

Teaching Jane Austen in Secondary Schools

How the use of a student edition can be of great help

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“I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! How much sooner one tires of anything than of a book!”

- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Glossary

pre-university education – vwo

higher general secondary education – havo

upper forms – bovenbouw havo/vwo

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1. Introduction

In 2005 director Joe Wright released his film version of *Pride and Prejudice*. The moment I saw it, I immediately fell in love with the characters. The story appealed to me so much that I searched the Internet to find more information about it. A quick search taught me that the film was based on a novel of the same name written by Jane Austen. Without any doubt I purchased a copy and set my mind on reading the novel. As it turned out, this was quite a challenge for an inexperienced reader as I was at the time but that did not stop me from trying. It took me several years to finish reading the novel and during that time I would regularly search the Internet to learn more about Austen and her stories. I was hooked and in my desire to learn more I decided to major in English in the hope of reading more similar stories for I had become a Jane Austen fan.

During my bachelor I learned that I most certainly was not the only one that appreciates Austen's work. Over the years, her novels have retained their popularity and as a worldwide acclaimed novelist she has earned a secure spot in the English literary canon. Her popularity is acknowledged by critics around the world, as polled by Jane Ciabattari, resulting in an eleventh place for *Pride and Prejudice* on the BBC Culture's list of 100 greatest British novels. This outsider's perspective shows the great influence that Austen has around the world nowadays. Remarkably, during my secondary education her name was not even mentioned, which caused me to question her popularity. For that reason, this thesis will take a closer look at Austen's place in literature education in the Netherlands, focusing on secondary schools.

The first chapter of this thesis will look into the general aspects of literature education and answers the question of how literature is taught in secondary schools, with a special focus on canonical works. Important in this chapter are the guidelines and regulations that secondary

schools have to abide by. The second chapter will look into the difficulties that students can encounter in reading canonical works, and specifically the complexities they will come across in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* including an explanation with examples of how her work can be made more accessible. The final chapter will discuss the use of student editions and will not only look into teachers' sentiments about these student editions, but it will also look at existing student editions and their added value followed by a suggestion of what a new student edition aimed at Dutch secondary school students should look like. A key element in this part will be the questionnaire answered by English teachers on if and how they deal with Jane Austen in class, and how they feel Austen's novels should be dealt with in class. Part of this questionnaire focused on the use of student editions of literary works.

2. Teaching Literature

Teaching literature can be a challenging task. There are several things that have to be taken into account and in order to provide for students, teachers need to be creative in designing lessons that are challenging yet not too demanding. After all, you want your students to be challenged without daunting them with an assignment that is too complicated to successfully finish. Taking all these factors into account is quite a task that is heavily dependent on what literature you teach, the students you teach and of course what goals you set for yourself and your students. This chapter will look into the problems that teachers might encounter, not only when teaching literature in general but specifically when dealing with older novels or classics, sometimes also referred to as canonical works.

2.1 Why teach literature?

Literature is nowadays an essential part of education in the Netherlands, yet its role has been debated ever since literature was introduced to the curriculum in 1875 (Dirksen). Even to date, there seems to be little agreement among scholars and writers about how to teach literature. In March 2016 Kluun, a renowned Dutch writer, brought one specific aspect of literature education, the reading list or literature list, under discussion once more (Van Rhee). He argued that the way literature is taught in secondary schools is out-dated and counterproductive. According to Kluun, students should not be forced to read novels labelled as classics, a common practice in schools, even though he agrees that knowledge about these classics is valuable. As he explains, forcing students to read these kinds of older works takes away any pleasure in reading a student might have whereas it is precisely this reading pleasure that teachers want to stimulate. For that reason, he proposes that educators should focus on students' needs; to let students decide what they want

to read. Providing students with this choice will spark their love for reading and should, in turn, lead to diminishing the decline in reading that is common among adolescents, according to Kluun.

Kluun's point of view sparked many reactions. Sylvia Witteman, for example, sided with Kluun by stating that those who do not like to read should not be forced to. With this statement she refers to the alleged cause of an aversion against reading that is common among young students (Witte et al. 19), something that Kluun mentions as well. In response to this, Aleid Truijens argued that the lack of reading motivation among adolescents could hardly be blamed on the works they have to read in school. She explains that students are not forced to read any particular works. Rather, students are merely assigned a number of works they should read and they can individually decide which works they choose to read. Furthermore, Truijens points out that a little force can go a long way. Students tend to stick to what they know and only occasionally step outside their comfort zone. This way they "get stuck in their own world" (Truijens) and that is why it is a teacher's job to introduce students to new worlds and open up possibilities students might otherwise not encounter, even if they do not like it at first. As Truijens puts it, reading taste is developed over time and some reading experience is needed in order to start the process.

This recent debate highlights the dichotomy that exists among teachers and critics. As Bolscher et al. explain, there are generally speaking two approaches to teaching literature (167). The first approach, dubbed the old-fashioned way of teaching literature, is aimed at the transfer of culture. Central to this approach is the focus on literary history and teaching the classics. Supporters of this approach consider literary works as cultural representations or, as Erik Raschke puts it, classic literature gives insight into the complexity and subtle nuances of a country's culture. The other approach strongly focuses on the possibilities for self-development.

This approach is aimed at awakening an interest in literature and developing a taste in reading. In this modern approach, literary history is of secondary importance. There is no absolute best way when it comes to teaching literature and as Kluun rightly points out it is about what you want your students to know in the end.

2.2 Literature Education in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the government has set a few guidelines on what literature education should look like. It is remarkable that Dutch secondary schools are relatively free to give purpose and content to their literature education. The only things that are set in stone are the so-called ‘eindtermen’, can-do statements that indicate a skill that the students should have mastered at the end of secondary school. These skills are tested in the school exam rather than in the central exam, meaning that the governing body does not coordinate exams and schools are thus free to choose what they teach and how they test it. The advantage of this system is that schools are not forced to teach anything they do not see fit for their students, yet the downside of it is that each school teaches different skills and works of literature, which can be challenging in higher education. After all, secondary education is aimed at preparing students for higher education. To overcome these differences between schools, the ministry of education has formulated the can-do statements in such a way that every student with a secondary school diploma should have similar knowledge and skills. The can-do statements for literature are as follows (Meijer and Fasoglio 55):

- Students can report about their reading experiences of at least three literary works supported by arguments.
- Students can recognise and distinguish between literary genres and are able to use literary terminology when interpreting literary texts (only at pre-university level).

- Students can give an overview of the literary history and place the literary works they have read in a historical perspective (only at pre-university level).

As can be seen, the can-do statements do not mention how to teach or test literature. They merely provide guidelines for what students should be able to do at the end of secondary school.

2.3 The Challenging Nature of Teaching Literature

The struggle many teachers face when dealing with literature is narrowing down what they specifically want their students to know. Literature is a rather large concept and the vast amount of literature available makes it difficult to decide what to teach. Therefore, Richard Beach et al. suggest a planning model that forces educators to think about it in small steps (47-59). The first step in deciding what you want your students to know is to set clear goals as these are central to good teaching (Biggs 361). It is important to take a closer look at the objectives that are set by the governing body of education before you start formulating your own learning objectives.

While it is necessary to derive your learning objectives from these curriculum goals and it is very important to take these guidelines into account, it hardly narrows down the possibilities of what you can teach. Beach et al. suggest that the next step in solving this issue is to take a closer look at the students you will be teaching. This means selecting a specific group of students you will be working with and determining their preferences and interests (48-9). The majority of teachers that participated in the questionnaire (see chapter 4.1) shared this viewpoint of taking students' preferences and interests into account. It was their main reason for not dealing with Jane Austen in class. Although I agree that it is of the utmost importance to take your students into account, it is sometimes necessary to teach things that might not appeal to students at first sight. In line with what Truijens argued, I believe it is a teacher's job to pull his/her students out of their comfort zone and to get them acquainted with literary works they might not choose

themselves when they go to the library to select a book. With this in mind I propose to select a work of literature first, followed by finding the appropriate way of teaching it to the students that you have in mind. This implies two things. First, I am convinced that a work of literature can be adapted in such a way that it can be taught to a larger body of students than might be expected. Second, a teacher can make a work of literature more accessible to students by selecting relevant materials to teach while reading. These notions form the foundation of my thesis.

2.4 Teaching the Canon

Pride and Prejudice is one of those works that is categorised as canonical (Ciabattari). The value of the canon has been widely debated (Beach et al. 64) and teachers indicate that they often despise works that are defined as classics (see chapter 4.1). Nonetheless, Beach et al. point out that teaching these classics can be of great value (64). They explain that canonical works are valuable to us because important ideas speak across generations and allow us to critically look at our own society (64). Furthermore, the general themes present in these works invite readers to think about ideas such as “truth, beauty, goodness, justice, liberty, and equality” (Beach et al. 64). Aside from the considerations of language and culture that might complicate reading a work that belongs to the canon, teaching classics can stimulate students to engage in critical thinking. Every novel has to offer different ideas and, similarly, every novel presents the reader with different difficulties. The following chapter will discuss the challenges that *Pride and Prejudice* presents.

3. The Difficulties of Teaching *Pride and Prejudice*

As mentioned before, many of the surveyed teachers object to teaching Jane Austen because her work is supposedly out-dated, off-putting and difficult to many students (see chapter 4.1). These sentiments might be felt among teachers nationwide, yet Austen's work also provides teachers with an opportunity. As said, older novels have an entire history to offer in addition to everything contemporary novels have to offer. This chapter will not only focus on the difficulties of teaching an Austen novel but also on the opportunities offered by such an undertaking.

3.1 Language and Style

The challenging nature of teaching an Austen novel is first and foremost the (use of) language. *Pride and Prejudice* is no exception to this. Language is always in motion and the English that we speak nowadays differs from the language that Austen used in her days. This adds to the difficulty that the novel presents. Students need to be able to decode the literal meaning of the work, unravelling the plot and discovering the main ideas and themes, as well as the language of the narrative and writing style of the author. This may appear an insurmountable obstacle, yet teachers, as experienced readers, are able to provide scaffolds that help students in overcoming this obstacle.

An important feature in Austen's novel is her writing style and use of language. Austen uses language in a careful, deliberate way and manages to use it as a characterisation tool. Characteristic of Austen's style is that she prefers to show a character in action as opposed to telling her readers about the characters. An important tool to show readers what a character is like is the clever use of dialogue and conversation, for instance, when Elizabeth is at Rosings having a

conversation with Colonel Fitzwilliam she attracts the attention of Lady Catherine, who boldly interrupts the conversation the two are having:

“What is that you are saying, Fitzwilliam? What is it you are talking of? What are you telling Miss Bennet? Let me hear what it is.” “We are speaking of music, Madam,” said he, when no longer able to avoid a reply. “Of music! Then pray speak aloud. It is of all subjects my delight. I must have my share in the conversation if you are speaking of music. There are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient.” (Austen, *Ware* 148)

In this brief excerpt, readers learn a great deal about Lady Catherine without having to read the complete novel. It should be obvious, even to secondary school students, that Lady Catherine is fond of music as she points out herself. What might be difficult for an inexperienced reader to grasp, however, is the indirect characterisation that portrays Lady Catherine as arrogant, rude, controlling, selfish and egocentric. This characterisation can be inferred from Lady Catherine’s actions. The fact that she has the audacity to interrupt a conversation that she is not part of shows her rudeness. During the early nineteenth century, it was simply not polite to intrude into someone else’s conversation. This makes it even more complex for students to understand, as joining a conversation you were not part of from the start is nowadays not as impolite and rude as it was back then. Moreover, Lady Catherine’s selfish and egocentric manner is highlighted in the way she manages to turn the conversation in such a way that it is about herself. The fact that she cannot be bothered by her own lack of civilised behaviour emphasises her arrogance. It is a true skill that Austen manages to show her readers so much of a character in relatively few words. It requires a more experienced reader to fully understand the characters in detail because they would have to read in between the lines and know the rules of behaviour.

In addition, as Norman Page points out, Austen makes use of keywords that “express her ideals and aspirations” (55). Keywords are defined as “lexicological units expressing a society ... denoting a person, a feeling, an idea which are alive in so far as society recognizes in them its ideal” (qtd. in Page 55). Precisely these keywords can prove a real challenge for students. The difficulty that these keywords present lies in the meaning of those words, or rather the meanings of those words. The notion that a word can have multiple meanings that can be quite similar is not new to students and will most likely not present any difficulties, as students are familiar with using dictionaries. The challenge with these words *is* that they have “both a familiar modern and an archaic sense” (Page 62), which might cause confusion amongst students. An example of such a word is “elegant” which is used in different ways by Mr. Collins and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*. The Oxford Learner’s Dictionary explains that nowadays the term elegant is used to refer to people or their behaviour and means “attractive and showing a good sense of style”. Mr Collins uses the term to explain Elizabeth’s rejection to his proposal: “As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females” (Austen, *Ware* 94). Mr. Collins describes Elizabeth’s behaviour as a common practice of elegant women. In this case the term elegant is used with a sense of coquettishness. He believes that Elizabeth’s rejection is merely a way of becoming more desirable. However, Elizabeth’s reply to this assumption shows that elegant has a rather different meaning to her: “I do assure you, Sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man” (Austen, *Ware* 94). The fact that Elizabeth names pretensions and tormenting in one breath with elegance indicates that she clearly disdains his use of the word. She goes even further by insinuating that she is insulted by the fact that he dares to ascribe that kind of behaviour to her: “Do not consider me now an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a

rational creature speaking the truth from her heart” (Austen, *Ware* 94). Here, she makes an attempt at explaining what she considers as elegant, namely to be honest and to show dignity in treating others with the kind of respect that she herself wishes to be treated. Either definition is still somewhat different from the present-day use of the term, although Elizabeth’s use is more similar to the modern use than Mr. Collins’s use is. It nonetheless remains difficult for secondary school students that are still learners of English to distil both meanings from the text as well as the emotional undertone that is present on closer inspection of the words.

One way teachers can help their students to decode language is by introducing them to the author’s style, for instance in the form of a short work or excerpt. In the case of Jane Austen, teachers can choose to use parts of her shorter work *Lady Susan*. This novel written in epistolary form is a great example of how Austen uses language as a characterisation tool. By using this novel to get students accustomed to Austen’s writing style, teachers are able to provide students with a skill they can use independently when dissecting *Pride and Prejudice*. The advantage of this is that a single novel is used to teach a skill that students can apply to other novels of the same author. Instead of dissecting a novel for them, it is possible to teach them how to do it on their own. On the other hand, where time is limited it can be useful to lend students a hand by helping them get on their way by taking an excerpt or several excerpts from *Pride and Prejudice* to teach the same skill. This way it is possible to kill two birds with one stone because students will not only acquire a skill, they will also get a head start in understanding the plot and characters of the novel. Either way can work yet it is important to stress that it is of the utmost importance that the focus should be on teaching the skills that are necessary for students to understand the novel, rather than helping them in analysing the novel. The whole idea is that students should be able to learn to do this on their own.

Another strategy that can be used to clarify language is pre-teaching vocabulary. This might be a more demanding task for teachers since there are no clear-cut vocabulary lists at hand. Although vocabulary is only part of the difficulty, it can be of great help to students. Students have a tendency to consult a dictionary as soon as they come across a word that is unfamiliar to them. A consequence of this is that they stop reading and are forced to interrupt their train of thought. Instead, a common practice among teachers is to teach students how to figure out the meaning of a word from the context and other clues. This is a difficult process and not mastered by all students, therefore, discussing recurring words beforehand stimulates this process because students have already seen a word and they are more likely to puzzle out the meaning. Furthermore, pre-teaching vocabulary allows a teacher to ensure that students are aware of the right meaning or relevant meanings of words. As discussed this can partially take away the ambiguity that is present in words that have both a modern and an archaic meaning. Together, these strategies should provide students with enough knowledge and skills to find their way in the novel and to make sense of the story.

3.2 Historical and Cultural Context

To a present-day reader, reading and understanding an Austen novel can be difficult. As cliché as it might sound, time is always changing and the circumstances that we are accustomed to nowadays are quite different from the circumstances that Austen lived in. As Beach et al. put it “we do well to remember that even timeless classics are coloured by the times through which they have moved” (66). This presents students with yet another challenge when reading *Pride and Prejudice*, as it is important to understand the historical and cultural context for it helps in understanding the story.

An important thing that provides insight into Austen's novels is an understanding of the class system. Social status is incredibly relevant in Austen's novels as it played a major role in Austen's society. A good way to deepen understanding of the class system is to look into the use of titles. A title is an indication of social status. There were several different classes in the Regency era yet it is not necessary for students to understand every detail of it. The most important thing students must understand in order to grasp the meaning of *Pride and Prejudice* is that there were commoners and nobility. A way to distinguish commoners from nobility and middle-class nobility from upper class nobility is, as said, their title. An example drawn from the novel that can clarify the difference of how a title works is the different use of Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Lucas. Both women carry the title "Lady", however, there is a slight difference as can be seen. Lady Catherine is called by her first name whereas Lady Lucas is called by her last name. This is what separates them. When a woman has the title "Lady" attached to her first name it means that she has a noble paternal lineage; she is the daughter of an earl (McMaster 117). This means that Lady Catherine cannot lose her title, as it is hereditary. Lady Lucas on the other hand can lose her title because it is attached to her last name, meaning that she can use it because she is married to a baronet or a knight (McMaster 117). This difference is of great importance because knights and baronets are considered middle class nobility because they could earn a title, whereas the upper class nobility were born with a title (Beckett). Thus, the different usage of the title "Lady" is what distinguishes the upper class from the middle class. Similarly, the eldest daughter of the Bennet family, Jane, is referred to as Miss Bennet whereas her sisters are called by their first name, e.g. Miss Mary. This distinction comes with certain rights as well. An elder sister can be out in society before the younger sisters, meaning they can go to balls without a chaperone and can get married (McMaster 120). Although this is relatively minor in comparison to the different use of the title "Lady" it still indicates that being the eldest comes

with privileges just as being a Lady comes with privileges. This is all the more true for being the eldest son because he would not only inherit any title, but also the bulk of the estate. In order to ensure that property stayed within the family, primogeniture was traditionally practiced, meaning that the firstborn male heir inherited the estate(s). If there were not any sons to claim the family's inheritance, the estate could be passed on to the closest male relative, but not to any daughters. This is the case in *Pride and Prejudice* where the Bennet estate is entailed upon Mr. Collins and the Bennet sisters risk losing their home to Mr. Collins after Mr. Bennet dies. An entail was not required, yet it ensured that the property remained within the family.

In relation to class there is a part of the population that deserves special attention for it is the focus of Austen's novels, namely the gentry. The gentry were part of the nobility although they did not share the same rights and privileges (Beckett). In Austen's time, male members of the gentry were referred to as gentlemen (McMaster 118). As Elizabeth points out, she is "a gentleman's daughter" and Darcy is a gentleman, suggesting that "so far [they] are equal" (Austen, *Ware* 298). However, Lady Catherine makes it perfectly clear that even though Darcy and Elizabeth both belong to the gentry they each have different social status as she makes it clear that Elizabeth's "alliance will be a disgrace" (Austen, *Ware* 298). Lady Catherine finds it is Elizabeth's family that makes her of lesser descent: "True. You *are* a gentlemen's daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition" (Austen, *Ware* 298). She even claims that the behaviour of her sisters, Lydia in particular, will pollute "the shades of Pemberley" (Austen, *Ware* 299). Furthermore, Darcy derives some prestige from being *her* nephew. As has been illustrated, there were quite some differences between members of the gentry. This had all to do with how men made their money. In Austen's time, the most common way to make money was to inherit it or to receive it as income from one's land or estate (McMaster 118). The annual income would thus be dependent

on the size of the land and the estate and that explains the great differences between members of the gentry. Mr. Bennet for example makes a reasonable £2000 a year whereas Darcy makes a stunning £10 000 a year. If there is no inheritance it means that men must find another way to make money. The possibilities for earning money were scarce, namely: “the church, the army, the navy, the law and medicine” (McMaster 121).

Although it appears to be quite a challenge for men to make a living, women face an even bigger struggle, as they are completely dependent on the men in their life. A woman had relatively few to no rights in the late 1700s. The only way for a woman to earn a living was to become a governess (McMaster 126) yet the most likely choice, even though you can hardly call it a choice, was to marry. In *Pride and Prejudice* this situation becomes clear in Charlotte Lucas’s marriage to Mr. Collins. Upon hearing the news of Charlotte’s engagement, Elizabeth acts surprised and declares it “impossible” (Austen, *Ware* 108). To Elizabeth marriage is an act of love whereas Charlotte points out that not all can afford to marry out of love:

I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connection, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. (Austen, *Ware* 108)

Charlotte makes it perfectly clear that marrying Mr. Collins allows her to live a life of her own, a picture that becomes clearer after Elizabeth’s observation of how Charlotte is getting accustomed to her new life once she visits the newly-wed couple: “When Mr. Collins could be forgotten, there was really a great air of comfort throughout, and by Charlotte’s evident enjoyment of it, Elizabeth supposed he must be often forgotten” (Austen, *Ware* 134). Evidently, Charlotte is not in love with Mr. Collins yet their marriage provides her with an independent living. As is the case with the Bennet sisters, Charlotte has no right to her family’s inheritance because she is a woman

and the estate passes onto the closest male heir. For this reason, Mrs. Bennet is so keen on ensuring that her daughters marry, preferably with wealthy husbands as the novel's famous opening-line points out: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen, *Ware* 3). This single line summarises the plot and the importance of marriage perfectly. Although it is here stated that every man is looking for a wife, it becomes clear throughout the novel that the women are in pursuit of a husband that can provide for them.

The question that arises then is how women were expected to spend their time. With no job or other similar occupation society expected women to spend their time on becoming and being accomplished. In Austen's days, an accomplished woman would possess certain skills and talents that allowed her to be a good wife and mother. Miss Bingley makes it clear what being accomplished entails in a conversation with her brother, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. She explains that people tend to apply the term too generously and to truly deserve the word a woman must "greatly surpass what is usually met with" (Austen, *Ware* 35). This already hints at some steep expectations that women had to meet, which further becomes clear as she sums up the exact qualities a woman should have:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved. (Austen, *Ware* 35)

As if this is not already difficult enough, Darcy elaborates that "she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (Austen, *Ware* 35). In the eyes of Mr. Darcy and Miss Bingley women apparently need their time to work on these accomplishments. Although it might appear that becoming an accomplished lady merely serves to

pass the time, the opposite turns out to be true, as Ann Bermingham points out (4). She explains that the way society looked at being accomplished suggested that it was “empty show” (4), merely there to please a (future) husband. A girl was often sent to a boarding school, if her parents could afford it, to learn about the etiquette of being a lady and even if her parents could not afford such a luxury, the girl would be taught at home either by her parents or by a governess if her parents could spare enough money to pay for the governess. As there was no standardised curriculum it was up to schools to decide what they believed was important to teach. This could include needlework, arithmetic, bookkeeping, natural history, English, French, drawing, writing, dancing and music (Bermingham 8). This suggests that girls were trained in becoming ladies for the sole pleasure of her future husband.

All things considered, a teacher has to provide aid and assistance in order for students to be able to interpret the story. It is important that students are able to look at the story from a more historical perspective. They need to understand that Elizabeth’s stubborn refusal to marry Mr. Collins because she does not love him is out of the ordinary. At the same time, they have to be aware that Charlotte’s response to Mr. Collins’s proposal is the desired and expected one. Without this understanding students interpret the story in a modern way and that means that part of the meaning will be lost. Therefore, in order to fully understand the characters and the motives behind their actions, teachers need to provide insight in the historical and cultural background by providing information about it. There are several ways to do this, for example: showing a documentary about life in the 1700s, drawing a timeline of events that happened in that period but also listing common practices and beliefs. It depends on the personal preferences of the teacher how this is incorporated but the necessity of it has been made clear.

3.3 Dealing with Resistance

Another obstacle teachers feel they need to overcome when assigning a class to read an Austen novel, is the reluctant attitude of students towards her work. Teachers mostly experience this unsympathetic attitude from boys and often define Austen's work as "girly" (see chapter 4.1). Putting it this bluntly does not only show resistance from students but also unwillingness from teachers to focus on themes more central to Austen's novels. Looking beyond the surface of the marriage plot provides teachers with an opportunity to discuss Austen's work in a historical and social context as explained above.

An issue that complicates assigning an Austen novel is that Austen's characters are socially and historically too far removed from students. This makes it difficult to identify or even sympathise with them, especially for younger students. Theo Witte explains that students should have reached modest literary competence about halfway through pre-university education (502). According to Witte "this level can be labelled as reflective reading" (530) meaning that students have a strong focus on reading, interpreting, understanding and appreciating rather simple literary works although they tend to be ready to read more complex novels. Students' literary development has reached a level that allows them to grasp a deeper layer of meaning, provided that the language is simple and the structure is clear. Students will also be able to discuss certain issues present in the book with their classmates, as these issues are what generally interests them. In general, reading is a way of exploring the world making it unnecessary for the characters in the novel to relate directly to the students' experience, as long as the story addresses themes that students can relate to such as love, death and friendship. Precisely this is what causes the resistance. At first sight, it may appear as though the central theme of marriage is too far removed from students. Yet, on closer inspection it becomes clear that there are moral and social issues to

be addressed, for instance, why is Elizabeth considered foolish for turning down Mr. Collins and how come women were so dependent on the men in their lives?

It is a teacher's job to grant access to a story by providing points of relevance for the students, for "relevance is the source of engaged reading" (Beach et al. 66). One way of bringing a novel closer to students is by making them see how the story would work out in modern times. This could be done by pairing the classic work to a modern version. In the case of *Pride and Prejudice* there has recently been published a modern retelling of the story entitled *Eligible*. This modern retelling brings the protagonists to Cincinnati. The story has been adapted in such a way that it is not only written in modern English, but also set in modern society. The Bennet sisters each have their own life. Jane and Liz live in New York and they both have a job and their own apartment. Kitty and Lydia are solely focused on their health and still live in the family home. Mary lives with her parents as well, only she prefers to spend her time studying. The one thing all sisters have in common is that they are single. The best part of the story is that it allows students to get to know the characters in a funny, recognisable way. Admittedly, the original story is witty as well but this might be too far removed from students for them to fully understand it. The characters are represented truthfully in comparison to the original story. The major disadvantage, however, is that the characters' representation is about the only truthful representation of the story, for it has been completely drawn out of context. This makes the girls' reasons for finding their true love and marrying even more difficult to believe since it is not such a big deal in society any more. What has not changed though is that their mother still pushes her daughters to get married. The similarities are there but it must be stressed that this novel cannot serve as a replacement of the original work. For that reason, I would suggest that similarities between the stories are highlighted and excerpts are used to strengthen the image that students create when reading *Pride and Prejudice*.

Furthermore, it is also possible to introduce students to the story by showing (parts of) a film or documentary. There are many adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, each with different benefits and drawbacks to them. A great advantage of studying film adaptations in general is that it presents students with an image. Moreover, watching a film in class provides teachers with the opportunity to discuss how the screen adaptation presents the story differently from the novel. However, this can be a disadvantage as well. A film or documentary may bear hardly any resemblance to the original text, meaning that students do not get the right image of the story. Thus, teachers must be careful in the materials they select. The 2005 film version of *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, has a scene in which Darcy and Elizabeth are talking to each other at the Meryton assembly about how they believe affection should be encouraged. This scene is not part of the book and changes the way the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth is portrayed. In addition, films have effects that can help students in interpreting what is meant. Music or other sound effects add emotion that might clarify what is happening. Ultimately, this can aid students in their understanding of the story.

4. Student Editions

One way of overcoming issues that hinder students in their reading is by using an adaptation that caters to the needs of the students. These student editions are edited or adapted in such a way that they are made suitable for students. They are designed to aid students in understanding the novel on their own. This chapter looks into the use of student editions in secondary schools in the Netherlands. The first section reports on a questionnaire that was conducted among secondary school teachers on their sentiments about the use of student editions. This section is followed by an analysis of two existing student editions. Important aspects of these editions are compared and assessed on their added value. Lastly, a suggestion will be made on the most important features that ought to be part of a new student edition to be published for secondary school students in the upper forms.

4.1 Questionnaire

There is absolutely no need to doubt Austen's popularity yet the question remains how much of this popularity is reflected in Dutch literature education. In order to establish this, a questionnaire was answered by thirty-five secondary school teachers that work in the upper forms. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to find out how these teachers feel about student editions in general, as well as adaptations of Austen's novels. The questionnaire was set up in such a way that teachers had to explain what role Jane Austen currently plays in their education.

As it turns out, the majority of the respondents indicate that Austen is not part of their literature curriculum. Reasons for this were diverse in nature. The most common objection to teaching Jane Austen is that her novels only appeal to a certain group of students and can be quite

off-putting to the rest. Teachers explain that Austen's novels are more for the experienced reader because of the rather difficult language. Furthermore, teachers feel that the general themes discussed in Austen's work are more suited for girls. This severely narrows down the students that might be interested in reading an Austen novel. This is underpinned by the responses to the questions about the students that choose to read an Austen novel for their reading list. Teachers indicate that this only happens occasionally and that most students that do choose to read one of Austen's novels are girls. Similarly, only a small number of teachers advise students to read an Austen novel. Most respondents stressed that the students to whom they have recommended an Austen novel tend to be girls that are particularly avid readers and genuinely interested in the genre. It was made perfectly clear that Austen is not an everyday read for most students in the upper forms.

Another reason why Austen is not as popular in education as among critics is because many teachers feel that Austen's writing is out-dated and that contemporary novels are more relevant and will appeal more to a larger body of students. Several teachers indicate that literature is a relatively small part of the curriculum and that choices have to be made with regard to the books and stories dealt with in class. Teachers often cannot name any particular reasons for not reading anything by Austen: "it just happens to be this way" is a commonly heard phrase. The teachers that do deal with Jane Austen in their lessons explain that they merely mention Austen or use short fragments from her novels as part of literary history, which is obligatory for pre-university students. It can thus be said that Austen has a rather unwanted status among teachers. This is reflected in the fact that none of the teachers reads a whole book with the whole class. The use of excerpts indicates that Austen serves the sole purpose of demonstrating what was common writing in her time as opposed to a novel to be read for its language or plot.

The last mentioned reason why teachers do not feel the need to teach about Austen is because they find her novels too difficult for a rather large group of students. This might suggest that they would feel something for a student edition that either simplifies or explains her writing, but the contrary appears to be true. Surprisingly, a vast majority of nearly seventy per cent of the respondents showed a strong objection to such a thing. Teachers feel strongly about their role in literature education. They explain that it is a teacher's job to make a difference in terms of explaining the relevance of a work and making it more accessible to students. Moreover, teachers make it very clear that they find that there are already more than enough materials available, such as films and documentaries that can help to understand not only Austen's novels but also the society she lived in. Lastly, many teachers point out that Austen's writing is so characteristic that changing the language in any way whatsoever, which would take away the difficulty for most inexperienced readers, will take away the most important feature of Austen's novels. According to most teachers that handed in this questionnaire, any work of literature should be enjoyed in its original form.

The teachers that do make a suggestion about what they think a student edition should look like have various ideas. Teachers' own preference is naturally a major factor in this, which becomes clear in the different opinions stated. A rather interesting finding is that about one third of the teachers mentioned a graphic novel as an agreeable solution to the problems that might be encountered when reading a novel written by Jane Austen. In addition, a handful of respondents indicated that they experience a need for illustrated editions. The reason that quite a lot of teachers opt for a visual addition to the book rather than changing the writing is that it adds something relatively new to the existing materials that are already easily accessible. One teacher sums up what most teachers briefly touch upon in their comments, namely that "this generation is very sensitive to images so [a graphic novel] could be a way to introduce them to Jane Austen

and give it a contemporary feel.” Teachers highlight, though, that a graphic novel should be an addition to the original work rather than a replacement of it.

Another frequently mentioned solution is to annotate the original work. Teachers feel quite strongly for a “decent” introduction, a wordlist and a few explanatory notes that touch upon concepts unknown to a present-day reader. However, the teachers do remark that annotations should be kept brief and are merely there to clarify essential parts that might otherwise hinder understanding. Any additions to a novel only feel justified if it aids the primary reading process. Hence, a list of characters, for example, is undesired by most and annotations should be kept to a bare minimum.

In a nutshell, the surveyed teachers indicate that it is not common to teach Jane Austen or to read any of her novels in their entirety. This is mainly due to the difficulty of her writing, the age of her books and the distinctly “girly” feel to her novels. Most teachers feel it is their job to overcome these difficulties when it is decided to deal with Austen in class, yet some feel that a graphic novel or annotated and illustrated edition that caters to the need of students in a Dutch secondary school setting might aid in making Austen’s work more accessible to a greater body of students.

4.2 Existing Editions

Student editions come in many forms and varieties. As it turns out, most of these editions are aimed at native speakers of English, for example the Wordsworth Classics edition. On their site, Wordsworth claims to “offer added value in the form of exclusive introductions”. The general introduction written in each book further explains that these introductions are “jargon-free” and “designed to appeal to the general reader and students” (Carabine). In addition, notes have been added to assist in the understanding of concepts that are unclear to a contemporary reader. It is

specifically pointed out that the notes are there to help in understanding the novel rather than providing students with an interpretation. Lastly, the story is accompanied by illustrations that portray important scenes in the book.

As much as these extras help in understanding the novel, it is doubtful whether it will be enough for a learner of English. Learners of English face an even greater challenge in reading these novels as opposed to native speakers. They can still benefit from these editions as they will help them in decoding the meaning of the story, however, they do not take away the challenges that the language poses. The notes that have been added are there to clarify words or concepts that are no longer common today. As important as this is, it will not be enough for learners of English, as they also need explanations or translations of words that are difficult and unfamiliar to them because they are not native speakers.

Further investigation demonstrates that there are also student editions aimed at learners of English. At first sight, these editions appear to be the ideal solution in overcoming linguistic issues for students, because the books are shortened and written in modernised English, but on closer inspection there are several drawbacks to these editions as well. Nonetheless, two editions have been analysed in more detail. These two editions are from the renowned publishers Pearson and Oxford. These editions were chosen because they are easily accessible and provide a set of extra materials that can be used for teaching, all aimed at learners of English.

The first issue that needs to be addressed is the level of difficulty that these publishers assign to the novel. Oxford scales *Pride and Prejudice* on a CEFR level B2/C1 and Pearson correspondingly rates it as B2+. Similarly, the Dutch site novellist.nl categorises the unabridged version of *Pride and Prejudice* as adult literature leaning towards old or classic with a reading level of C1. It can thus be said that for readers to be able to understand *Pride and Prejudice* in either version they must have reached the C1 language proficiency level. The question that

remains is what this indication entails. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is, as it says, a framework of reference that can be used as a guideline in the assessment of foreign language proficiency. Language learners that have reached the C1 level are considered to have effective proficiency meaning the following:

[They] can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. (27)

The framework further specifies that concerning reading, learners on a C1 level “can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style” (27). These “illustrative descriptors” immediately highlight the problems that teachers face when teaching *Pride and Prejudice*. Secondary school students only reach the level that is necessary to read and understand the novel when they are about to leave school, that is, pre-university students should have reached C1 by the time they graduate whereas higher general secondary education students will only reach B2 according to the governing body that regulates the national exams (College voor Toetsen en Examens 13). This indicates that teachers must provide the necessary scaffolds in order for students to be able to understand the novel, even when using a retold version. On the whole, rewriting *Pride and Prejudice* in more modern language does not necessarily take away the difficulty of the novel, for even modernised versions are still considered too difficult for secondary school students.

What is more, the re-telling of a story in present-day English has several drawbacks that might hinder understanding as well. This is most likely why most respondents to the

questionnaire showed a strong objection to using such editions. Most teachers believe that literature should be enjoyed in its original form. Although the respondents did not elaborate on this opinion, one of them said that translating Austen's novels would lead to a loss of their character. Austen is well known for her clever use of language and the success of her novels is often ascribed to her friendly, witty narrator (Page 9-10). A modern day translation of her novels will at least partially take away the narrative voice that so many have fallen in love with. Furthermore, Austen's distinct writing style, especially the way she constructs her dialogues and conversations, plays a major part in characterisation. Each character's speech appears to be a perfect match and provides the reader with a great way to come to know each character. Changing the language can thus lead to a change in characters. Another pitfall of altering the language is that it might take away parts of the historical elements within the story. Canonical works such as Austen's are considered cultural representations "that show a nation, its people and its literature in the best possible light" (Beach 64). Language is a major part of this representation because "each historical era has its own characteristic features of linguistic style" (Beach 65). Again, changing the language will also have an influence on the story itself. This indicates that the teachers' belief that the most essential part of a novel is taken away in adaptations is not based on mere feelings.

If modernising a novel's language is not the solution to helping students in overcoming the difficulty of language, teachers must look into other resources to make a novel more accessible. Some of these aspects are already present in the researched student editions, for example a wordlist. Both publishers have chosen to include a wordlist as part of the book, which can be found after the story. Words are listed in alphabetical order and are accompanied by a definition rather than a translation. A major advantage of this is that students do not have to switch from one language to another. This can be of great help especially since students consider

it frustrating when they do not understand the translation of a word. Vocabulary the mother tongue can provide difficulties for students as well. The use of a wordlist in this particular manner also has its drawbacks. There is reason to believe that the wordlist is included so that students need not use a dictionary. This is quite practical and makes sense, however, the wordlist is at the end of the book meaning that students still have to leaf through the book in order to find the word they are looking for, which is a severe interruption of the reading process. Furthermore, students have to look for the right word because they are not presented in the same order in which a student will come across them whilst reading, meaning students have to perform another act that keeps them from reading. Lastly, the words that are in the wordlist are not in any way indicated in the text so during reading students are not aware whether or not a word is in the wordlist, which can cause unnecessary interruptions as well. All in all, a wordlist can most certainly be of great help to students as long as it is provided in a student-friendly way.

Another great resource that students and teachers can use is a general introduction. Although both student editions have an introduction that places the story in a cultural and historical context, each introduction is somewhat different from the other. The Oxford edition focuses solely on introducing the story in the form of a summary with an explanation of what society looked like at the time it was written, whereas the Pearson edition opens with a short summary as well but then describes society intertwined with the author's biography. Oxford chooses to provide a biography as well yet this is presented at the end of the book as a separate part. Nonetheless, both publishers have chosen to clarify three things as part of their student edition. The first is a short summary of the story. Presenting this summary before the story is a great way of introducing students to the story first of all because it allows them insight in what they can expect and secondly because it highlights the most important parts in plain English, making sure that students get what the story is about even if they are not able to extract it from

reading the story. The second feature, present in both introductions, is an overview of the historical and cultural context. This look into society provides students with the first step in understanding the characters. The last aspect, though presented in different ways, is a short biography of Jane Austen. On the one hand, a glimpse into the life of an author can be helpful as it is another way of showing aspects of society at the time the story was written but on the other hand, it can also be confusing for students for the author is not part of the story and insight into her life is not necessary for understanding the story. Providing information about the historical and cultural context without mentioning the author should be enough to help students get started. Thus, an introduction can prove to be a great asset for students provided it presents only relevant information that helps a student in understanding the story.

The last resource that can help students in understanding a story is the addition of notes. Remarkably, both Pearson and Oxford have chosen not to include notes in their editions. Neither publisher specifies a reason for the absence of notes, however, it can be speculated that they felt it unnecessary to include notes since the story is already introduced and rewritten in modern English. Nonetheless, adding notes to clarify certain words or concepts can help students in their understanding of the story, as it is most likely that not everything from the general introduction will be remembered. Furthermore, pointing to specific examples of things that were mentioned in the introduction can clarify the information that they have read before. Thus, incorporating notes can assist students in understanding the story and its background in a better way.

In spite of the differences between student editions aimed at learners of English and native speakers of English, it has been established that both ways of adapting or editing a story in a way that caters to the needs of the students has its advantages and disadvantages. It can be concluded that neither edition is considered sufficient for Dutch secondary school students. With this in mind the following section will propose a set of features that are to be taken into account in a

student edition of *Pride and Prejudice* aimed at helping Dutch students read the story on their own as part of a lesson series.

4.3 A New Student Edition

It has already been made clear that a student edition can be of great help to students, however it has also been pointed out that current student editions lack the right combination of resources to offer successful guidance. For that reason, this section will shortly touch upon the features that are necessary for students to independently read *Pride and Prejudice*.

Due to the major disadvantages of modernising the language, as shown above, it is strongly recommended to present the story in its original form. As a consequence, learners of English face the struggle of decoding a language that is in multiple ways foreign to them. To overcome these difficulties, notes should be added to clarify difficult and unknown words. One suggestion to clarify words and phrases is to present them as a marginal note on the same page. This way there is no need to leaf through the book in order to find the right note so that there will be as little interruption as possible while at the same time providing students with the help they need. Furthermore, footnotes can be used to explain difficult words and phrases. The story of *Pride and Prejudice* is riddled with cultural and historical elements that are expected to be unknown to a present-day reader. These elements can be briefly addressed in footnotes to clarify their meaning, provided that footnotes are kept to a bare minimum. This way, students can better justify characters' actions, which will not only help them in understanding the characters, but also the deeper layers of the story. In addition to the use of footnotes for clarifying cultural and historical elements, a general introduction can be added to the book in order to provide students with an overview of the historical and cultural context that is relevant to understanding the story. As pointed out, it is precisely this context that can be challenging for students, as they are not

familiar with societal norms of the time the story was written in. Without a proper understanding of how society worked students are prone to interpret the story in a different way that will hinder understanding of it. Besides using the introduction to describe the historical and cultural context, it can also be used to give a short summary of the story. Introducing students to a story by giving a summary up front allows them to get acquainted with the story before reading it. By knowing what to expect, students can concentrate on unravelling the plot without focusing on too many details. It also provides them with ample opportunity to focus on getting to know the characters. The downside of a written introduction as part of the book, however, can be that students will not read it because they feel that they already have to read an enormous amount. In order to overcome this, teachers can choose for an edition without an introduction and choose to introduce the story as part of their lessons. This depends on personal preference; many teachers indicated they feel it is their job to guide students through the process of reading, and the time that is available to spent on literature (see chapter 4.1).

In a nutshell, reading *Pride and Prejudice* is an immense challenge for students in which they need help from a teacher to come to a better understanding of the novel. Unfortunately, teachers often lack the time to guide students through the entire reading process. Therefore, they can choose to use a student edition that helps students to independently read the novel. Such a student edition could feature an introduction with a brief summary and an overview of the cultural and historical context, marginal notes that explain difficult words and phrases, and footnotes that explain foreign or out-dated concepts. If there is enough time in the schedule, the introduction could be left out of the student edition and the novel can be introduced in class with various assignments. An example of how this can be done and what the student edition would look like can be found in the appendices.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate what Jane Austen's role in literature education in the Netherlands is. Where her popularity around the world is unquestionable, her place in literature education in Dutch secondary schools remained unclear. It has been shown that Austen is not a major part of the curriculum. Many teachers indicate that they find her books unsuitable to deal with in class. In a survey conducted for this thesis, they mentioned that they find the language too difficult, the themes not relevant and the story unappealing. However, it has been made clear that the complexities of *Pride and Prejudice* are not an insurmountable obstacle. Although the language that Austen uses is different from the language that we use today, and thus more difficult for students to understand, it is quite possible to use strategies to overcome these challenges. Teachers can look into pre-teaching vocabulary or they can discuss excerpts to make students familiar with Austen's style. With regard to the cultural and historical considerations, teachers do well to deal with the most important differences between Austen's society and our society. They could, for instance, focus on the use of titles to illustrate how the class system works.

In addition, the challenge of dealing with a canonical work in class can be taken away by finding points of relevance and showing what can be learnt from classics such as *Pride and Prejudice*. This could be done by pairing the novel to a modern retelling of the story or by watching a film adaptation.

Most problems can also be tackled by using a student edition that is adapted in such a way that it caters to the need of the students. Such an edition would make use of marginal notes to explain difficult words, footnotes to explain cultural or historical concepts that are unfamiliar,

and, if desired, a general introduction to the story including a summary and background information about society. In sum, teachers need to look into resources that can help their students become more experienced readers, as this will help them in acquiring the skills and knowledge that are necessary to independently read *Pride and Prejudice*. These skills and knowledge are valuable to students because canonical works offer insight in culture and history and allow us to engage in critical thinking about our own society.

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Appendices

I. Example of a Student Edition

Chapter 1

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

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

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let^o at last?"

rented

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four^o to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas¹, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

carriage

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome^o! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

annoying

"Is that his design^o in settling here?"

intention

¹ A Christian holiday in honour of St. Michael, 29 September.

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion^o for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."

reason

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage^o for, I assure you."

have planned

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment² it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous^o, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

too worried

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness^o than her sisters."

intelligence

"Mr. Bennet, how *can* you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing^o me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."

troubling

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least."

"Ah, you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

² A settlement in life often in the form of marriage.

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts°, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice°, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean° understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented°, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace° was visiting and news.

cleverness

change of mind

limited

unhappy

comfort

Chapter 2

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on^o Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed^o in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming^o a hat, he suddenly addressed her with:

visited

"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are not in a way to know *what* Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

revealed
sewing

"But you forget, mamma," said Elizabeth, "that we shall meet him at the assemblies^o, and that Mrs. Long promised to introduce him."

public balls

"I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her."

"No more have I," said Mr. Bennet; "and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you."

Mrs. Bennet deigned³ not to make any reply, but, unable to contain herself, began scolding^o one of her daughters.

reprimanding

"Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces."

"Kitty has no discretion in her coughs," said her father; "she times them ill."

"I do not cough for my own amusement," replied Kitty fretfully^o. "When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?"

annoyed

"To-morrow fortnight^o."

two weeks

"Aye, so it is," cried her mother, "and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to *her*."

"Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?"

"I honour your circumspection^o. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if *we* do not venture^o somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will

caution

make a move

³ Mrs. Bennet considered herself too good.

think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office⁴, I will take it on myself."

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"What can be the meaning of that emphatic^o exclamation?" cried he. "Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you *there*. What say you, Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books and make extracts."

powerful

Mary wished to say something sensible, but knew not how.

"While Mary is adjusting her ideas," he continued, "let us return to Mr. Bingley."

"I am sick of Mr. Bingley," cried his wife.

"I am sorry to hear *that*; but why did not you tell me that before? If I had known as much this morning I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now."

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished; that of Mrs. Bennet perhaps surpassing the rest; though, when the first tumult of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while.

"How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved your girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! and it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning and never said a word about it till now."

"Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose," said Mr. Bennet; and, as he spoke, he left the room, fatigued with the raptures^o of his wife.

happiness

"What an excellent father you have, girls!" said she, when the door was shut. "I do not know how you will ever make him amends^o for his kindness; or me, either, for that matter. At our time of life it is not so pleasant, I can tell you, to be making new acquaintances every day; but for your sakes, we would do anything. Lydia, my love, though you *are* the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball."

make up

"Oh!" said Lydia stoutly^o, "I am not afraid; for though I *am* the youngest, I'm the tallest."

decisively

The rest of the evening was spent in conjecturing^o how soon he would return Mr. Bennet's visit, and determining when they should ask him to dinner.

guessing

⁴ If you do not perform this duty.

Chapter 3

Not all that Mrs. Bennet, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject, was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways—with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises⁵; but he eluded^o the skill of them all, and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour, Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favourable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

avoided

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for."

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining^o from an upper window that he wore a blue coat, and rode a black horse.

observing

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched^o; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred^o it all. Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and, consequently, unable to accept the honour of their invitation, etc. Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted^o. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies, but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing, that instead of twelve he brought only six with him from London—his five sisters and a cousin. And when the party entered the

sent

delayed

unsettled

⁵ With bold questions, clever guesses and far-fetched assumptions.

assembly room it consisted of only five altogether—Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance^o, and easy, unaffected^o manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion. 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^o, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year⁶. The gentlemen pronounced^o 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.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined^o being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment^o by his having slighted^o one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged^o, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to hear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to press^o his friend to join it.

"Come, Darcy," said he, "I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance."

face, real

look

declared

refused

dislike, ignored

forced

urge

⁶ Having an income of ten thousand pounds a year was considered highly exceptional.

"I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable°. Your sisters are engaged°, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up° with."

*unheard of, dancing
dance*

"I would not be so fastidious° as you are," cried Mr. Bingley, "for a kingdom! Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty."

picky

"*You* are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room," said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

"Oh! She is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld°! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you."

looked at

"Which do you mean?" and turning round he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said: "She is tolerable°, but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; I am in no humour⁷ at present to give consequence° to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me."

*pretty
attention*

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked off; and Elizabeth remained with no very cordial° feelings toward him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition°, which delighted in anything ridiculous.

pleasant

The evening altogether passed off pleasantly to the whole family. Mrs. Bennet had seen her eldest daughter much admired by the Netherfield party. Mr. Bingley had danced with her twice, and she had been distinguished by his sisters. Jane was as much gratified by this as her mother could be, though in a quieter way. Elizabeth felt Jane's pleasure. Mary had heard herself mentioned to Miss Bingley as the most accomplished⁸ girl in the neighbourhood; and Catherine and Lydia had been fortunate enough never to be without partners, which was all that they had yet learnt to care for at a ball. They returned, therefore, in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived, and of which they were the principal inhabitants. They found Mr. Bennet still up. With a book he was regardless of time; and on the present occasion he had a good deal of

temperament

⁷ To be in no humour means that you are not in the mood to do something.

⁸ An accomplished woman possesses many skills such as drawing and playing an instrument. In addition, she is considered clever because she speaks foreign languages and reads a lot.

curiosity as to the event of an evening which had raised such splendid expectations. He had rather hoped that his wife's views on the stranger would be disappointed; but he soon found out that he had a different story to hear.

"Oh! my dear Mr. Bennet," as she entered the room, "we have had a most delightful evening, a most excellent ball. I wish you had been there. Jane was so admired, nothing could be like it. Everybody said how well she looked; and Mr. Bingley thought her quite beautiful, and danced with her twice! Only think of *that*, my dear; he actually danced with her twice! and she was the only creature in the room that he asked a second time. First of all, he asked Miss Lucas. I was so vexed to see him stand up with her! But, however, he did not admire her at all; indeed, nobody can, you know; and he seemed quite struck with Jane as she was going down the dance. So he inquired who she was, and got introduced, and asked her for the two next. Then the two third he danced with Miss King, and the two fourth with Maria Lucas, and the two fifth with Jane again, and the two sixth with Lizzy, and the *Boulanger*⁹—"

"If he had had any compassion for *me*," cried her husband impatiently, "he would not have danced half so much! For God's sake, say no more of his partners. Oh that he had sprained his ankle in the first dance!"

"Oh! my dear, I am quite delighted with him. He is so excessively handsome! And his sisters are charming women. I never in my life saw anything more elegant than their dresses. I dare say the lace upon Mrs. Hurst's gown—"

Here she was interrupted again. Mr. Bennet protested against any description of finery. She was therefore obliged to seek another branch of the subject, and related, with much bitterness of spirit and some exaggeration, the shocking rudeness of Mr. Darcy.

"But I can assure you," she added, "that Lizzy does not lose much by not suiting *his* fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited^o that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I wish you had been there, my dear, to have given him one of your set-downs^o. I quite detest the man."

arrogant

lectures

⁹ At a ball you would dance with the same partner for two consecutive dances. Bingley danced the first two with Jane, the two after that (two third) with Miss King, etc. The Boulanger is a dance in which the couples move in circular motions over the dancefloor.

Chapter 4

When Jane and Elizabeth were alone, the former, who had been cautious in her praise of Mr. Bingley before, expressed to her sister just how very much she admired him.

"He is just what a young man ought to be," said she, "sensible, good-humoured, lively; and I never saw such happy manners!—so much ease, with such perfect good breeding¹⁰!"

"He is also handsome," replied Elizabeth, "which a young man ought likewise to be, if he possibly can. His character is thereby complete."

"I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment."

"Did not you? I did for you. But that is one great difference between us. Compliments always take *you* by surprise, and *me* never. What could be more natural than his asking you again? He could not help seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room. No thanks to his gallantry^o for that. Well, he certainly is very agreeable, and I give you leave^o to like him. You have liked many a stupider person."

"Dear Lizzy!"

"Oh! you are a great deal too apt^o, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in your life."

"I would not wish to be hasty in censuring^o anyone; but I always speak what I think."

"I know you do; and it is *that* which makes the wonder. With *your* good sense, to be so honestly blind to the follies^o and nonsense of others! Affectation of candour¹¹ is common enough—one meets with it everywhere. But to be candid^o without ostentation^o or design—to take the good of everybody's character and make it still better, and say nothing of the bad—belongs to you alone. And so you like this man's sisters, too, do you? Their manners are not equal to his."

"Certainly not—at first. But they are very pleasing women when you converse with them. Miss Bingley is to live with her brother, and keep his house; and I am much mistaken if we shall not find a very charming neighbour in her."

Elizabeth listened in silence, but was not convinced; their behaviour at the assembly had not been calculated to please in general; and with more quickness of observation and less pliancy^o of temper than her sister, and

politeness
permission

inclined

criticising

stupidities

honest, show

intended
flexibility

¹⁰ Of a good family or social background.

¹¹ Pretending to be honest.

with a judgement too unassailed by any attention to herself¹², she was very little disposed^o to approve them. They were in fact very fine ladies; not deficient^o in good humour when they were pleased, nor in the power of making themselves agreeable when they chose it, but proud and conceited. They were rather handsome, had been educated in one of the first^o private seminaries^o in town, had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, were in the habit of spending more than they ought, and of associating with people of rank, and were therefore in every respect entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others. They were of a respectable family in the north of England; a circumstance more deeply impressed on their memories than that their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade.

*willing
lacking*

best, schools

Mr. Bingley inherited property to the amount of nearly a hundred thousand pounds from his father, who had intended to purchase an estate, but did not live to do it. Mr. Bingley intended it likewise, and sometimes made choice of his county; but as he was now provided with a good house and the liberty of a manor^o, it was doubtful to many of those who best knew the easiness of his temper, whether he might not spend the remainder of his days at Netherfield, and leave the next generation to purchase.

large estate

His sisters were anxious for his having an estate of his own; but, though he was now only established as a tenant^o, Miss Bingley was by no means unwilling to preside^o at his table—nor was Mrs. Hurst, who had married a man of more fashion than fortune, less disposed to consider his house as her home when it suited her. Mr. Bingley had not been of age two years, when he was tempted by an accidental recommendation to look at Netherfield House. He did look at it, and into it for half-an-hour—was pleased with the situation and the principal rooms, satisfied with what the owner said in its praise, and took it immediately.

*renter
exercise authority*

Between him and Darcy there was a very steady friendship, in spite of great opposition of character. Bingley was endeared^o to Darcy by the easiness, openness, and ductility^o of his temper, though no disposition^o could offer a greater contrast to his own, and though with his own he never appeared dissatisfied. On the strength of Darcy's regard, Bingley had the firmest reliance, and of his judgement the highest opinion. In understanding, Darcy was the superior. Bingley was by no means deficient, but Darcy was clever. He was at the same time haughty^o, reserved, and fastidious^o, and his manners, though well-bred, were not

*precious
flexibility, personality*

*arrogant
precise*

¹² Elizabeth's judgement is not clouded by any attention she might have received herself.

inviting. In that respect his friend had greatly the advantage. Bingley was sure of being liked wherever he appeared, Darcy was continually giving offense.

The manner in which they spoke of the Meryton assembly was sufficiently characteristic. Bingley had never met with more pleasant people or prettier girls in his life; everybody had been most kind and attentive to him; there had been no formality, no stiffness; he had soon felt acquainted with all the room; and, as to Miss Bennet, he could not conceive^o an angel more beautiful. Darcy, on the contrary, had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure. Miss Bennet he acknowledged to be pretty, but she smiled too much.

form an image

Mrs. Hurst and her sister allowed^o it to be so—but still they admired her and liked her, and pronounced her to be a sweet girl, and one whom they would not object to know more of. Miss Bennet was therefore established as a sweet girl, and their brother felt authorized by such commendation^o to think of her as he chose.

admitted

approval

Chapter 5

Within a short walk of Longbourn lived a family with whom the Bennets were particularly intimate. Sir William Lucas had been formerly in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune, and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the king during his mayoralty. The distinction had perhaps been felt too strongly. It had given him a disgust to his business, and to his residence in a small market town; and, in quitting them both, he had removed with his family to a house about a mile from Meryton, denominated from that period Lucas Lodge, where he could think with pleasure of his own importance, and, unshackled by business, occupy himself solely in being civil to all the world. For, though elated by his rank, it did not render him supercilious¹³; on the contrary, he was all attention to everybody. By nature inoffensive, friendly, and obliging, his presentation at St. James's¹⁴ had made him courteous.

Lady Lucas was a very good kind of woman, not too clever to be a valuable neighbour to Mrs. Bennet. They had several children. The eldest of them, a sensible, intelligent young woman, about twenty-seven, was Elizabeth's intimate friend.

That the Miss Lucases and the Miss Bennets should meet to talk over a ball was absolutely necessary; and the morning after the assembly brought the former to Longbourn to hear and to communicate.

"You began the evening well, Charlotte," said Mrs. Bennet with civil self-command to Miss Lucas. "You were Mr. Bingley's first choice."

"Yes; but he seemed to like his second better."

"Oh! you mean Jane, I suppose, because he danced with her twice. To be sure that *did* seem as if he admired her—indeed I rather believe he *did*—I heard something about it—but I hardly know what—something about Mr. Robinson."

"Perhaps you mean what I overheard between him and Mr. Robinson; did not I mention it to you? Mr. Robinson's asking him how he liked our Meryton assemblies, and whether he did not think there were a great many pretty women in the room, and *which* he thought the prettiest? and his answering immediately to the last question: 'Oh! the eldest Miss Bennet, beyond a doubt; there cannot be two opinions on that point.'"

"Upon my word! Well, that is very decided indeed—that does seem as if—but, however, it may all come to nothing, you know." "My overhearings were more to the purpose than *yours*, Eliza," said Charlotte.

*speech, time as mayor
prestige*

named

uplifted,

polite

relevant

¹³ It did not make him superior.

¹⁴ Receiving his knighthood at St. James's Palace.

"Mr. Darcy is not so well worth listening to as his friend, is he?—poor Eliza!—to be only just *tolerable*."

"I beg you would not put it into Lizzy's head to be vexed by his ill-treatment, for he is such a disagreeable man, that it would be quite a misfortune to be liked by him. Mrs. Long told me last night that he sat close to her for half-an-hour without once opening his lips."

"Are you quite sure, ma'am?—is not there a little mistake?" said Jane. "I certainly saw Mr. Darcy speaking to her."

"Aye—because she asked him at last how he liked Netherfield, and he could not help answering her; but she said he seemed quite angry at being spoke to."

"Miss Bingley told me," said Jane, "that he never speaks much, unless among his intimate acquaintances. With *them* he is remarkably agreeable."

"I do not believe a word of it, my dear. If he had been so very agreeable, he would have talked to Mrs. Long. But I can guess how it was; everybody says that he is eat up with pride, and I dare say he had heard somehow that Mrs. Long does not keep a carriage, and had come to the ball in a hack chaise¹⁵."

"I do not mind his not talking to Mrs. Long," said Miss Lucas, "but I wish he had danced with Eliza."

"Another time, Lizzy," said her mother, "I would not dance with *him*, if I were you."

"I believe, ma'am, I may safely promise you *never* to dance with him."

"His pride," said Miss Lucas, "does not offend *me* so much as pride often does, because there is an excuse for it. One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family, fortune, everything in his favour, should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a *right* to be proud."

"That is very true," replied Elizabeth, "and I could easily forgive *his* pride, if he had not mortified *mine*."

"Pride," observed Mary, who piqued^o herself upon the solidity^o of her reflections^o, "is a very common failing, I believe. By all that I have ever read, I am convinced that it is very common indeed; that human nature is particularly prone to it, and that there are very few of us who do not cherish a feeling of self-complacency^o on the score of some quality or other, real or imaginary. Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us."

*wounded
prided, quality
thoughts*

satisfaction

¹⁵ A carriage that served as a taxi, not one's own.

"If I were as rich as Mr. Darcy," cried a young Lucas, who came with his sisters, "I should not care how proud I was. I would keep a pack of foxhounds, and drink a bottle of wine a day."

"Then you would drink a great deal more than you ought," said Mrs. Bennet; "and if I were to see you at it, I should take away your bottle directly."

The boy protested that she should not; she continued to declare that she would, and the argument ended only with the visit.

II. Justification Student Edition Pride and Prejudice

It is difficult to explain why certain words and phrases are glossed, whereas others are not. In general, I have based my decisions on whether I believe a word is unfamiliar, difficult or outdated to Dutch students. I find it important that notes are kept to a bare minimum because too many notes can still be a distraction to students. Thus, there might be some words that are not glossed that could be unknown to student, but students should be able to infer the meaning from these words by themselves. Some words that appear several times have only been glossed the first time if the meaning is exactly the same later on in the text. If a word appears multiple times with different meanings then the word is glossed multiple times as well. Some glosses deserve some more explanation and those can be found below.

This student edition is designed to be read independently by students as part of a lesson series. That means that there is no general introduction to the story, as that should be dealt with in class.

Chapter 1

chaise and four – The *OED* points out that there are several kinds of carriages and that the number mentioned, in this case four, indicates the number of horses that would have drawn the carriage. Since the number of horses that draws the carriage is irrelevant to the story, I chose to omit this and simply refer to it as “carriage”.

Michaelmas – It is most likely that students are not familiar with this holiday and for that reason I have chosen to briefly mention it in a footnote. The nature of the holiday is not important to the understanding of the story and for that reason is not further

explained. The date on the other hand is relevant for the story and therefore mentioned. Students need it to get a sense of time in the story.

tiresome – The difficulty of this word is that it implies multiple things. It refers to behaviour that is both tiring and annoying. I nonetheless highlighted only one aspect in the margin and that is because “tiresome” already indicates a sense of “tiring” and not a sense of “annoying”. Students should be able to dissect the word in such a way that they get the sense of “tiring”.

design – Although this word is probably not unfamiliar to students, it is likely that the intended meaning here *is* unfamiliar to them and that might cause confusion. To clarify what is meant I put it in the margin.

establishment – It turned out to be quite a challenge to find a proper synonym for “establishment” that would portray every facet of the word. At first, I opted for marriage but upon reading it again, I realised that marriage does not capture the full meaning and that is why I have chosen to put an explanation of it in a footnote rather than a marginal note.

over-scrupulous – The first synonym I thought of for scrupulous was meticulous and I immediately realised that it does not fit the context. Moreover, I suspect that meticulous is as unfamiliar to students as scrupulous is, so I had to choose something else. The *OED* defines scrupulous as troubled with doubts, which roughly translates to worried.

vexing – “Vexing” is such a comprehensive word that it is difficult to find a proper synonym. I have chosen for “troubling” because it helps clarify the meaning of the word yet it provides students with an opportunity to give a more specific meaning depending on the context, for the word appears multiple times in the novel.

caprice – Mr. Bennet’s caprice is what makes that his wife has trouble understanding him. It is an important feature for students to understand and even though it is possible for them to infer this characteristic from the text, it is important to help them by providing a synonym in the margin.

Chapter 2

deigned – It was impossible to come up with a synonym that could be put in the margin, however, the word is important enough to explain because it provides the reader with a great insight in Mrs. Bennet’s character.

circumspection – Despite the difficulty of capturing the meaning of “circumspection” in one word, I have chosen not to make it a footnote. I believe that in this context “caution” carries the same meaning.

venture – The problem with “venture” is that student are likely to associate it with business because it is a common word in economics. Therefore, I have provided the intended meaning in the margin. Students might be able to get the meaning from the context, but some might be so distracted by the meaning they know that they cannot look beyond it.

decline the office – It is most likely that students have no idea what is meant with this phrase.

They will probably think of a literal meaning of “office” and will thus be confused, as it will not fit the context. Therefore, it was necessary to explain the phrase in a footnote.

stoutly – This word can be very distracting because it contains the Dutch word “stout”. This might make it challenging to find another meaning, so to help out a synonym is placed in the margin.

conjecturing – Long words tend to be the first words students look up in a dictionary and since that is what I am trying to avoid I have specified the meaning of this one in the margin.

Chapter 3

with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises – This phrase contained so many unfamiliar and difficult words that I have chosen to translate it in a footnote. I believe a clarification of the sentence is needed here.

disconcerted – Although I prefer to use “flustered” as a synonym for “disconcerted”, I am afraid that “flustered” is not as well known among students as “unsettled” is.

ten thousand a year – As already mentioned, the fact that Mr. Darcy receives an income of ten thousand a year is quite unusual and considered an enormous amount. Nowadays, this would not be as uncommon as it was back in Austen’s days and therefore a footnote is necessary. I have specifically chosen to highlight Darcy’s ten thousand a year and not Bingley’s five thousand a year because there is more talk about Darcy’s wealth than about Bingley’s wealth.

slighted – Students might be familiar with the phrase “not in the slightest way”, and should therefore be able to derive the meaning from the context. However, the aim is to help students to easily understand the story and it is therefore necessary to help them out with these kind of words.

accomplished – Even though accomplished should be familiar to students, the specific meaning as Jane Austen intended is not, and therefore explained in a footnote. It is of great importance to the story thus needs to be explained.

Chapter 4

good breeding – In general, “breeding” is used when referring to animals. It most likely strikes students as odd that it is used in reference to a person. I have placed an explanation in a footnote because it was hardly possible to keep it short enough for a note in the margin.

gallantry – I have chosen to gloss “gallantry” as politeness in order to avoid too many longer footnotes on one page. I believe “gallantry” deserves more explanation than just “politeness”, however, this definition will suit for secondary school students so they can fully understand the story.

affectation of candour – This phrase is uncommon yet important to understand this sentence. I have chosen to treat it as one phrase in a footnote, rather than providing two separate words in the margin.

ostentation – It was difficult to come up with a word that captures the meaning in the right way. The first idea I had was “pretentious” but that does not quite fit, nor is it likely that students will know this word. In the end, I came up with “show” because it indicates the fact that it is done intentionally.

disposed – Willing is not mentioned in the *OED* but prepared is. I favoured willing over prepared because it is most likely better understood by students.

deficient – According to the *OED* deficient is the absence of something which roughly translates to lacking in this sentence.

seminaries – Even though a school is not the exact same as a seminary it suits the story well enough for students to understand what is meant.

manor – Since “estate” is already mentioned in the story and the meaning of it can be derived from the text, it is not necessary to mention that a “manor” also includes the land and not just the house. I believe that specifying “manor” as “estate” is clear enough for students.

tenant – Translating tenant with inhabitant did not feel justifiable because that might suggest that one owns the property which is not the case. Therefore, I specified it as renter, a word that is more familiar.

ductility – “Ductility” is defined in the *OED* as “the ability of being ductile”. Ductile refers to metal being pliable and therefore flexibility seemed the best option, because it refers to the flexibility of Bingley’s temper.

Chapter 5

supercilious – The difficulty of this word is that it is hard for students to derive meaning from the context and that is why it is necessary to give a synonym.

hack chaise – Chaise is already explained in the first chapter but because it becomes clear from the context that it has a different meaning in this sentence, it is glossed. It is rather important to stress that this kind of carriage was used as a taxi and the complete explanation would not fit in the margin.

mortified – The way in which Austen uses this word is not common to date. In order to speak to students I have chosen to gloss it with vivid language that speaks to their imagination.

III. Lesson series Pride and Prejudice

Note: all lessons are based on a schedule of 45 minutes and a class of 28-30 students.

Main aims:

To learn to analyse Austen's work and to place it in a historical context.

To help students develop critical and analytical reading skills.

Subsidiary aims:

To introduce students to a literary work they might not pick themselves.

The Project

The idea behind this lesson series is that students and teacher form a community of learners in which everyone can learn from each other. According to Anne-Marieke Staal, "[i]n a community of learners both students and teachers are engaged in explorative learning, take risks, exchange results, form conclusions based on research and raise new questions that can be explored" (8).

This means that the project is quite dependent on the amount of work that each member of the community puts in it. The major advantage of this is that students are able work on one particular aspect, meaning they can delve deep into that subject. All assignments together form a complete image of the novel that can then be studied by all.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Introducing a literary work can make or break how students feel about it. Therefore, a proper introductory lesson is of the utmost importance. This first lesson should focus on helping students get on their way in their reading process. This includes explaining the general gist of the story, focusing on briefly introducing the characters and providing the students with a short summary. It is also important to remind students of how they should read a novel namely by keeping a reading diary. Lastly, it is necessary to let students know what they should focus on during their reading process.

All this can be done in various ways but a few examples will be provided.

- If you prefer a more hands-on approach in which students do most of the work, you can let them find information about the novel online. Give them some time to discuss this in small groups and then discuss it in class to let them know which information is correct.
- One way of introducing students to a literary work is by making a word web on the whiteboard or smart board. Ask students what they already know about the novel or if they do not know it, what they think it is about. Let the students respond to each other so they can expand their ideas and knowledge.
- It is also possible to design a PowerPoint or other kind of presentation and lecture the students about everything you want them to know.
- As part of the introduction, you can choose to show the trailer of a film version of the novel. This will help students to create an image about what they are about to read.

In between lessons 1 and 2 students should have had plenty of time to read the novel. Since it is a homework assignment, students will need several weeks to read the novel.

Lesson 2: Discussion of the novel

This lesson is used to discuss the novel based on the reading diaries that students have kept. Start out by letting the students discuss their findings, feelings and opinions with each other in pairs or small groups. After that, discuss the novel in class. This discussion should focus on discussing the most important themes and cultural and historical considerations, as discussed in this thesis. Again, there are several ways to do this but considering the importance of the information, I suggest it is best to lecture the students. Now that the students have read the novel they can start thinking about which assignment they want to do.

Lesson 3, 4 & 5: Watching the film

To help clarify the story it can be very helpful to watch a film adaptation. I have chosen for the version from 2005 directed by Joe Wright, because this is the most recent and will most likely be the most appealing to students. This will take about three lessons.

After watching the film students should hand in their motivation for the assignment they would like to do.

Lessons 6 – 10: Working on assignments

These lessons can be used to let students work on their assignments. Providing the opportunity to work in class is very important because students can consult the teacher and members of other groups if they desire help. These lessons are heavily dependent on students' ability to self-regulate their learning as part of the ownership of learning that students are presented with. The

definitions of ownership of learning and self-regulated learning as defined and used by RSG Slingerbos | Levant are as follows (Staal 8):

Ownership of Learning

Ownership of learning is achieved by actively engaging students in their own learning process by offering students tasks that increase their motivation for learning. Making students responsible for their own learning process increases motivation. Ownership is stimulated in learning environments in which teachers are facilitators and students collaborate on tasks and learn by teaching, and in which there is an active interaction between task, instructor and learners. Self-efficacy and self-regulation are important in this process.

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulation means that learners gain control over their own learning process and are able to direct cognitive and motivational processes to reach learning objectives. Learners have the skill and the will to learn, actively plan, set goals and control their behaviour. Self-regulated learners know when and why to use specific learning strategies. It is necessary to know what strategies to use for what type of school task and why.

Lessons 11, 12 & 13: Presentations

Students should present the essence of their assignment in five minutes to the rest of the class. After the presentation, each assignment is uploaded on the virtual learning environment for the class to be studied in preparation for the test.

Lesson 16: Preparation for the test

In this lesson the presentations will be discussed in class. The teacher will highlight and discuss the most important things from each presentation so that students can prepare themselves for the test.

There should be at least one week and preferably two weeks in between lessons 14 and 15 to give students plenty of time to prepare for the test.

Lesson 15: Test

Students will be tested on their knowledge of the book. The test will consist of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. Student should be able to demonstrate that they understand the novel on the aspects that are discussed in the presentations.

Assesment: 50% presentation grade + 50% test grade

Lesson 16: Evaluation

The lesson series will be evaluated in class. This can be either be done by a group discussion or by a questionnaire.

The Assignments

A. Title (2)

The title of a novel can tell you quite a few things about the story. Jane Austen's original title for the novel was *First Impressions*. What do you think of this title?

Answer the following questions:

- What role do first impressions play in *Pride and Prejudice*?
- How are pride and prejudice represented in the story? Which characters are proud and which ones are prejudiced?
- Why do you think that Jane Austen favoured *Pride and Prejudice* over *First Impressions* as a title?
- Which title do you think fits the story better? Explain why.

B. Character Analysis of Elizabeth Bennet (2)

Elizabeth is one of the main characters in the story. She is quite ahead of her time and she is different from the rest of the women in the story. Explain why and in which ways Elizabeth is so different from the other young women, including her sisters, in the story. Towards the end of the story Elizabeth's character has changed. Explain how she has changed and why this happened.

C. Character Analysis of Mr. Darcy (2)

Mr. Darcy is considered a very unpleasant character in the novel, yet readers all over the world have fallen for his character. As readers, we are presented with a conflicting image of the man.

What is the reason for this mixed message? How can a man that is perceived as unpleasant, snobbish and arrogant be so loved amongst so many people? What does this tell you about his character? The image that the reader is presented with changes in the course of the story. How does it change and how does this affect your view on Darcy?

D. Character Analysis of Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley (3)

Jane and Mr. Bingley appear to be the perfect couple because their characters are so alike. However, they only marry at the very end of the novel. Compare and contrast the characteristics of Jane and Mr. Bingley. In which ways are they similar and in which ways do they differ? Use these character sketches to work out the following assignment:

After the Meryton assembly, Jane and Charles are rather close. Nonetheless, they are separated by Mr. Darcy and do not see or talk to each other for quite a while. Imagine that Darcy had not separated the couple and Jane and Charles would write each other (love) letters throughout the story. What would these letters look like? What sort of things would they discuss with each other and how do they express their feelings? Write out four of these letters.

E. Character Analysis of Mr. & Mrs. Bennet (3)

Mr. & Mrs. Bennet are the first married couple to be introduced in the story and the parents of the Bennet sisters. Throughout the story it becomes clear that they are quite opposite characters. Mrs. Bennet places a great deal of emphasis on marriage of her daughters, whereas Mr. Bennet cannot be bothered. What do you think is the reason for this? How about their own marriage, do you think that they have married out of love or did they have other reasons for marrying? How do they behave towards each other? Do you think they would have divorced if this was possible/accepted? It is sometimes said that Mr. Bennet represents Austen's attitude towards

marriage where Mrs. Bennet is a representative for the women of the middle-class and their attitude towards marriage. Look up and explain what these attitudes are. Do you think that based on their views of marriage, Mr. & Mrs. Bennet are good parents?

F. Love and Marriage (3x2)

Love and marriage are central to *Pride and Prejudice*. Every character appears to have an opinion about it. Marriage is very common and not marrying someone is out of the question. In the following assignments you will take a closer look at the institution and the characters' attitudes towards it.

Group 1:

Mrs. Bennet's sole purpose in life is to get her five daughters to marry, preferably to a fortunate man. Why is this so incredibly important to her? Include the first line of *Pride and Prejudice* in your answer. Do you think that Mrs. Bennet's reasons for wanting her daughters to marry are justifiable?

Group 2:

Compare Elizabeth's response to Mr. Collins's proposal to Charlotte's response to his proposal. Why do the ladies respond in such different ways to his proposal? What does this tell you about the ladies' attitudes towards love and marriage? What can you tell about Mr. Collins's idea of marriage?

Group 3:

Compare the marriage proposals of Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy. What is similar about these proposals and in what ways do they differ? What do these proposals reveal about the men in question and how can their attitude towards marriage best be characterised?

G. Society and Class (2)

Class is an important part of the novel. In the novel, class determines what your life looks like. Austen writes mostly about the gentry. Look up what gentry means and what part of society the gentry makes up. In *Pride and Prejudice*, there are members of the middle class and members of the upper class. Who belongs to which class? How can you tell? In which ways does the class you belong to define your life?

H. Women (2)

The life of women in *Pride and Prejudice* is very different than the life of men. Explore Austen's portrayal of women in the novel. Women, especially upper class women, were expected to be accomplished. Figure out what it means for a woman to be accomplished. Which qualities and skills should she have and what does this mean for her behaviour? Look at how the women of the different classes are portrayed in comparison to each other. What does this tell you about Austen's attitude towards women?

I. Novel and Film (2x2)

Reading a novel is quite different from watching a film, even though it might be the same story. Argue why watching a film is not the same as reading a novel. Is it just different or is one better than the other?

Group 1:

Pick a scene from the film that is not in the book or different in the novel. Why do you think the screenwriters made the decision to put it in or to change it? Do you think it is justifiable to adapt the plot or to add/leave out things?

Group 2:

The film we have watched in class has an alternative ending that you can watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zg7YhN-I2M0>

What could be the reasons for this alternative ending? Do you think that it fits the story? Imagine that you are the director of this film, what would your alternative ending look like?

J. Quiz (2)

Prepare a quiz of 20 questions. Make sure that you have at least ten open-ended questions. The goal of this quiz is to test whether your classmates have understood the novel. Make sure that you do not solely focus on facts.

III. Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

Many thanks in advance for filling in this small questionnaire. There are ten questions, five multiple choice and five open questions. I would like to ask you to be as honest and elaborate as possible in your answers for the open questions. The purpose of these questions is to find out what role Jane Austen's novels play in secondary schools (havo/vwo bovenbouw) and whether there is a need for student editions of her novels for Dutch readers/learners of English.

1. Do you deal with Jane Austen in class?

Yes, the whole class reads a whole book

Yes, we deal with fragments in class

Yes, Jane Austen is mentioned in class

No

2. Can you explain your motivations behind (not) dealing with Jane Austen in class?

3. Are there any Jane Austen novels available in the school library?

Yes, in English

Yes, in Dutch

No

4. Which books are available in the school library?

5. Have you ever advised a student to read a Jane Austen novel?

Yes

No

- 6. Which novel did you advise and why or why haven't you recommended a Jane Austen novel?**
- 7. Do students choose to read a Jane Austen novel themselves?**
Yes
No
- 8. Do you feel there is a need for student editions of Jane Austen's novels?**
Yes
No
- 9. Why or why not?**
- 10. In your opinion, what would such an edition look like (e.g. annotated, simplified/modernised, graphic novel/illustrated etc.), and why?**

Do you deal with Jane Austen in class?

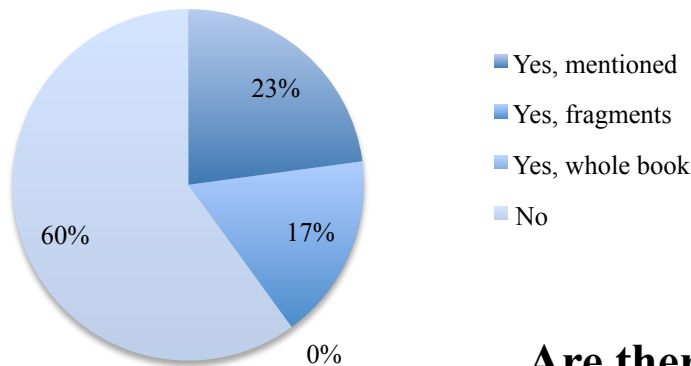


Figure 3

Are there any Jane Austen novels available in the school library?

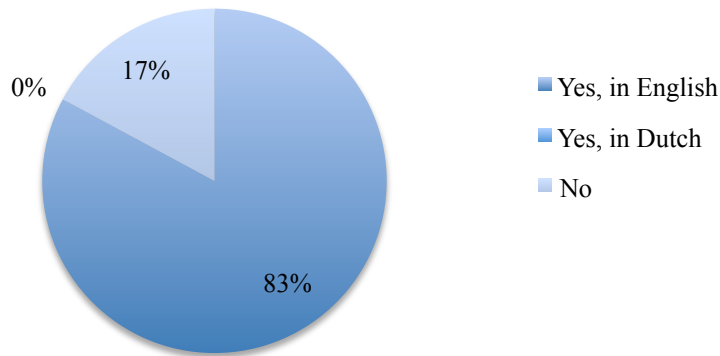


Figure 2

Have you ever advised a student to read a Jane Austen novel?

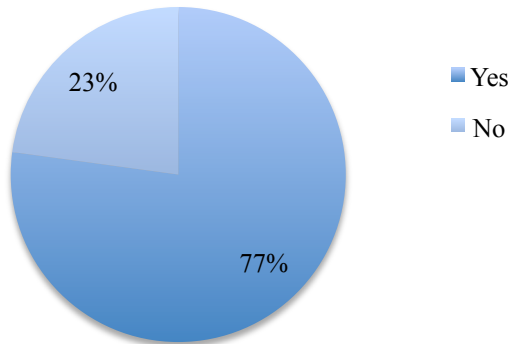


Figure 1

Do students choose to read a Jane Austen novel themselves?

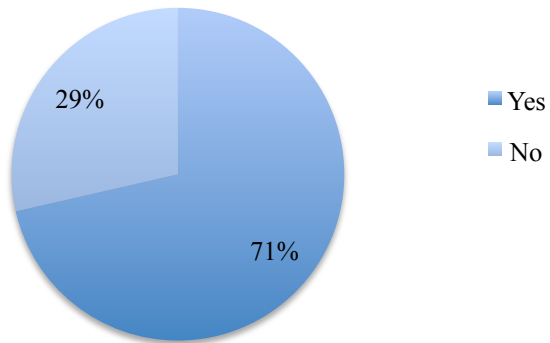


Figure 4

Do you feel there is a need for student editions of Jane Austen's novels?

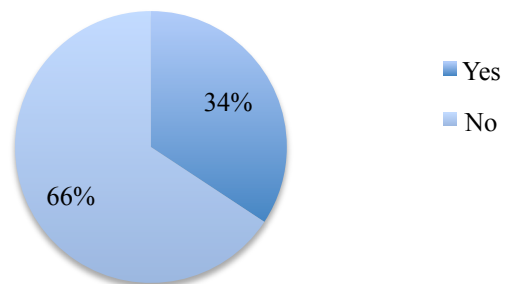


Figure 5