ABSTRACT
This paper will deal with the attitude of early nineteen century towards women and their roles. In this paper I would like to present some of what it is possible to discover about the actual of women during Jane Austen’s time and to consider how these data correspond to Jane Austen’s representation of woman’s place. This will give a complete image of Jane Austen’s way women were seen in the early nineteenth century. We can see that woman’s role; her place is a central subject in the Austen novels. In her novels the picture of women and their lives are very different from the pictures painted of women as suppressed, passive victims of their society. Jane Austen, in choosing to delineate as accurately as possible the life she knew, recognized that life was not to include mad wives, French mistresses, orphans and the rest of the paraphernalia of the romantic novel. In her novels she does not only show the socials follies of society towards women but she also points out women’s own follies for their worst condition. In her novels she points out women’s week points and makes them aware with their strength, with their power by setting the examples of strong and intellect woman characters in her novels. Her moral teaching is characterized by a wisdom which is free from all illusions.

Keywords: Women; Feminism; Individual Identity; Obligations; Self-awareness; Contribution; Security; Freedom

INTRODUCTION
Daily life for women in the early 1800s in the Britain was that of many obligations and few choices. Some even compare the conditions of women in this time to a form of slavery. Women were completely controlled by the men in their lives, First, by their fathers, brothers and male relatives and finally by their husbands. If a father died leaving unmarried daughter, then they were most generally at the mercy of another male relative, or sometimes a male friend who became their ward. Women’s sole purpose in life is to find a husband, reproduce and then spend the rest of their lives serving him. If a woman were decided to remain single, she would be ridicule and pitied by the community. If a girl married, it was usually between the age of 16 and 19, if she entered her twenties unmarried, her prospect for marriage was nearly impossible. Keeping in mind that the mortality rate for women in childbirth only increased as a woman aged, marriage became impractical and dangerous at a certain point. She became more valuable to her father, who by that time, was often a widower and needed her companionship and services as a homemaker and often as a surrogate mother to her younger siblings. Most of women in the 18th century were uneducated. Only girls of the middle and upper working classes and nobility were fortunate to learn and write, play instruments, learn that art of becoming a “lady”.

Jane Austen born in 1775 was the second daughter of a clergyman of a church. She was pent of not very well off household in a quiet east Hampshire village. The Austen family however, had always been ‘great novel readers’, Austen wrote, and not ashamed of being so. She had intention, however, of...
writing the type of pseudo-historical romance usually associated with the genre. She wanted to write something that reflected real life, and that exhibited her humour. Women’s lives were definitely the most important in Austen’s books—she rarely bothered to note what the male characters were doing when the women weren’t around. This marked the transition from obscurity to being one of this century and last’s most influential literary figures. She did not openly sympathies with radical contemporaries such as Mary Wollstonecraft, the British writer and advocate of women’s rights. She depicts the social life of her time and is thus a practitioner of the domestic novels. It has often been remarked that, although the Napoleonic wars were going on throughout Jane Austen’s writing career, she keeps mention of them out of her novels, in which soldiers appears only as attractions for the girls or in some similar social capacity. She is a realist who draws her materials from actual life as she sees it. certain limitations were imposed upon her by the convictions of the romantic novels, whose plot demanded that she should deal with the courtship and marriage of her heroine, but she herself claimed that she worked on a “little bit (two inches wide) of ivory”. The principal theme of her novels is matrimony and daily life of a woman. Austen’s feminism is more subtle but she was still one of the first authors to suggest that women should marry for love, and for increased standing or money. Austen seemed to know too much about everyone’s follies and was so worldly that nothing shocked her. She gave her female characters the right to be happy too—right to we now take for granted, but certainly was not a given in Regency England. ‘Persuasion’, her last finished novel, is so bold as to suggest that happiness lies in a woman’s courage to act upon her passion.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To examines Jane Austen’s depiction of marital significance, social class and women’s education
2. To examines how the women’s socioeconomics positioning in Jane Austen’s novels reflects the status of women in the 18th century.

**Condemning the limits of women’s education**

In Jane Austen’s days, there was no centrally organized system of state-supported education. There were local charity or church run day schools, but these were not attended by the children of “genteel” social levels that Jane Austen writes about. More or less the same is true of apprenticeships, another relatively less “respectable” mode of education. And “dame schools” were even less respectable. Instead, “genteel” children might be educated by their parents, particularly when young, or by live in governesses or tutors. There might also be lessons with outside “masters”. Some local “grammar” schools did exist, teaching the educational basics to higher class or upwardly mobile boys, but these schools did not admit girls. Of course, women were not allowed to attend the institution rungs on the educational ladder; “public school “and the universities Oxford and Cambridge. the prime symbol of academic knowledge were the classical languages Greek and Latin, to which a great deal of time was devoted in “genteel” boy’s education, but which only few women studied. since women did not usually have career as, and were not “citizens “in the sense of being directly involved in politics, there was little generally perceived need for such higher education for them, and most writers on the subject of “female education” preferred that women receive a practical training for their domestic role. Despite the national education system established through the education acts of 1870 and 1876, girls attending public/state school received essentially the same skill related to the domestic role, classes in laundry, home management, needle work, etc. John Ruskin, a writer during this period, believed that a woman’s education should be such that “it takes into consideration a husband’s need to his interest with his wife and conduct intelligent conversation with her”. All Jane Austen’s novel’s engage with the debate over women’s education by exploring the intellectual and moral distance between the show of mere accomplishments and deeper understanding that signals self knowledge. often the distance between show and substance is what separates her heroines from other women in their society. For Austen one route to such inward knowledge is reading. At the same time, all her heroines are keenly aware of their deficiencies in education.
Questioned by the insufferably rude lady Catherine de Bough, Elizabeth Bennet admits to having few accomplishments:

She cannot draw and plays the piano only a little”, but rather than feeling her education ‘neglected ‘she counters that:

“We were always encouraged to read” ch. 29

Jane Austen’s novels all imply that this educated young woman not only can achieve a happy marriage based on equality rather than subservience, on love rather than submission, but she also can play a crucial role in insuring the moral health of her society, for she can effect order and harmony to manage her household, to promote the happiness of her husband, to provide moral leadership to her family, and to strengthen the life of her community.

Marriage

In nineteen century traditionally, marriage had been regarded as an alliance between families, as a pairing on the basis of wealth or birth or as an arrangement made by parents without regard to the personal preferences of the young woman. In this scenario, eligible young men are reduced by society into “the rightful property of some one or the other of their daughters “the notion that a propertied male desires to marry is linked to the social concept of attractive masculinity as that of one in possession of property.

One of the main themes in “Pride and Prejudice” is that of marriage and its close relation with money. The novel’s soft quoted opening sentence:

“It’s a universally acknowledge, that a single man in possession of a good wife”

Show view on marriage in Austen’s time.

In her books Jane Austen makes fun of the more trivial attraction of the married state in case the gentleman has enough money to offer his future wife everything. When Mrs.Bennet exclaims, when she hears of the marriage of her daughter with the rich Mr.Darcy:

“what pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! … A house in town!...ten thousand a year!...I shall go distracted!”

"However, in the latter part of the eighteen century certainly in Jane Austen England radical changes in the attitudes towards marriage were occurring. Marriage was coming to be regarded as a lifetime, intimate happy companionship based upon love, esteem, and compatibility and both woman and was to have voices in choosing the spouse.

“...pray, my dear aunt, what is the difference in the matrimonial affairs, between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end and avarice begin?” Ch.22in

In ch.33 Col. Fitz William Darcy the younger son of an early and obviously a very rich man hints to Elizabeth that he can’t marry her;

“Our habits of expense make us too dependent, and there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money”.

Was he being prudent or avaricious in not marring Elizabeth? Jane Austen leaves it to the readers to decide.

Charlotte is 27, not especially beautiful and without an especially large “portion”. It is therefore her advancing age that hastened her engagement to Collins “solely the pure and disinterested desires of an
In her books Jane Austen makes fun of min

But Jane Austen expresses her own opinion on all this clearly enough by the fact that only her silliest characters have such sentiments. Mr. Bennet for example says:

“He is rich, to be sure and you may have more fine clothes and fine carriage than Jane. But will they make you happy?”

It is clear that Jane Austen disapproved of this kind of marriage.

Elizabeth says to Mr. Bingley on the process of marriage,

“it appears that love is what should leads to marriage”.

In their exchange towards one another, Elizabeth deems that

“a lady’s imagination is very rapid, from love to matrimony, in a moment”(22).

Elizabeth does not emphasize money or possession but rather love. Darcy’s capture of Elizabeth represents the triumph of reason over perversity. But Darcy does not win Elizabeth merely by persistence. Though this helps greatly when Darcy first proposes, Elizabeth entertains beliefs, which if true, clearly constitute excellent grounds for refusal and she accepts him. It is partly because he has changed in fact, and largely because he has estimation, as she has seen that her earlier view of him was mistaken when she at last accepts him.

Legal status

English common law left a woman very little economic freedom, for it ruled that whatever property a woman owned before marriage or might receive thereafter automatically became her husband’s. Thus, daughters of wealthy fathers frequently became prey of fortune-seeking men, and daughters of fathers of limited fortunes often had difficulty finding husbands at all. The law of inheritance further limited women’s economic freedom for they often excluded settlement of property on women. The entail of Mr. Bennet’s estate and the economic plight of Dash woods are instances in the Austen novels of the operation of these laws of inheritance.

CONCLUSION

In Jane Austen’s novels, these issues of proper marriage, and sound education of girls and young women and economic security are represented realistically. She shows the shallow nature of the social standards of her time. She has delineated characters from the inside with the full and finished touch of the great masters; and she can also sketch figures with so sure and suggestive a pen that they stand out on a strong and unforgettable ground. She believed that all bad things come to an end. Austen feels that women do have choice. She blended these topics both thematically and aesthetically so that each novel tells the distinctive story of an individual young woman who achieves rational self-awareness and who learns to make choices.

REFERENCES