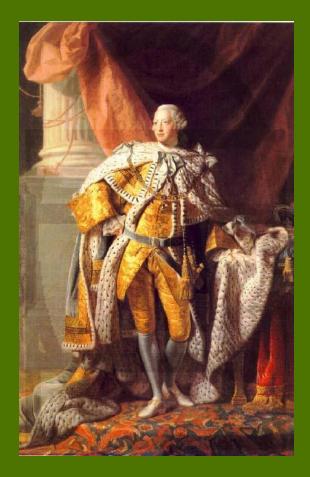
Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice



Regency Period

- Middle class gained social status; known as landed gentry
- Profits from Industrial Revolution and expanding colonial system
- Strived to align themselves with England's landed aristocracy
- Purchased estates and country homes to rival aristocratic mansions
- Newly acquired wealth and possessions



Austen's Novels

- Privileged circle of England's landed gentry and aristocracy
- Upper class was old hereditary aristocracy and the new landed gentry who came into money through commercial enterprise and ascended from the middle class
- Upper class did not work and frequently employed farmers to work their land
- Upper class controlled England's politics



Mr. Darcy

- Darcy is representative of hereditary aristocracy
- Wealthy landowner who does not have to work for a living
- Employs workers to farm his land, surrounding families depend on his patronage



The Bingleys





- Bingleys represent the new landed gentry
- Bingley's father acquired wealth through trade, gave up his business, and moved his family to the country
- He and his sisters are now considered upper class

The Bennets

- Bennets own land, but they are a middle-class family
- Longbourn House in Hertfordshire – 2,000 per year
- Must work to cultivate land
- Few servants and limited financial resources



Women, Patriarchy and Property Rights



- Women had few legal rights
- Depend on men for protection and survival
- Women could not own property (they were considered property)
- Depended on fathers to "give them away" to a lucrative marriage
- At death, property went to another male heir
- Finding a husband was a necessity not a social preoccupation

Women, Patriarchy and Property Rights



- "Entailment" determined how property would be passed through several generations within a family; usually closest male relative
- Lady Catherine DeBourgh, patroness of Rosings Park, is a rare example of an independent woman who inherits the estate of her father.

Theme of Social Class and Lack of Mobility

- Conflict that arises when members of middle class, such as Bennets, mingle socially with members of the upper classes, represented by Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley.
- Austen was critical of the social barrier between middle and upper class (while remaining silent about members of lower class)
- Elizabeth Bennet breaks class barrier



Theme of Marriage and Family



- Future of Bennet's daughters depends on successful union with suitable husbands
- Women often forced into marital unions purely out of financial necessity
- New ideal of marriage and partnership based on mutual respect and love
- Expectation of social network above individual desire for privacy
 Family's reputation was tied to reputation of each individual member

Theme of Propriety, Social Decorum, and Reputation

- Person's value depends on respect of friends and neighbors
- Woman who engaged in inappropriate behavior with a man prior to marriage was morally corrupt. No virtue = social outcast
- Elizabeth values personal worth and individual character over reputation and status
- Standards of proper social etiquette



First Impressions





- Original title of P & P
- Premature preconceptions complicate the relationships between characters
- Both characters must set aside their pride and prejudice and form an opinion based on respect and cordial friendship
- Error in judgment with Wickham who creates a bad image of Darcy
- Must look beneath the surface of a person's character

Satire

- Humor or with in order to criticize or ridicule a particular person or group
- Disguise criticism of an intended target by clothing it in humorous language, funny characterizations, and sarcasm
- Austen satirizes Mrs. Bennet and her need to marry her daughters; also Mr. Collins' high opinion of himself which often makes him the laughingstock of society



Comedy of Manners

- Uses elements of Satire to ridicule or expose behaviors, manners, flaws, and morals of members of the middle or upper classes.
- Incorporate love affairs, witty and comical exchanges between characters, and the humorous revelation of societal scandals and intrigues
- Witty banter between characters

