and begins to pursue Lydia Bennet who is naïve enough to fall for him and the two run away together without marrying. The Bennets are only saved from social ruin by Darcy, who bribes him into marrying Lydia.



JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen was born in Hampshire in 1775, in the parish of Steventon, where her father, Rev George Austen was rector. As with many of the characters in her novels, she lived amongst the country gentry. The country gentry of Austen's time included landowners, wealthy tradesmen, military men, farmers and members of the clergy. She was one of eight children, of which most were boys. She was particularly close to her sister Cassandra, and it is likely that the warmth of their relationship provided the model for her characters of Elizabeth and Jane Bennet in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

Jane loved country walks and reading, as well as socialising, but despite their good connections, the Austen's, like the Bennet's in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, didn't have a lot of money. Jane received part of her education at boarding school, but when this became unaffordable, she was educated at home by her father and brothers. She was well read, enjoyed music, writing, and performing plays for her family.

In her teens, Jane Austen began to write poems, stories and plays of her own, at the same time developing her own biting sense of humour, which stayed with her throughout her life. Writing to her sister Cassandra, for instance, in 1811, about the recent birth of their new nephew, she commented:

"I give you joy of our new nephew, and hope if he ever comes to be hanged it will not be till we are too old to care about it."

She had developed into a strong and independent-minded woman.

As she grew up, her brothers married and began to raise families of their own. Jane stayed at home, and although neither she nor her sister eventually married, her letters do hint at a romance with a young law student named Thomas Lefroy. Lefroy had relatives in the area and he and Jane danced together several times. The fledgling romance coincided with the first drafts of three of Jane's novels, First Impressions (which became PRIDE AND PREJUDICE), Lady Susan (which became Sense and Sensibility) and Northanger Abbey. But marriage was not to be. The prospect of inheriting money was essential for a marriage to be deemed prudent in the late 18th century, and neither the Lefroys or the Austens had any money.

Jane did receive one proposal of marriage, which was not from Thomas Lefroy, but rather a man named Harris Bigg-Wither. In 1800, Rev Austen and his wife (also Cassandra), had moved to Bath, a move which upset Jane. During the six years that she spent there, she did not write any more novels, although later Bath featured as a location in much of her work. On 2nd December 1802, whilst visiting the Bigg family at Manytown, near her former home of Steventon, Jane received and accepted Harris's proposal. The next day, she changed her mind, realising that she didn't love him. Bigg-Wither, though a gentleman with money, was "big and awkward". Jane's real feelings may be the ones that she later put into the mouth of Emma Watson in The Watsons: *"Poverty is a great evil, but to a woman of education and feeling it ought not, it cannot be the greatest. I would rather be a teacher in a school (and I can think of nothing worse) than marry a man I did not like."*

No reference to the incident survives from the time, but later in a letter to a niece, Jane is clear that:

"Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection."

She had given up a future for herself, and an ability to provide some comfort for her parents and sister.

Things came to a head in 1805 when Rev Austen died, leaving his wife and daughters in a precarious financial situation. Luckily, Jane's brothers were successful career men, and thus able to ensure that their mother and sisters were not left destitute. It was in the cottage at Chawton, near her brother Edward's estate, that Jane settled and succeeded in publishing four of her six major novels.

At the time, it was frowned upon for a woman to be published, so Jane's first novel, 'Sense and Sensibility' was credited simply to 'a Lady' when it first appeared in 1811. It was a success, followed by further success with PRIDE AND PREJUDICE in 1813 and 'Mansfield Park' in 1814 and 'Emma' in 1815. Her brother Henry, who lived in London, often liaised with publishers on Jane's behalf. At Chawton, there was little privacy for Jane to write, so she wrote in the general sitting room of the cottage. Between there and the front entrance to the house was a door which creaked, but which Jane determined should not be fixed, as it gave her warning of impending visitors so that she could hide the manuscript that she was currently working on. Thus, it was only her immediate family who knew of her authorship of her increasingly famous novels. Such was the social scandal associated with a female author, in fact, none of her novels published in her lifetime bore her name.

The family's financial situation worsened again when Henry's bank failed in 1816 and by this time, Jane was feeling increasingly unwell. She continued to write and prepared 'Persuasion' for publication, although it was ultimately published after her death.

In May 1817, she was moved to Winchester for medical treatment, having given up writing her last and uncompleted novel 'Sandition' in March. Although it is not known how she ultimately died, it is generally believed that she had contracted an illness that we now call 'Addison's Disease', a disorder of the adrenal glands that causes fatigue, muscle weakness and depression. She died on Friday 18th July 1817 and was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

"Since Tuesday evening, when her complaint returned, there was a visible change, she slept more and much more comfortably; indeed, during the last eight-and-forty hours she was more asleep than awake. Her looks altered and she fell away, but I perceived no material diminution of strength, and, though I was then hopeless of a recovery, I had no suspicion how rapidly my loss was approaching. I have lost a treasure, such a sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed. She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself."

extract from Jane's sister Cassandra's letter to her niece, Fanny Knight
following Jane's death on 18th July 1817

Following her death, 'Persuasion' and 'Northanger Abbey' were published as a set in December 1817, and for the first time, Jane Austen was acknowledged as the author. Although she remained out of print for a short period, since 1832 her novels have been in continuous print, have sold millions of copies, been translated into numerous other languages and inspired both film and television adaptations. Her literary legacy, and her wry humour, lives on.

"You express so little anxiety about my being murdered under Ash Park Copse by Mrs. Hulbert's servant, that I have a great mind not to tell you whether I was or not."

extract from Jane Austen's letter to her sister Cassandra
8th January 1799

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Jane Austen's world was very different to the world that we live in today, 200 years later. To understand her, and particularly to understand *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, we must understand the social context of her life and her writing. As with any historical research, sources are important - there is little information available about Jane's childhood, for instance, but as an adult she was a regular letter writer, and so knowledge and understanding can be gained, in particular from the surviving letters sent to her sister, Cassandra - despite many others having been destroyed. Other accounts from family members, especially the 1869 volume 'A Memoir of Jane Austen', written by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, are useful, if approached with caution as they are likely to be at least somewhat biased. Taken together with other literary works and historical documents, we can piece together an understanding of the society that Jane moved in, and in particular the role of women in the 19th Century.

Background

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE was written during the English Regency period in the early 19th Century. The Industrial Revolution was continuing to bring innovations that would fundamentally alter the way that people lived, moving them away from farming and the countryside to seek out the industrial towns, where money could be made from manufacturing and mining. The newly rich, who had made so much profit from the efficiencies that technology had brought to manufacturing, were keen to adopt the lifestyle of the landed aristocracy. Little thought was given to a third of the country that was living close to starvation, with work that had previously been done by men, now being done by machines. Meanwhile, the wider world was embroiled in wars and revolutions, including, until 1815, the Napoleonic wars in Europe.

At this time, social standing was determined by family history and wealth, and was very difficult for anyone to overcome, particularly as it encouraged those with privilege to be proud, and prejudiced towards anyone whom they considered to be socially inferior. This is a society in which reputation is everything and expectations of social conduct are high. Women especially were expected to conform to the rules of society, lest they should be branded immoral and their family disgraced (see 'Rules & Etiquette in Regency Society').

The Role of Women

Women from a middle class or upper class background, and aristocratic women, didn't work in Jane Austen's England. As they had no power to earn money, it was their duty to marry as well as possible. To that end, a marriage was as much about an alliance as it was about love. Love was secondary, hence potential partners sized up each other's wealth as a primary consideration.

Women were taught to read, but most did not write well and so it was unusual for a woman to become a published novelist, as Jane Austen did. The novel was a relatively new form, having become established in the 18th Century, and was generally the preserve of men. It was considered unbecoming for women to have an interest in events beyond those in their immediate circle, and so writing about such things, even if they were fictional, was frowned upon. Austen herself hid her writing from all but her closest family, particularly when anyone came to visit whilst she was working on a novel.

Regency women were expected to defer to men; first to their father and then later to their husband. Women did not have the legal right to own property, and dealing with money was considered to be a man's job. A woman's job was initially to seek out a good marriage, and then to take

on a domestic role. In the case of women of Elizabeth Bennet's class, this would have included hiring and managing servants, and supervising the household spending. A Regency woman was also expected to be artistic, and well-bred women often took classes in drawing and music.

Etiquette

In Jane Austen's world, men were expected to be 'gentlemen' and women were expected to be 'ladies', and to adhere to all of the social graces, rules, and standards of behaviour that accompanied those expectations. Much of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is concerned with what is and isn't 'acceptable', in terms of visits and introductions, in conversation, between different ranks in society and between men and women. Anyone who fails to follow these rules (Mrs Bennet for example), becomes an embarrassment, and if things go too far the wrong way (Lydia eloping with Wickham), the consequences could be devastating for an individual and their family.

"There was one gentleman, an officer of the Cheshire, a very good-looking young man, who, I was told, wanted very much to be introduced to me, but as he did not want it quite enough to take much trouble in effecting it, we never could bring it about."

extract from Jane Austen's letter to her sister Cassandra
8th January 1799



Rules & Etiquette in Regency Society

- Social connections were usually formed through a series of meetings, usually beginning with calls to the homes of those in fashionable society.
- A gentleman calling on a family asked for the mistress of the house if the visit was a social one, and the master if it was a business call.
- A card was left if the lady of the house was indisposed or not at home. It was acceptable for a gentleman to call on a daughter of the house if she were well above marriageable age or a long-standing friend.
- Callers were received by men in their business room or library, by women in the morning room or in their drawing-room.
- A lady, either married or single, did not call at a man's lodging.
- It was acceptable to go out riding or driving with a man as long as a groom or other chaperone was in attendance, unless he was a relative of a close family friend, in which case no chaperone was necessary.
- Servants were spoken to with exactly the right degree of civility and never with casual informality.
- Neither a lady nor a gentleman discussed private business in the presence of servants.
- Servants were generally ignored at mealtimes.
- It was essential to dress for dinner.
- When going in to dinner, the man of the house always escorted the highest-ranking lady present. The remaining dinner guests also paired up and entered the dining room in order of rank.
- At a formal dinner one did not talk across the dinner table but confined conversation to those on one's left and right.
- Ladies were expected to retire to the withdrawing room after dinner, leaving the men to their port and their 'male' talk.
- Overt displays of emotion were generally considered ill-bred.
- Children always bowed or curtsied on meeting their parents for the first time each day.
- To be thought 'fast' or to show a want of conduct was the worst possible social stigma.
- A wife was expected to be blind to her husband's affairs.
- A married woman could take a lover once she had presented her husband with an heir and so long as she was discreet about her extramarital relationships.
- A lady did not engage in any activity that might give rise to gossip.
- When out socially a lady did not wear a shawl for warmth no matter how cold the weather.
- A gentleman was expected to immediately pay his gambling debts, or any debt of honour.
- A female did not engage in finance or commerce if she had a man, such as a husband, father or brother, to do it for her.
- Extremes of emotion and public outbursts were unacceptable.
- A well-bred person maintained an elegance of manners and deportment.

from 'Georgette Heyer's Regency World'
by Jennifer Kloester (2008)

CREATIVE INSIGHT

In this section, some of the creatives involved in the Regent's Park Theatre's touring production of *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* talk about their work on the show, and explain what inspired them to work in the theatre in the first place. From playwriting to directing, from set and costume designing to composing, this section offers a comprehensive insight into a major touring production. From its birth at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre in 2013, to its national tour in 2016/17, this is an opportunity for teachers and students to learn about the real world of professional theatre production.



Simon Reade, Playwright

Simon Reade is a director, producer and writer, whose CV includes co-production partnerships with West Yorkshire Playhouse, Birmingham Rep, Liverpool Theatre and the Young Vic. He produced five award-winning seasons at the Bristol Old Vic, and directed the one-man theatre show of 'Private Peaceful' which has toured nationally and internationally. Simon's adaptation of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE enjoyed a sell-out run at the Regent's Park Theatre in 2013.

I haven't pursued a career or followed a particular path. I have flip-flopped between theatre and TV and film in a variety of evolving and expanding roles. At school I performed; at Exeter University I read English and started to direct. While taking on some post-graduate research, I found myself in Germany and learnt about the fabulous role of the dramaturg: the in-house researcher and commissioner and literary advisor and programmer and creative producer. That's what got me going back in the UK - both in theatre as a Literary Manager, but also sidestepping into TV as a script editor - and then starting to adapt stories into plays. All the time I was also moonlighting as a theatre reviewer which meant I saw more work than most and got me thinking about theatre and articulating those thoughts and communicating them to a wider audience on an almost daily basis - via the discipline of overnight reviews which appeared in print. My work as a producer has come about because as theatre-makers we need to get the show on the road, and who best to do that but the people who create the work. And despite all my work producing theatre in the relative comfort of the subsidised sector, I learnt most about producing in commercial touring for Danny Moar at Theatre Royal Bath Productions. Contrary to popular belief, commercial producing pours all the money that is available on to the stage, rather than anywhere and everywhere else, as subsidised theatre too often seems to do.

Whatever it may look like in the end, there is nothing elegant about making theatre; and the thought is often more of a mixture of heart-felt zeal tempered by the practicalities learnt through experience. Although *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* is a story led by Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy, it is also populated by an entire world true unto itself. In my version there is an empathy with the mother (Mrs Bennet) and the father (Mr Bennet) which often surprises audiences. I have also tried to allow the women to speak with the stronger voices that

Austen gives them - and I am pleased that there are more actresses required to mount this version than actors.

I start by writing out all the dialogue by hand - and turning some of the narration into dialogue. The reason being that working at the same speed as the original author, and crafting the work as they would have done, by hand more often than on a computer, makes you pay attention to the detail and nuance and diction. But before I have even get to that stage I will have been reading a novel when the penny drops that it is inherently dramatic and I have a gut feeling about how to adapt it. I will think about the piece for as long as possible, and go for long walks, before committing to my own first draft; but then I am relatively swift. And I enjoy the process of rewriting at speed once I have liaised with the director. By the time we get to the first rehearsal, I endeavour to have as much of the script work achieved as possible, because I do not believe in rewriting by committee throughout the rehearsal process to a variety of different agendas. My adaptations are plays in their own right, with my voice as distinctive as the original author's. Although I will learn from the actors bringing the characters to life in rehearsals, it is quite rare that I ever make any drastic changes thereafter. Nothing is more alarming than an actor at the readthrough with the script in one hand and a copy of the novel in the other. Their job is not to have an overview like the playwright's, but to breathe life into one aspect of the play - any tinkering with the text by them can imbalance the whole enterprise. In preview I am very practical and will suggest cuts and trims and prunes and rewrites - but that's peculiar to each production, to do with the director's vision as much as my own, and often to help deliver the individual actor's performance more effectively ad hominem, ad feminem.

When I write screenplays I often do a number of drafts focusing on one or another character at a time - it's a way of trying to attach casting (if you are after a number of stars, you can end up with some fairly bloated screenplays, as you can imagine). I seem to recall I did something similar adapting PRIDE AND PREJUDICE back in 2008 - with Elizabeth, with Mrs Bennet and then, crucially, with Mr Bennet. I am drawn to characters who are radical, who upset the status quo, who are active - who have childlike imaginations that are the scourge of the childish adults of a conservative society. And I also echo characters I know in real life (the Bennet sisters in my adaptation also have occasional traits and tics of my own three daughters).

Each time the play has been produced I have further adapted it, bespoke for each theatre, each director. When it was first performed, the company was led by the sharp-witted Susan Hampshire as Mrs Bennet on UK tour from Theatre Royal Bath. Then in its second incarnation at Regent's Park, the director Deborah Bruce was keen to take Mrs Bennet on a different tack, so we adjusted accordingly. Its third major production was by the delightful Irish director Joe Dowling at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, and in previews we did quite a bit of cutting to suit the audience taste. Its fourth production was at Sheffield Crucible, directed by Tamara Harvey, who approached it with the forensics of a scholar, which was delightfully challenging. Each time the script evolves and a bit of one production feeds into the next. So now that we are reviving it for the tour, it will have the benefit of having been shot through the prism of two subsequent productions. It won't need to be adapted specifically because it's touring - though I will, I'm sure, revise it in rehearsals.

I see Jane Austen's work as being deeply political, with class war and interfamilial crises. I didn't have to bring these things out in my adaptation, I just had to deliver them and coax the company and the audience into recognising them. Austen is scandalously misread, in my view, by generations of schoolteachers and book groups - I was put off Austen myself for many years by being made to suffer a dreary reading of Mansfield Park at A level, knocked dead and senseless by that ghastly phrase 'comedy of manners'. Far too many academics have said Austen wasn't political enough, and that she didn't even put the Napoleonic wars explicitly into her stories, for example. Nonsense. The soldiers and sailors are there in all of them, often visually (they are redcoats, after all). Much of Austen's observation is devastatingly acerbic and satirical. Take Darcy's lament that the

rising middle-classes are now becoming so well-read that they are threatening the very order on which his complaisant aristocratic lot depends: "I cannot comprehend the neglect of a family library in such days as these." Pride comes before a fall, Mr Darcy. Austen was of course writing in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution - and then rewriting during the Battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo. Anyone who knows her last work, the incomplete masterpiece 'Sanditon', will see that she was an overtly political writer who would have defined 19th century literature, had she lived, as much as she is seen as the literary zenith of the long 18th century.

Like any classic work of fiction it is both rooted in its time but chimes with our own because it dramatises the universal human condition. Falling in love, despairing in the isolation of social censoriousness, the painfully comic generational clashes - all these and more are for all time.



Deborah Bruce, Director

Deborah Bruce is a celebrated theatre director with over 20 years of experience, and more recently a successful writer. Originally from London, she studied at the University of East Anglia, before honing her craft at the Theatr Clwyd, near Mold in North Wales. Since becoming freelance, she has directed at the Royal Court, Shakespeare's Globe, The Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, Bristol Old Vic, and the National Theatre Studio. Her first stage play, 'Godchild' was produced in Hampstead in 2010.

I wasn't part of the drama scene at school, but I went to youth theatre and that became a hugely important part of my teenage life. Every Wednesday evening I went along to Group 64 Theatre in Putney and we did drama exercises and improvisation and devised sketch shows and rehearsed for productions. When I finished school, myself and a few friends from Group 64 devised a play and put it on ourselves. It was the first show I directed and I loved every aspect of it. I went on to study Drama at the University of East Anglia and directed a lot of plays with acting students from my course. When I graduated I stayed in Norwich to set up a small scale touring company - and we put on lots of productions. I also got a job teaching drama in prisons and directed plays there too. I think this was the period of time that I learnt the most about putting on a play, having to do everything with so little money and resources. I am still really proud of the work that we produced.

Then I got on to the Regional Young Theatre Director's Scheme (RYTDS, still going today) and went to Theatr Clwyd in North Wales as an Assistant Director. I assisted lots of fantastic directors there for a year and then stayed on as an Associate Director. I learnt a lot at this time too. When I returned to London and became a freelance director I had a lot of experience but it was still incredibly hard to get enough directing work to survive financially, so I did lots of other jobs in between shows.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is a famous book and audiences have a sense of ownership of it and strong ideas of who these characters are. The book is witty and wholehearted and romantic and a great deal happens - and the play is only two hours long! The action has to move fast and tell the story clearly. The production needs to carry the atmosphere of the book and depict the world of the play and keep the audience engaged with the characters' journeys. Simon Reade's adaptation is brilliantly fluid and lets the scenes roll into each other. In our production, the set is on a revolve and so this helps one scene dissolve into the next.

The process of creating a theatre production like PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, goes like this. You get asked to read the play and come in and talk to the Artistic Director (AD) of the theatre that's producing it. If you like the play and the AD likes your take on it, you go ahead and appoint a designer and the other creatives (composer, lighting designer, choreographer, sound designer) that you would like to work with. The director works closely with the designer to find the world of the play; where and when will it be set? Will it be realistic or not? How will you tell the story? How will you move from scene to scene?

The director then works with a casting director to cast the play. There are loads of characters in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: it's a huge show to cast and this is a really important part of getting the production to work. The relationships between the characters are the heart of the play and it's especially interesting when you are casting a family. These relationships have to be believable and the casting process has to explore how this might work.

Most plays rehearse for four weeks. The first week involves reading the play all together as a company; discussing the specific world of the play; researching how life would have been for the Bennet sisters in 1813; how different things were for women at that time; why marriage and social position were such an important aspect of these sisters' lives. Then scene-by-scene you work through the play, blocking the moves, working on the choreography for the dances, working out how to show the passing of time, change of place and the scene changes. Towards the end of the fourth week of rehearsal you start running the play in the rehearsal room, before moving into the theatre and translating all that work onto the stage with lights and sound and discovering the relationship with the audience.

The beautiful outdoor space at Regent's Park is so particular, and the designer Max Jones designed the last production so specifically for it that it has been a real challenge to create a new production that has to work both outside in the open air at Regent's Park and inside in a traditional theatre space on tour. Outside you have the extraordinary privilege of having the sky as part of your set. Inside, I have the luxury of being able to work with the lighting designer Tina McHugh to create beautiful images with light. Outside you never have a blackout so it's harder to control where the audience look.

As soon as I start thinking, 'I like this character best', I think of another I love too. All the characters are well rounded and properly rooted and have so much to unpack. So, of course I like Lizzie, she's so feisty and full of integrity and loyalty and also crucially flawed; she makes huge mistakes in the course of the play; misjudging Wickham, and she's blind to her own feelings towards Darcy. All of Austen's characters are fabulously human. I love Collins, he's totally ridiculous and yet recognisably fearful underneath his pompous exterior. Mrs Bennet is a fantastic woman, Lydia is a delightful character too, and Bingley, and Caroline. And Mary. All of them. I could list them all! They are each a pleasure for an actor to play.

Ultimately, I would like students watching our production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE to take away the feeling of having spent the evening with this brilliant collection of characters and a desire to read or revisit Jane Austen's amazing book.



Max Jones, Set Designer

Max graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2001, and in the same year won The Linbury Biennial Prize for Stage Design. Since then, he has designed productions across the world, including 'The Mystery Plays' at York Minster, 'The Crucible' at Manchester Royal Exchange, 'Orpheus Descending' at the Theatre Cocoon in Tokyo and 'Little Shop of Horrors' at Theatr Clwyd in Wales, amongst many others. He has recently been nominated in the Best Design category in the 2016 Wales Theatre Awards.

I'm from Bristol. My family aren't theatregoers particularly... we went to the odd pantomime and musical when I was younger, but not much else. My interest developed almost entirely at school, partly through school plays and numerous school theatre trips as part of English Literature and Theatre Studies, but mostly due to a very good teacher, who throughout GCSE and A-Level was very committed to developing a strong theatre studies course at the school. A really good theatre was built during my time there, and we were able to put on shows in addition to the usual curriculum requirements. I was already leaning towards the arts or architecture as a career, one way or another, and my time at the school introduced me to the backstage world of theatre. Rather than being in the shows as I had regularly been, I realised how much I preferred creating the work behind the scenes... and at A-Level I directed and designed our sixth form play. I guess over the years I caught the bug. It wasn't until a boy in the year above me said he was going to study theatre design at university that I realised it was even an option. The next twelve months in sixth form were spent choosing between architecture and theatre design. On finishing my A-levels I decided I was going to give it a try and successfully applied to the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, where I then spent 3 years studying a degree in theatre design.

When I'm commissioned to design a show, two things happen first: I visit the venue and I read the script. It's the combination of these two things that will most influence my initial set design process. Regent's Park is, of course, an outdoor theatre, which presents a really interesting set of possibilities and challenges for a stage designer, compared to other more conventionally arranged theatre venues. I enjoy finding bespoke design solutions for theatres/venues rather than just responding solely to the text. Once I've familiarised myself with the text I will then immerse myself for a while in reference material appropriate to the narrative... in this instance mainly relating to the Regency Period, both visual and literary. Alongside this, I'll meet with the director, for PRIDE AND PREJUDICE Deborah Bruce, and we will share early thoughts for the style of the show.

As early ideas start to materialise, I'll make various draft 'white card' models of the set design. These serve a number of purposes... they are an important tool to help me move the design forward, they are also a tool to help communicate my ideas to other members of the production team, and at this early stage, generate provisional costings so we can also check that we are financially on track.

Once we are all happy with the rough design in principle, I will then continue to develop the final design ideas and create a final model, usually 1:25 scale, which on completion becomes the main production tool to re-create the work at full size. I present this to the company on the first day of rehearsals, so that everyone in the cast understands what the show will look like, and then the model is taken to the set builders who take measurements off it in order to build the full scale version. Scenic artists will

also take colour references off it to match the final paint finishes. Once the set is built it is delivered to the theatre and constructed on site ready for tech week and opening night. It's always really satisfying finally seeing the scale model sat next to the full size version in the theatre during fit-up week.



The set for the original Regent's Park Theatre production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE through its various design stages, from card model, to rough model, to final model and then construction.

With the original production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, my principle artistic urge was to respond to the Open Air Theatre itself and the Regent's Park in which it is located. I knew early on that I wanted my design for the show to have a strong sculptural integrity, which integrated well with its environment, rather than a stand alone stage set. On my first trip to Regent's Park, my eye was caught by the decorative iron railings that run around the perimeter of most of the grounds. Being very appropriate in period style for PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, these formed the starting point for my design. I wanted the stage set to look like one of the Regent's Park fences had wound its way into the theatre, like a ribbon through the trees, and become the backdrop for the show. A simple, pure, sculptural gesture that would celebrate Regent's Park whilst also appropriately referencing the period context of the piece. I didn't want this structure to be too visually 'heavy', so again referencing the fence detailing helped there, as it allowed me to create a semi-transparent form which could appear or disappear when lit in a certain way, whilst never obstructing the beautiful view of the park trees beyond.

When used in conjunction with a revolve I was also able to very simply evoke interior and exterior spaces whilst simultaneously amplifying the sense of movement integral to a piece where dance plays a key role.

The 2013 production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE wasn't conceived as a touring show, so inevitably my initial design fills Regent's Park and is too big to tour in its original form. The main challenge of the tour was to try and reduce its volume without compromising its visual integrity, not only as a piece of sculpture, but also as a very practical structure that interacts with, and services the production in many ways. We wanted to retain the physical composition of the original show as much as possible, as well as continuing to use a revolve, so I worked on ways of achieving this in the dozen or so different sized venues that the show would be touring to. However, the challenge that I had to consider whilst re-designing was how an idea that was conceptually such a bespoke fit to Regents Park would work in all of those other venues.

For me, the success of this set design, or indeed any design, is finding a way to both challenge and satisfy the personal desire to produce work with artistic integrity. I'm very fond of the set for PRIDE AND PREJUDICE; it has an apparent sculptural simplicity that betrays the huge amount of technical work and re-working during the design process.

The simple looking things are always the hardest to get right.



Tom Piper, Costume Designer

Tom got involved in student theatre in Cambridge, where he was training to be a biologist, but was so taken with the theatre world that he changed direction and started designing, whilst pursuing a new course in art history. He has worked with famous theatre directors including Peter Brook, Michael Boyd and Sam Mendes. For ten years he was Associate Designer at the Royal Shakespeare Company and more recently has worked as Creative Associate for the Tricycle Theatre. In 2014, he designed the installation at the Tower of London that marked the centenary of the outbreak of World War One. From an original concept by ceramic artist Paul Cummins, 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' captured the mood of the nation, and the world.

I had always enjoyed making things, from tree houses to puppet theatres, and at university I started to get involved with student drama; building and painting my own sets. In the end I became so obsessed that I decided to change course and ended up with a degree in art history and then did a post graduate degree in theatre design at the Slade Art School. I was very lucky to get to go and assist for the famous theatre director Peter Brook in Paris, and when I returned, I got a job doing a pantomime in the Tron, a small theatre in Glasgow with director Michael Boyd. Michael then asked me to design his production of Macbeth, which got the attention of the RSC who invited him to work there, so I followed! I started doing costume as part of the design of the whole piece. This is the first production I have done where I have just designed the costumes, collaborating with Max Jones, the Set Designer.

Clothes are very strong clues as to class and status, no matter what period you are in. In general more expensive fabrics such as silk tell a story of wealth, the choices of colour and pattern say a lot about the taste of a character. For example Mrs Bennet and Lydia are drawn to more 'feminine' fabrics, whereas Elizabeth has a more practical eye. The biggest challenge in this production is to tell the difference between the country dance,

where Elizabeth first meets Darcy, and the much grander ball at Bingleys. Some of the characters, especially Elizabeth never leave the stage so we have to find a way to change her look very simply but make it appropriate for the social situation. So we have devised jackets and layers that can be removed or added on stage.

I have looked at other versions of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, but have tried to not be too influenced by their choices! The main difference is, in the theatre, we are much more aware of a group of actors telling us the story, with minimal props, and inviting us to use our imaginations to create the full picture. And the actors in this production are on stage most of the time, so each character really only has one costume. I am not interested in being naturalistic and having a different costume for each time they appear (nor could I afford it!). My style, if there is one, is to be quite simple and not be over decorative with the clothes and try to trust in the fabrics and colour choices to tell the story.

Initially, I start with a close reading of the book and also the script, then research paintings and fashion plates from the period. I have to work out when the characters appear on stage, and start off by doing a series of very small sketches for each character to get a sense of the whole show and how the costumes and the colour palettes change. Then, I work up individual sketches which I share with the director and then as rehearsals begin with the actors. As part of this process, we discuss how my ideas might work with their interpretation of each character.

Meanwhile, working with a Costume Supervisor, we book freelance makers to create the clothes or investigate what is available to hire (normally a combination of the two) and then sample and choose fabrics that work for the period and cut and are within our budget. At the fitting stage we try the half-made costumes on the actors and make adaptations for fit, and for how the actor feels about the costume. This happens about mid-way through rehearsals. Then, in the technical rehearsal, we put the whole show together and see how the clothes work on the set and under lights, make adaptations, dealing with quick change requirements etc.

In this production, I think Elizabeth was probably my favourite character to design for, as she is the central figure and the most compelling. Also, Rev Collins was great fun to do, finding a way to give a slightly heightened sense of his ghastly self-importance in his clothes.

Overall, I hope that the clothes and the production will make students think of the story in a different way from any other versions that they've seen, and be able to focus on the love story at the heart of the piece.



Lillian Henley, Composer

Originally a performer, Lillian gained a degree Northumbria University and later a masters in theatre and performance practice, before beginning work professionally in theatre and film. Since 2006 she has been a composer and performer with the 1927 Theatre Company, as well as writing music for both contemporary and silent films.

At school, I studied art and drama as my creative GCSE subjects and played piano avidly. I wanted to become a musical theatre performer, and so I would often create pieces on the piano to sing, whilst continuing

play piano for pleasure outside of my formal education. I took A-Levels and Music A/S Level and I studied Performance BA (Hons) in Newcastle, at Northumbria University. In my second year I lived with a friend who was studying animation. He asked me to provide some comic voiceovers for his animation and for fun, asked me if I could write a piece of music for his first ever animated film for his degree. I loved this experience and thought nothing more of it. I continued my training as an actor at the Live Theatre, Newcastle upon Tyne, gaining a Theatre & Performance Practice masters degree and entering the acting profession. I loved working at the Live Theatre, for the theatre nurtured new writing and it gave me a wonderful insight into how to move from student performer into the professional world.

I knew life as an actor was a tricky profession, so I continued to play and write music to make myself more employable. I stayed in touch with my friend Derek, who became a professional animator. When he moved to London, he introduced me to his sister, Suzanne Andrade, recommending me to work as a composer and performer. Shortly afterwards, the 1927 Theatre Company was formed, and together we created theatre shows that included live piano accompaniment throughout. My time working with 1927 helped me to develop as a self-taught composer, where I particularly enjoyed scoring the characters' emotions. I love working intuitively, reacting in the room with the writer and director and performers. This style of composing has led me to score silent films too and I've been able to take on other theatre commissions like *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* at Regent's Park Theatre. It's a joy to be able to create music and see performers respond throughout the rehearsal and production period. It's also fascinating to hear how audiences react to the music once the show has been rehearsed and staged - you can feel when something works and when tweaks need to be made.

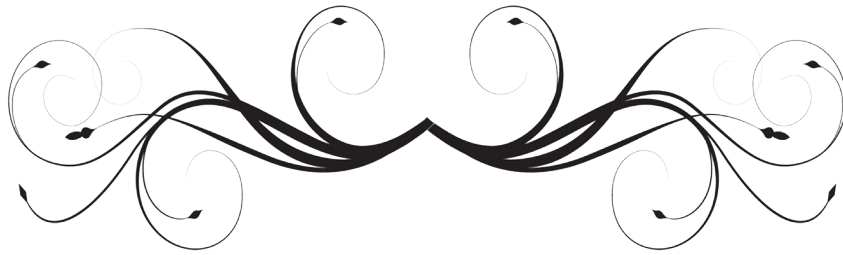
Simon Reade's superb adaptation of Jane Austen's play includes stage note descriptions. For instance, at one point he suggests that the actors should look "like Constable portraits against Turner skies". As I take a lot of inspiration from visual stimuli, I visited the National Gallery to look at Turner, Constable and Gainsborough's works of art. I sat there and looked at the brush strokes and tried to imagine a piece of music for each painting that I felt moved by. I made a rough recording into my Dictaphone and this became a musical starting point for the world I knew I wanted to conjure.

I wanted the world to be authentic, but also emotive of the characters we meet in the play, for example the long love story between Darcy and Lizzie. I improvise a lot at the piano, before I set on a final composition. Of course, I became very romantic in my improvisations, as this story has a lot of social themes on marrying for love and marrying for convenience.

Writing music in theatre is completely a collaborative process. It's important to understand that the music you create can change and develop once you share your work with your creative colleagues in rehearsal. As I developed the musical themes, I would then have meetings with Deborah, the director and Sian, the choreographer, to share my ideas and hear any feedback that they had. It was important to collaborate closely with Deborah, to check we were on the same page creatively. As a theatre composer, I have to be prepared to make changes to my music up until the opening night. It's a constant creative dialogue with the rest of the production and you have to be flexible and willing to blend your ideas with other creative ideas to create the finished production, for example, Deborah was keen to see how the actors responded to the music. I particularly enjoyed writing the dance scenes, seeing how Sian responded to the music, and how Deborah would direct the ballroom scenes. I was also keen to work with Deborah on the characters' monologues that we had chosen to underscore. It was great to see a relationship develop between the actors and the score as the production progressed.

how he was being portrayed. I thought that he was an awkward soul, whose overconfidence and displeasure at the Bennet girls was a gift from a composer's point of view. I also really enjoyed the awkward dance between Lizzie and Darcy in the ballroom scene. I love playing the awkward comedic moments and making, what could be very romantic, extremely uncomfortable for both lead characters.

I would love students to be inspired, as I was, by the language in Austen's novel and Simon Reade's play text. I found the language very inspiring to work with as a composer. I hope that they have fun listening to the world of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, which I have tried to make believably of its time, and yet original and theatrically pleasing.





INSIGHT QUESTIONS

Study the Creative Insights provided by the talented people who put together the touring production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, and then try to answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Where did each of the creatives go to university?
 - a. Simon Reade (playwright)
 - b. Deborah Bruce (director)
 - c. Max Jones (set designer)
 - d. Tom Piper (costume designer)
 - e. Lillian Henley (composer)
2. How long, according to one of the creatives, does a professional play normally rehearse for?
3. Name three artists that Lillian Henley used as part of her research when composing the music for PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.
4. Give an example of a fabric that suggests the wealth of a character, according to costume designer Tom Piper.
5. Which character types is Simon Reade most drawn to when he is writing?
6. Which 'awkward soul' did Lillian Henley enjoy composing music for?
7. What is the first thing that Simon Reade does when he adapts a novel for the stage?
8. What did both Deborah Bruce and Tom Piper do first when they started to work on PRIDE AND PREJUDICE?
9. Why does Deborah Bruce believe that casting the family roles in PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is particularly important?
10. Why, does Simon Reade suggest, is PRIDE AND PREJUDICE relevant to us today?
11. Why, does Deborah Bruce believe, is Lizzie Bennet 'flawed'?
12. Why, does Simon Reade believe, is PRIDE AND PREJUDICE actually at odds with the common critical view of Austen's novel?

ACTIVITY: OPENING

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE opens as news reaches Longbourn of the arrival at nearby Netherfield Park of the eligible Mr Bingley. There is much excitement, most particularly from Mrs Bennet, at the prospect of her engineering a match for one of her five daughters. As a man of large fortune, Mr Bingley requires courting immediately.

In his stage adaptation of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Simon Reade has cleverly reflected the atmosphere from the beginning of the novel, quickly established characters and motivations, spotlighting characters to highlight them to the audience and punctuating their appearances (in the case of the Bennet girls) with examples of their individual character traits.

Ask your students to read the opening of Simon Reade's adaptation, and also Jane Austen's description of the Bingley clan and Mr Darcy.

Next, ask them to consider how a similar opening scene might play if it were set at Netherfield Park and took place between characters from the Bingley household. Undoubtedly they will have heard of the eligible young ladies in the Bennet family, but may also be aware that this is a family without vast wealth, and maybe even that Longbourn is 'entailed' and therefore due to be inherited by a male relative at some point in the future, with no guarantee of security for Mrs Bennet and her daughters.

Ask them to write the opening scene of a play that reflects the characteristics that Jane Austen describes, the gentlemanlike qualities of Bingley, and the lack of manners demonstrated by Darcy. Perhaps Darcy, in the new scene, displays the prejudice against the Bennets described in the title. If some students require an additional challenge, ask them to follow Simon Reade's style, particularly in the spotlighting of characters and highlighting them to the audience at opportune moments.

Students should then be divided into groups and allocated either one of their own newly written scripts, or Simon Reade's adaptation. They should rehearse these ready to perform, and then compare the alternative versions, considering:

- which scene is most effective?
- how well do the scenes establish the central characters in the play?
- which scene works best as an opening of a play that hooks the audience in?

Finally, ask students to combine groups so that there is one group that have been working on Simon Reade's adaptation and one that has been working on the newly written opening scene. Ask them to work together to combine the two versions, using the drama technique of cross-cutting. What effect is this likely to have on the audience?

Prologue

Music. A pride of male ACTORS dances a slow dance and swagger – gorgeous, and don't they know it.

MRS BENNET: It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

Shrieking, breathless ACTRESSES rush forward and whisk all the men away in laughter.

Hertfordshire: Longbourn: The Bennets' home. Inside the 'drawing room.

MARY tinkles poorly at a musical instrument, straining to read the music through her thick glasses. LYDIA struggles gamefully with a bonnet.

LYDIA: Oh! It is so nidgetty!

KITTY is eating cream buns, bored, and idly interferes with LYDIA's bonnet, to the latter's consternation.

Kitty!

KITTY: Please allow me to assist you, Lydia.

LYDIA: Shan't.

JANE smiles serenely at their bickering. MR BENNET is hidden behind his newspaper. MRS BENNET bursts in, excited, a whirlwind of hat and shawl.

MRS BENNET: My dear Mr Bennet, have you heard?

MARY instantly stops playing. MR BENNET gives no response.

Netherfield Park is let at last!

KITTY chokes on her cream bun.

LYDIA: (Excited.) It isn't!

MRS BENNET: But it is.

MR BENNET, reading his paper, hmphs.

Do you not want to know who has taken it?

The GIRLS do. MR BENNET does not.

KITTY: Do tell, Mama.

MRS BENNET: Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune.

JANE: What is his name?

MRS BENNET: Bingley.

Bing! BINGLEY is picked out from the pride.

LYDIA: Married or single?

MRS BENNET: Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure: a single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for all you girls!

MR BENNET: How can it affect them?

MRS BENNET: You can be so tiresome, Mr Bennet! One of them must be married soon.

MR BENNET: Is that Mr Bingley's design in settling here?

MRS BENNET: How you talk so! But it is very likely he may fall in love with one of them. If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing else to wish for.

*from PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
by Jane Austen
dramatised by Simon Reade*

The Residents of Netherfield Park

Mr. Bingley was good looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

*from PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, chapter 3
by Jane Austen*

ACTIVITY: RE-INTERPRETING

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE has been subject to a multitude of alternative interpretations over the years, produced in a variety of formats, from plays to films, to novels. Many do their best to stay to the spirit of Jane Austen's original, whilst seeking an alternative insight or perspective into the characters or the time, either to highlight a particular aspect, or to make the storytelling work in an alternative format.

Ask your students to read 'Extract 3'. This is the moment in PRIDE AND PRJUDICE where Darcy first asks Elizabeth Bennet to dance and she turns him down. This is the original version by Jane Austen. Discuss with students to ensure their understanding of this moment in the story, and particularly Lizzie's motivation for refusing Darcy.

Ask them to consider:

- What is the style of Jane Austen's writing?
- What form does she use?
- What prompts Lizzie's attitude towards Darcy?
- Why is he 'bewitched' by Lizzie when she had just turned him down?

Next, ask them to read the other two extracts. 'Extract 1' is from Simon Reade's adaptation for the stage, and 'Extract 2' is from Amanda Grange's novel 'Mr Darcy's Diary', which re-imagines the events of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE from the point of view of Fitzwilliam Darcy, with his thoughts and feelings explored and explained.

Ask your students to consider:

- How successfully do Reade and Grange take Austen's original and adapt it into another form?
- In each case, what form is used?
- What is the same and what is different?
- What, if any, additional aspects do they bring to this scene?

Next, ask them to consider the following quote from Austen's original text: *"Miss Bingley saw, or suspected enough to be jealous; and her great anxiety for the recovery of her dear friend Jane, received some assistance from her desire of getting rid of Elizabeth."*

Ask them to create a new alternative telling of the scene in which Darcy asks Lizzie to dance, but this time to be taken from the point of view of Caroline Bingley, watching the exchange between the two. This can be written either as:

- a piece of prose
- a script for a stage adaptation
- an imagined diary or journal
- a letter from Caroline to Jane

Once they are complete, ask students to read them back to the class and discuss their success in telling the story, but this time from the perspective of someone with an alternative agenda. Have they been successful in making Caroline Bingley's agenda and her feelings about Darcy and Lizzie clear?

Extract 1

- DARCY: Miss Bennet, would you care to dance a reel?
- ELIZABETH: I heard you before; but I could not immediately determine what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say 'yes', that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste; but I know your scheme and therefore have made up my mind to say 'no' – and now despise me if you dare.
- DARCY: I do not dare.
- ELIZABETH: Mr Darcy is not to be laughed at!
- DARCY: It has been the study of my life to avoid those weaknesses which expose one to ridicule.
- ELIZABETH: Weaknesses such as vanity and pride?
- DARCY: Yes, vanity is a weakness. But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will always be under good regulation.
- ELIZABETH: I am perfectly convinced that Mr Darcy has no defect.
- DARCY: I have faults enough. My temper I dare not vouch for – it is I believe too little yielding for the convenience of the world. I cannot forget the follies and vices of others as soon as I ought, nor their offences against myself. My good opinion once lost is lost for ever.
- ELIZABETH: That is a failing indeed! But you have chosen your fault well. I cannot laugh at it.
- DARCY: There is, I believe, in every one a tendency to some natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome.
- ELIZABETH: And your defect is to hate everybody.
- DARCY: And yours is wilfully to misunderstand them.

*from PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
by Jane Austen
dramatised by Simon Reade*

Extract 2

“Oh,’ she said, ‘I heard you before; but could not immediately determine what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say “Yes,” that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste; but I always delight in overthrowing those kind of schemes. I have therefore made up my mind to tell you, that I do not want to dance a reel at all – and now despise me if you dare.’

‘Did I really seem so perverse to her? I wondered. And yet I could not help smiling at her sally, and her bravery in uttering it.’”

from ‘Mr Darcy’s Diary’
by Amanda Grange

Extract 3

Soon afterwards Mr Darcy, drawing near Elizabeth, said to her –

“Do not you feel a great inclination, Miss Bennet, to seize such an opportunity of dancing a reel?”

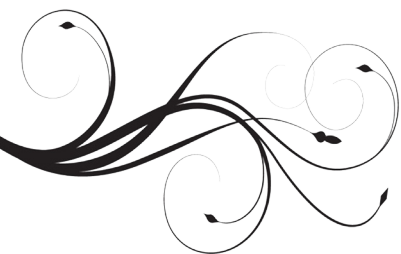
She smiled, but made no answer. He repeated the question, with some surprise at her silence.

“Oh” said she, “I heard you before; but I could not immediately determine what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say “Yes,” that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste, but I always delight in overthrowing those kind of schemes, and cheating a person of their premeditated contempt. I have therefore made up my mind to tell you, that I do not want to dance a reel at all – and despise me if you dare.”

“Indeed I do not dare.”

Elizabeth, having rather expected to affront him, was amazed at his gallantry; but there was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody; and Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her. He really believed, that were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger.”

from *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, chapter 10
by Jane Austen



ACTIVITY: ADAPTING

Simon Reade's primary challenge in adapting *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* for the stage, was to condense a 367 page novel into a two-and-a-half hour theatre production (including interval). The skill was one of harnessing the spirit of the novel, but also retaining as much as possible of Jane Austen's original language and humour.

Ask your students to study Darcy's letter to Elizabeth, which they will find in Chapter 35 of the novel. The letter takes up most of the chapter, and is nearly seven pages long. It is a crucial moment in the story, as it follows Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy's proposal. Perhaps even more significantly, the mere sending of the letter is a risk for Darcy. Propriety at the time meant that correspondence between two unmarried and eligible young people was taken as an indication that the two were engaged. Darcy therefore takes the precaution of hand-delivering his letter to Elizabeth, lest anyone else should see that he had written, potentially leading to awkward questions. However, it is still a risk, and perhaps the main reason why Elizabeth does not send a response in writing.

Simon Reade condenses the letter and crucially places it at the beginning of Act 2; a significant moment for a significant event, made all the more effective by placing Darcy in a spotlight to recite its contents. But do not ask your students to study Reade's version yet!

Ask them to use the text from Chapter 35 to create their own monologue for Darcy to be delivered at the beginning of Act 2, as is Simon Reade's version, following Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy (which takes place at the end of Act 1 and takes the audience into the interval). This is important, as students should remember that their audience have been left on something of a cliffhanger, and that therefore this needs to be, at least somewhat, resolved at the beginning of Act 2. They will need to consider which are the most important parts of the letter from Austen's text, and which would have the most significant impact in a theatrical performance.

Once these have been written, ask students to compare them to Simon Reade's version. Have they decided to include the same moments, or not? Which versions are the most effective? Students of drama or performing arts may like to perform a selection of these monologues, to compare their effect on an audience. English students may like to undertake a more formal comparison, highlighting moments and considering why they have or have not been included.

In many ways, this is the moment when Darcy starts to seem less arrogant and more sympathetic in the story. Ask students to consider how this gear change can be achieved in performance by an actor and how the selection of words included in the monologue can best support him in taking Darcy on his journey of self-discovery.

Darcy's Monologue

On the empty stage DARCY is picked out in a spotlight.

DARCY: Be not alarmed, Madam, on receiving this letter, by the fear of it containing any repetition of those sentiments and offers which were so disgusting to you. I write with out any intention of paining you, or humbling myself.

To deal with the offence you did lay to my charge – that I had ruined the immediate prosperity, and blasted the prospects of Mr Wickham – I can only refute it by laying before you his connection with my family. My excellent father died five years ago; and his attachment to his godson, Mr Wickham, was to the last so steady, that in his will he promoted his advancement, and if he took orders, desired that the valuable living on the estate might be his as soon as it became vacant. Within half a year, Mr Wickham informed me that, having resolved against taking orders, with some intention of studying the law, I should not think it unreasonable to provide for him. I rather wished, than believed him to be sincere; but at any rate I settled upon him the sum of three thousand pounds. He lived in town, but his studying the law was a mere pretence, his life was one of idleness and dissipation. For three years I heard little of him, but on the decease of the incumbent of the living which had been designed for him, he applied to me again. His circumstances, he assured me, and I had no difficulty in believing it, were exceedingly bad. He had found the law a most unprofitable study, and was now absolutely resolved on being ordained. You will hardly blame me for refusing to comply with his entreaty.

Having said this much, I feel no doubt of your secrecy: – My sister, who is more than ten years my junior, was left to my guardianship. About a year ago, she was taken from school, and an establishment formed for her in London; last summer she went with the lady who presided over it, to Brighton; and thither also went Mr Wickham... He so far recommended himself to Georgiana, whose affectionate heart retained his kindness to her as a child, that she believed herself in love. She was then but fifteen. I joined them unexpectedly a day before the elopement; you may imagine how I acted. Mr Wickham's chief object was unquestionably my sister's fortune, which is thirty thousand pounds; but I cannot help supposing that the hope of revenging himself on me, was also a strong inducement.

You may wonder why all this was not told you before. But I was not then master enough of myself to know what could or ought to be revealed.

God bless you, Fitzwilliam Darcy.

*from PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
by Jane Austen
dramatised by Simon Reade*

ACTIVITY: ROMANCING

Jane Austen liked her protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, writing to her sister Cassandra:

“I must confess that I think her as delightful a character as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like her at least, I do not know”.

The wealthy, arrogant, Darcy is described by Adam Nicolson in his book ‘Seize the Fire Heroism, Duty and Nelson’s Battle of Trafalgar’, thus: *“Darcy is fine, tall, handsome, noble, proud, forbidding, disagreeable and subject to no control but his own.”*

On their first meeting, Austen ensures that there is a mutual dislike between the two characters. So how on earth can it be that they could ever get together and become a couple?

If Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy were single today and looking for love, the most likely way that they would find a match would be through online dating. According to the UK’s ‘Online Dating Association’, *“online dating accounts for more than 25% of all new relationships”* and the industry in this country is worth £300 million per year. Globally, this rises to £2 billion.

So how would these two singletons, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, describe themselves? And as most online dating websites ask users to input search criteria to help them to find their perfect match, or use a system of profiling to suggest suitable partners, what would be the likelihood of Lizzie and Darcy actually finding each other?

One way might be for their best friends to write their profile for them. After all, although Lizzie might think it great fun to write an online profile, but not take the process particularly seriously, Darcy would probably hate the idea intensely.

Ask your students to take on a role for this activity. They can first play the part of Charles Bingley, Darcy’s good-natured and easy-going friend who, despite acknowledging that he is not much of a reader or writer of letters, would doubtless do anything to help and support his friend’s happiness. Then, they can become Charlotte Lucas, Lizzie’s intelligent and sensible friend, who takes a pragmatic view of life and love, and would certainly embrace anything that would help her friend to find the love that she can’t, having married the fool that is Mr Collins.

They should use the evidence provided to create an online dating profile for each of the two characters, writing in role from the point-of-view of the friends, but remembering that the friends in turn are pretending to be Lizzie and Darcy. They should use the following headings to help them:

Profile Headline

A short, punchy statement that is designed to capture the attention of the online reader and encourage them to read your profile.

Relationship

What sort of relationship you’re looking for (friends, dates, long-term relationship, marriage).

About Me

Likes and dislikes, what sort of person you are. Remember that this section needs a positive spin – leave out the bad points, although clever students may like to allude to some of the bad points by their careful selection of tone and style.

Personal Info

Height, weight, hair colour, eye colour, occupation etc.

My Ideal Relationship

The vision. The ideal. This person probably doesn't exist, but it's nice to dream, isn't it?

I am looking for...

Be specific, but remember that in an online dating profile, the writer will get a better response if they aren't too specific. Probably best not to rule out too many character types straight away – encourage responses.

My perfect first date

What it says on the tin. Where would you go? Remember that this tells your potential dates something about you – be too greedy or too stingy and they may be put off.

It is crucial for students to remember that, whilst this activity is focused on a modern phenomenon, they need to stay true to the characters of Lizzie and Darcy as they appear in the touring production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE and the novel. They should imagine that online dating was available to Lizzie and Darcy in 1813 when the novel was published. They may find it more straightforward to write in modern English, rather than the more formal style of language that Austen (and Simon Reade) use. However, writing in period style may increase the level of challenge in this activity for more able students.

They should design their online dating webpage, including an image of the character and an appropriate layout.

As an extension task, ask them to imagine that each character reads the others profile and decides to respond. What would they say? How would they introduce themselves and make the initial contact? All they have to go on is the profile page that they have read – which bits would they refer to? How would they present themselves as being compatible?

An alternative would be to also write the responses from the point-of-view of Charles Bingley and/or Charlotte Lucas, pretending to be Lizzie and/or Darcy. Perhaps they are trying to smooth the course of true love, but how would they write if they were pretending to be their friends? It might be interesting to compare Bingley and Charlotte Lucas' responses with the ones that students write for Lizzie and Darcy – who is most bold? Who is most honest? Which, if any of them would actually get a reply?

Finally, lead a discussion with students once this activity has been completed, comparing the 19th Century and 21st Century methods of dating. It's the Meryton Ball versus online dating. Supper parties versus Pizza Hut. Which works best? Which provides the best range of matches? And what considerations are at play then and now? Darcy in the Regency period has £10,000 per year; Darcy in the early 21st Century might have a nice car. Have our attitudes to dating, to relationships and to attractiveness fundamentally changed over the past 200 years?

Character Evidence

Elizabeth Bennet

“Only the deepest love will induce me into matrimony.”

“Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticise. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes.”

“She hardly knew how to suppose that she could be an object of admiration to so great a man.”

“There was a mixture of sweetness and archness in her manner which made it difficult for her to affront anybody.”

“Yes, you know enough of my frankness to believe me capable of that. After abusing you so abominably to your face, I could have no scruple in abusing you to all your relations.”

“There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it.”

“There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises at every attempt to intimidate me.”

Fitzwilliam Darcy

“Darcy was clever. He was at the same time haughty, reserved, and fastidious, and his manners, though well-bred, were not inviting.”

“She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me.”

“He is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great!”

“We all know him to be a proud, unpleasant sort of man; but this would be nothing if you really liked him.”

“I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle.”

“I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any.”

“As a child I was taught what was right, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit.”

“I certainly have not the talent which some people possess,” said Darcy, “of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done.”

“I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding.”

ACTIVITY: MODERNISING

It is likely that Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy would be close to the top of anyone's list of famous couples from literature. Their story of mutual distaste for each other, that leads to admiration and ultimately love once their pride and prejudices have been overcome is arguably one of the greatest love stories ever written. It has been retold many times, across a wide variety of mediums and through a broad range of cultures, from the different points-of-view of both characters. But how does a modernised version of the story work?

Ask your students to research some of the modernised versions of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE and to see what they discover about how the story has been adapted to make it more up-to-date. Show them trailers for 'Bride & Prejudice' and 'The Lizzie Bennet Diaries' and ask them to compare the two. Are they both still recognisably PRIDE AND PREJUDICE? What has happened to the plot and to the characters? What is the premise of the new story and is it effective? What sort of audience would they attract, and are they different audiences than would be attracted to the original?

With your students, start to think about how a narrative is constructed, as they will shortly be putting together their own story. According to the German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag, the plot of a story consists of five parts: exposition; rising action; climax; falling action; and resolution. In a modern version of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, this theory might be applied as follows:

Exposition - a handsome newcomer arrives in the neighbourhood, who becomes the subject of conversation as he is good-looking and eligible. As far as the Bennet family, with their 5 single daughters is concerned, the even better news is that the newcomer, Charlie, also has a friend, who is also eligible! A party takes place at the local Meryton club, where the newcomer's friend Fitz refuses to dance with Bennet number 2, Lizzie.

The Rising Action - Bennet number 1, Janie, falls ill when staying at a friend's house, so Lizzie hurries over to look after her. Whilst away, she meets Fitz again and it becomes clear that he fancies her, although he doesn't tell her. Geeky Will arrives and asks Janie out, but when she tells him to 'get lost', he makes a play for Lizzie. She is having none of it, having spotted the much-more-handsome cadet, George. It's all likely to get complicated when all of the characters find themselves at the Netherfield Festival together.

The Crisis - Fitz tells Lizzie that he is in love with her. This news comes completely out of the blue, when all she can remember is how rude he was to her at the Meryton club, so she rejects him angrily. They have a long and complicated text conversation in which Fitz tries to explain himself.

The Falling Action - Geeky Will gets together with Lizzie's best friend Charl, much to Lizzie's disgust, but Charl thinks that, on balance, having Geeky Will as a boyfriend is better than no boyfriend at all. Lizzie realises that Cadet George isn't as nice as she thought he was and confides this to her Aunt Maddy who she's really close to. Lizzie goes on a short break to the country village of Pemberley with Aunt Maddy and Uncle Eddie, not realising that they are going to stay with Fitz's family who her Aunt and Uncle know well. Lizzie realises that Fitz isn't as awful as she first thought, but just as she's thinking of her next move, news

Resolution - Lizzie decides that Fitz is definitely the one for her, but her love is really secured when Fitz catches up with George and persuades him to step up to the plate and stick by Lydia. Meanwhile, Bennet number 1, Janie, has got together with Charlie Bingley, the newcomer from the beginning of the story. And finally, Fitz asks Lizzie out. She agrees, and along with Charlie and Janie, the two couples head off on a double date.

Ask your students to expand this outline, or to construct their own, following Freytag's model. They can either write their version as prose, as a script, or devise their own dramatised version and prepare it for performance.

They should discuss what they learned from watching the two modern versions that have been created professionally, and to see how successfully they can make their own modernised version work. Once the work has been created, share it around the class and encourage students to read each others, or watch the performance if one has been prepared. Ask students to feedback on the success of each version, particularly considering how successfully it follows the plot line of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE and Freytag's narrative structure.



Bride & Prejudice (2004)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFYwqts1_TI



The Lizzie Bennet Diaries (2012)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KisuGP2IcPs&list=PL6690D980D8A65D08>

ACTIVITY: MARKETING

To misquote Jane Austen herself, it is a truth universally acknowledged that audiences in different parts of the United Kingdom respond to marketing in a different ways. The 2016/17 tour of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is scheduled to visit towns and cities from Cardiff to Canterbury and from Birmingham to Bath. But how do you go about creating awareness of the play in such a wide spread of places? And how do you make sure that your marketing is appropriate to each venue and to each audience?

Ask your students to research details of your local theatre, where PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is playing. Can they tell, from the wider programme that the theatre is offering, which sort of audience they are marketing to? Is it clear from the recent and future programming, who is most likely to be their core audience? Is there anything else on the venue's website that gives them a clue? Encourage them to consider style and language, as well as content.

Next, ask them to work in small groups to create two separate marketing campaigns that reflect the style of the venue that they have been studying. One campaign should be for a younger audience such as themselves, and the other should be for an older demographic. In both cases, their task is to market the tour of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

Ask them to look at the posters and advertisements that have been created by the production team to publicise this production. These materials are intended to encompass a wide and diverse audience, so what would students retain and what would they change when targeting their campaigns to the more specific audiences in their campaigns?

Are the two different audiences looking for different things? How can both age ranges be hooked in? Where are they going to place their marketing materials? Which publications? Which platforms? From this, ask them to create a marketing campaign plan.

They should then use photographs from the official website of the tour of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, or their own images, drawings or designs, to create a cohesive and targeted campaign for their two different audiences. They should consider including:

- a poster for the venue to display
- an advertisement for the side of a local bus
- a website homepage specific to this play in their town
- an advertisement for a local newspaper or magazine that is read by their target audience

They may also wish to use some quotes from some of the reviews of this production, to highlight the critical response, if they think that this would be likely to persuade members of their audience to buy tickets.

Finally, compare the campaigns for the two different audiences - how are they similar and how are they different? How successfully do students believe that they will reach the audiences that they have targeted?

Reviews

'Deborah Bruce's charming production blows fresh air into Austen's wonderful comedy'

Mail on Sunday

'This bicentennial Simon Reade adaptation provides an elegant and thoughtful frame for Deborah Bruce... it clips along smartly from scene to scene...and shows a respect for Austen's dialogue.'

The Times

'Discharges a quiverful of Austen's most astringent observations and sketches in the essential contours of the smoulderingly rational central love story with sufficient clarity and grace to put a slightly goofy smile on even the severest spectator's face.'

Metro

'Arguably the country's favourite novel...Deborah Bruce's production has such charm and elegance. All in all, a lot to be proud of.'

Evening Standard

Posters and Adverts



RESOURCES AND LINKS

Books

Pride and Prejudice Study Edition
by Jane Austen
Published by Coordination Group
Publications Ltd (2010)
ISBN: 978-1847624819

Pride and Prejudice (play)
by Jane Austen and Simon Reade
Published by Oberon Books (2009)
ISBN: 978-1840029512

Jane Austen: A Life
by Claire Tomalin
Published by Penguin (2012)
ISBN: 978-0241963272

The Real Jane Austen
by Paula Byrne
Published by William Collins (2014)
ISBN: 978-0007358342

Mr Darcy's Diary
by Amanda Grange
Published by Sourcebooks Inc (2007)
ISBN: 978-1402208768

Websites

<http://prideandprejudiceplay.com/>

Regent's Park Theatre's official website for the tour of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

www.pemberley.com

The online volunteer community dedicated to the work of Jane Austen, including digital copies of Austen's work and copies of her letters

<http://www.janeaustensoci.freeuk.com/>

Website of The Jane Austen Society of the United Kingdom

www.maxjones.co.uk

www.tompiperdesign.co.uk

www.lillianhenley.com

Websites for some of the creative talents involved in the Regent's Park Theatre's touring production of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

CD

Pride and Prejudice
Music from the 2016 touring production
by Lillian Henley
Available on tour and online
Details at www.lillianhenley.com

DVD's

Pride and Prejudice (Special Edition), 1995
Starring Colin Firth, Jennifer Ehle & Alison Steadman
Directed by Simon Langton
Released by: Zentertain

Pride and Prejudice, 2005
Starring Keira Knightley, Matthew MacFadyen & Brenda Blethyn
Directed by Joe Wright
Released by Universal Pictures Video

Bride & Prejudice, 2004
Starring Aishwarya Rai & Martin Henderson
Directed by Gurinder Chadha
Released by Twentieth Century Fox

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

UK TOUR 2016/17

Wed 21 - Sat 24 Sep
Tue 27 Sep - Sat 1 Oct
Tue 4 - Sat 8 Oct
Tue 11 - Sat 15 Oct
Tue 18 - Sat 22 Oct
Tue 25 - Sat 29 Oct
Tue 1 - Sat 5 Nov
Tue 8 - Sat 12 Nov
Tue 15 - Sat 19 Nov
Tue 17 - Sat 21 Jan
Tue 24 - Sat 28 Jan
Tue 31 Jan - Sat 4 Feb
Tue 14 - Sat 18 Feb
Tue 21 - Sat 25 Feb

BROMLEY
NORWICH
CAMBRIDGE
SALFORD
LEICESTER
WOKING
TRURO
BIRMINGHAM
RICHMOND
BATH
HIGH WYCOMBE
CANTERBURY
NEWCASTLE
CARDIFF

Churchill Theatre
Theatre Royal
Corn Exchange
The Lowry
Curve
New Victoria Theatre
Hall For Cornwall
Repertory Theatre
Richmond Theatre
Theatre Royal
Wycombe Swan
The Marlowe Theatre
Theatre Royal
Wales Millennium Centre

**REGENT'S
PARK** THEATRE
LONDON